

Bring a pen and paper
to class on Thursday for
the midterm

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Enlightenment Warfare

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Enlightened warfare?

Lecture goals

- Define the Enlightenment, in basic terms.
- Understand the nature of warfare at the start of the Enlightenment.
- Explain how Enlightenment intellectual and technological developments changed warfare.

What is (the) Enlightenment?

An intellectual movement in Europe between the late-seventeenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

Debates about the Enlightenment

Was it truly international?

High Enlightenment vs. Low Enlightenment

- Which one actually mattered more?

Enlightenment vs. Scientific Revolution

- Enlightenment was consciously constructed by contemporaries (i.e., people at the time)
 - Scientific Revolution was a concept created by historians after the fact
- Enlightenment focused on philosophical ideas
 - Although some Enlightenment philosophers focused on applying them to real-world problems, such as improving agriculture or the status of Jews
- Most historians would say the Scientific Revolution started earlier

Warfare at the start of the Enlightenment

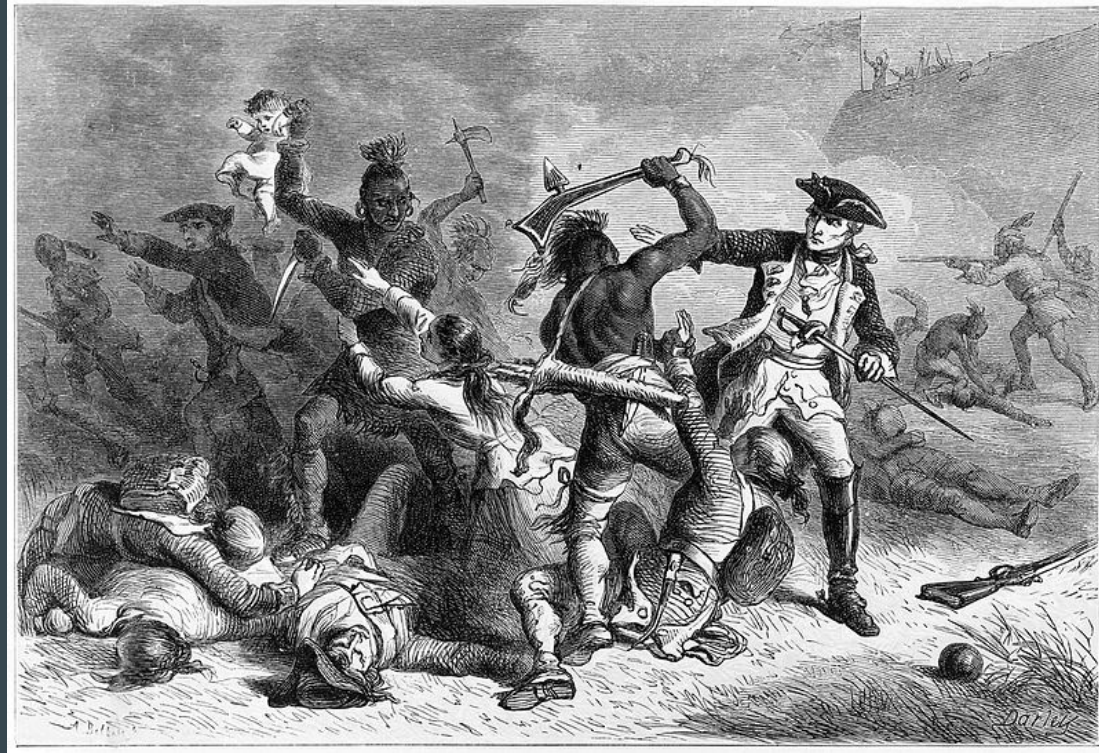
- Armies are large, permanent and well trained (because of Military Revolution)
- Armies commanded almost exclusively by nobles
 - Officers held in high esteem; ordinary soldiers are not
- States are complex and powerful (also because of Military Revolution)
- Large, pitched battles are common
 - Sieges are less common due to modern artillery
- But “little war” is a common tactic, especially during revolts and overseas.
 - Little war: War based on raids, small-scale attacks and plunder. Origin of term “guerilla warfare”

How the Enlightenment changed warfare

- Challenged nationalism as a motive for war
- Encourages rethinking of the status of soldiers
 - “Slime of the nation” vs. enlightened citizens
- Mathematical precision on the battlefield
 - Troop formations
 - Fortifications
 - Artillery
 - All of the above increase the importance of civilians trained in math and science
- Encourages restraint and protection of civilians
 - Stronger delineation between civilian and military spheres

Warfare overseas

- Should Enlightenment values of restraint and civility apply overseas
 - Example: Fort William Henry Massacre (1757)



The Enlightenment and pacifism

- Castel de Saint-Pierre (1713) and Immanuel Kant (1795) argue for “perpetual peace.”
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1755) decries “the perpetual quarrels, the robberies, the usurpations, the revolts, the wars, the murders, which bring daily desolation” to Europe.

Voltaire on warfare

"There was never anything so gallant, so spruce, so brilliant, and so well disposed as the two armies. Trumpets, fifes, hautboys, drums, and cannon made music such as Hell itself had never heard. The cannons first of all laid flat about six thousand men on each side; the muskets swept away from this best of worlds nine or ten thousand ruffians who infested its surface. The bayonet was also a sufficient reason for the death of several thousands. The whole might amount to thirty thousand souls. Candide, who trembled like a philosopher, hid himself as well as he could during this heroic butchery. At length, while the two kings were causing Te Deum to be sung each in his own camp, Candide resolved to go and reason elsewhere on effects and causes. He passed over heaps of dead and dying, and first reached a neighboring village; it was in cinders, it was an Abare village which the Bulgarians had burnt according to the laws of war. Here, old men covered with wounds, beheld their wives, hugging their children to their bloody breasts, massacred before their faces; there, their daughters, disemboweled and breathing their last after having satisfied the natural wants of Bulgarian heroes; while others, half burnt in the flames, begged to be dispatched. The earth was strewed with brains, arms, and legs." - *Candide*

Non-pacifist philosophers

- Montesquieu: War is natural
 - Although war harms the economy
- Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert: "It is by war that liberty is perpetuated, dignity is maintained and provinces and power are protected."

A rationalist interpretation of war

Why Enlightenment societies may have liked war:

- Relatively low-risk way to solve political disputes
 - Enlightenment wars are almost never existential in nature
- Civilians mostly left alone
 - Warfare limited to frontier regions
 - By mid-1700s, almost all soldiers are paid, supplied and housed by the state
 - No conscription in most European countries
- Financial effects are indirect
 - French tax revenues increase from 85 million *livres* circa 1650 to 152 million by 1715
 - But tax increases not directly tied to war, so French subjects don't draw the connection

Expectations of warfare

The Dutch Crisis of 1787 and Louis XVI's impotence

Enlightenment calls for military reform

- Centered mostly on treatment of soldiers
 - E.g., no longer making soldiers dress up in women's clothes as punishment
- But calls also increase for greater involvement by “the people” in deciding whether the state should go to war, and determining whether a war is “just” or not

This is the most significant legacy of the intersection between Enlightenment thought and warfare (because it leads to French Revolution)