



# Revolutionary Times



Containing the Latest News from the Sons of the American Revolution

## French Connection

France had long been enemies of their neighbors across the English Channel.

While the two had competed in the Hundred-Years War (ca. 1337-1453) for territorial sovereignty in continental France, one could say Britain and France then partook in a second Hundred-Years War (ca. 1689-1815) for global commercial and military power.

Then, what became known as the French and Indian war in North America and Seven Years War elsewhere settled into a stalemate for the next several years.

However, after 1757 the war began to turn in favor of Great Britain. British forces defeated French forces in India, and in 1759 British armies invaded and conquered Canada.

The ink was barely dry on the Treaty of Paris in 1763 before the French foreign ministry began planning and preparing for the “next” war with Great Britain.

France was determined to avenge its humiliating defeat during the French and Indian War/ Seven Years War, which had forced it to give up Canada and had upset the balance of power in Europe.

During the early stages of the American Revolution France hesitated to formally join the American cause.

They waited for the young United States to prove that they could succeed militarily against the British and would not abandon the cause to form a separate peace.

Such a sign came in the US victory over British forces by American Generals Horatio Gates and Benedict Arnold at Saratoga, New York in the fall of 1777.

France’s economic support was essential in bolstering US finances, supplying and outfitting the American army and replacing the colonies’ lost trade in leaving the British commercial network.

France’s actions further legitimized the rebellion, helping to convince other rivals of Great Britain, such as the Spanish and the Dutch, to support the US cause.

Roughly 12,000 French soldiers served the rebellion, along with some 22,000 naval personnel aboard 63 warships.

Lafayette was the one of the earliest and most prominent officers to join.



The French national debt incurred during the war contributed to the fiscal crisis France experienced in the late 1780s, and that was one factor that brought on the French Revolution.

In the end the French people paid a high price for helping America gain its independence.

This broadsheet is dedicated to the 250th Anniversary Celebration of the Declaration of Independence for more information visit the National Society Sons of the American Revolution website at: [www.sar.org](http://www.sar.org)

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