

The British Military Presence in America, 1660-1720

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The presence of British regular army forces in the American colonies in the late 17th century and early 18th century was sporadic at best. This period in which Britain was becoming an empire at war intermittently with other European Powers, was a time when defending colonial possessions was becoming, but was not yet a major priority. This is a small but evolving attempt to learn something about and portray those sent to America to defend it from natives, pirates and the other major competing adversaries in America, those being, initially, the Netherlands, and later Spain and France. The wars fought in America during this time that involved regulars were King William's War (1690-98), Queen Anne's War (1702-13), the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718-20).

In the 17th century and later, soldiers were seen as a dangerous burden to those civilian communities they lived in or near. The need for protection from hostile natives, pirates, the Spanish and or France in the Caribbean seemed to lead to some appreciation for soldiers and former soldiers as settlers. During the post-1697 disbandment, Antigua offered a bounty and land for those soldiers who stayed on there. In 1688, Antigua also offered a pension to wounded soldiers and their children or widows. By all indications, this demonstrates a unique view of soldiers. Further exploration of the literature is called for to see if this unique attitude was common to the North American and other Caribbean colonies.

Regular Regiments. Regular regiments, in whole or in part, were involved in both garrison and expeditionary missions in North America and the Caribbean during this period. How the regiments were equipped was a function of how much the regimental commander was willing to spend on his soldiers and where the British army was generally in its transition away from pike to bayonet, from matchlock to fire lock, bandoleer of boxes to cartridge boxes and the other transitions occurring in the army. Matchlock muskets and bandoleers (or "collars") of charges might have been seen throughout the period with vastly decreasing frequency after 1700. Marine units would not have had matchlocks in their inventory. Firelocks would have been seen in ever increasing numbers throughout the period. Sword belts and plug bayonets would have been prevalent from the 1680's onward. I have addressed the regimental colors (coat/facing) of the different regular regiments that served in America during the specified time wherever possible as well as if they were raised in Ireland. Also, when possible, I have provided the numbered regiment designation of those regiments that continued to 1757 and the duration of service of those regiments that were "broken."

Independent Companies. The Independent Companies were composed of officers and soldiers sent from Britain and not raised locally. Unlike the other units of the army that each had distinctive uniform colors, regiment dependent, they would have worn

Royal Livery colors, that is to say red coats faced blue. Commanders were responsible for clothing, arming and equipping their soldiers. Each company would have been equipped and clothed as any other company for the time it was raised. This being a time of great transition in weapons and equipment and there being no uniform pattern for clothing and equipment, there is likely to have been a good deal of variation between the companies at different locations not to mention the differences between the equipment of “old timers” and new replacements. When the initial issue was worn out, it was expected that the colony, officers or soldiers would replace it. The likelihood that such replacement occurred with any degree of regularity is low, given multi-year long delays in soldier and officer pay and colonies already feeling over taxed by the British government. Equipment and style of uniform was a function of when a company deployed from England and when or if it was re-supplied and re-equipped.

An Independent Company organization had 50-100 soldiers with one Captain, one to two Lieutenants, three sergeants, three corporals and 2 drummers. There is no mention in the literature of pike being used, only muskets. Once a soldier came over with an Independent Company they rarely went back to Britain. They either died, as large numbers did, due more to conditions than combat, or retired and settled where they had been sent, subject to recall at any time. Officers did find their way back to Britain on occasion, but staying in the colonies allowed advancement for those without the requisite family connections, due to death and or retirement of superiors. A lack of family connections would have been likely to land officers in the Independent Companies to begin with. Sergeants from regular regiments, as opposed to “gentlemen,” were even known to have been offered and accepted commissions in the Independent Companies during the reign of Queen Anne. These were not prestigious postings for ambitious officers.

Why volunteer for service in an Independent Company half a world away? Some soldiers didn't, but were forced to go as punishment for desertion and other crimes. Others were from “broken” disbanded regiments and wished to remain soldiers. Some were doubtless told they would receive their past due pay if they continued to serve.

The army underwent a major draw down in 1697 with the signing of the Treaty of Ryswick leading to a 60% reduction of an army of 87,500 men. A total of 1500 officers were put on half pay. The Independent Companies were an opportunity to continue to serve, and many chose to.

The mission of the Independent Companies was colonial defense as well as to augment and support offensive operations. The Independent Companies manned garrisons and forts, served as leadership cadre as well as trainers for militia forces, and served as marines for Royal Navy and Privateer vessels that needed them. Soldiering in the Independent Companies no doubt became a part time job, situation and location dependent, allowing for casual labor and taking up outside trades. Unlike soldiers in mobile regiments, these soldiers became permanent members of the community where they were stationed.

Militia. The militia was comprised of all able bodied male civilians usually between the ages of 18 and 60, led by local prominent community leaders. They either brought their own arms or were armed by their commanders. There is no evidence I have found of militia uniforms with the exception of an effort on the part of the Port Royal Council in the 1680's to provide black hats and red coats to the militia and an eyewitness account of the Port Royal militia wearing red coats with blue facings in 1688 . Militia rotated through forts and were involved in patrolling frontiers areas. In the case of islands and coastal regions militia patrolled areas subject to amphibious assault and piracy. Militia were also involved in expeditionary operations and subject to serve as marines on Royal Navy vessels requiring a complement of marines.

The Role of Women. Women had a critical role in the armies of the late 17th and early 18th centuries, to the point that armies would feed 15 women per company to insure the execution of the essential logistical roles of cooking, providing medical support as well as repairing and washing clothes. The Independent Companies and militia were no different in this regard. In the literature there are two interesting citations concerning the presence of women in the Army, the first being a Lieutenant of an unidentified Independent Company with smallpox being put ashore with his wife so she could nurse him to health. The other is the drowning of 35 women in the sinking of a troop ship in the St Lawrence Seaway during the abortive attempt on Quebec in 1711. Wherever British soldiers went, their women went too.

Chronology of Military Operations in North America and identifiable British units involved, 1664-1720

25 Aug 1664 Dutch surrender New Amsterdam and Fort Amsterdam (renamed as New York and Fort James) to three companies of the Duke of York's Regiment (approximately 100 men in three companies) (1664-1690)

1665-67 Second Dutch War

1667 Dutch raid on the James River

1670 Treaty of America between Britain and Spain

1672-74 Third Dutch War

1673 Admiral Evertson takes New York for Holland

1674 New York returned to Britain

1675-76 King Phillips War
Appleton's Massachusetts Militia
Bradford's Plymouth Militia
Treat's Connecticut Militia

1675-76 Virginia war with the Susquehannocks.

1676 Bacon's rebellion in Virginia

1676 Pate's rebellion in Maryland

1676 Albermarle's war with the Meherins.

1677 Culpepper's rebellion in Carolina

1682 Pirate raid on plantations on the York River in Virginia. Ship pursued to Rhode Island and crew captured

1683 Talbot establishes Maryland fort near New Castle with Maryland militia garrison

1686 Spanish destroy Scottish settlement of Stuart's Town in Carolina

1687 Guard Ship *Dumbarton* captures pirate vessels vicinity Accomack County in the Chesapeake Bay

1688 Raid on Maine Indians

1689-97 King William's War

1689 Coode's Rebellion in Maryland

1690 Phip's capture of Port Royal and Acadia
Johnson's Massachusetts Militia

1690 French raid Falmouth Maine

1690 Phips raid on Quebec

1696 Raid on Beaubassin
Church's Massachusetts Militia

1696 French destroy Fort at Pemaquid Miane

1697 Seizure of St. Johns by Commodore Norris
Gibson's Foot (28th) (red/yellow)

1697 Treaty of Ryswick- Acadia returned to France

1702-13 Queen Anne's War/War of Spanish Succession

1700 Governor Nicholson and Captain Passenger of the *HMS Shoreham* capture Lewis Guillar and the *Le Paix* on the James River in Virginia

1701 Pennsylvania established armed watch on Delaware Bay to look for pirate activity

1702 Raid on St Augustine

Moore's South Carolina Militia

Daniel's South Carolina Militia

1704 Apalachee Raid

Moore's South Carolina Militia

1704 Attack on Port Royal

1 Massachusetts Militia regiment

1704 French raid on Deerfield, Massachusetts

1704 Raid on Mines

Church's Massachusetts Militia

1706 Spanish/French attack on Charleston

Northward Militia Regiment

Southward Militia Regiment

1707 Raid on Port Royal

Wainright's Massachusetts Militia

Hilton's Massachusetts Militia

1 New Hampshire Militia Regiment

1708 Recapture of St John's by French

1710 Capture of Port Royal and Acadia

Saunderson's 1st Marines (30th) (Irish) (red/yellow)

Hobby's Massachusetts Militia regiment

Tailer's Massachusetts Militia regiment

Whiting's Connecticut Militia regiment

Walton's Rhode Island/New Hampshire Militia regiment

1711-12 Attempt on Quebec under Commodore Walker

Queen's Royal Sea Service Foot (4th) (red/green)

Stanhope's Sea Service Foot (11th) (red/yellow)

Livesays' Sea Service Foot (12th) (red/white)

Handasyde's Sea Service Foot (22nd) (red/buff)

Wetham's Sea Service Foot (27th) (Irish) (red/buff)

Saunderson's 1st Marines (30th) (red/yellow)

Donegal's Marines (35th) (Irish) (red/orange)

Charlemont's Sea Service Foot (36th) (Irish) (red/green)

Meredeth's Sea Service Foot (37th) (Irish) (red/yellow)

One company each from:

Villier's 2nd Marines (31st) (Irish) (red/yellow)

Borr's 3rd Marines (32nd) (red/white)
Mordaunts' Marines
Holt's Marines
Shannon's Marines
Vetch's Massachusetts Militia
Walton's Massachusetts Militia
1 Company, New Hampshire Militia

1711-15 Tuscarora War
Barnwell's South Carolina Militia
Moore's South Carolina Militia

1715-18 Yamassee War
Craven's South Carolina Militia

1718-20 British War with Spain

1718 Cpt Maynard kills Blackbeard and captures crew.

1718 Col Rhett captures Stede Bonnet and crew.
South Carolina Militia

North American Garrisons, 1664-1720

New York

1664 Colonel Nicoll's Company occupies Fort James
Colonel Cartwright's Company occupies Ft Orange/Albany
Colonel Carr's Company occupies Delaware River settlements
1667 Carr's Company Disbanded
1672 Krieger's Company raised
1673 Dutch retake New York and English garrison surrenders
1674 Edmond Andros arrives at New York with one Independent Company of 100 soldiers to be divided between Albany and Fort James/ New York City
1676 Ft Charles at Pemaquid built and garrisoned with 50 men
1686 Two additional Independent Companies arrive at New York. Four companies established with two sent to Boston
1689 All companies disbanded
1690 Two Independent Companies (3 officers and 68 soldiers each) with one in New York and one at Albany
1694-95 Four Independent Companies (3 officers and 68 soldiers each)
1699 Four Independent Companies (3 officers and 50 soldiers each)
1701-14 Four Independent Companies (3 officers and 100 soldiers each) with 2 Companies in New York City and 2 in Albany

Virginia

1676 Herbert Jeffrey's Regiment (approximately 1000 officers and soldiers with 200 soldiers 6 sergeants and 6 corporals per company) arrives in Jamestown Virginia.
Lt Col. Jeffrey's Company, 1st Foot Guards (red/blue)
Cpt. Pict's Company, 1st Foot Guards

Cpt. Mutlowe's Company, Coldstream Guards (red/green)
Cpt. Middleton's Company, Duke of York's Regiment (yellow/red) (1664-1690)
Cpt. Meole's Company, Holland Regiment (3rd) (red/buff)

- 1676** - Elements of regiment garrison south bank of the James where rebels still active vicinity Albermarle
- Elements of regiment garrison New Kent County
 - One company sent to Northern Neck to support militia and protect plantations
 - Two companies sent to the Falls of the James
 - One company sent to Kecoughtan

1677 Herbert Jeffrey dies

1677 Independent Company established

1678 Four companies return to England

1679 One Company sent from England

1682 Both Companies disbanded

Massachusetts

1686 Two Independent Companies in Boston

1689 Two Independent Companies returned to England

South Carolina

1670 2 Militia Companies

1685 Northward Militia Regiment

Southward Militia Regiment

Huguenot Company

Port Royal/Annapolis Nova Scotia

1710-17 Four Independent Companies

1717-20 Phillip's Foot (40th) (red/buff)

Newfoundland

1689-1712 One Independent Company

1694-97 Gibson's Foot (28th) (red/yellow)

1699 Queen Dowager's Foot- Selwyn's (2nd) (red/green)

1703-04 River's Foot (6th)

1713-17 Four Independent Companies

1717-20 Phillip's Foot (40th)

Chronology of Military Operations in the Caribbean and identifiable British units involved, 1660-1720

1660 Captain Myngs' raid on Santiago
Windsor's Militia

1663 Captain Myngs' raid on Campeche
Windsor's Militia

1665 - 1667 Second Dutch War

1665 Colonel Morgan's raid on Dutch colonies of St Eustatius and Saba
Jamaica Privateers

1665 Captain Mansfeld's raid on Cuba and Spanish occupation of Providence Island
Jamaica Privateers

1665 Captain Morgan's raid on Granada
Jamaica Privateers

1665 Colonel Watt's raid on St. Martin's
Watt's Militia Regiment

1665 Captain Morris' raid on Guiana
Morris's Militia Company

1666 English Colony established on New Providence – James Modyford commissioned
as Governor of the Bahamas

1666 Captains Searle's and Stedman's raid on Tobago

1666 French capture English side of St Kitts, Montserrat and Antigua

1666 Capture of St Lucia
Willoughby's Militia Regiment

1666 Captain Harman's raid on Cayenne
Willoughby's Militia Regiment

1667 British raid on Tobago
Bridge's Foot

1667 Captain Harman's raid on Surinam
Willoughby's Militia Regiment

1667 French return English side of St Kitts, Montserrat and Antigua to Britain

1668 Captain Morgan's raid on Puerto Principe
Jamaica Privateers

1668 Captain Morgan's raid on Portobello
Jamaica Privateers

1669 Captain Morgan's raid on Maracaibo
Jamaica Privateers

1670 Spanish raids on Jamaica

1670-71 Captain Morgan's raid on Panama
Jamaica Privateers

1670 Spanish sack New Providence

1670 Captain Searle's raid on St Augustine

1670 Treaty of America between Britain and Spain

1672 - 1674 Third Dutch War

1672 Major Beeston with the HMS *Assistance* and HMS *Lilly* capture the *Charity* at sea and *Mary* while careened.

1673 Col Tobias Bridge captures Tobago
Bridge's Foot

1680 Sharpe's raid on Panama

1680 Morgan takes Everson's ship in Cow Bay. Captured crew turned over to Spanish at Cartagena.
Morgan's Company

1684 Captain Carlyle with the HMS Francis burns the *Trompeuse* and another ship at St Thomas.

1683 New Danish Governor installed on St Thomas with British help in response to support for pirate activity by prior governor

1683 Spanish raid British colony on New Providence

1684 Captain Mitchell and the HMS Ruby captured the *Golden Fleece*

1687 Captain Sir Robert Holmes Expedition

1684 Spanish raid on Nassau- English settlers evacuate the Bahamas

1687 Colonists from Jamaica settle on New Providence and build a fort.

1689 - 1697 King William's War

1689 French capture St. Kitt's and St. Eustatia

1689 French raids on Jamaica

1689 Thornhill with 2 sloops captures French privateer
Hamilton's Company, Thornhill's Militia.

1689 Thornhill Raid on St Bartholomew
Thornhill's Militia

1689 French capture Antiguilla and retaken by Codrington
Lloyd's/Holt's Foot (1689-98) (blue)

1690 British retake St Kitt's and St. Eustatia
Lloyd's/Holt's Foot
Independent Company
Thornhill's Militia
Blackstone's Militia
Pym's Militia
Earl's Militia
William's Militia

1690-92 Commodore Wright's Expedition/1690 Raid on St. Bartholomew's and St.
Martin's Islands
Lloyd's/Holt's Foot
Thornhill's Militia
Pym's Militia
Earl's Militia
Hewetson's Militia

1691 Codrington's raid on Hispanola
Lloyd's/Holt's Foot

1691 Captain O'Brien's raid on Hispaniola

1693 Commodore Wheeler's raid on Martinique
Foulke's Foot (38th) (red/yellow)
Lloyd's/Holt's Foot
Collingwood's (32nd) (red/white)
Salter's Militia
Boteler's Militia

1694 French Raid on Jamaica
Montjoy's Independent Company

1695 Commodore Wilmot's raid on Hispaniola
Lillingston's Foot (38th)
Lloyd's/Holt's Foot
Collingwood's (32nd)

1697 Fort Nassau built outside Nassau

1702-13 Queen Anne's War/War of Spanish Succession

1702 British capture of French sector of St. Kitts

1702 Admiral Benbow's raid on Guadalupe
Wetham's Sea Service Foot (27th) (Irish) (red/buff)

1702-04 Commodore Walker's Expedition/ Raid on Guadalupe

Erle's Sea Service Foot. (19th) (red/yellow)

Viscount Boyne's Sea Service Foot. (20th) (Irish) (red/white)

Donegal's Marines (35th) (Irish) (red/orange)

Charlemont's Sea Service Foot. (36th) (Irish) (red/green)

One company each from:

Saunderson's 1st Marines (30th) (Irish) (red/yellow)

Villier's 2nd Marines (31st) (Irish) (red/yellow)

Fox's 3rd Marines (32nd)

Mordaunts' Marines (1702-04)

Holt's Marines (1702-13)

Shannon's Marines (Irish) (1702-13)

Wetham's Sea Service Foot (27th)

Byam's Militia

Two Independent Companies of St Kitts

1703 French/Spanish raid on Nassau

1706 Spanish raid on Nassau- most English settlers evacuate the Bahamas

1706 French raid on Nevis

Burt's Militia

1706 French raid on St. Kitt's

Independent Company

Hamilton's Militia

1710 French raid on Monserrat

1717 Cpt. Hume of the *Scarborough* sinks Martel's ship at St Croix

Jones/Alexander's Sea Service Foot (38th)

1717 13 British frigates sail to Caribbean to eliminate piracy

1717 Teach's raid on St Kitts

1717 British Crown issues proclamation for suppression of piracy and surrender by 1718

1718-20 British War with Spain

1718-19 British settlement on Crab Island. Removed by Spain.

1718 Cpt. Woods Rogers arrives at New Providence and garrisons island

1720 Cpt. Barnet captures Jack Rackham, Mary Reed, Ann Bonny and crew

1720 Spanish raid on Nassau
Independent Company
3 Nassau Militia Companies

Caribbean Regular Army Garrisons, 1660-1720

Bermuda

1702-20 One Independent Company

Cpt. Lancelot Sandys, Lt. Robert Henley, 2 sergeants, 2 corporals one drummer and 50 sentinels detached from Handasyde's Sea Service Foot (22nd) in 1702. Barracks located in St George.

Barbados

1667-73 Bridge's Foot, Six Companies

1671-97 Two Independent Companies

1694-97 Russell's Foot (The Barbados Regiment)

1698-99 One Independent Company

Bahamas (Abaco, Eleuthera, Andros, New Providence)

1718-20 One Independent Company

Baeuchamp's Company

Jamaica

1678-82 Two Independent Companies

Carlisle's Company

Morgan's Company

1694-99 One Independent Company

Montjoy's Company

1694-1697 Lillingston's Foot (38th) (red/yellow)

1703-05 Livesay's Sea Service Foot (12th) (red/white)

1703-13 Handasyde's Sea Service Foot (22nd) (red/buff)

1714-20 Two Independent Companies

Leeward Island Colony (St. Kitt's, Antigua, Barbuda, Montserrat, Nevis, Anguilla, Dominica)

1667-71 Bridge's Foot, Four Companies with two on Barbados and two on St. Kitt's

1671-90 St. Kitt's two Independent Companies

1689 St Kitts two Independent Companies move to Nevis

1690-1706 St. Kitts one Independent Company

1690-98 Lloyd's/Holt's Foot on St. Kitt's

1692-99 Collingwood's/Fox's Foot (32nd) on Antigua

1699- 1714 Wetham's Sea Service Foot (27th) on St Kitt's, Antigua and Nevis

1702-03 St Kitts two Independent Companies

1710-1720 Jones'/Alexander's Sea Service Foot (38th) on Antigua

Locally raised Caribbean forces:

1660-63 Jamaica

Windsor's Militia Regiments (4)

Port Royal Regiment

1665 Jamaica

Edward Morgan's Militia Regiment

1665 St Kitts

Watt's Militia Regiment

1665 Barbados

Cpt Morris Militia Company

1666-67 Nevis and Antigua

Willoughby's Militia Regiment

1667-68 Jamaica

Morgan's Port Royal Regiment

1672-73 Barbados

Rupert's Dragoons

1680 Jamaica

Morgan's Port Royal Regiment

Freeman's Regiment

Cope's Regiment

Whitfield's Regiment

Watson's Regiment

Bynbloss's Regiment

Fuller's Regiment

Ballard's Horse

1689 Barbados/Antigua/Nevis

Thornhill's Militia Regiment

1689 Nevis

Pym's Militia Regiment

1689 Nevis

Earl's Militia Regiment

1692 Barbados

Salter's Militia Regiment

1692 Barbados

Boteler's Militia Regiment

1690 Antigua
William's Militia Regiment

1690 Antigua
Hewetson's Militia Regiment

1690 Montserrat
Blackstone's Militia Regiment

1694 Jamaica
Clayborne's Militia Regiment

1702 Antigua
Byam's Militia Regiment

1706 St Kitt's
Hamilton's Militia Regiment

1706 Nevis
Burt's Militia Regiment

Antigua Privateers 1702-13

Bermuda Privateers 1682-84

Barbados Privateers 1702-13

Jamaica Privateers
1660-72
1675-79
1702-1713

1718 Bahamas
3 Nassau Militia Companies

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