

The Women of the British Army in America

Don N. Hagist
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The roles of women in the armies of the American Revolution, although not unknown, are not fully appreciated. Of all that has been written on this period of history, only a small portion addresses the women who followed the armies; still less is dedicated to the topic. This shortfall is not the result of a dearth of primary accounts. There is a great deal of such material available, but very little has been compiled or assimilated. It is with a view toward compilation that this article is written.

Several "classic" published profiles of women and children with the British army during the American Revolution are available, but tend to be general and sometimes heavily stereotyped. A few high quality works have appeared quite recently¹, but even these tend to treat the topic amid a broader study and thus provide only an overview. A much better and more detailed understanding can be obtained from the wealth of primary source material that is available. This article interweaves an assortment of such material from a large number of sources, which, when taken together, begins to yield portraits of women present within the British garrisons and encampments that clarify their characters, daily lives, responsibilities and experiences.

A Look at the Numbers

It is not difficult to determine the number of women officially affiliated with a given British regiment; one needs only examine some of the numerous returns that were regularly kept throughout the war. In this article, we present data from a few such returns that provide representative examples. Figure 1 presents data illustrating the numbers of dependent women and children with a few British regiments in the New York area during 1779 and 1780. Although only a few regiments are here used as examples, the sampling is a representative cross-section. The variation in the incidences is great enough to demonstrate why we should not draw conclusions about all regiments by examining the situation of a few or by creating an average around which there is a wide degree of variation. Every regiment's situation was unique, and if we want to understand a particular situation, then we must find data for the specific regiments concerned.

Figure 1

**Numbers of Men, Women and Children Among
Selected British Regiments, New York Area, 1779-1780***

| | <u>Unit</u> | <u>Men</u> | <u>Women</u> | <u>Children</u> |
|--|----------------|------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 21 November 1779 | 22nd | 401 | 57 | 68 |
| | 23rd | 469 | 61 | 60 |
| | 33rd | 488 | 56 | 16 |
| | 37th | 499 | 57 | 38 |
| | 38th | 429 | 60 | 53 |
| | 43rd | 405 | 46 | 45 |
| | 71st | 195 | 30 | 16 |
| 22 - 28 November 1779 | 22nd | 403 | 60 | 70 |
| | 23rd | 468 | 63 | 62 |
| | 33rd | 493 | 58 | 28 |
| | 37th | 480 | 58 | 40 |
| | 38th | 436 | 63 | 59 |
| | 71st | 110 | 30 | 17 |
| 29 November - 5 December 1779 | 17th LD | 159 | 46 | 34 |
| | 22nd | 399 | 56 | 68 |
| | 23rd | 473 | 63 | 62 |
| | 33rd | 483 | 62 | 28 |
| | 37th | 481 | 58 | 40 |
| | 38th | 432 | 61 | 59 |
| | 71st | 204 | 32 | 19 |
| 12 - 19 December 1779 | 17th LD | 391 | 66 | 46 |
| | 22nd | 386 | 56 | 64 |
| | 23rd | 463 | 62 | 62 |
| | 33rd | 475 | 62 | 28 |
| | 37th | 474 | 54 | 36 |
| | 38th | 422 | 63 | 60 |
| | 71st | 201 | 35 | 22 |
| 20 - 26 December 1779 | 17th LD | 403 | 66 | 42 |
| | 22nd | 416 | 57 | 62 |
| | 37th | 483 | 32 | 36 |
| | 38th | 431 | 65 | 62 |
| 27 December 1779 - 2 January 1780 | 17th LD | 334 | 70 | 44 |

| | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------|-----|-----|-----|
| | 22nd | 407 | 60 | 77 |
| | 38th | 430 | 65 | 62 |
| 6 - 12 March 1780 | 17th LD | 384 | 72 | 52 |
| | 22nd | 407 | 67 | 74 |
| | 38th | 422 | 80 | 77 |
| 27 March - 2 April 1780 | 17th LD | 384 | 72 | 52 |
| | 22nd | 402 | 73 | 85 |
| | 38th | 438 | 79 | 74 |
| 3 - 9 April 1780 | 17th LD | 373 | 78 | 52 |
| | 38th | 447 | 79 | 74 |
| 10 - 16 April 1780 | 17th LD | 377 | 77 | 52 |
| | 38th | 450 | 80 | 76 |
| 25th September 1780 | Guards | 639 | 149 | 123 |
| | 17th LD | 88 | 37 | 42 |
| | 22nd | 392 | 66 | 74 |
| | 37th | 436 | 58 | 40 |
| | 38th | 427 | 67 | 65 |
| | 42nd | 694 | 89 | 51 |
| | 43rd | 337 | 76 | 59 |

***These data are selected from eleven British army victualing returns for army personnel posted on Long Island contained within the Frederick MacKenzie Papers, William L. Clements Library. Only a few of the regiments and corps cited within each manuscript return are included in the figure, and those only when the majority of the regiment was represented on the return. In cases where a regiment was divided among several posts cited in the returns, the figures given are totals of all contingents. These victualing returns do not necessarily represent the total strength in America of each of the regiments. Regiments that appear on only some returns were not posted on Long Island for the entire period represented.**

The personnel counts in Figure 1 are from victualing returns, and so include only women and children who were being fed by the army. Ratios of women to men range from a high of about 1 to 6 to a low of about 1 to 10, with 1 to 8 being more or less typical. There are usually about the same number of children as women, although, again, there is a great deal of variation.

British regiments during this period were composed of ten companies. At times, however, some companies functioned independently of the remainder of their respective regiments. For this reason, there is some value in determining numbers of women and children per company. This is more difficult, though, since most returns are presented by regiment, but the regimental numbers do not necessarily include companies that were on detached duty. For the regiments cited in Figure 1, two of the companies usually were serving separately in composite battalions during this time period, and their personnel were returned with those battalions. Therefore, most of these returns are for eight companies, and, typically, we see about seven women per company.

The source returns for Figure 1 include some characteristics that may be typical for an army in a long-term garrison. The returns were for Long Island, and were subdivided according to towns or localities on the island. In many cases, elements of a regiment were posted in several different places, but for the regiments listed in Figure 1, the numbers of men, women and children have been aggregated, regardless of how they were distributed. There are also cases in which a few women and children of a regiment were in a place where there were no men of that regiment, and vice versa. This is probably an effect of regiments being moved about within a relatively small area; if women and children found good quarters in a town, they may have preferred to stay rather than move if the rest of their regiment was moving only a few miles away.

The ratios of women to men within companies could vary as much as those seen across regiments. The data presented in Figure 2 are from a set of returns for the First Battalion of Grenadiers. This battalion was composed of the grenadier companies of several regiments. At the time of these returns in early 1778, the battalion was with the army in Philadelphia, and was composed of fifteen companies. Across the array of companies, the ratio of women to men ranged from 1 to 3 through 1 to 9. There was usually about one-half the number of children as women, but these ratios varied considerably also. Once again, we find that there is such variation that statistical summarization of the data, as through a mean, would not produce useful information, but instead would tend to disguise the great range of situations across the different companies.

Figure 2

**Numbers of Men, Women and Children in the
1st Battalion of Grenadiers, Philadelphia, 1778***

| Origin | Rank | | | | Total | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Regiment | Officers | Sergeants | Drummers | & File | Men | Women | Children |
| 4th | 4 | 3 | 4 | 49 | 60 | 11 | 12 |

| | | | | | | | |
|------|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|
| 5th | 4 | 3 | 3 | 48 | 58 | 17 | 12 |
| 7th | 2 | 2 | 3 | 39 | 46 | 9 | 3 |
| 10th | - | - | - | 52 | 52 | 6 | 6 |
| 17th | 3 | 3 | 3 | 41 | 50 | 10 | 4 |
| 22nd | 3 | 3 | 3 | 27 | 36 | 6 | 3 |
| 23rd | 3 | 3 | 2 | 51 | 59 | 10 | 6 |
| 27th | 3 | 3 | 4 | 44 | 54 | 6 | 2 |
| 28th | 3 | 2 | 3 | 40 | 48 | 12 | 5 |
| 33rd | 4 | 2 | 1 | 43 | 50 | 8 | 5 |
| 35th | 2 | 2 | 3 | 39 | 46 | 9 | 3 |
| 37th | 3 | 3 | 2 | 39 | 47 | 8 | 2 |

***From "A Return of Bread baked by Mr. Powel for the first Battalion of the Grenadiers ...", inclusive of four weekly returns recorded in Philadelphia, 27 February to 26 March. A.O. 13/87 pp. 72-74, PRO. The 15th and 40th have no data given for women and children; the 38th appears on the returns with no data.**

It appears that the data in Figure 2 include women and children of officers as well as of the rank and file. It is not clear that this is true of the data in Figure 1. That possible variation may account for the typically greater proportion of women and children in the grenadier companies (Figure 2) than seen for the entire regiments (Figure 1).

These personnel counts demonstrate that, on average, between one-eighth and one-quarter of the people who were considered a part of a regiment were women and children. This may strike us as a large proportion but, for the time period, it was typical. A document prepared for the planning of campaigns in America indicates that an army of 30,000 men could expect to have the "number of attendants, women and children generally equal to the number of troops."²

The returns that we have examined represent only women and children who were being provided rations by the regiments. There may well have been others who were truly "following the camp" but were not affiliated with the army in any official capacity. We can do little more than speculate about the numbers of such women and children.

When a regiment left England for America, the embarkation orders that it was given included the specification of the number of women allowed to accompany it on the transports. The following is a typical example, from February of 1776:

The 42d Regiment of Highlanders consists of 1168 Men, Officers included, 80 Women & 16 Servants allowed..."³

This regiment consisted of two battalions, or twenty companies, and so the above orders specify four women for each company, or about

one for every thirteen men.

A related case was that of the 6th Regiment of Foot, which was on service in St. Vincent's in the Caribbean in early 1776 when ordered to America:

The Sixth Regiment will consist of 677 Men, Officers included; 60 Women & 12 Servants are to be allowed ...⁴

This regiment, having the more typical ten companies, was allowed six women to each company for this embarkation, or about one woman for every ten men.

The above examples show that there was no single, hard and fast proportion of women allowed to accompany a regiment on foreign serve. The ratio varied, and can only be determined for certain by finding the orders given to each specific regiment. More importantly, it is not necessarily true that the orders were followed. In at least one case, it is clear that they were not. The following extract is from a War Office letter dated March 22, 1776, and refers to a regiment leaving England for Canada:

By the Embarkation Return dated the 6th. instant, it appears that the 31st Regiment has embarked 92 Privates short of the Allowance... The regiment is now weaker than when it was ordered to be in readiness for foreign Service, tho' there has been time to recruit since that notice. One hundred & five Women have been allowed to embark, tho' only Sixty are permitted by His Majesty's Order. There are also 47 Children; The great number of Soldiers Wives & Children already in America are very inconvenient to the Regiments there, and more than the Number permitted by the Regulation must be a burthen on every Corps that goes thither.⁵

This regiment embarked more than the allowed number of women and children, and fewer soldiers than the prescribed number, changing the expected proportionality considerably.

Regiments serving in America relied on recruits from Europe to sustain their numbers. Each year, a regiment might receive fifty or so new men to make up for losses.⁶ Some wives were allowed to accompany the recruits. For example, when a parcel of German recruits embarked to join the 60th Regiment of Foot in early 1777, four soldiers' wives accompanied fifty-three non-commissioned officers and private men, for a ratio of about one woman for every twelve men.⁷

The above examples demonstrate that the number of women allowed to accompany a regiment when it embarked on foreign service was governed by specific orders, but that the prescribed ratio could vary significantly, and may not always have been enforced. We see from the data presented in Figures 1 and 2 that the number of women and children with the regiments generally exceeded that allowed in the

embarkation orders. In explaining the discrepancies (assuming that the orders were at least sometimes enforced), we must remember that the orders concern transportation, and do not address the number of women allowed to be with regiments after arrival at their destination.

In some cases, women secured their own passage to America. Evidence of this exists in a letter to General Washington in October of 1775, describing the situation of two women who were on board a captured British ship:

Watertown [Massachusetts] October 4th 1775

In the Brigantine Dolphin Lately carried into Gloucester, the two Women accompanying this were Passengers. Their names are Margaret Roberts & Mary Knap - They say they have Husbands belonging to the 59th Reg^t of Genl Gage's Army - And are desirous of seeing them - I am therefore directed by the Board, to recommend to your Exy to permit them and 2 Children, to pass your Lines, in order to their proceeding into Boston.⁸

Also, some soldiers certainly married during their time in service. An extreme case is described by a German officer in New York who encountered a sergeant of the 38th Regiment of Foot, the latter boasting about having married seventeen times since his arrival in America.⁹ Without further information, we cannot verify or refute the accuracy of the sergeant's claim, nor can we say whether such deviant behavior was common. Shortly, we will see advice given to officers to prevent this kind of occurrence.

Thomas Sullivan, a soldier of the 49th Regiment, wrote a history of the American war in which he recounted many of his personal experiences. Commenting on December 15, 1777, while the army occupied Philadelphia, he recorded:

This day I was married to Sarah Stoneman, then an Inhabitant of the City of Philadelphia. She was born in Buck's County, in the Province of Pennsylvania, and in the 20th Year of her age; she was bred to the Book-binding business. Her father (who was a man of great learning) was born in Wales; and her mother in the North of Ireland.¹⁰

When Philadelphia was evacuated the following June, Sullivan deserted. Although he had considered desertion earlier in the war, it is noteworthy that his successful attempt came at a time when he was faced with either separation from his spouse or she with separation from her family.

It is important to note that not all soldiers' wives chose to accompany their husbands to America. We have no documentation of how many soldiers were married but not accompanied by their wives. There is clear evidence, however, that some wives remained in England, never

attempting to journey to America. At least one letter exists from a private soldier, Thomas Plumb of the 22nd Regiment of Foot, referring to his wife and family in England. Captain William Dansey of the 33rd Regiment and Lieutenant Loftus Cliffe of the 46th each mention soldiers in their companies in letters home, offering news to be passed on to the soldiers' wives and families. Major Frederick MacKenzie of the 23rd Regiment, serving as a staff officer in Rhode Island, described the drowning suicide of a soldier of the 43rd Regiment, and noted that he had left a wife and child destitute in England.¹¹

In other cases, wives were in America, but not with the army:

In Committee of Safety, Cambridge, June 21, 1775. Resolved, that Joseph Adams Driver of the Stage from Newbury be and he is hereby Directed to transfer back to Newbury Eliz^h Rogers (who as she says) is the wife to Will^m Rogers First Sergeant in the 63 Regiment of Foot now in Boston and deliver her to the care of the Selectmen of s^d Newbury who are Hereby Directed to Provide for her and her child at the expense of the Colony.¹²

We have no additional information to explain Elizabeth Rogers' plight; it is unlikely that she was an American who married a soldier before the war began, since the 63rd had only that month arrived in America. Perhaps she traveled from England on a separate vessel from her husband, and landed somewhere other than Boston; perhaps she managed to leave the besieged city for an unknown reason.

Once a regiment arrived in America, it spent time either in quarters in towns, or in encampments. The encampments were either in or near adjacent towns, if the regiment was in garrison, or wherever the lay of the land was most suitable, if the regiment was on campaign. When a regiment went into an encampment or on campaign, orders were given regulating the number of women who could accompany it. The numbers given in orders for campaigning are usually lower than the total number of women belonging to a given regiment. We can assume, then, that only a portion of the women went into the field with the regiments, while the rest remained in the garrisons.

The number of women allowed on campaign was decided by the local army commander. When British troops occupied Charlestown Neck after the battle of Bunker Hill, for example, four women per company were allowed in the camps, an additional two women per regiment being ordered to the general hospital. Shortly thereafter, more specific orders were given that four women per company, but no children, were allowed in the camps. When the army evacuated Boston in March of 1776, six women per company were allowed to embark with each regiment; it is not clear how additional women were expected to make their way out of the city.¹³ When General John Burgoyne's ill-fated army left Canada in the summer of 1777, Burgoyne allowed only three women per company on the campaign.¹⁴

The numbers of women allowed to accompany a regiment on campaign are usually found in orderly books, and are sometimes mistaken for the total number of women that were accompanying a regiment. In fact, it is clear that regimental women and children continued to be provided for on the regimental accounts even if they did not accompany their regiments into the field. The Long Island victualing returns cited in Figure 1 provide two excellent examples in the cases of the 23rd and 33rd Regiments. Both regiments departed Long Island in late December 1779 as part of General Sir Henry Clinton's expedition to Charleston, South Carolina. On the return for December 12th through 19th, we find that the 23rd Regiment victualed 463 men, sixty-two women, and sixty-two children, while the 33rd victualed 475 men, sixty-two women, and twenty-eight children. At the time of the following return, December 20th through 26th, these regiments had embarked for Charleston, but the 23rd still victualed five women and eight children, and the 33rd victualed ten men, eight women, and no children. These numbers decrease in subsequent returns. In all likelihood, some of the women and children left Long Island for the city of New York. It is possible that some eventually found their own passage to Charleston, but this is unlikely to have occurred until after the city was taken by the British several months later.

The number of women on campaign, of course, may have varied from the orders, just as the number of women embarked varied from orders. Whether or not regimental women accompanied the army without orders probably depended on the specific nature of the campaign, and we have no data from which to attempt to deduce numbers beyond those specified in the actual orders. A wide assortment of people followed armies of the period, and information about them is fragmentary at best. We can only draw conclusions about the regimental women allowed in orders or given in returns.

The above information suggests a fairly orderly situation, and leads us to believe that, although there were no set numbers, a generally constant ratio of women and children to men could be expected. We find, however, that some trained military men were surprised at what they encountered. When Continental Army General Richard Montgomery wrote about capturing the 7th Regiment of Foot at St. John's in September 1775, he noted that, "their number of women and quantity of baggage is astonishing."¹⁵ It is possible that General Montgomery included in his observation other civilians, both men and women, who followed the army in addition to regimental women.

Married to a Soldier

We have referred to regimental women strictly as wives of soldiers. This is because there is no reason to believe that the women of a regiment were anything but wives of soldiers in that regiment. Unfortunately, it is just as difficult to prove that all of these women were married as it would be to prove that a significant number were

not. There is, however, considerable evidence to support the view that any woman who was considered a part of a regiment was in fact married to a man in that regiment.

Records of general courts martial conducted by the British Army in America contain many citations of women being defendants or witnesses, as well as numerous other references to women who were involved with the army in one way or another.¹⁶ Among these women are many who belonged to regiments. In all such cases examined to date, women who belonged to a regiment are clearly stated as being wives of soldiers of the regiment. More extensive research into this collection of court records may reveal otherwise, but all of the to-date evidence from this source supports the conclusion that regimental women were army wives.

No official returns are known to exist which list the women of a regiment by name, but there is some material which provides information at this level of detail.¹⁷ Returns of members of the 26th Regiment of Foot captured in 1775 at various locations along the Canadian border include women of the regiment. Therein, 247 men are listed by company (although each company is erroneously called a regiment in the returns), while sixty-six women are listed together at the end of the returns. Although the women are not specifically associated with their husbands within these returns, all but three of the sixty-six women's surnames match surnames of soldiers on the returns. This is not perfect evidence, of course, since the correlation of surnames does not necessarily prove that a given soldier and woman were married. The material is interesting nonetheless because it is the most complete list of regimental women known at this time.

This return of women prisoners of the 26th Regiment lists the number of children belonging to each of the women, information which is also rare and enlightening. Of the sixty-six women in the return, fifteen had no children, twelve had one child, nineteen had two, twelve had three, three had four, and five had five children, for a total of 123 offspring. It is interesting to compare these numbers with those presented in Figure 1. Perhaps the 26th Regiment had such a large proportion of women and children because it was on service in America for several years before the war began.

In the same collection of documents are returns of prisoners of a single company, the Colonel's Company of the 7th Regiment of Foot, captured at various places in Canada.¹⁸ The prisoners include five non-commissioned officers, twenty-three private men, ten women and eighteen children. Again, it is not clear whether this represents a complete company that was under strength, or just a part of the company. All of the women are referred to as "Mrs.", and all can be matched by surname to men of the company. Two of the women had four children each, two had three, one had two, and two had one child, the remaining three women being childless. It is very interesting to note that three of the women - the ones with no children - are

described as having married after their husbands were captured. The circumstances of these marriages are not known. It is possible that these women were Americans who met the captured soldiers, or that they were camp followers who married in order to remain with the army even as prisoners, or that they had already intended to marry their soldiers before their capture and did not let the exigencies of war change their plans.

Widows and Orphans

A woman's connection to a regiment was through marriage. When a married soldier died, his widow and their children, as well as orphans, were provided with passage back to the British Isles, as indicated by the following announcement:

With Respect to the Widows and Orphans of Non Commissioned Officers and private Men it is the King's Direction to the Commander in Chief, that Examination be made into their Settlement in Great Britain, or Ireland, in Order to their being passed to it; The passages and Victualling of such Women and Children as may obtain Certificates, from the Commanding Officers of Corps, will, if approved in the first Ships Returning to Great Britain or Ireland, and the pay Masters of the Corps to which the Deceased did belong, are hereby Authorized to give such women and Children a half Guinea Each, after they are Embarked to Carry them to their Respective abodes, which Exspence will be allowed in the next Contingent Bill of the Regiment.¹⁹

A return drawn up in August 1775 shows that fifty-four women and children of various regiments were sent home from Boston at that time.²⁰ Most of them belonged to regiments that had suffered heavy casualties at the battle of Bunker Hill, which strongly suggests that they were widows and their children.

It is also clear that, until they were able to make their way home, women who lost their husbands were cared for by the respective regiments. Thomas Simes, one of the popular military writers of the period, documented the following:

When any casualties happen in a company, the Paymaster-sergeant must take care to preserve the regimentals, that the succeeding recruit may be clothed in like manner with his brother soldier, provided the soldier had not worn them 1 year; if he had, his wife or child should have them.²¹

That this kind of consideration was given is illustrated by a general order issued on June 5, 1776, which ordered regimental quartermasters to draw shoes and stockings from army stores for widowed women and their children.²² In some cases, widows fared

better than the basic provision of subsistence and passage home. Regimental commanders could provide additional accommodation if they wished, as did the colonel of the 5th Regiment of Foot:

After the fatal attack on Bunker's Hill in America, Earl Percy gave to the widow of every soldier in his regiment who fell in the battle, an immediate benefaction of seven dollars; he paid their passage home, and ordered five guineas to be given to each of them on their landing in Britain.²³

Other efforts were made to provide for those who had lost their husbands and fathers. Captain John Peebles of the 42nd Regiment of Foot describes a playhouse that was opened in Philadelphia during the time the British army was in that city. One or two performances were given each week for the benefit of widows and orphans of soldiers. "The Performers are Gentl^m of the Army & Navy & some kept Mistresses. - the Gentle^m do their parts pretty well, but the Ladies are rather defficient."²⁴ A British officer wrote a book that was "published for the benefit of the children and widows of the valiant soldiers inhumanly and wantonly butchered when peacefully marching to and from Concord, April 19, 1775, by the rebels."²⁵

We also find evidence of the continued attachment of soldiers' widows to the army in an advertisement in the *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury* of July 11, 1781. Margaret Balandine, "a native of Edinbough, North Britain, and a widow of the 76th Regt.," had "run away from the service," and so became the subject of the same kind of advertising typically devoted to deserting soldiers.

Restrictions on Marriage

Since a soldier's marital status could have an effect on his ability to serve, and since his wife could become a part of the regiment, it follows that the soldier's commanders would have some say over whether or not he should be allowed to marry. While we do not find any evidence that a soldier could be forbidden to marry, we do find statements such as the following:

The Commanding Officers of companies should be desired to prevent, as much as possible, the inconveniencies and ill consequences produced, by having too many soldiers married; for their wives are in general so abandoned, as frequently occasion quarrels, drunkenness, diseases, and desertions; they involve their husbands in debt; and too oft are the ruin and destruction of a soldier: it is therefore recommended, that the Non-commissioned Officers avoid entering into such engagements, without consulting their Commanding Officer; and that they use their utmost endeavours with the private

men to prevent all such marriages as they think are detrimental to his Majesty's service.²⁶

This passage sheds light on some of the problems that could be introduced by imprudent marriages. Since these types of problems would ultimately affect the regiment, the officers had a responsibility to attempt to influence their soldiers' marital choices. Bennett Cuthbertson, author of a popular military textbook, devoted several paragraphs to the subject, which are here reproduced in their entirety:

CHAP. XXV

Of the Marriage of Non-commission-officers, and Soldiers, and the Methods for preventing improper ones as much as possible.

ART. I.

Officers being a sort of guardians to the Men in their respective Companies, should use every means that prudence can suggest, to prevent the distress and ruin which so often attends their contracting marriages with women, in every respect unfit for them.

II.

The principal method by which they can hope to guard against so great an evil, is to fix a standing order, for no Non-commission-officer, Drummer, or private man to marry without the consent of the Officer commanding the Company he belongs to, which he should not grant on any account, until he has first had a strict enquiry made into the morals of the Woman, for whom the Soldier proposes, and whether she is sufficiently known to be industrious, and able to earn her bread: if these circumstances appear favourable, it will be right to give him leave, as honest, laborious Women are rather useful in a Company.

III.

On the contrary, if he finds the woman's character infamous, and that she is notorious, for never having been accustomed to honest industry (which too often is the case of those on whom the Soldiers fix their affections) he should by no means give the least encouragement to a connection, which must, in a short time, inevitably destroy the ease and happiness of the Soldier, to whom he should represent these matters in the plainest terms, and recommend it strongly to him, not to think of persevering in a measure, which undoubtedly must hurt him in the esteem of his Officers, besides many other unsurmountable inconveniences: if after such an admonition he is

imprudent enough to marry, in justice he deserves a punishment for his folly and disobedience.

IV.

It will also be another expedient towards preventing improper marriages, if, upon the arrival of a Company in a Town, application was made to the Minister of the Parish, to request he would not publish any Soldier's intended marriage in his Church, without first receiving a certificate from the Officer commanding the Company of its being agreeable to him: this is a piece of civility, few clergymen it is presumed, could reasonably object to, as an Officer can surely have no other motive for anxiety in such a case, but merely the welfare of the Soldier, of which he must incontestably be allowed a cooler judge than either of the parties desiring to be married, being uninfluenced by passions of any sort.

V.

A Soldier marrying with proper consent should be indulged, as far as can be in the power of Officers to extend their favour, whilst his behaviour and that of his Wife deserves it; but he who, contrary to all advice and order, will engage in a dishonourable connection, exclusive of any punishment he may receive for such contempt and insolence, should as much as possible be discouraged, by obliging him not only to mess, but lie in the quarters of the Company he belongs to, at the same time that his wife, is prevented from partaking of any advantage either from his Pay or Quarters: this severity of course must soon expell her from the Regiment, and be the certain means, of making other Soldiers cautious how they attempt such acts of disobedience.²⁷

Employment

For a soldier to be allowed to marry, it was expected that his future wife would be someone who could "earn her bread."²⁸ This was sensible for the woman, who could not be expected to subsist on her husband's meager pay and the half-ration allotted by the crown, especially if children were expected. It was also sensible for the army, to avoid the possibility of the soldier being distracted from his duty either by indebtedness or by his spouse's deviant behavior, both of which often resulted from idleness.

Many employment options were open to a soldier's wife. Some of the more frequently documented occupations are presented below and discussed in terms of the information that we find in period military manuals, orderly books and other documents.

Women as Sutlers

An essential adjunct to the military of the 18th Century was the sutler. Dictionaries from the period define the term as follows:

Sutler. *n.f.* [*soeteler*, Dutch; *sudler*, German.] A man that sells provisions and liquor in a camp.²⁹

SUTLER, in *war*, one who follows the army, and furnishes provisions for the troops. They pitch their tents, or build their huts, in the rear of each regiment, and about head quarters.³⁰

The popular military writers of the day documented that women were allowed to employ themselves in this role. Unfortunately, we are not given the details of how this occupation was sustained, that is, how the sutlers were to procure their wares, or the booths or tents from which to sell them. What is clear is that they were an integral part of the encampment³¹ and of the military organization, and as such were subject to regulation:

No non-commissioned officer's or soldier's wife is to suttle or sell liquors without permission; and leave will be granted to such as are particularly recommended by commanding officers of companies, and who will pay due attention to all orders concerning them.

That no sutler offer to harbour any body in the line of the regiment without the Major's leave.

No more than one grand sutler and five petty ones will be allowed; and any sutler who refuses to change the men's money, or ask reward, shall be drummed out of the camp.³²

We see from this that it was considered wise to limit the number of sutlers (remember that the military texts usually contain recommendations, not regulations; regulations of this nature were usually established locally and could vary), and control their activities through the necessity of permission. Permits would only be granted to women who had shown that they would follow orders. Further, the sutler was required to operate a sound business, and not to "harbour" soldiers.

Orderly books document not only that these recommendations were put into use in America, but that abuses occurred as well. In Halifax during the summer of 1776, orders were given that women suttling in the barracks without leave were to be turned out of the barracks and their rations be stopped.³³ Successive orders issued in Boston during 1775 provide a clear picture of the army's repeated attempts to regulate the consumption of liquor, the soldiers' efforts to continue to drink, and the women's efforts to ply their merchandising trade:

Altho' Canteens have been allowed the several Regiments for the convenience of the soldiers, there are notwithstanding still complaints of soldiers wives keeping dram shops in the different parts of the town, where the men get intoxicated in a very extraordinary manner, and two soldiers have been killed (with the poisonous liquors they sell) in one night.

The Commanding officers will make enquirey amongst their Regiments, and give in a return of such women as hire rooms in the town to sell drams, where they live, and from whom they hire the rooms.³⁴

When Soldiers are found frequenting houses occupied by soldiers wives who sell liquor without license, from whence the greatest irregularities proceed, and the liquor sold in such houses proves fatal to many soldiers, the commanding officers will direct such persons to be carried before a Magistrate with proper witnesses who will order them to be fined, and proceeded against in other respects according to law.³⁵

All persons belonging to, or followers of the Army, are forbid to sell spiritous liquors, excepting at the Regimental Canteens, one and only one of them is to be allowed for each Regiment subject to the regulation of the Officer Commanding it; and as the appointment of the Sutler depends upon the Commanding Officer of the Corps, it is expected that henceforward they will be answerable for the sobriety of the Soldiers under their Command, all other sources for Spiritous liquors but that of the Canteen, being effectually stopped up ...³⁶

The Commanding Officers of Corps not to allow their Sutlers to sell liquors to Soldiers, or any other persons who do not belong to their respective Corps; Upon a conviction of a disobedience of this order, the liquors will be destroyed, and the delinquent not to have leave to sell any in future.

Women belonging to the Army convicted of selling Spiritous liquors, will be confined in the Provosts till there is an opportunity of sending them from hence.³⁷

The Commanding Officers of Corps to Suppress all Dram Shops in their Respective Districts that are not Licensed by Brig.-Gen. Robertson.³⁸

In order to promote sobriety and safety, the army established regimental canteens so that the dispensation of spirits could be controlled. To sell liquor more freely, soldiers' wives rented rooms and opened shops. When the shops were ordered closed, it appears that some women attempted to expand the canteens. In response, it was

then ordered that only one canteen was allowed for each regiment, and only one sutler allowed to operate it, although it was not specified whether the sutler could or could not employ others. Presumably, the regimental canteens were further regulated to guard against drinking to excess because the soldiers found that they could drink more by visiting the canteens of other regiments. To prevent this, it was required that each canteen serve only its own regiment, with dire consequences for the sutler who failed to obey. Finally, all dram shops were required to be licensed, regardless of who ran them. Also from the preceding orders, it would appear that a significant proportion of the women who sold liquor illegally procured the cheapest product available, or perhaps made it themselves, thus explaining the concern about the potentially dire effect on the health of soldiers.

The situation appears to have been similar in other garrisons. Soon after the British occupied Rhode Island, permission was given for women to keep shops as long as they did not sell liquor:

No Soldier's wife is upon any account to keep a shop, without permission in writing signed by the Commandant, or Deputy Commandant of the Town, for which they must be recommended by the Officer Commanding the Corps to which they belong. The General is concerned that no recommendation will be given to any women without a certainty that she will not make a bad use of it, by selling spiritous Liquors.³⁹

We can conclude, however, that the women shopkeepers did not strictly abide by this order since their privilege was revoked a year later:

Whereas the great Drunkenness that prevails among the Soldiers, proceeds from the Soldiers wives being allowed to keep little Shops out of the districts of their Regiments, the Commanding Officers will give directions that they are not permitted to live out of the quarters of the Regiment they belong to.⁴⁰

It would appear that the selling of liquor was again restricted to regimental canteens, as it had been in Boston. When private soldier Bartholomew Gilmore of the 22nd Regiment of Foot was tried by court martial in July 1779, it was mentioned during the testimony that he and several comrades from his regiment had been drinking in the canteen of the Regiment von Ditfurth, one of the German regiments in the Rhode Island garrison.⁴¹ In another incident, three soldiers of the 22nd, Murtoch Laughlan, Charles Neal and Robert Pearce, were tried by a court martial for stealing twelve sheep. One witness testified that after the sheep were stolen and divided up among six men involved, "one had been given, by joint consent to the Wife of Joseph Lovel, for some Rum."⁴² It is not stated in the court record whether Mrs. Lovel,

whose husband was a soldier in the regiment, was in fact a licensed sutler.

The problems caused by the sale of liquor are obvious, not only in terms of sobriety but also from soldiers plundering in order to pay their drinking debts. Similar problems could be caused by the suttling of any goods, as illustrated by the following extract:

There being great Reason to suppose, that Soldiers are encouraged to plunder Fields and Gardens, by Soldiers Wives, and other small Retailers, purchasing from the Vegetables so stolen ...⁴³

In response to this problem of stolen goods being bartered for liquor, sutlers were required to be able to account for the source of their wares, or they were liable to arrest by the provost.

In some cases, a female sutler enjoyed a privilege that was typically not allowed to the army's women, and often not even allowed to junior officers:

No follower of the Army can be allowed a Horse Except the Sutler of Each Regiment.⁴⁴

Whether a horse was allowed would depend, of course, on the particular circumstances of the army at the time, the allowance of horses for each regiment varying on different campaigns depending on the availability of both horses and forage.

None of the orders above pertains to armies on campaign. We cannot say whether these women sutlers did, or were allowed to, ply their trade outside of garrisons and regular encampments. An order given to the 1st Battalion of Light Infantry on campaign in New Jersey certainly suggests that sellers of liquor, at the very least, were not welcome:

any Woman detected in Bringing Rum into Camp is immediately to be sent to Provost.⁴⁵

Women as Nurses

Nurses were an integral part of the army medical system. As such, their duties were described in detail by military writers of the period:

An experienced, careful woman must be constantly employed to attend in the Regimental hospital, as a Nurse, whose wages should be paid, either by the Surgeon when he has an * allowance for it, or from the savings of the sick Men's Pay; when neither of these will answer, it must be a charge in the Non-effective account: an orderly Man, or more if necessary,

should be appointed daily from the Companies, in turn, to assist in the attendance of the sick.

* An allowance is made to the Surgeon of each Regiment, on the Irish establishment of thirteen shillings and three-pence three farthings *per* month for a Nurse.⁴⁶

The Serjeant attending the infirmary must keep an exact account of the pay of each ward; see it properly expended by the nurse, according to the Doctor's directions; give receipts for coals, candles, and sheeting, and close the account every half week ...

No sick soldier can have his wife employed as one of the nurses; and if any of the nurses husbands are taken ill, such nurse must be dismissed, or her pay discontinued till the recovery of her husband; but married men of good character, who live near the infirmary, and who have careful wives, if they are taken ill, may be allowed to remain in their lodgings, at the discretion of the Surgeon.⁴⁷

You [the regimental surgeon] are to appoint a head nurse (and the others to be under her) and the greatest attention must be paid that she is of exceeding good character, sober, healthy, and experienced in her duty, and in every other respect qualified for the employment.⁴⁸

You [the regimental surgeon's mate] are to visit the sick twice a day, and, if necessity demands it, oftener, to see that the head nurse and nurses of the infirmary keep their wards clean; that they behave themselves soberly and orderly, and give all necessary attention to their patients; that their food is good and properly dressed, their pots, kettles, &c. free from copperas, lest they endanger the health of the sick; you are to see that the food and medicines ordered consist of such only as were directed by the surgeon, or in his absence by you.

If any nurse should be found out of not having paid all due attendance to their patients and wards, and of keeping them as neat and clean as the nature of the distempers admit of; to give them their diet regularly; to be particularly careful to see them take their medicines as ordered them; to have their chamber-pots and close-stools early out of their wards, emptied and well washed before brought back again; or who shall connive at, or be present at any faults or irregularities, which any of their patients may have committed; or if they do not maintain good order and regularity throughout the infirmary; it is your duty to report the same to the surgeon, that they may be dealt with accordingly.⁴⁹

Notice the emphasis on character and sobriety, always requirements of a woman who was to hold a job with the army. The above extracts pertain to regimental hospitals, for which we would expect only one or a few nurses. Service in America, however, offered additional nursing opportunities in the general hospitals of the various garrisons. Orderly books are replete with entries such as the following:

A Discreet active Woman from each corps to be ordered to attend the sick of their respective Corps in the General hospital, where they are to be sent to morrow morning at six o'Clock, to prepare the rooms for the reception of the sick.⁵⁰

It is again recommended to send a good nurse from each Regiment with the men, such as are encumbered with children, are by no means proper for that duty.⁵¹

Twenty Women from the 1st., 3d. and 4th. Brigades, and 71st, to be sent to Horne's Hook tomorrow morning at 8 o'Clock, to be Employed in the Hospitals.⁵²

The 43d and 63d Regiments are immediately to send two Nurses each to the General Hospital.⁵³

Two Nurses from each British Regiment in the Country to be sent to the General Hospital immediately.⁵⁴

Such Corps as have not already sent a Woman as a Nurse to attend their Sick in Town are to order one there immediately.⁵⁵

Similar orders, with a bit more emphasis, were given after major battles. We find examples given after Bunker Hill:

The Regiments are to oblige two Women of each Corps to attend at the hospital immediately; the wounded being in the greatest want of assistance.⁵⁶

The General requests the officers Commanding Corps will order sober careful women, to be sent to the General hospital, to take care of their wounded men, who are greatly suffering for want of proper attendance.

Two more women from each Corps to be sent as soon as possible to the General hospital.⁵⁷

After Brandywine:

Four Women from each Brigade British to be sent to the General Hospital to attend the Wounded; Surgeons of the Hospital will dispose of them.⁵⁸

After Guilford Courthouse:

All the Women of the army Except one a Comp^y to be Immediately sent after the Wounded men of the Army.⁵⁹

From this array of orders, we find that the number of nurses called for varied with the need. As we would expect, on campaign and soon after major engagements, more nurses were required. Notice that each regiment or brigade was required to provide the same number of nurses. Either qualifications were not important, or an ample number of qualified women were available. We have found no information, other than that published in popular military guides, to indicate how the nurses were selected from among the wives of the regiment. It is evident, however, that the women did not have a choice about this service:

Any women who may be wanted as nurses at the General hospital, or to do any other business for the service of the Garrison, and shall refuse to do it, will immediately be struck of[f] the provision list.⁶⁰

Complaint having been made that Women decline serving in the Hospital Ships, The Commander in Chief determined not to allow any Woman to remain with the Army, that refuses to take a duty of this necessary Office.⁶¹

Army nurses could earn a significant amount of money. Orders pertaining to the pay of nurses document amounts that were actually earned by army wives in America, regardless of the recommendations of military texts. One of the most detailed orders includes a pay schedule, in pounds (£), shillings (s) and pence (d), for hospital personnel at Castine, Maine in 1779:

The servants in the hospital to be paid at the following rates:

| | £ | s. | d. |
|--------------------|---|----|-----------------|
| The steward | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| The nurses | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Washing women | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Person for shaving | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Cook | 0 | 1 | 0 ⁶² |

Orders issued in Boston in 1775 also describe a wage of six pence per day, but clarify that this is in addition to provisions:

The Nurses employ'd at the Hosp^l in Charlestⁿ to be on a Similar footing with those at the General Hospital in Boston to receive 6^d St^g p^r day & an Entire ration of Provisions.⁶³

Whereas the soldiers' pay of eight pence sterling per day included the cost of his food, the nurses earned six pence sterling in addition to a full ration (as opposed to the half-ration normally allowed to army

wives.) At this pay rate, a soldier's wife working as a nurse could earn a respectable laborer's wage. Additional orders given on the same day as those above clarify an obvious question about the rations due to the nurses:

The Corps to be Carefull to strike such Women off their provision Lists as are employ'd in the General Hosptiall's, as they receive provisions in the Hosptiall's and are not to be supplied in a Double Capacity.⁶⁴

Surviving receipts document that some nurses did earn more than the six pence per day specified in the above citations. The Royal Fencible American Regiment paid a nurse named Ann Madden at a rate of eight and one-half pence per day for the first half of 1778, amounting to £6.8.11 for 182 days' work. She was also paid £2.15.0 for soap and washing for the hospital during this period, while another woman, Mary Connolly, was paid £1.10.0 for "washing the Hospital bedding" during the same half-year.⁶⁵

A receipt for payment of Simon and Catherine Nye of the New Jersey Volunteers shows them having been paid £9.2.6 for work as nurses for the first half of 1783, which represents one shilling per day. This, however, appears to be payment for two people, resulting in the much more typical individual wage of eight pence per day.⁶⁶ Simon Nye was a soldier in the New Jersey Volunteers, and Catherine probably was his wife.

Another receipt records that an unnamed British nurse working on a hospital ship in 1781 was paid £2.6.0 for forty-six days of work in the summer of 1781; she was also paid £3.1.1 for "old sheets and other materials for bandages."⁶⁷ This equates to one shilling per day for the nursing wages. We do not know whether the payment for bandage material was strictly reimbursement or if this nurse made a profit by procuring materials and selling them to the hospital.

The various orders cited above do not provide a clear picture of how many women from a given regiment were serving as nurses at any particular time. There are references to hospitals, general hospitals, hospital ships, and "sick in town." Additional research is required to determine how many of these facilities were operating simultaneously and whether regiments provided one or two nurses in aggregate or to each hospital location. All that can be concluded to date is that a few women from a regiment -- perhaps between one and six -- could be expected to be working as nurses at any given time. A few orderly book entries indicate that this duty was rotated, suggesting that the majority of the women in a regiment may have had an opportunity to earn money in this manner:

The 3rd and 4th Brigades will send one Carefull woman to Attend the General Hospital at Hell gate, the woman will be paid and Relieved weekly, any one that Quits her duty will be immediately sent Home⁶⁸

Two Women to be sent to the Regimental Hospital and Relieved every second day.⁶⁹

On the other hand,

It is again recommended to send a good nurse from each Regiment with the men, such as are encumbered with children, are by no means proper for that duty.⁷⁰

Overall, the available information demonstrates that British soldiers' wives who were employed as nurses could earn a "respectable" wage. And, although such employment was not assuredly steady, there were many opportunities for it during the course of the war, with some women maintaining continuing employment in this capacity for extended periods.

Women as Laundresses

The image of the washerwoman camp follower is somewhat of a cliché, but evidence suggests that this may have been the most common occupation of regimental women who left the garrison or cantonment to accompany the army during an active campaign. An order given shortly before the war began suggests that, in some cases, washing may have been the only reason that women were allowed to be with the army in the field:

Six women, wives of men belonging to the detachment may be sent there [Marshfield, Massachusetts] at the same time the necessaries go, who will be employed in washing for the men, that they may be kept clean.⁷¹

Most orders pertaining to laundresses address restrictions on where they could work in order to insure cleanliness and sanitation.

The Commanding Officer having observed some women washing in the Barracks, which must be prejudicial both to the Rooms & the mens health therefore it is his positive order that the women find some other place to do that Dirty work in, the Commanding Officer being Determined to Drum out of the Corps such as are Guilty of so shameful a practice.⁷²

Commanding Officers of Corps are not to suffer their Women, on any account, to Wash in the Streams near the Watering Places.⁷³

The Commanding Officers to be answerable that proper People are sent on Shore at Dartmouth to Superintend the Women and others that may be left there to Wash, or for any other Purpose, who are to be accountable for all Depredations

that may be Committed on the houses or Estates of the Inhabitants.⁷⁴

An entry from an orderly book kept in England in the summer of 1779 indicates that the "washerwomen" of each company were allowed one wood ration.⁷⁵ One military text sheds some further light on the logistics of the job, clarifies that this was a paid occupation, and mentions one of the improprieties that could occur if finances were poorly managed:

As it often happens, that the women who wash for the Soldiers are not punctually paid, by which means, they are unable to provide that quantity of soap the linen must require, and thereby sooner rub it out, the Pay-Serjeants should be directed to stop for washing from those, who are so idle to neglect a punctual Payment, and every week clear off the Women, who, by this method, can have no excuse for not doing justice to the linen.⁷⁶

Another text mentions allowances made for laundresses in camps, further clarifying that the function was an established part of army logistics:

Straw is to be allowed at the rate of one truss to each paliass for two men, and to be changed every thirty-two days. Two trusses per company are to be allowed for Batmen, or servants not soldiers; and three trusses per company or troop, for the three washerwomen, to be changed every fifteen days, they not having paliasses.⁷⁷

An account book for one company of a British battalion shows twelve soldiers having debits for washing by four women. All four washerwomen appear to have been married to men in the company since their surnames match. There were over eighty men in this particular company, but only twelve with laundry debts recorded. Perhaps, as described above, these men were the ones who could not be trusted to make a "punctual Payment."⁷⁸

There are a number of mentions of laundry and laundresses in court martial records. In one trial, Sarah Serjeant of the 1st Regiment of Guards testified "She got up at Gun firing, & felt a pair of Breeches by her Washing Tub." Other wording of the trial testimony suggests that the washtub was in the camp, but this is not certain, nor is it apparent that the tub was in use at the time. In many trials, soldiers testified that they were doing their own washing, but others refer to washerwomen. Perhaps soldiers did their own laundry some of the time or washed only certain garments. One defendant's testimony does nothing to clarify the issue, and raises other questions. A soldier charged with desertion testified that ...

he went to the Waterside to wash his Trouzers ... and on Serjeant Foulter finding fault with the Dirtiness of his Shirt, at Evening Roll calling, he got a clean one from his Washing Woman...

A second soldier at the same trial gave similar testimony, saying ...

... his Shirt being dirty, he went to his Washing Woman's and got a Clean one; which he put on and put the dirty one into his Pocket with an intention to carry it to the Washing Woman ...

This makes it sound as though a "washing woman" kept a stock of shirts, such that a soldier would bring in a dirty shirt and exchange it for a clean one, although there is not enough evidence to be sure of this.⁷⁹

In April 1773, a fire destroyed the barracks of the British fort at Crown Point, New York. A court of inquiry was held to determine the cause, and part of the testimony focused on the activities of Jane Ross, wife of a soldier in the 26th Regiment of Foot. An officer of the 26th testified that "it was the common talk" that the fire was caused by a soldier's wife boiling soap, a chimney fire having started in the fireplace that Mrs. Ross had used to make soap the day before. Mrs. Ross testified that it was common practice to make soap in the barracks rooms, that she was not aware of any orders prohibiting this practice, and that the chimney had last been swept some five weeks prior to the fire.⁸⁰

Women as Seamstresses

Intuition would lead us to expect women to have been employed in the making and altering of clothing for the men of their regiments. Most new clothing had to be fitted after it was received by a unit. In addition, British regiments in America often received cloth with which to make up campaign clothing such as leggings, overalls or trowsers, and linen breeches. When the amount of alterations and repairs required for a regiment on service is considered, it is clear that there was much sewing work to be done. But tailoring was typically a male profession, and Britain's extensive textile industry provided many skilled tailors who had joined the army as soldiers. So predictable was the presence in the ranks of skilled tailors that extensive information about their duties and the payments that they were to receive for their work can be found in orderly books and published military writings. As a result, there are only a few known cases of women finding employment in producing or altering clothing for their regiments. One such example is described by military writer Thomas Simes:

No Serjeant employed to buy necessaries for the men shall receive any advantage thereby, except that of employing his wife to make up the linen; and even that shall be absolutely at

the choice of the men for whom it is bought, who shall be present at the buying, and see the money paid ...⁸¹

The "necessaries" consisted of shirts, stockings and shoes, all items that wore out frequently and were procured locally by companies when they were required. The company captain was responsible for the procurement of these articles, but might delegate a sergeant to actually locate and purchase them.⁸² Apparently, a privilege associated with this responsibility was an opportunity for the sergeant's wife to realize some extra income.

Women could be pressed into service to assist the regimental tailors on occasions when clothing had to be produced quickly. When the Brigade of Guards was in Charleston, South Carolina in December 1780, preparing to march into the country on campaign, the following brigade orders were issued:

... the 1st Battⁿ to be provid^d with Brown Trowsers, in order that the Brigade may be Uniform in this as well as the other part of their dress ... The Taylors & Women of the whole Brigade to be Employ'd in Compleating the 1st Battⁿ in Trowsers; a Return of whom will be given in for the Com^{ds} of the 1st Battⁿ immediately.⁸³

Another example, which relates to both the nursing and seamstress functions, is recorded in the journal of Thompson Forster, surgeon to the general hospital, while sailing with General Clinton's first expedition to Charleston, South Carolina in 1776. In March, while still on board ship, Thompson wrote that ...

we employed all our women - soldiers wives intended for Nurses to the Hospital - in sewing four thousand Bandages which we two Surgeons made during that week.⁸⁴

In general, that it was not typical for soldiers' wives to be employed making, altering or repairing clothing, but there were occasional opportunities for this type of work.

Other Employment

There were other opportunities offered by the army for wives of soldiers to earn an income, albeit on a temporary basis. Two examples are given in the following orders:

If the soldiers wives chuse to go a Hay making Mr Fairbank will employ them.⁸⁵

As there are many women in the different Corps, who understand making of hand turf, a list of their names to be

given to the Barrack Mr General immediately, who will employ them, and pay them for their work. Any woman who is capable of doing this work, and shall refuse, will be struck off the provision list.⁸⁶

Here we have another case of required work being mandatory for those qualified, such women being threatened with loss of ration privileges for noncompliance. "Hand turf" was used for fuel.

Concurrently, though, there is record of a work assignment from which women were specifically excluded. The following prohibition is found within orders regarding fighting fires in Boston early in the war:

Women belonging to the Army will not be allowed to be present at any fire that may happen.⁸⁷

It is not stated whether this ban was due to the hazardous nature of fire fighting or as a precaution against plundering.

Occupations and Numbers

We have seen that there were many opportunities for "sober, industrious women" to earn a living with the army. This information improves our overall image of the situation of the soldier's wife since we know that her husband's base pay was not enough to subsist her, much less any children, even if a reasonable amount of food was provided by the army. What we do not have are precise data on exactly how many women of a regiment were employed at any given time. The information presented above, however, offers enough benchmarks to make some general assumptions.

We have seen that it was typical for a regiment to have about eighty women, or eight per company, when on service in America, although actual numbers varied widely. When on campaign, a number of women were allowed to follow each company; we will use four as a typical figure, remembering that this number also varied widely. Our scant evidence suggests that the primary employment of these women on campaign was as laundresses. If we assume that these women also worked as laundresses while in garrison, then we have about one-half of a regiment's women in such employment.

We know that some women worked as sutlers, and although it appears that only one was allowed to be so employed per regiment, others were sometimes permitted to keep shops in the vicinity of an encampment. We have also seen opportunities for women to be nurses, and to occasionally engage in required sewing work for the troops. All of these occupations might account for another five or ten women in a typical regiment.

This leaves more than a third of the women of a regiment with no steady employment from the army. Temporary opportunities occurred now and then, and certainly some wives were not "discreet active women," but we still must suppose that some wives sought employment outside of the army. Continuing research may provide evidence of this or at least uncover details about the proportion of regimental women who were actively employed.

Habitation in the Garrison

Most of the British army's time in America was spent in garrison. Usually, the regiments spent winters in barracks or quarters, and summers in long-term encampments within or adjacent to towns. During these times it was not necessary for the wives to "follow" their regiments, since the regiments were not going anywhere. This is significant because it made it possible for women to find long-term housing in the towns. When a regiment was in garrison, there was no need for the wives to stay in the encampments, even if it was allowed. For this reason, we must consider habitation not in terms of barracks and encampments, but in terms of garrisons and campaigns.

The writings of Bennett Cuthbertson provide some general insight on the consideration given to married soldiers and their wives when a regiment was in garrison:

Those Soldiers who are married to industrious sober women, that can earn near as much as their husband's pay, and can be depended on for eating well, may be excused from messing with their Companies; but if on the contrary, the wives are idle, and trust to them for support, it must be insisted on, that such men be appointed to a mess, to prevent their being starved, and to oblige the women to some scheme of industry, by which alone it can be possible for their husbands to be allowed to co-habit with them: Officers should frequently enquire into the married Soldiers' manner of living, that they may be enabled to prevent, in time, any ill consequences which may arise, from the indulgence of permitting them to be with their wives. [88](#)

Private Men and Drummers, who are married to sober, industrious women, may be indulged with liberty to lodge with them, provided the lodgings are not too distant from the Quarters of the Company: the Non-commission-officers should inform themselves of such Men's habitations, that they may inspect their manner of living, and know where to find them readily, when necessary; and as it often happens, that several people on whom Soldiers are quartered, do not wish to have the trouble of them in their houses, and therefore desire leave to lodge them out, it will be right, in that case, to exchange to those Billets, any of the married Men who are

deserving of indulgence, that they may receive the advantage of a lodging for their wives, without expence; when an Officer has none of these to serve, he should insist on having an apartment hired, fit for the reception of the Soldiers, and that will answer conveniently for messing, otherwise, he will do extremely wrong, in consenting to their being removed from the original Billet.⁸⁹

In America, army women occupied all manner of habitations, depending upon availability at each location. In May of 1775, when the army in Boston prepared to move from barracks into encampments, General Gage issued the following orders concerning the use of the vacated barracks:

Two Regiments barracks will be assigned for the accommodation of the women and children of the army, and a place will also be assigned as an hospital for convalescents; all the other barracks are to be cleared immediately, and quitted by the troops.⁹⁰

After the barracks were provided, however, it was necessary to order the following:

Notwithstanding the care that has been taken, to provide the women, with proper places to stay in, some of them have broke into houses and buildings that were infected with the small pox, by which there is danger of its spreading through the town ... the General therefore desires the Officers Commanding corps, will have the strictest enquirey immediately made, to discover the women concerned, whom he is determind to order on board ship, and send away.⁹¹

Some wives made their own housing arrangements. In September 1775, the 23rd Regiment of Foot was encamped on Charlestown neck; its women had been assigned to one of the barracks mentioned above. Two soldiers of the regiment, John Cox and John Woods, along with two soldiers of the 63rd Regiment, were tried by a general court martial for breaking into a store and stealing porter and oil. During the trial, it was stated that the accused men left their booty in "the house where Woods's Wife lives."⁹²

When the army garrisoned New York City and the surrounding areas, where it remained for most of the war, huts were built to accommodate regiments during the winter months. In some instances, married soldiers were allowed a hut for themselves and their family:

No Non Commis'd Offr or private will be allow'd to have a Hut to themselves, unless such as are married Men, & not then without being particularly recommended by the Captain to the Commanding Offr of the Regiment for such an Indulgence.⁹³

Early in 1780, the 37th Regiment of Foot moved from Long Island into New York City. Soon after, the major commanding the regiment received this correspondence from Brigadier General Pattison:

A Complaint having been made to Major Gen^l Pattison that a Number of Women belonging to the 37th Regiment have taken possession of a House near the Bowery Lane belonging to M^r Auchmuty and known by the name of the Cascina, and lately belonging to M^r Burton, I am directed by the General to desire that you will give Orders that they be immediately removed.⁹⁴

When a regiment left its huts or barracks and moved to an encampment, and especially if it went on campaign, accommodations had to be found for the women who were not able to accompany it. One option was to allow them some of their own camp equipment:

Four Women Pr Compy of Companys of 50 & 8 Women Pr Compy of Companys of 100 are Allowed to Embark with their Respective Regiments and to be Victualed According to the Former Regulations the Remainder of the Women and Children of their Corps will be sent to NYork where Aproportion of provisions & Qrs or Old Camp Equipage will be provided them⁹⁵

Sometimes, particularly good fortune befell a woman. During the winter of 1782-83, an officer of the 38th Regiment built for himself a two-room hut with a brick fireplace in each room. In June, when the regiment encamped, he "... found myself under Canvass, having left my hut in charge of a Soldier's Wife."⁹⁶

Habitation on Campaign

When they were on campaign, we naturally assume that the women of the regiment simply shared tenting with their husbands and whomever else was assigned to that tent. An August 1776 return of tent assignments for Lieutenant-Colonel Sir John Wrottesley's Company of the 1st Regiment of Foot Guards includes assignments for five wives among the ninety-nine sergeants, corporals, drummers and private soldiers in the company. There are eighteen tents specified, most having six people assigned to each, while a few sheltered only five. Five of the tents included one woman among the six people assigned (excepting one which had only five people in total.) Clearly, the women were considered among the total tentage requirements of the company.⁹⁷ A German military text was very specific about the woman's place in a tent, directing that " If a woman in the tent she sleeps behind the pole in the apex." This would put her at the extreme back of the tent, in the area also used to store equipment and food.⁹⁸ There are cases, however, in which we know that such accommodations were not

possible; sometimes wives were specifically prohibited from living in the encampment. An example is found in orders issued to the 17th Regiment of Foot while on campaign around Manhattan in October of 1776, which read:

No Women are ever to be allowed to lay in the Men's Tents.⁹⁹

In cases like this, we must assume that the wives simply stayed in nearby New York City. Some regiments provided special tentage for the women, as indicated by this description of the benevolence of the colonel of the 5th Regiment of Foot, Hugh, Earl Percy:

He had a large tent provided for every company at his own expense, to accommodate the women; and he made it a rule to receive no other servants into his family but soldiers or their wives.¹⁰⁰

When regiments were disembarked from transports, it was often several days before the women were allowed to come ashore, after the situation of the army was firmly established. This was the case in Rhode Island in December 1776:

No women to be allowed to go on shore till further orders: they, and the baggage will be brought on shore when proper...¹⁰¹

When the army landed on Staten Island in the summer of 1776, the orders were somewhat less strict; women were allowed on shore during the day, but were required to return to the transports at night.¹⁰²

Life on Campaign

Armies on campaign could, of course, find themselves in combat. The order of march was established to anticipate this, arranging the soldiers so that they could be readily deployed to the best advantage in battle. Precautions were taken to protect all of the assets of the army by keeping them together on the march. The fact that these "assets" included both the women and the baggage does not mean that the women were considered as being baggage. Rather, common sense dictated that everything of value be kept together - baggage, stores, horses, wagons, and all noncombatants including wounded and invalid soldiers, wives, and children. Orders given by General Cornwallis on his campaign in the Carolinas illustrate this:

December 21, 1780, Camp, Thirty Mile Halt: The Women of the Army Will March at the Head of the Baggage.¹⁰³

Similar orders were given on various campaigns. There were minor variations, such as having the women "march on the Flanks of the

Baggage of Their Respective Corps",¹⁰⁴ It was also made clear that they were not to cause any interference:

The Regulated Number of women Only to be with the Army and they are on no account to be with or near the ranks of the Regt on the march¹⁰⁵

These orders, however, were difficult to enforce. Subsequent orders given by Cornwallis make it clear that the marching orders were not being followed, despite increasingly dire consequences:

December 22, 1780, Camp Monks Corner: the Women of the Army more Strictly to Observe the Orders of yesterday.

December 27, 1780: The Ord^r respecting Bat Men Woman, Serv^{ts} & other followers of the Army is repeated, any person who may be again found out of the Line of March, will be punished on the Spot, in the most Exemplary Manner.¹⁰⁶

The reason for keeping such a tight rein on the followers of the army was, of course, to prevent plundering. No amount of orders successfully stopped this constant problem. Much has been written on this topic. Since we are concerned with wives of soldiers, and not with followers of the army in general, we would like to be able to ascertain how much of the plundering was committed by army wives. Unfortunately, there is no reliably accurate way to determine this. A few bits of information persuade us that soldiers' wives were as opportunistic as anyone in taking advantage of chances to plunder. Orders given to the Brigade of Guards during Cornwallis' southern campaign illustrate this well:

It is B^r Gen^l O'Hara's orders that the Officers Commanding Companies cause an immediate Inspection of the Articles of Cloathing at present in the possession of the women in their Companies & an exact Account taken thereof by the Pay Serj^{ts} after which their Necessaries are to be regularly examin'd at proper opportunities; and every Article found in Addition thereto, Burnt at the Head of the Company; Except such as have been fairly purchas'd on Application to the Commanding Officers & regularly added to their former List by the Serj^{ts} as above. The Off^{rs} are likewise order'd to make these Examinations at such times & in such a manner as to prevent these Women (Suppos'd to be the Source of the most infamous Plunder^g) from evading the purport of this order.¹⁰⁷

Even these systematic measures did not seem to keep order, for only a week later additional orders were issued:

Women to attend all Roll Calls in the Rear of the Companies (Except such as are in the Service of Officers) any, and every one found absent, to be immed^y Whipp'd & Drumm'd out of

the Brigade...

NB: The Women to attend all Punishments.[108](#)

Ten days after that, however, the requirement for women to attend punishments was dispensed with.[109](#)

We also have the following mid-war quotation:

As to the plundering, there is nothing so common as to see the soldiers wives, and other women, who follow the army, carrying each three or four silk gowns, fine linen, etc. etc. which have been stolen by the soldiers from different houses in their march ...[110](#)

If a woman was arrested for plundering, she was subject to the same system of justice as a man, namely, trial by court martial. From May 1774 through May 1780, seven women associated with the army were tried by general court martial for plundering, theft or receiving goods known to have been stolen. Of these, two are known to have been wives of soldiers. It is not known how the remainder were affiliated with the army, the court records referring to them as "followers of the army" or, in one case, "retainer to the camp."[111](#) We have court transcripts only for general courts martial; other women were assuredly tried by brigade and regimental courts for similar crimes.

The proceedings of one such general court martial held at Freehold, New Jersey on June 27, 1778 (the day before the Battle of Monmouth) gives an idea of the disorder that could occur on a march. Mary Colethrate and Elizabeth Clarke, "followers of the army," were tried for plundering.[112](#) The officer who arrested them described the circumstances of the incident:

... a farmer came up to him and begg'd for Protection, as some Women were plundering & destroying his house, that upon going into the house, he found everything in the greatest Confusion, the feather Beds being cut open and the feathers strewed about, and many other things destroyed; that there were about twenty or thirty Women in the house, & upon asking the Man of the house, who had been the most active, he pointed out the Prisoner Colethrate, & the Woman of the house pointed out the Prisoner Clarke and another Woman ... the Prisoner Clarke was in the house and Mary Colethrate at the Door, and both Loaded with something in their Aprons, which he did not examine, but by the feel of one of them it appeared to contain Flour; he himself saw the Prisoner Clarke very busy, in turning over some things which were in a Closet in the house, & the Woman of the house informed him that she had treated her very ill, having beat and abused her and that the Woman who has been since released, stripped all her Children and had Carried off one Load of Plunder and returned for another.

Mary Colethrate's defence gives some details of a woman's life on the march:

... she had rode all day on the Baggage Waggon and had just then got off to Light her Pipe, which she was smoking at the Door, when Major Antill went in, that she never was in the house and what she had in her Apron was her husband's Biscuit, which she shewed to the Woman of the house, and who acknowledged before the Officer of the Artillery Guard that it did not belong to her & that she had not been in the House.

A soldier who took Elizabeth Clarke to the provost attested "upon her apron being examined, there was found an unfinished pair of shoes, & some other Articles that he does not remember." The court found Colethrate innocent, but sentenced Clarke "to receive one hundred Lashes on her bare back with Cats of nine tails, and then to be drummed out of the Army, in the most public manner possible."

Women in Battle

Following the army in any capacity always entailed the possibility of being exposed to battle. Although the women were protected along with the other "assets" of the army, they were nevertheless at some degree of risk whenever there was combat. This is illustrated by an event in Rhode Island during the siege in 1778. On August 19, a soldier of the 54th Regiment's light infantry company was struck by a cannon ball, by which he ...

... lost his leg ... as he was making shoes in his tent with his wife & children about him.¹¹³

The extent of the danger is exemplified by an incident in New Jersey on June 22, 1777 in a skirmish that began "where the Quibbletown Road meets and turns into the Amboy Road":

They killed and wounded about 20 Soldiers and a Woman a Grenadiers Wife.¹¹⁴

It bears noting that orders were issued six days before this incident specifying "no woman or child do stay in camp nor follow the Army."¹¹⁵

An order issued by General Cornwallis gives the impression that women were expected to actually fight in certain situations, but we do not have sufficient evidence to know whether that is really the intent of the order:

When the Brigade Marches the Women, Sick, & Weakly Men, will March in the Rear of the Second Battⁿ & in Case the

Brigade Shoud be ordered forward – and they cant keep up – they will form a Guard to the Baggage, Packs, or what else May be left in their Charge.[116](#)

When Burgoyne’s beleaguered army was encamped near Saratoga, the Baroness von Riedesel was with a group of officers’ wives in a basement caring for wounded men. She recounted the efforts of a soldier’s wife who was undaunted by constant sniping fire:

Because we were badly in need of water, we finally found the wife of one of the soldiers who was brave enough to go to the river to fetch some. This was a thing nobody wanted to risk doing, because the enemy shot every man in the head who went near the river. However, they did not hurt the woman out of respect for her sex, as they told us themselves afterwards.[117](#)

After the surrender on October 17th, ...

The good woman who had fetched water for us at the risk of her life now got her reward. Everyone threw a handful of money into her apron, and she received altogether more than twenty guineas. In moments like this the heart seems to overflow with gratitude.[118](#)

The topic of combat begs the question of whether women ever disguised themselves as men and joined the British army. This subject has much allure and has drawn much attention, but documented cases throughout the entirety of the 18th Century are few. One book devoted to the subject suggests that there are only sixteen known instances throughout more than two centuries, and provides only three examples of women soldiers and four of women sailors for the entire 18th Century.[119](#) **We know of no cases of women serving as soldiers in British regiments in the American Revolution. Even at the time, however, the possibility was considered intriguing. If we can believe the newspapers of the time (which published many rumors and tall tales, and should be used very cautiously without additional evidence), a woman attempted to enlist in the 71st Regiment of Foot when it was preparing to come to America:**

Newcastle, December 30, 1775.

Wednesday last, a good-looking girl, about twenty-seven years old, dressed in mens cloaths, applied to Serjeant Miller, the recruiting officer here for Frazer's Highland regiment, and desired to be enlisted in that body, which the serjeant agreed to, and gave her a shilling. Her sex, however, was soon after discovered. She said the cause of this act was from a quarrel with her father, whose cloaths she had absconded in: and notwithstanding her sex, she would have no objection to the army, as she thought the exercise not superior to her abilities. She was, however, discharged.[120](#)

Similarly, Rivington's New York Loyal Gazette of September 25, 1779 carried an account of a woman trying to enlist in the army in order to follow an officer she loved. Again, however, we cannot fully document any cases of women serving as British regulars in the American War. British recruiting procedures included a physical examination and other practices that, if followed, would make it impossible for a woman to disguise her gender.¹²¹

Although they did not fight as soldiers, a few British army women certainly did fight. A soldier's wife with Burgoyne's captured army bested an American soldier outside of Boston:

The soldier's wives are allowed to pass the centinels, but the other day a most ludicrous circumstance took place, by the obstinacy of an old man upon guard. He would not permit a woman, who was a true campaigner to go beyond him, great altercation ensued, in which the lady displayed much of the Billingsgate oratory, when the old man was so irritated as to present his firelock; the woman immediately ran up, snatched it from him, knocked him down, and striding over the prostrate hero, in the exultation of triumph, profusely besprinkled him, not with Olympian dew, but that which is esteemed as emollient to the complexion - and 'faith, something more natural - nor did she quit her post, till a file of sturdy ragamuffins marched valiantly to his relief, dispossessed the Amazon, and enabled the knight of the grisly caxon to look fierce, and reshoulder his musquet.¹²²

One of the most remarkable exploits of an army woman occurred during the action at Trois Rivieres, Canada on June 8, 1776. A British officer described the event:

I must not omit telling your Lordship of one Instance of Courage that was shown at Trois Rivieres by a fair Country woman of ours, that deserves to be recorded. The wife of Middleton Soldier in the 47th Reg^t. Quite alone took & disarmed six Provincial Soldiers, & was the means of two more being taken also. The Circumstances are thus, which [she] related to Gen^l. Burgoyne in my Presence. She said she went to a House about a quarter of a Mile from the River near the Wood, for some Milk to carry to her Husband the 8th of June during the Engagem^t. That on opening the Door she saw six Rebel Soldiers armed, that this daunted her a little, however she took Courage, & rated them saying, "Ay'nt ye ashamed of yourselves ye villains to be fighting agst. Your King & Countrymen" that they looked sheepish, therefore she said, you are all Prisoners give me your Arms, that two more remained at the Outside of the back Door, which she was more afraid of than all the rest, that however standing between them, & their Arms, she called to some Sailors at the

River Side, to whom she delivered the Prisoners, & who presently took the other two.

This is exactly true, & she is, contrary to what you wou'd imagine her, a very modest, decent well looking Woman.[123](#)

Hazards

We have seen that women who accompanied the army into the field might find themselves exposed to the dangers of battle. Life with the army, of course, entailed many other hazards. A soldier of the 33rd Regiment of Foot recounted a unique event demonstrating that, while women might eagerly accompany the troops to join in "foraging" from the inhabitants, they were not immune from being targeted by pranksters:

In this excursion, among other plunder, we took a store of molasses, the hogsheads being rolled out and their heads knocked in, a soldier's wife went to dip her camp-kettle in a hogshead of molasses and while she was stooping in order to fill her kettle, a soldier slipped behind her and threw her into the hogshead: when she was hauled out, a bystander threw a parcel of feathers on her, which adhering to the molasses, made her appear frightful enough. This little circumstance afforded us a good deal of amusement.[124](#)

This incident is indeed amusing but most other dangers of army life were thoroughly serious. In the garrison at Charleston, South Carolina,

...

At midday a fire broke out in an English soldiers' barracks, which burned down. A woman in childbed died in the blaze.[125](#)

Following the army could be hazardous aboard ship as well:

A very remarkable event happened that Night, which was: A Woman's shift being burnt upon her body, lying in a Birth on board a Transport, and she a Sleep, by a Flash of Lightning, with out the least damage to her skin or Flesh. Also a Man's Coat and Shirt was burnt likewise on his Back, without his knowing of it till next morning: And the Arms of three Companies of men were jappanned on Board the same ship by the same Flash.[126](#)

Perhaps more disturbing than even the hazards of physical harm was that risk uniquely faced by those soldiers' wives who chose to follow the army, the possibility of dismissal from the regiment. Few orders could more starkly illustrate the potentially subjective basis upon which an army marriage could be disrupted than the following:

Any Soldiers Wife who is a disgrace to the Regiment she belongs to, for bad behaviour, and having incurred the displeasure of the Commanding Officer of the Regiment; her name to be given in that she may be sent to England in the Fleet. [127](#)

Thus, even disgraced women were usually not abandoned, but rather sent home. There were, however, occasions when even more drastic measures were taken. Preparations for the evacuation of Boston presented unusual opportunities for plundering, so that while the entirety of the army was being readied for embarkation from North America, the following extraordinary threat was leveled:

Any Woman belonging to ye Army, that may be found in Town after one o'Clock will be imediately taken up & sent to ye Provost & will be left there [128](#)

Domestic Distress

With the exception of being sent back to England, the types of hazards described above were generally typical of everyday life during the period, and not particular to the army. The same is true of the domestic strife that an army wife might encounter. Although we cannot accurately judge whether they were more or less frequent at the time, many of the social problems with which we are familiar today were common problems of 18th Century society as well. An advertisement in a New York newspaper in 1774 read:

Hugh McCullum, soldier in His Majesty's Royal Regiment of Welsh Fusileers, will not pay debts contracted in the future by his wife Ann. [129](#)

We know nothing of the circumstances of this incident, but it is clear enough that relations were less than cordial between this soldier and his wife.

Two tragic incidents are recorded in the journals of British officers:

Carrigan of Ct Duffs compy [of the 40th Regiment of Foot] was stabb'd by Northington- being got upon his Wife – died in 1/2 hour

NB Northington after stabbing Carrigan stabb'd his wife & then stabb'd himself & attempted to throw himself again on his bayonet. (he wounded himself & his wife slightly) [130](#)

A Soldier of the 43rd Regt shot himself last night in the rear of the Camp. The discovery of a Connection he had with a married woman of the same Regiment, appears to have been the cause of this rash action. [131](#)

At least two British soldiers were tried by court martial for murdering their wives.¹³² Although we cannot document their frequency of occurrence, it is clear that the social ills of the army reflected those experienced by society in general, and which continue today.

Notes on Clothing and Behavior

To develop a more accurate image of British army wives, some information on their clothing and their behavior is of benefit. Descriptive information of this sort is rare, but a few passages exist that provide some glimpses of these individuals.

Two inventories of army women's clothing are known to exist. Ann Miller was the wife of a soldier of the 7th Regiment of Foot captured at La Prairie in Canada in 1775. Accompanying her husband, she made a claim to the Continental Congress for clothing that she had lost during their captivity. Her claim, valued in pounds, shillings and pence, is dated February 13, 1776 at Lancaster, Pennsylvania and reads as follows:

List of Cloaths taken from Ann Miller of the Roy. Fuzileers at La Parara in Canada

| | £ | s. | d. |
|-------------------------|---|----|------------------|
| 2 Gounds Value | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 Black Cloke | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 Silk Hatt | 0 | 8 | 0 |
| 1 Peticote | 0 | 7 | 6 |
| 1 Pair of Stays | 0 | 12 | 0 |
| 3 Shifts | 0 | 12 | 0 |
| Childrens Cloaths | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 Bead Tick & 2 Pillows | 0 | 11 | 0 ¹³³ |

An inventory of the belongings of Mrs. McQueen, wife of a soldier in the 84th Royal Highland Emigrants, was made when she died:

2 blankets
4 paticoats
4 shifts
3 short gown
1 pair stockings
1 pair shoes
1 apron
1 waistcoat
2 shirts¹³⁴

As we might expect, army women often possessed some items of soldiers' clothing. In fact, because a soldier owned his clothing, paid

for by stoppages from his wages, his widow was entitled to his regimental clothing or the value thereof:

When any casualties happen in a company, the Paymaster-serjeant must take care to preserve the regimentals, that the succeeding recruit may be clothed in like manner with his brother soldier, provided the soldier had not worn them 1 year; if he had, his wife or child should have them.¹³⁵

Account ledgers for the 22nd Regiment of Foot prove that this recommendation was followed; four widows were given payments "in lieu of clothing" between 1775 and 1783.¹³⁶ That an army widow might "inherit" regimental clothing does not mean, of course, that a woman would necessarily wear such garments, selling them always being a potential source of ready cash. There are, however, a few descriptions of women wearing cast-off uniform coats or other army clothing. A contemporary writer used this analogy:

It looks like one of those drunken red-faced old women, who follow a camp, and half of whose clothes are scoured regimentals.¹³⁷

James Boswell wrote of an encounter with a former servant:

But whom did I see in that blackguard lane but my pretended servant-maid, Nanny Smith, in a drummer's coat by way of a morning jacket!¹³⁸

In some cases, the army issued clothing and equipment directly to army women and children. During the summer of 1776, some women and children received stockings and shoes.¹³⁹ In 1778, damaged army blankets were distributed to dependents, as well as to refugees.¹⁴⁰ The 84th Regiment is known to have supplied the following items to families in Quebec in 1777:

suits of clothing complete
hatts
mocasins
legging cloth
linen yards
Canadian shoes
stockings¹⁴¹

The "suits of clothing complete" were likely worn-out regimentals, including coats, waistcoats and breeches or trousers. They may have been the old provincial green uniforms issued before the regiment adopted highland dress, this being implied by the inclusion of "hatts", a term usually applied to military cocked hats.

Two American "rebel" diary excerpts provide glimpses of the behavior of some British army wives, but those described cannot be interpreted

as particularly representative. While certainly colorful, the women that these diarists encountered were almost assuredly atypical of the "sober, industrious women" that were considered ideal spouses for His Majesty's soldiers. This distortion is particularly the case for the first diarist, Peter Edes, who was imprisoned in Boston on July 2, 1775. The most obvious departure from the norm of the typical army wife, of course, is Edes' focus upon what was likely a typical 18th Century military prison:

From this day to the 17th, a complicated scene of oaths, curses, debauchery, and the most horrid blasphemy, were committed by the provost martial, his deputy and soldiers who were our guard, soldier prisoners, and sundry soldier women confined for theft, &c. We had some of the vilest women for our neighbors ever known, some placed over our heads, and some in rooms each side of us. They acted such scenes as was shocking to nature, and they used language horrible to hear, as if it came from the very suburbs of hell.¹⁴²

Captain Alexander Graydon of the 3rd Pennsylvania Battalion was among the American soldiers captured when Fort Washington capitulated in November 1776. He and other prisoners were marched to New York City, of which experience he wrote:

On the road as we approached the city, we were beset by a parcel of soldiers trulls and others, who came out to meet us. It was obvious, that in the calculation of this assemblage of female loyalty, the war was at an end; and that the whole of the rebel army, Washington and all, were safe in durance. Which is Washington? Which is Washington? proceeded from half a dozen mouths at once; and the guard was obliged to exert itself to keep them off. Some of them assailed us with vollies of Billingsgate; and colonel Maxwell [of the 27th Regiment of Foot], who rode along side of us ... had enough to do to silence one of them, calling out repeatedly: "Away with that woman! Take her away! Knock her down, the bitch! Knock her down!"¹⁴³

While onlookers' responses to prisoners of war being paraded through a town had likely remained basically unchanged since Roman times, and with the reality of such a scene being heavily biased as reported by a POW, Graydon's profiling, like that of Edes, is skewed by its context. Given the intense propaganda engaged in by both sides, rebellious Americans' accounts of British army personnel and camp followers are predictably more apt to be hostile than realistic. In seeking to more validly discern the central element of a typical British army wife's behavior, the quality that seems to be most frequently cited within the army itself is service. Beyond the expected household duties and child-rearing responsibilities, as well as the wage-earning occupations noted previously, a military text's mention of another minor role at times fulfilled by the wives quite well illustrates that

theme of ongoing service to their husbands and to the communal well-being of the army itself:

When Soldiers are on Guard, their attendance must never be dispensed with, even for the smallest time, except on some very extraordinary occasion, as they are always to be in readiness to turn out with alertness on the shortest warning; the Rolls should therefore be frequently called, to ensure this point; and that they may never have the least pretence for straggling from their Guards, the dinners of the batchelors should be carried to them by their comrades, and that of the married men, by their wives.¹⁴⁴

We also find that company officers were, at least in some cases, significantly assisted by the women of their companies. Ann Harris of the 22nd Regiment testified on behalf of an officer of her regiment, Lieutenant Charles Dalrymple, who was accused of stealing liquor from the owner of the house in which he lodged. Mrs. Harris went so far as to advise Dalrymple's accuser against bringing the matter to a court martial since it would "hereby much hurt Mr. Dalrymple."¹⁴⁵ **When a detachment of the 53rd Regiment was captured near Lake George, while serving on the supply line to Burgoyne's army, some of Ensign Thomas Hughes' baggage was brought to him by women of the regiment.**¹⁴⁶ **Quite remarkably, Lieutenant Loftus Cliffe of the 46th Regiment recorded ...**

... if it were not for a woman of my company a Corporals Wife who has supplied me with money between 30 and 40 Guineas I should have been badly off.¹⁴⁷

Some authors have used this passage to suggest that the woman must have been a harlot in order to have such a sum of money, but we have seen that "sober, industrious women" had ample opportunities to "earn their bread" in legitimate employment.

Notes on Children

As noted earlier, the number of children recorded within the strength returns of a regiment was usually at least equal to the number of women. Although we know far less about the children, their presence was clearly an accepted part of military life. Several of the noted military writers of the day devoted text to them. Thomas Simes noted:

No soldiers must carry coals, or any other thing, on their heads, when they have their regimental cloths or hat on; nor must they carry any children about the barrack-yard or street.¹⁴⁸

Army children were exposed to many of the same hazards as were faced by the women when in encampments, garrisons, and on board ship. Some were exposed to domestic distress as well.¹⁴⁹ Concurrently, however, they were also able to enjoy the pleasures of childhood. Archaeological excavations of British hut sites in the New York City area recovered a number of playthings: "buzzers" made from lead discs with serrated edges and holes for string through their centers; miniature pewter plates, cups, and platters; a doll; a tiny thimble; and a miniature pewter broom.¹⁵⁰

And, the army made an effort to educate the children:

A Serjeant, or Corporal, whose sobriety, honesty, and good conduct, can be depended upon, and who is capable to teach writing, reading, and arithmetic, should be employed to act in the capacity of school-master, by whom soldiers and their children may be carefully instructed: a room or tent should be appointed for that use; and it would be highly commendable if the Chaplain, or his deputy, would pay some attention to the conduct of the school.¹⁵¹

We cannot say whether such army schools were maintained consistently during the war in America. An account kept by Rhode Island schoolmaster Joseph Rhodes includes an entry for "Schooling Soldiers Children" in 1777, during the British occupation.¹⁵² This bit of information shows us not only that army children were sent to school, but also that the schools were not always maintained by the army itself. In another case, a well-educated British soldier "was employed by a serjeant and his wife to teach their son writing and arithmetic."¹⁵³

Conclusions

This article is an overview intended to stimulate further research into the lives of the wives of the common British soldiers who served in America. As such, it is in no way comprehensive. It represents the assimilation of disparate notes accumulated during research on other aspects of the British Army. Every topic covered in this article invites further, dedicated research. We can, nonetheless, draw some general conclusions.

Women were not considered a burden; instead they were an integral part of the workings of a regiment. Although some commanders-in-chief complained about the numbers of women with the army, none ever prohibited their presence.

General orders usually specified that three to six women per company were allowed to join a regiment on campaign, but victualing returns show that higher numbers were commonly maintained. Eight women

per company of fifty men was a typical ratio, although numbers varied widely. In addition, a similar number of children were victualed.

Widows were not abandoned or forced to remarry; instead, they were provided with some financial or material compensation, and given passage home.

Many, if not most, women were gainfully employed. In fact, employment was necessary for subsistence, and often was a condition of being allowed to accompany the army.

Army wives sometimes had their own lodgings when regiments remained in one location for long periods. Some remained in garrison towns when their regiments went on campaign. Those who did follow the army on campaign were faced with the similar dangers and hardships as were experienced by the soldiers.

Acknowledgements

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Steven R. Gilbert, 3rd New York Regiment, for many of the period diaries and journals cited throughout the article.

David Gray, 23rd Regiment of Foot, for some of the material from British courts martial.

John Rees, 2nd New Jersey Regiment, for writing the article, "...the multitude of women..." (*Brigade Dispatch* Vol. 23 No. 4, and Vol. 24 No. 1 & 2), which provided the incentive for this article.

Gilbert Riddle, 2nd New Jersey Regiment, for many of the orderly books cited herein.

Kim Stacy, 84th Regiment of Foot, for orderly book information from the 84th Regiment of Foot.

Notes

1. A few details are given in Frey, Sylvia R., *The British Soldier in America*, Austin, TX, 1981; this work is extremely well referenced, but gives only minor treatment to the subject of soldiers' wives.

The most extensive single work that we have found is Kopperman, Paul E., "The British High Command and Soldiers' Wives in America, 1755 - 1783," *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, V60 (1982), p. 14-34. A reasonable but somewhat dated treatment of the subject is given in Blumenthal, Walter Hart. *Women Camp Followers of the American Revolution*, Philadelphia, George S. MacManus Co., 1952.

2. "Estimate of Horses, Waggon, and Wheel Carriages, Artillery, &c. necessary for an Army of 30,000 men to take the field and act with vigor." Almon, J. *The Remembrancer or Impartial Repository of Public Events*, London, 1775-1783 (hereafter cited as *Almon's Remembrancer*), Vol. 2 p. 310.

3. Letter, Germain to the Admiralty, February 21, 1776. W. B. Clark and W. J. Morgan, eds., *Naval Documents of the American Revolution*, Vol. 4. Washington, D.C., 1964, p. 295 (hereafter cited as *Naval Documents*).

4. Letter, George Jackson to Vice Admiral Shuldham, dated Boston, March 16, 1776, transcribed in *Naval Documents*, Vol. 4, p. 977.

5. W. O. 4/96, Public Record Office, London (hereafter cited as PRO), p. 364-365.

6. See for example, pay lists of the 22nd Regiment of Foot, which present the dates when recruits joined the regiment. It bears noting that when recruits joined the regiment, they were typically distributed evenly among the eight battalion companies, and experienced men were transferred among companies so that all eight were at about the same strength and experience level. W. O. 12/3872, PRO.

7. Letter, William Knox to Philip Stephens, March 26, 1777. *Naval Documents*, Vol. 8.

8. Letter, Massachusetts Council to George Washington. Massachusetts Archives, Vol. 164 p. 122, reprinted in *Naval Documents*, Vol. 2.

9. "Journal of Lieutenant John Charles Philip von Krafft, of the Regiment von Bose, 1776 - 1784." *Collections of the New-York Historical Society*, Vol. 15, 1882, p. 139.

10. *Journal of Thomas Sullivan*, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 973.3.SW5. Entry for December 15, 1777, Philadelphia.

11. Letter, Private Thomas Plumb to his brother, February 2, 1777. HCA 30,272, PRO. Letters of William Dansey, Delaware Historical Society, Dover, DE; Letters of Loftus Cliffe, William L. Clements Library,

Ann Arbor, MI. MacKenzie, Frederick: *The Diary of Frederick MacKenzie*, Harvard University Press, 1930. Entry for July 5, 1777, Rhode Island.

12. Massachusetts Archives, V. 138 p. 166, reprinted in *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, V. 46 (1910).

13. Benjamin Franklin Stevens, ed., *General Sir William Howe's Orderly Book at Charleston, Boston and Halifax*, London, 1890. Orders for June 20 and 22, 1775 and May 2, 1776.

14. *Journal of Captain G. Pausch, Chief of the Hanau Artillery During the Burgoyne Campaign*, William L. Stone, trans., Albany, 1886.

15. *Almon's Remembrancer*, Vol. 1, p. 122.

16. Judge Advocate Papers, W. O. 71/80 - 97, PRO.

17. John B. Linn and William H. Egle, ed., *Pennsylvania Archives*, 2nd Series, Vol. 1, p. 411 - 419.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 419 - 420.

19. Orderly Book, 17th Regiment of Foot, Lt. Col. Charles Mawhood, October 11 - December 28, 1776. New-York Historical Society manuscripts. Entry for October 28, 1776. The entry for this date also shows that widows and orphans of officers received additional allowances:

If a wound Should be received in Action by any Commissioned Officer, which shall Occasion the Loss of an Eye or Limb, or the Total loss of the use of the Limb, he shall receive a gratuity in money of One Years full pay and be further allowed, such Expences Relating to his Care, if not performed at the King's Charge, as shall be Certified to be Reasonable by the Surgeon General of the Army, and Inspector General of Regimental Infirmarys, upon Examination of the Vouchers which he shall ley before them.

If the wounds Received shall not amount to the loss of a Limb, the Charge of Care only shall be allowed Certified as above.

When any Commissioned officer shall lose an Eye or limb as aforesaid, the Commanding officer of the Corps in which he serves shall delliver to him a Certificate Specifying the Time when, and the place where, the said Accident happened, a Duplicate of which Certificate shall likewise be Transmitted with the next Monthly Returns.

When any Commission Officer shall be Killed in Action, his Widow and Orphan Children if he has any shall be allowed as follows

To the Widow a full Years pay according to her Husband's Regimental Commission.

To Each Child under Age and unmarried, One third of what is allowed to the Widow.

Posthumous Children to be Included.

All persons dying of their wounds, within Six Months after the Battle, shall be deemed Slain in Action.

The Commanding Officer of the Corps in which the Slain officer Served, shall on Demand, give a Certificate of his being Killed in Action to his Surviving Wife and Orphans Respectively, Spicifying the time when, and the place where, the said Accident happened a Duplicate of which Certificate, Shall likewise be Transmitted with the next Monthly Return.

20. "Passes Granted to Women and Children, sent on Board the ship Charming Nancy, Boston, 19th August 1775." Thomas Gage Papers, Vol. 134 (Reel 65), William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

21. Simes, Thomas. *A Military Guide for Young Officers*, London, 1781, p. 201 (hereafter cited as *Simes*.)

22. Orderly book, marine garrison at Halifax, June - August, 1776, New York Public Library mss.

23. *The Percy Anecdotes*, Vol. 2. New York, 1832, p. 53. It bears noting that thirteen women and children of the 5th Foot were listed on the document cited in Note 22, more than any other single regiment.

24. Journal of Captain John Peebles 42d Foot, undated entry made in January 1778. Cunningham of Thortoun Papers, Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh.

25. Donkin, Robert. *Military Collections and Remarks*, New York, 1777.

26. Simes, op. cit., p. 164.

27. Cuthbertson, Bennet. *A System for the Compleat Interior Management and Œconomy of a Battalion of Infantry*, Dublin, 1768, p. 156 - 158, (hereafter cited as *Cuthbertson*.)

28. For a discussion of the restrictions on soldiers' marriage, refer to part 1 of this article, *Brigade Dispatch*, Vol. XXIV No. 3.

29. Johnson, Samuel. *A Dictionary of the English Language*, London, W. Strachan, 1755.

30. Smith, George. *An Universal Military Dictionary*, London, 1779; reprinted by Museum Restoration Service, Ottawa, 1969.

31. **Lochéé, Lewis. *An Essay on Castrametation*, London, T. Cadell, 1778.**
32. **Simes, Thomas. *The Regulator*, London, 1780. This extract is from the section titled, "Of the Colonel, and his Duties", p. 156.**
33. **Orderly book, marine garrison at Halifax, op. cit. Undated entry.**
34. **General Orders, America, op. cit. Mss. p. 68, undated entry, probably late January 1775.**
35. **Ibid. Mss. p. 69, undated entry, probably early February 1775.**
36. **Ibid. Entry for June 22, 1775.**
37. **Ibid. Entry for October 14, 1775.**
38. **"General Sir William Howe's Orders." *Collections of the New-York Historical Society*, 1883. Entry for January 23, 1776.**
39. **General Orders, Rhode Island, W.O. 36/2, PRO. Entry for December 23, 1776.**
40. **Ibid, orders for December 11, 1777.**
41. **Judge Advocate Papers, W.O. 71/90 p. 26-34. Notice that there must have been no order about serving soldiers from other regiments at this time.**
42. **Judge Advocate Papers, W.O. 71/85 p. 159-166, Dec. 22, 1777. They were found guilty and sentenced to be lashed. General William Howe, the commander in chief, ordered the sentences to be carried out, but also signified in public orders that he disapproved of the punishment since the crime warranted capital punishment. MacKenzie, op. cit., entry for February 23, 1778.**
43. ***Newport Gazette*, August 26, 1779.**
44. **Orderly Book of Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Mawhood, op. cit. Entry for November 22, 1776.**
45. **Orderly Book of the 1st Battalion Light Infantry (British), August 4 - October 13, 1778. Presidential Papers of George Washington, Series 6B Vol. 6, Library of Congress. Mss. p. 83.**
46. **Cuthbertson, op. cit., p. 42-43 (section titled, "Of the Treatment of the Sick, and management of a Regimental-Hospital.") The reference to the Irish Establishment is a reflection of the location of the first publication of Cuthbertson's work.**
47. **Simes, *A Military Guide for Young Officers*, op. cit., p. 212.**
48. **Simes, *The Regulator*, op. cit., p. 80 (section titled, "Of the Surgeon, and his Duties".)**

49. **Ibid., p. 70 (section titled, "Of the Surgeon's Mate, and his Duties").**
50. **General Orders, America, op. cit. Entry for May 25, 1775.**
51. **Ibid., entry for June 2, 1775.**
52. **"General Sir William Howe's Orders," op. cit. Entry dated New York Island, October 10, 1776.**
53. **General Orders, Rhode Island, op. cit. Entry for January 27, 1777.**
54. **Ibid. Entry for February 10, 1777.**
55. **"General Sir William Howe's Orders," op. cit. Entry dated Camp at Germantown, September 28, 1777.**
56. **General Orders, America, op. cit. Entry for June 18, 1775.**
57. **Ibid. Entry for June 27, 1775.**
58. **"General Sir William Howe's Orders," op. cit. Entry dated Brandywine, September 12, 1777.**
59. **Orderly Book, Brigade of Guards, August 28, 1780 - March 20, 1781. Published as "A British Orderly Book, 1780-1781," A. R. Newsome, ed., *The North Carolina Historical Review*. Entry for March 17, 1781.**
60. **General Orders, America, op. cit. Entry dated Boston, May 25, 1775.**
61. **"General Sir William Howe's Orders," 1776, op. cit. Entry for October 15, 1776.**
62. **"Orderly book of William Lawrence, at Castine 1779-80," *Bangor Historical Magazine*, Vol. V (1889-1890), p. 1124. This British post was the object of the abortive Penobscot expedition in 1779.**
63. **Howe's Orderly Book, op. cit., entry for 5 July 1775.**
64. **Ibid.**
65. **"A Contingent Accot. for the Hospital of the Royal Fencible American Regiment, between 25th December 1777 & 24th June 1778", PRO, Treasury, Class 1, Volume 642, folio 83; this document is reproduced [online](#).**
66. **Headquarters Papers, PRO 30/55/7809, PRO.**
67. **Headquarters Papers, PRO 30/27/215, PRO.**
68. **Orderly Book, British Regiment of Foot Guards 14 August 1776 - 28 January 1777, New-York Historical Society manuscripts; Brigade**

orders for 20 September 1776.

69. Ibid, regimental orders for 13 December 1776.

70. General Orders, America, op. cit. Entry for 2 June 1775.

71. Ibid. Entry for January 27, 1775.

72. Orderly book, marine garrison at Halifax, op. cit. Undated entry.

73. "General Sir William Howe's Orders," op. cit. Entry dated Staten Island, July 2, 1777.

74. Ibid. Entry for April 13, 1776.

75. Order books, W. O. 34/242-244, Amherst Papers, PRO. Entry dated London, June 5, 1779.

76. Cuthbertson, op. cit., p.21-22 (Section titled, "Of the Stoppages necessary to be made in a Regiment.")

77. Williamson, John. *A Treatise on Military Finance*, 1782, London.

78. "Lt. Colo. Sir John Wrottesleys Acctent. Book 1778." National Archives Microfilm Publication M922, "Orders, Returns, Morning Reports, and Accounts of British Troops, 1776-1781."

79. Court martial proceedings in Judge Adjutant Generals papers, W. O. 71/84 p. 317-332, W. O. 71/87 p. 1-9, W. O. 71/88 p. 144-166, W. O. 71/91 p. 55-62, PRO.

80. Colonial Office Papers, C.O. 5/5, p. 311, PRO.

81. Simes, *Military Guide for Young Officers*, op. cit., p. 197.

82. An example of this is given by an advertisement placed in the *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury* on September 19, 1778; Sergeant Blackgrove of the 45th Regiment of Foot offered a reward for the return of 50 pair of white worsted stockings lost between New York City and Kingsbridge, where the regiment was encamped. Presumably, Blackgrove had purchased the stockings in the city for his company.

83. Orderly Book, Brigade of Guards, op. cit. Entry for December 15, 1780.

84. "Diary of Thompson Forster, Staff Surgeon to his Majesty's Detached Hospital in North America. October 19, 1775 - October 23, 1777. Transcribed in 1938 from the original in the possession of Robert Ethelstone Thompson Forster." Typescript provided by Gilbert Riddle.

85. Orderly book, marine garrison at Halifax, op. cit. Undated entry.

- 86. General Orders, America, op. cit. Entry dated Boston, September 17, 1775.**
- 87. Ibid. Entry for November 18, 1775.**
- 88. Cuthbertson, op. cit., p. 28-29 (section titled, "Of messing, and the Advantages attending to it...")**
- 89. Ibid., p. 35-36 (section titled, "Of the necessity of regularity in quartering Soldiers on a Town, or in a Barracks...")**
- 90. General Orders, America, op. cit. Entry for May 31, 1775.**
- 91. Ibid. Entry for June 6, 1775.**
- 92. Judge Advocate Papers, WO71/81, PRO, p.405-430.**
- 93. Orderly Book, King's American Regiment, William L. Clements Library. Entry for November 12, 1777.**
- 94. Letter, General Pattison to Major Cousseau, March 10, 1780, *Collections of the New York Historical Society, 1875.***
- 95. Orderly book, 40th Regiment of Foot, Washington Papers. Entry for June 3, 1777.**
- 96. Journal of Richard Augustus Wyvill, 38th Regiment, Peter Force Collection, Library of Congress, entry for June 7, 1783.**
- 97. Newbold-Irvine Papers, Box 5, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.**
- 98. "Was ist jedem Officier, waehrend eines Feldzugs zu wissen noethig, ("What every officer should know when on a Campaign"), Carlsruhe, 1788, p. 27.**
- 99. Orderly Book of Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Mawhood, op. cit. Entry for October 12, 1776.**
- 100. *The Percy Anecdotes*, op. cit.**
- 101. General Orders, Rhode Island, op. cit. Entry for December 7, 1776.**
- 102. General Sir William Howe's orders, June 30 - October 5, 1776, Morristown National Historical Park. Entry for July 10, 1776.**
- 103. Orderly Book, Brigade of Guards, op. cit.**
- 104. Orderly Book, Second Battalion of British Grenadiers, 1778, George Washington Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. Series 6B, Captured British Orderly Book, Volume 5. Microfilm Reel 118, P37437.**

105. Orderly book, 40th Regiment of Foot, op. cit., entry for June 11, 1777.

106. Orderly Book, Brigade of Guards, op. cit.

107. Ibid. Entry for February 28, 1781.

108. Ibid. Entry for March 2, 1781.

109. Ibid. Entry for March 12, 1781.

110. *Almon's Rememberancer*, Vol. 5, p. 154.

111. Index of WO 71/80-94, Judge Advocate Papers, PRO. Work in progress by the author.

112. Judge Advocate Papers, W. O. 71/86, PRO, p. 151 - 158.

113. "Journal of Rev. Joshua Wingate Weeks," *Historical Collections of the Essex Institute*, Vol. LII No. 1 (1916), entry for August 21, 1778. Another diarist says that the soldier was in a hut, and erroneously refers to his regiment as the 45th. MacKenzie, op. cit., entry for August 19, 1778.

114. "Journal of the Operations of the American Army under General Sir William Howe from the Evacuation of Boston to the end of the Campaign of 1776" (this document also includes a journal of operations in New Jersey, June 11 - July 31, 1777). British Library, Egerton Manuscripts.

115. Orderly book, 40th Regiment of Foot, op. cit. Entry for June 16, 1777.

116. Orderly Book, Brigade of Guards, op. cit. Entry for January 30, 1781.

117. Brown, Marvin L., Jr. *Baroness von Riedesel and the American Revolution: Journal and Correspondence of a Tour of Duty, 1776-1783*. The University of North Carolina Press, 1965. p. 60.

118. Ibid.

119. Ewing, Elizabeth. *Women in Uniform through the Centuries*. London.

120. *The Middlesex Journal and Evening Advertiser*.

121. It was typical to subject recruits to a physical which included examination for rupture. Cuthbertson, op. cit., p. 56 (section titled, "Of Recruiting, and what is to be particularly attended to on that Duty"). A recruit in the 33rd Regiment of Foot, John Robert Shaw, wrote that on his first night as a recruit, "I was put to bed a naked man, which I thought strange, but this is a common custom with soldiers, in order to save their linen..." More likely this was a measure to prevent a new

recruit from deserting during the night. Shaw, John Robert. *A Narrative of the Life & Travels of John Robert Shaw, the Well-digger, "written by himself,"* Lexington, KY, 1807; reprinted by George Fowler, Louisville, KY, 1930. (Hereafter cited as *Shaw*.)

122. Anburey, Thomas. *Travels through the Interior Parts of America, in a Series of Letters.* London, 1789; Reprinted by Arno Press, Inc., 1969. Vol. II, p. 81-82, letter dated Cambridge, December 9, 1777. "BILLINGSGATE LANGUAGE. Foul language, or abuse." Grose, Francis, *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, London, 1796.

123. "Letters to Lord Polwarth from Sir Francis-Carr Clerke, Aide-de-Camp to General John Burgoyne," *New York History*, 79, #4 (October 1998), p. 413.

124. *Shaw*, op. cit. Shaw writes that this incident occurred in 1779, when the regiment was on an expedition "up the East river... some distance above New Bedford..." He appears to be referring to an expedition to Bedford, New York; Shaw had not yet arrived in America at the time of the British expedition to New Bedford, Massachusetts.

125. "Valentin Asteroth's Diary of the American War of Independence, 1776," Bruce E. Burgoyne, trans., *Diary of A Hessian Chaplain and The Chaplain's Assistant*, The Johannes Schwalm Historical Association, 1990. Entry for August 22, 1781, Charleston, SC.

126. Journal of Thomas Sullivan, op. cit. This incident occurred on a transport when the army was bound for Head of Elk, August 17th, 1777.

127. General Orders, Rhode Island, op. cit. Entry for December 7, 1777.

128. "Lieut. and Adj. Waller's Orderly Book," Connecticut Historical Society. Entry for March 11, 1776.

129. "Rivington's New York Newspaper: Excerpts from a Loyalist Press, 1773 - 1783." *Collections of the New-York Historical Society*, Vol. 84, New York, 1973.

130. Bamford, William. "Bamford's Diary: The Revolutionary Diary of a British Officer," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, V. 27, December, 1932. Entry for July 15, 1776, Staten Island.

131. MacKenzie, op. cit. Entry for July 6, 1777, Rhode Island.

132. William Whitlow of the 44th Regiment of Foot, WO 71/90 pp 397-405; John Lindon of the 22nd Regiment of Foot, WO 12/93 p. 196.

133. The Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789, National Archives Microfilm Publications M247 (Washington, DC, 1958), reel 71 p. 421.

134. "An account of all things belonging to Mrs. McQueen." MacLaine Papers, GD 174/585/1, Scottish Records Office.

135. Simes, *The Military Guide for Young Officers*, op. cit., p.201.

136. Cox & Co. Ledgers, 22nd Regiment, Lloyds Bank Archives, London.

137. Lewis, W. S., ed., *Horace Walpole Correspondence*, v. 35, Yale Univ. Press, 1973. Describing a portrait of Philippe, Chevalier de Vendôme (1655-1727), in a letter to the Earl Harcourt, May 18, 1781.

138. Ryskamp, Charles and Pottle, Frederick A., ed., *Boswell: The Ominous Years, 1774-1776*, McGraw-Hill, 1963, p. 307.

139. "General Sir William Howe's Orders, 1776," op. cit. Orders given on June 6, 1776.

140. Capt. Robert MacKenzie to Lt. Col. Clerk, 1 March 1778. Headquarters Papers, PRO 30/8/28.

141. Fraser Papers, MG 23, K1, National Archive of Canada.

142. Edes, Peter. *Diary of Peter Edes*, Bangor, 1901.

143. Graydon, Alexander. *Memoirs of a Life, Chiefly passed in Pennsylvania, within the last sixty years; with occasional Remarks upon the general occurrences, character and spirit of that eventful period*, Harrisburg, 1811. Another diarist offered a remarkably similar account of the event: The Hessian women were particularly abusive. When we got to the environs of the city we were assailed by a number of soldier's trulls and others who the soldiers called Holy Ground Ladies. Numbers were calling out, "Which is Washington?" "Where is he?" was vociferated from a number of mouths at the same time, and treated us with volleys of indecent language. Adlum, John. *Memoirs of the Life of John Adlum in the Revolutionary War*, Chicago, Caxton Club, 1968, p. 78.

144. Cuthbertson, op. cit., p. 180 (section titled, "Of Regulations for doing Duty, Direction for Guards and Centinels with some general Rules to be observed in a Regiment".)

145. Judge Advocate Papers, W. O. 71/87, PRO, p. 209 - 250.

146. Hughes, Thomas. *A Journal by Thos. Hughes*, Cambridge University Press, 1947, p. 13.

147. Letters of Loftus Cliffe, op. cit. Letter dated Philadelphia, November 12, 1777.

148. Simes, *A Military Guide for Young Officers*, op. cit., p. 204. An almost identical entry is in Thomas Simes, *The Regulator*, op. cit., p. 12 (section titled "Of the Soldier, and his Duties").

149. Corporal John Fisher of the 28th Regiment was tried for raping "a woman child of nine years of age", who was the daughter of a sergeant in the regiment. W. O. 71/85 p. 290 - 307. Private William Sanders of the First Regiment of Foot Guards was tried for molesting a four-year-old girl. W. O. 71/90, PRO, p. 82-102.

150. Calver, William P. and Bolton, Reginald P. *History Written with a Pick and Shovel*, New York, 1950, p. 236-239.

151. Simes, *Military Guide*, op. cit, p. 164; Simes, *The Regulator*, op. cit., p. 2.

152. "School with Joseph Rhodes Eq.", Item 999, George Chalmers collection, Peter Force manuscripts, Library of Congress.

153. Lamb, Roger. *Memoir of My Own Life*, Dublin, 1811.