

FRENCH MILITARY HISTORY

The Army Under the Old Regime

Among the Franks, every free man is a soldier by definition. In the Middle Ages, under the feudal system, all vassal to his lord military service of 40 days per year in the form of OST (participation in a military operation in the service of the king) or ride (limited operation for the benefit of lord). The feudal army is discredited by his indiscipline during the Hundred Years War and was replaced by Charles VII (Orders 1439-1447) by a royal army of permanent and mercenary types. A service that can be considered "national" persists in the militia parish, municipal and regional brought valuable support to the royal army on numerous occasions. These order several thousand volunteers companies developed thereafter. Under Francis I, their number increased to about 50,000 men and 150,000 under Louis VIII. Under Louis IX, it reached about 380,000 men which may be added the 70,000 men of the Navy and about 120,000 other soldiers corresponding to the Royal Militia, local militias and Coast Guard. For its royal militia which the number of volunteers was deemed insufficient, Louis XIV instituted a random drawing from among all men in the kingdom age 16 to 45 years. Every year, we drew lots with white or black notes a number of individuals required to serve for five years the militia created by Louvois. We can consider the draw a bit like "ancestor" of military service that we will see later. These militias were to replace the regular troops in border towns. Volunteers were recruited by the Royal Household and included bodyguards, the Musketeers and the police. The voluntary agreement was renewable for a term of six years. You could leave before the end of 6 years by buying a replacement. By cons, those who contracted debts repayable before the end of their contract saw it automatically extended until full repayment of the debt! Under Louis XV, of foreign origin shows that about 20% of soldiers.

From the Revolution to the War of 1914

If, in 1789, conscription was unanimously condemned by the list of grievances, it is not ready to go! In 1792, to deal with foreign invasion, the Jacobin leaders had proclaimed the country in danger and called for volunteers. These, along with veterans of the old royal army won victories but it was not enough to bring peace. By decree of 25 August 1793, the Convention proceeded to a first form of conscription by the levy of 300,000 men, which was strongly opposed by the people. Later, the old conventional decide to launch wars of conquest to get France out of its economic difficulties. To cope, a law was proposed by Jean-Baptiste Jourdan, a former general, commander of the victorious army of the Sambre and Meuse.

Act "Jourdan" 19 Fructidor VI (5 September 1798) states that "all is French soldier and is due to the defense of the fatherland." It is the text "founder" of modern conscription and military service. War becomes an obligation for all male citizens, regardless of their motivation or ability to fight. Nation requires blood money and democratizes the glory and death! This is a first in the history of mankind. War is no longer restricted to professional as under the old regime. The Act provides that all men 21 to 25 years old must register on the municipal registers to deal with the threat of a second European coalition. Its objective is to enable mass uprising as needed. This law was worse accepted the mass uprising of 1793 and there were many refractories. She remained in force for twenty years, with some modifications:

Act 1802 establishes the right of replacement.

It allows those who can afford to buy a replacement for their son. This may shock as favorable "rich" but it was an unexpected opportunity for others to make money that would not have won otherwise, in the difficult economic climate of the time. Act of 1804: It creates the draw and regulates exemptions. Faced with public pressure, conscription was abolished in 1815 but will be restored three years later!

The Act of March 10, 1818, known as the St. Cyr: It provides an annual quota of 40,000 men and call modifies the conditions of conscription while maintaining the draw and the opportunity to buy a replacement. For committed volunteers, the duration increases to 6 years in departmental legions and eight years in the other body. For conscripts, the designation of the quota is based on the population of the departments and draw the head of Canton in public session before the sub-prefect and mayor of Canton. Registered or their authorized representatives are called in the order table census and must take a number in a box. The draw stops when the quota is reached. The length of service is more specifically 6 years from January 1 of the year when the soldiers were placed on the number of registers and ends December 31, 6 full years. At the end of six years, soldiers and NCOs are paid into a reserve called educated "vétérance". In 1824, dissolutions of companies vétérance. The subject refers to the non-called uneducated and therefore each class. In 1829, the length of service from 6 to eight years.

Soult Act of March 21, 1832: To avoid the stagnation of commitments, the Minister of War passed a law imposing a service for a period of seven years while maintaining the draw. The 1885 Act did not change anything. At the end of the Second Empire, Napoleon III was impressed by the Prussian victory over Austria. It seeks to apply in France the Prussian system based on universal service based on educated reserves, but without success. In 1868, the law creates a mobile Niel National Guard (in addition to the active army) where each citizen from serving 15 days per year to receive military training.

Act of 1855: End of the replacement. This is replaced by the exemption, a sum of 2800 francs., it was possible You could also buy each remaining year of service already for 500 francs. For the record, the average salary of a minor official at the time was about 700 francs per year! The money collected were made to an endowment of the army and used to fund military pensions and increase commitment Premiums for voluntary

Niel Act I février1868: Service for a period of five years for half of the quota by lot and six months for the other half, **replacement is allowed again.** Creating a mobile National Guard. Every citizen can do an internship of 15 days and receive military training.

Third Act of July 27, 1872: The rapporteur of the law, the Marquis de Chasseloup-Laubat present military service as a social necessity that would be imposed on our country even though the defense of our soil will not be ordering imperative because it is a place for creating social cohesion and contributes to national unity. This law created a military obligation extending for a period of 20 years. The draw is held. Replacement is deleted but can be excused for various reasons, the breadwinner. Establishment of a register of personnel numbers by department from cantonal recruitment lists, indicating the incorporation and all changes (assignment, home, etc.) to passage in the territorial army. The service is as follows:

5 years in the active army - four years in the active reserve. 5 years in the Territorial Army - 6 years in the territorial reserve.

Freycinet Act of July 15, 1889: It furthers the principle of universal conscription. The service was reduced to three years, but there are now exceptions. The "exempt" are on a reduced service year to 10 months for graduates and students. Exempt from active duty are assigned to an auxiliary service. The draw continues and the beneficiaries are one year. For cons, the exempt, exempt and drawn must pay a military tax to compensate for their pension. One third of each age class is a one-year service. The social role of military service is important: it is an introduction to modern for many from the rural world with the discovery of the city, training in the use of more sophisticated equipment than their agricultural equipment, discovery running water, other manners, customs and the opportunity to learn French for those who speak a local dialect or regional language. It is a real factor of social cohesion will be strengthened by the following law.

By the law of 21 March 1905 (Law Jourdan-Delbel), the Minister of War, General Andrew **terminates the draw and requires a personal and compulsory military service** for a period of two years (instead 3 since 1889). **Dispensation is excluded** . A stay is possible in some cases. It is a law that marks the origin of the national service still in force under the Fifth Republic.

From the war of 1914 to the present day.

On August 7, 1913, the term of service is increased by 2 to 3 years to deal with many more French than German classes. The Imperial army had only 850,000 men against 540,000 in France.

In 1914, general mobilization of 760,000 men. The army from about 2 million people. Between 1914 and 1918, 8 million men aged 18 to 45 years are mobilized, representing 20% of the French population, creating a huge problem to continue to keep the economy running.

April 23, 1923, the law establishes the principle of exemptions, waivers and availability and reduces the length of service to 18 months. It will be reduced to 12 months in 1928.

In 1939, the number of door mobilization army to 4 million people. After the armistice, a form of military service is maintained. The armistice agreements of 22 June 1940 stipulates that the French army should be disarmed and demobilized with the exception of 100,000 men needed to maintain internal order. This means the removal of military service, but the Vichy government creates youth camps serving as military service in January 1941. From the age of 20 young people are called by class to a "stage" 8/9 months of the youth camps where alternate forestry work (making charcoal), physical exercises and courses on social . This had a dual purpose: to indoctrinate young people about the ideals of the revolution and maintain a national recruitment in the southern zone in spite of the armistice, to deal with a possible outbreak of war. Suspicious, the Germans submit youth STO (Compulsory Work Service) in 1943 and dissolve the movement in 1944

On August 17, 1945 the right to vote is granted to officers. The army cannot be called "the great mute"!

In 1946, the length of service is 12 months.

The law of 30 November 1950 sets the military service to 18 months and provides for the establishment of various tests during the "3 days".

If conscripts in 1946 represent 14% of the workforce, the percentage rises to 29% in early 1950 because of the war in Indochina. It amounts to 38% at end 1953 to 57% in 1957 due to the war in Algeria (1954-1962). The continuation of the flags is extended during the war in Algeria to 30 months. We will return to 18 months after the end of operations in Algeria.

By order of 7 January 1959, military service becomes "national service" in two forms: a) military service and b) defense department. From that date, new forms of service will be set up and gradually reduced to 10 months duration in 1992.

Act of 9 July 1965 establishes the active military service of 16 months in lieu of military service. The caller can perform his service in the army, cooperation or opt for technical assistance.

The Debré Law of 10 July 1970 reduced the length of service to 12 months.

June 10, 1971: Adoption of the National Service Code to respond to all forms of aggression against the security, territorial integrity and people's lives. The term "service" is replaced by "national". The service extends to the age of 35. 5 years active service and the availability and the rest in reserve. During the "availability" men remain attached to their original quota The "available" and "reserve" should participate in exercise periods not exceeding one month each and a total of six months, extended to one year for reserve officers.

January 4, 1992 is increased to 10 months active service, 16 months of cooperation, including VSNE, and 20 months for conscientious objectors. The postponement is allowed between 18 and 27 years in some cases. Cooperating, VSNE included are the responsibility of the Embassies of France.

In 1996, voting reform national service with an appointment citizen of 6 days from 2002, extended to girls in 2003. Voluntary national service for 9 to 24 months can be done in defense, solidarity, international cooperation and humanitarian.

November 8, 1997, the enactment of the law 97-1019 of 28 October 1997 on the reform of national service. Start of professionalism ..

October 3, 1998: start of the call to prepare for the defense "ODA" or day call-up to the defense.

1999: Census of girls and boys at the age of 16 years.

April 8, 2000: arrival of the first girls to call the day of preparation for defense.

June 27, 2001: Joint statement by the Presidency of the Republic and the Hotel Matignon is announced the immediate end of incorporations, suspension (not removing) the military service,

professional armed forces, downsizing to reduce costs, the restructuring of defense industries and the creation of a European force projection muscular destined to become the backbone of a European force within NATO.

Source: <http://www.nithart.com/servmifr.htm>