

## French Advantages and Armed forces

### [Map of French forts and cities in New France](#)



King Louis XV (1710-1774) was destined not to maintain the empire established by his great grand father Louis XIV

The French held an extensive system of forts in the St. Lawrence and Great Lakes region. Unlike the English settlers with their independent local governments, which were difficult to organize in time of war, the French had a single royal system of command. The French, having fewer settlements than the English, came into less conflict with the Indians and were able to establish a strong network of Indian allies. French trappers, hunters and traders were at home in the forests where many of the battles of the war would be fought and developed tactics suited to the wilderness. The uniformed French troops in New France at the start of the war were the Compagnies Franches de la Marine, marines because New France was under the administration of the French Navy.

The French troops wore white and blue uniforms. Many of the French officers were familiar with frontier warfare and had served in outposts in the wilderness. The French often attacked with mixed parties of Canadian militia and Indian allies, led by regular officers and regular soldiers. They were able to combine European organization, with the Indians knowledge of the land and stealth to great effect. As in the English colonies, most men aged 16 to 60 served in the local militia. In 1750 the militia totaled around 13,000 men.

France had penetrated deeply into the interior of North America through such noteworthy explorations as Samuel de Champlain in the Great Lakes and Robert Cavalier La Salle who reached the Gulf of Mexico by going down the Mississippi River in 1682. Captain de la Verendrye established trading forts on the Canadian prairie and went as far west as Wyoming by the 1730s. Unlike England, France had few costal cities and forts in North America, except for the naval base of Louisbourg, built in 1720 and Mobile and New Orleans. The mainstay of New France was the fur trade, which was maintained through a wide network of forts from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the Gulf of Mexico.