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The American Society of Le Souvenir Français Inc.
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TRIBUTE TO FRENCH OFFICERS, SOLDIERS AND SAILORS IN NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

149 French soldiers and 24 sailors died at Newport
from 1780 to 1783



Plan of the stationing of Rochambeau's troops and Ternay's squadron at Newport, R.I. in 1780. The *Hermione* (red arrow) appears between the French Navy frigates *La Surveillante* and the *Amazone*.

"Defense plan of New-Port in Isle Rhode (North America) by the King's squadron under the orders of Admiral Ch. de Ternay, Head of the Naval Armies Squadron, Knight of Saint Jean de Jerusalem as well as the position and camp of the French Army under the orders of Monsieur le Comte de Rochambeau, Grand Cross of the Royal and Military Order of Saint Louis, Lieutenant General of His Majesty's Armies in 1780."

By Mullon, lieutenant in the auxiliary French Navy Frigate *Hermione*.

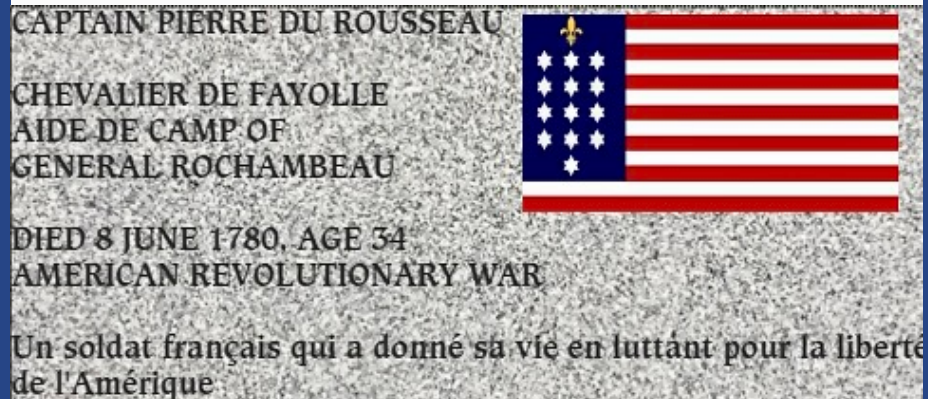
Historic Grave Markers to be inaugurated Sept 11-12, 2021

Our Association is proud to announce its participation in the inauguration of two grave markers to pay tribute to two French officers of the French Navy frigate *Hermione* who are interred in the Trinity Church historic cemetery of Newport, Rhode Island.

The ceremony will take place on Saturday September 11, as part of a weekend named "Tribute to France" by the City of Newport.

We are proud to partner in this endeavor with the National Park Service/Washington-Rochambeau Route, which is the lead contributor to this project, along with the American Friends of Lafayette.

The history of these two young officers is poignant, as they gave their lives for America's freedom.



CPT Pierre du ROUSSEAU, Chevalier de FAYOLLE (1746-1780)

As a liaison officer, he had served several years in the French army when he left for the United States with Lafayette in 1777. Not receiving a commission from Congress, Fayolle volunteered with Vice Admiral d'Estaing's squadron in Rhode Island in 1778 before returning to France. He went back to America with Lafayette in 1780.

[General George Washington mentions him in a letter to General Lafayette, dated May 16, 1780.](#)

On May 28, 1780, he accompanied General Lafayette to Boston. The mission was to inform General George Washington that the French Army was on its way to help the American insurgents and fight the British Army.

Unfortunately, the chevalier de Fayolle died in an accident on June 7, 1780 in the harbor of Newport, and was interred in Trinity Church cemetery.

No indication exists as to the exact location of his burial site. A grave marker will be placed next to Admiral de Ternay's tombstone. The *Connecticut Journal* (New Haven) for 22 June 1780 printed an item dated 10 June at Newport that described Fayolle as a "Major in the French service," who "died very suddenly last Thursday, as he was going off from the south part of this Island to the frigate Hermione; a Gentleman of a most amiable character, and whose death is greatly lamented by all his acquaintance."

SECOND LIEUTENANT AUGUSTIN
BENJAMIN DE LA VILLEMARAIS

FRENCH FRIGATE L'HERMIONE

BURIED 22 JULY 1780, AGE 37
AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR



Un soldat français qui a donné sa vie en luttant pour la liberté
de l'Amérique

2LT Augustin Benjamin de la VILLEMARAIS (1733-1780)

As a lieutenant auxiliary officer on board the French Navy frigate l'HERMIONE, he was wounded during a naval battle against the British Navy frigate IRIS. (See account of the battle below).

No indication exists as to the exact location of his burial site. A grave marker will be placed next to Admiral de Ternay's tombstone.

French Navy frigate l'Hermione



2014 September 17th, [Hermione replica](#), built in Rochefort, comes off the Charente river, and reach open sea for the first time. Thousands of spectators attend this first departure. *By Jp.sembely - Own work*



Courtesy U.S. Navy/Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Michael Sandberg. The appearance of U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement. The Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Mitscher (DDG 57), right, provides a warm welcome to the French tall ship replica the *Hermione* in the vicinity of the Battle of Virginia Capes off the east coast of the United States. The original *Hermione* brought French Gen. Marquis de Lafayette to America in 1780 to inform General Washington that a French army was headed for the United States to assist in the war effort.

On May 4, 1780, the Captain of *Hermione*, Louis-René Latouche-Tréville, received on board the principal members of the Massachusetts State Council as well as personalities such as **Samuel Adams** and **John Hancock** (future first governor of Massachusetts).

Latouche-Tréville proposed to the Council to make the frigate available to fight the privateers or English frigates likely to harass the local maritime trade.

The *Hermione* sailed from Boston on May 14 for Penobscot Bay in search of two enemy ships, and approached the English positions at Castine. On her return, she stopped at Portsmouth (then the capital of the state of New Hampshire) on May 19 before returning to Boston two days later.

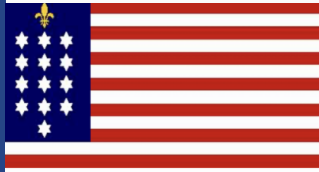
The *Hermione* set sail again on May 29, 1780, this time south. In the days that followed, she captured two English merchant ships: the English brig *Thomas* with a cargo of butter, candles and soap on June 2 south of Nantucket, then the salt laden *Rewrery* on June 6 south of Long Island.

On June 7, 1780, the French frigate fought the British frigate *Iris* off Long Island and suffered significant damage. During the one-and-a-half-hour fight, the *Hermione* fired 260 cannon shots, 140 scree shots and 1,280 rifle and blunderbuss shots.

Ten men were killed, and 37 wounded including the commander and his second. Two of the injured died of their wounds in the days that followed.

On July 4, 1780, the *Hermione* was decked out and Captain Latouche-Tréville ordered 13 cannons to fire a round of 3 shots each to celebrate the 4 years of the Declaration of Independence of the 13 United States of America.

Lieutenant de Villemarais, auxiliary officer, wounded while on the ship's forecandle of a grapeshot in the thigh, died of his wounds on July 18, 1780 in Newport and was buried on July 22 in the cemetery of Trinity Church.



Watch for more news in the coming months as we would like list the names of all 149 French soldiers and 24 French sailors who died in Newport for the freedom of the United States. A fascinating detailed account of the French presence in Newport can be found at: <http://smallstatebighistory.com/french-soldiers-who-died-at-newport-during-the-revolutionary-war/> and notably the historical research conducted by Norman Desmarais, Professor Emeritus at Providence College and author of the *Guide to the American Revolutionary War in Canada and New England* (Battlegrounds of Freedom).



Watch for more news in the coming months as we honor General Lafayette, in association with TheLafayetteTrail.org and The American Friends of Lafayette, in view of the 200th anniversary of his triumphal tour of 1824 as "Guest of the Nation" throughout 24 States!

www.thelafayettetrail.org

<https://friendsoflafayette.wildapricot.org/>



Watch for more news in the coming months as we honor General Rochambeau, Commander of the French Army, in cooperation with the National Park Service - Washington-Rochambeau Route and the 240th celebration of the final Victory at Yorktown, VA on October 15-19, 2021.

[Visit the Washington-Rochambeau Route, the Route to Victory.](#)

The American Society of Le Souvenir Français Inc. aims:

- To preserve the memory of the French soldiers, sailors and airmen who gave their lives for freedom, and who are buried in the United States.
- To honor French Citizens who did great deeds in the United States, or with a strong connection with the United States,
- To promote esteem for French culture and heritage in the United States,
- To strengthen the long-standing traditional bonds of friendship between the American and French peoples, and to this end: erect or maintain memorials and monuments and encourage historical research, public presentations and publications in the media.

Le Souvenir Français, a national association under the high patronage of the President of the Republic, was born in 1872 in occupied Alsace-Lorraine, and was founded in 1887 in Paris by Professor Xavier Niessen. The association has more than 300,000 members in France and in more than 45 countries.

In the United States, the American Society of Le Souvenir Français (Souvenir Français USA) has been represented since the First World

War by a General Delegate, among whom were Dr Jules Pierre, MM. Bruno Kaiser, Colonel Roger Cestac, Christian Bickert, Mathieu Petitjean, and Jean Lachaud. The association is presided since November 2020 by CF(H) Thierry Chaunu (H) Lt Cdr., French Navy.

The American Society of Le Souvenir Français, Inc. is a 501(c)3 corporation established in 1993 in NY.

Join us!

Help us implement several historic commemorative projects celebrating the 243-year-old Franco-American friendship and alliance!

Contact: Thierry Chaunu, Président
132 East 43rd Street #341 The Chrysler Building New York, NY 10017
Email: thierrychaunu@gmail.com Mobile: 646-732-1822

