

Dr. Josiah Tucker. Memorandum
July, Aug., Sep. 1767

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Between St. Omers & Aire in the Province of Artois, a detachment of French Troops to the number of 1200 were employed in making a Canal of a very singular construction. The Canal itself is broad & deep, as far as it is completed; but the vast Body of Earth dug out of it is all carried to the French side, & none thrown up on the Flemish. By this means the Flemish side is almost level with the Water in the Canal; but on the French side there is a very high & broad Rampart, which has a command of the Country all around it. I rode about a Mile on this high Terrace, & had a fine prospect of the Country. The Wheel Barrows were very clumsily made, & upon a wrong Principle. Had they been formed like the Wheel Barrows of our Gardeners the Workmen might have carried at least one third more.

more, & with greater ease. The Soldiers were not encamped
in Tents, but in Huts made of Mud, & covered with Straw. At
the distance of about a Mile from these Huts, Centinels
patrolled, & Posts were fixed up with Inscriptions signifying
that those were the utmost bounds of the Camp. At the
Table d'Hôte at Arras I was informed that the Soldiers
did not enter willingly into this Service, but were
compelled by Military threats, that a Mutiny had
happened but the Week before for which some of
them were hanged, & that their Work is set out
to them by Foot Square, that they are not paid
by the Day, but by the piece; & that a good hand
with great Industry will get 14. sous per day, besides
his Pay. It is said that this singular Canal,
having the Earth all on one side is intended to
communicate with all the French Barrier Towns
viz. Calais, Dunkirk, Lille, Douay &c. & that the

reasons

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reason why so few Men as 1200. were then at Work was that the intention of the Ministry was first to make them complete in their Exercise as Soldiers (for which purpose the Men were under Arms almost from five in the Morning till seven at Night) before they employed them as Labourers, but that next Summer the number will be augmented to 12000.

& I learnt farther on my Return through Flanders in the month of September, that a Contract had been made with an English Man to furnish these Flats with 500. Blankets, & that if this Specimen was approved of, an Order would be given for 1500. more.

In all the Towns great or small & Villages adjoining, the Houses are now numbered, the method generally is to black a square Piece of Wall over the Door & to put the number of the House

House in White; this is done with a View to the more
easy, expeditious & impartial Way of quartering the
Troops upon a March; Every House (without exception)
being obliged to furnish one Bed to contain two Soldiers,
those Persons who do not chuse to have such Lodgers,
must agree with others to provide Lodgings for
them. This Regulation, tho' an Innovation, is
acquiesced in, without the least murmur, because
say the Bourgeois, this is no new Burthen, but
a new Regulation of an old Appointment, since
Houses being always obliged to lodge Soldiers
upon a March, & this method prevents much
loss of time, many altercations, & not a few
partialities.

The French Cavalry are now as well as the Foot
in excellent Order; all the Troops being fresh
mounted with Danish or Holstein Horses, & in
order to encourage a better Breed in France, & to
be less dependent upon Foreigners for the future
the

The present Minister has established in the Capital of each Province a stable of Danish Stone Horses to serve the Horses of the Peasants gratis.

The Marquis de Conflans has obtained 150. Wild Horses from Tartary for the service of his Regiment of Hussars; this it seems was one of the projects of the late Count de Saxe & the stories which the Officers of this Regiment tell of these Horses are quite surprizing; they say that the Horses will jump down precipices of an astonishing height, & light upon their legs; that in doing this they will all follow like sheep; that they make no Boggle at entering any River whether deep or rapid; & that in fighting with one another they rise upon their hind legs & strike with their fore feet, spreading them asunder.

Observations
in July, August & September
1787
on certain Military & Land
Schemes now carrying in
France
by D^r F. Guichard Secy of Peace