

**SOCIAL ADVANCEMENT: MILITARY PROMOTIONS AND RETIREMENT
WITHIN THE SPANISH ARMY IN CHILE (1693-1735)**

**ASCENSO SOCIAL: GRADOS MILITARES Y JUBILACION DENTRO DEL
EJERCITO ESPAÑOL EN CHILE (1693-1735)**

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Abstract: Colonial Chile is known in part for its continual military conflicts that forced the Spanish Crown to station there a permanent standing army. This paper looks at a unique aspect of this conflict, in that it focuses on the administrative details of a specially created system by which common soldiers could purchase officer's titles and form part of a newly created semi-retired officer corps. Many of these officers on paper were then able to enter the civilian society with an acquired level of nobility that permitted them to receive specific economic benefits reserved for those of noble birth.

Key Words: Arauco Indian War, Military Promotions, Colonization, Colonial Chile, Spanish Army, 17th-Century.

Resumen: Chile colonial esta conocida en parte por sus continuos conflictos bélicos que forzaron a la Corona Española a estacionar allí un ejército profesional permanente. Este artículo analiza un aspecto único de este conflicto, en que se enfoca en los detalles administrativos de un sistema especial creada por medio de lo cual soldados comunes compraron grados de oficiales para luego formar parte en un cuerpo de oficiales semiretirados. Muchos de estos oficiales en papel entonces lograron entrar en el mundo civil con un nivel de nobleza adquirida que les permitió recibir beneficios económicos específicos que generalmente fueron reservados para los de nacimiento noble.

Palabras clave: Guerra de Arauco, promociones militares, colonización, Chile colonial, ejército español, siglo XVII.

Introduction

The conquest and subsequent European colonization of America during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have been the subject of renewed interest within the academic community intent on understanding the inner workings of Spanish colonialism and its unique country specific characteristics. While the conquest of America's indigenous peoples was quick and decisive in many parts of Spain's American colonies, there were a few notable exceptions, where localized indigenous military resistance extended the period of the initial conquest late into the seventeenth century. One such place was the remote colony of Chile, located on the southern Pacific coast of South America. Chile's location was key in protecting not only the massive Peruvian silver mines of Potosi but also Spain's overall control of the Pacific Ocean.

The King's military planners recognized Chile's strategic importance and the inherent difficulties in colonizing and resupplying such a remote region. However, nothing was done to remediate these problems until a massive Indian uprising in 1598 cost the lives of the Spanish governor and hundreds of the colony's leading citizens. The loss of seven key cities in southern Chile and the deaths or capture and most of their inhabitants finally convinced the power brokers in Madrid that the traditional system of using the lower ranks of the Spanish nobility to colonize and defend her colonies was not working and would not work in Chile's case. She was too far away from the traditional economic centers of Lima and Mexico City and thus was not able to attract the interest of those of the noble class willing to emigrate to Spain's American colonies.

However, abandoning even part of the region was not an option because the British and Dutch saw the lack of a visible Spanish military presence as a perfect opportunity to create their own bases of operations in southern Chile's abandoned ports, which was clearly shown by raids in 1593 and 1600.¹ The mere idea that another European power could form a base of operations in the South Pacific forced the Spanish King, Phillip III, to authorize the creation and financing of a permanent standing army in Chile, whose main tasks were to

¹Gascón, Margarita, *Periferias imperiales y fronteras coloniales en Hispanoamérica*, Buenos Aires, Editorial Dunken, 2011.

protect Chile's Pacific coast and force into submission the rebellious parts of the indigenous population.²

The arrival of over two-thousand Spanish soldiers and the construction of permanent and mobile military installations changed overnight the Spanish society of colonial Chile and in particular, the southern military frontier region located around the city of Concepcion. Furthermore, the army was funded by a yearly grant of 293,279 pesos,³ called the *Real Situado*, collected from taxes on the silver produced in the Peruvian mines of Potosi, which quickly became the motor of the regional economy and the source of its economic dependence. Over the next hundred years, Chile's southern frontier was an active military zone, forcing the Peruvian Viceroy's to maintain the military's funding and at the same time sending over the years thousands of new recruits to fill the army's ranks.⁴

Years of military action permanently changed the Chilean colonial society and in particular those living in the frontier region of Concepcion. This paper will analyze a portion of these innate social and economic changes and their appearance within the historical record. We will specifically examine the initiation and evolution of the European colonization of colonial Chile during the seventeenth century and how the colonization in itself became directly tied into the continued military conflict. While the economic and social processes related to the European colonization are also evident in the historical record in Chile's central and northern regions, in this paper we will focus directly on the southern militarized border region, where the recovered documentation allows for visible direct connections between the Arauco Indian War and the Spanish colonization.

The idea that Chile's colonial society evolved around and created a new identity based on the Arauco Indian War, in itself is not new. In 1961 Alvaro Jara showed how Chile's colonial identity was based on years of constant military action, dating from the

²For more information about the historical events surrounding the creation of the standing army in Chile and its place within the whole of the Spanish empire please see: Vargas Carriola, Juan Eduardo. *Ejército de Chile en el siglo XVII*. Doctoral Thesis, University of Sevilla, Spain, 1981; Concha Monardes, Raúl, *El reino de Chile: realidades estratégicas sistemas militares y ocupación del territorio (1520-1650)*, CESOC Printers, Santiago, Chile, 2014.

³ In 1606 the Real Situado was 212,000 ducados, which was later converted into 293,279 pesos.

⁴ Vargas Carriola, Juan Eduardo. *Ejército de Chile en el siglo XVII*. Doctoral Thesis, University of Sevilla, Spain, 1981.

arrival of Pedro de Valdivia.⁵ Later classical historians such as Sergio Villalobos were able to show that while the Arauco Indian War was a constant aspect of the seventeenth-century Chilean society most years were relatively peaceful with little or no meaningful military action.⁶ Recently, Raul Concha further expanded on this idea by documenting and categorizing the army's military actions.⁷ In 2006, Eugene Berger showed how Chile's military and civic leaders constantly misinterpreted or exaggerated the colony's military situation in order to maintain or expand the military's funding levels.⁸ Recently Jaime Valenzuela and others have shown how local civilian leaders used or misused military actions to enslave thousands of Mapuche Indians, who were later sold in Santiago or Lima.⁹ In other words, the Arauco Indian War was an integral part of the Chilean society and none of her colonial institutions can be studied without taking into account the local military influence over that particular institution.

One such institution or aspect of this military conflict that has been long overlooked or oversimplified by historians is the role of the Spanish soldier in the civilian colonization of the region they were tasked in defending. We define the civilian colonization as that propagated by the Spanish governor and local city councils and not squatters located in the direct vicinity of the frontier military installations.¹⁰ The Spanish governor and local civilian officials were tasked with the orderly colonization of their jurisdictions, through the issuing of land grants for farms (chacras) and ranches (haciendas-estancias) to Spaniards or Criollos or noble birth, who expressed a desire to colonize the region. Government officials and active-duty military leaders technically were barred from receiving land grants, in a vain attempt to reduce their influence and accusations of corruption against them, however, most used legal loopholes to get around these prohibitions. While many of the recipients of the land grants immediately started constructing their ranches and planting vineyards, a portion

⁵Jara, Álvaro. *Guerra y Sociedad en Chile*. Editorial Universitaria, 1961.

⁶Villalobos R, Sergio. *Historia del pueblo Chileno, 4 tomos*. Editorial Universitaria; *Relaciones fronterizas en la Araucanía*. Santiago, Ediciones Universidad Católica de Chile, 1982.

⁷ Concha Monardes, Raúl, *El reino de Chile: realidades estratégicas sistemas militares y ocupación del territorio (1520-1650)*, CESOC Printers, Santiago, Chile, 2014.

⁸ Berger, Eugene Clark. *Permanent war on Peru's periphery: frontier identity and the politics of conflict in 17th century Chile*. Doctoral Thesis University of Vanderbilt, 2006.

⁹Valenzuela Márquez, Jaime, *Indias esclavas ante la Real Audiencia de Chile (1650-1690)*, in the book "América en diásporas", edited by Jaime Valenzuela, Santiago 2016.

¹⁰ Keith, Robert G. *Conquest and agrarian change: The emergence of the hacienda system on the Peruvian coast*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1976.

were sold at speculative market prices within days of their legal acquisition, thus allowing for the formation of large haciendas composed of various conjoining land grants.

The near absence of potential nonmilitary colonizers led to the creation of a unique partnership that allowed some soldiers stationed in Chile to evolve, over a period of years, from active military duty to that of semi-retired landholding officers. This system, which we will analyze in this paper, allowed for hundreds of 17th century Chilean soldiers first to become officers and second to receive land grants and *encomiendas* based entirely on the nobility or social standing expressed by their military rank. As (*hacendados*) landholders these soldiers and their families were then able to form part of the colonial political and economic systems and ascend to the newly formed criollo middle class. This unique system is vital in understanding the civilian-military connexion that became an integral part of the Chilean national identity and shaped its postcolonial interactions.

In this paper, we will first show the geographical distribution and breakdown of the Spanish army in Chile during the 17th and 18th centuries. Second, we will analyze the creation of the semi-retired officer corps (*Capitanes Reformados*) and its expansion during the seventeenth century. Next, we look at how military promotions worked within the Spanish army in Chile, at the local level, using individual soldier's military records from the fort of Valdivia and the Chilean governor's secretary's logbook. Finally, we will show how the semi-retired officers were able to receive land grants and *encomiendas* within the Chilean civilian society by analyzing grant records from the latter part of the 17th century.

Distribution and Breakdown of the Spanish Army in Chile: 1693-1735

The first wave of military reinforcements that arrived in Chile upon the creation of the standing army included nearly two-thousand Spanish and Portuguese soldiers led by a number of decorated military officers trained in Spain's military conflicts in the Netherlands, including Alonso de Rivera who was named as the new colonial governor. Local officials and previous military leaders joined forces with Alonso de Rivera to create and implement a plan for a mobile militarized frontier that protected the two remaining southern cities, Chillán and Concepción, with a string of forts and military encampments.¹¹ Military leaders

¹¹Alonso de la Calle, Ricardo. "Los fuertes fronterizos chilenos. Resistencia e interacción en la frontera de Chile en los siglos XVI y XVII", Espacio, Tiempo y Forma, Serie IV, Historia Moderna, Vol. 18-19, 2005,

and Jesuit missionaries were given civil and religious authority south of the militarized frontier, while local civic leaders and parish priests controlled the districts located just north of the border.

The Governor of Chile was tasked with using the *Real Situado* to pay the soldier's salaries and supplying them with the needed food and military equipment. The *Real Situado* came in the form of food, clothing, military supplies, and a few silver coins, part of which the governor used to pay military debts, reserving the rest for the soldier's salaries.¹² However, high shipping costs and price gouging by merchants in Lima drastically reduced the monetary value of the supplies that the Chilean military agents were able to bring in each year, and as a result, local military leaders were never able to fully cover the cost of the soldier's salaries or the army's accumulated war debts.¹³

The newly constructed defensive line, or militarized frontier, followed the Bio-Bio and Laja rivers, whose size and swift currents made them natural boundaries between the remaining colonial cities and the hostile Indian groups that lived on the other side. Seven forts were built on the north side to protect the river's main fords. Three additional forts were built along the coast, south of the Biobio River, which served a double role defending against hostile Indians and European corsairs. For defensive purposes, each fort was assigned a garrison of 20 soldiers and a company of friendly Indians (*Indios Amigos*) who

pages 223-246; Contreras, Hugo. Fortificaciones, logística y vida de cuartel en el real ejército de Chile durante el siglo XVII, *Boletín Americanista*, N° 77, 2018, Barcelona, pages 203-223.

¹²Each year the Chilean governor would send an agent to Lima to collect the Real Situado from the Peruvian Viceroy. Generally, the agent would receive only credit notes from the Viceroy that he would then trade with local merchants for clothes, weapons, and a small quantity of silver coins. Since the bank notes did not come with a guarantee of quick payment, local merchants charged the Chilean agents high-interest rates that were generally collected the next year. For more information about the inner workings of this process refer to Suarez, Margarita. *Desafíos transatlánticos: mercaderes, banqueros y el estado en el Perú virreinal, 1600-1700*, Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos, Lima, 2001; For more information about the financing of military operations within the Spanish empire refer to, Marchena Fernández, Juan. "La financiación militar en Indias. introducción a su estudio". *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, #36, 1979, pages 81-130; "Oficiales y soldados en el ejército de América", Escuela de estudios Hispano-Americanos, Sevilla, 1983; Rodríguez Ridao, Antonio Luis. "La administración del Real Situado en tiempos del gobernador Tomás Marín de Poveda: corrupción en detrimento del Ejército de Chile (1692-1700)", *Revista Complutense de Historia de América*, N° 43, 2017, pages 101-126; Rodríguez Ridao, Antonio Luis & Soler Lizarazo, Luisa Consuelo. "Mecanismos de regulación del Real Situado: una aproximación a la eficiencia de los recursos fiscales destinados al ejército de Chile en el siglo XVII", *TEMPUS Revista en Historia General Medellín (Colombia)*, N° 6, 2017, pages 22-56.

¹³Suarez, Margarita. *Comercio y fraude en el Perú colonial: Las estrategias mercantiles de un banquero*. Instituto de Estudios Peruanos, Lima 1995; *Desafíos transatlánticos: Mercaderes, banqueros y el estado en el Perú virreinal, 1600-1700*. Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Instituto Riva-Aguero, Lima 2001.

lived in nearby villages or haciendas. Anchoring the line of forts were two military camps called *tercios*, each with six hundred soldiers divided into an equal number of cavalry and infantry companies. The rest of the army was stationed in the cities (*presidios*) of Chillán, Castro, Concepcion, and Valparaiso¹⁴. The cities of La Serena and Santiago did not have paid garrisons and were defended by local militia companies.

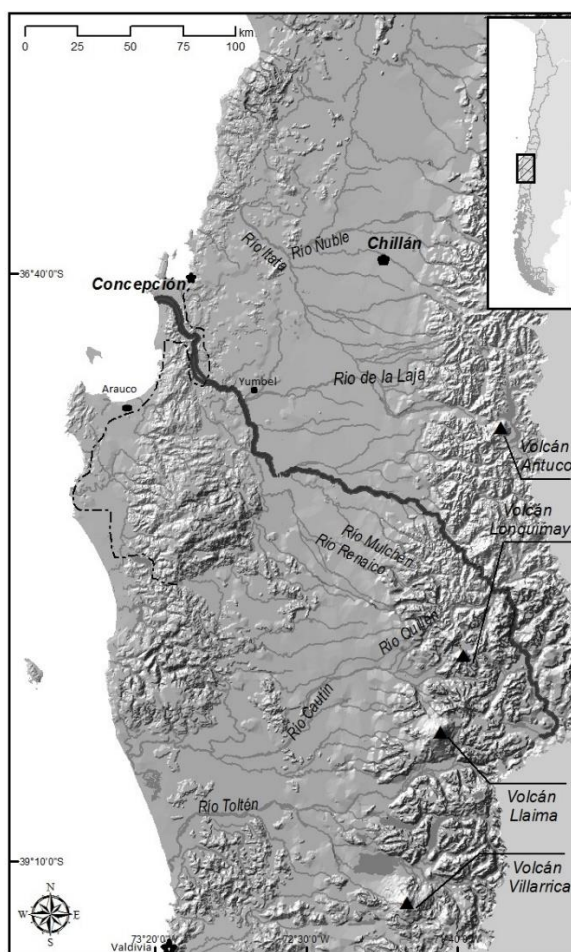


Figure 1: Distribution of the forts of the Spanish army in Chile¹⁵

While the defensive line remained stagnant during the majority of the 17th and 18th centuries, new forts were added, when prolonged military campaigns permitted the

¹⁴Concha Monardes, Raúl, *El reino de Chile: realidades estratégicas sistemas militares y ocupación del territorio (1520-1650)*, CESOC Printers, Santiago, Chile, 2014.

¹⁵Stewart, Daniel M. "Indian labor: the evolution of the encomienda and indigenous slavery within Chile's 17th century frontier society", *América en Diásporas: esclavitudes y migraciones forzadas en Chile y otras regiones Americanas (Siglos XVI-XIX)*, Edited by Jaime Valenzuela Marquez, RIL Editores, Santiago, 2017, pages 251-291.

temporary occupation of Indian lands south of the Biobio River. The most notable of these forts were Angol, Boroa, Puren, and Tucapel. Additionally, in 1646, the port city of Valdivia was rebuilt and turned into a military fortress by the Peruvian Viceroy, after a new incursion into the South Pacific by Dutch naval forces.¹⁶

While the King's military planners called for a permanent standing army of 2000 soldiers, the actual number of troops fluctuated between 1200 and 2600. Each year the army had to replace a minimum of 10% of its ranks due to illness, death, desertion, retirement, not to mention the few who died in actual combat.¹⁷ For example, in the year 1615, the Chilean Governor Alonso de Rivera complained to the authorities in Madrid that nearly one hundred soldiers had left the army that year alone without his permission to become Catholic monks.¹⁸ Furthermore, letters from local military leaders show that at any given time more than a third of the soldiers that appeared on their rolls were either missing or away on leave. Likewise, a large percentage of the soldiers who were present in the forts were either too old or too sickly to bear arms.¹⁹

While we have ample documentation showing the number of soldiers stationed at each frontier post during the seventeenth-century, most are limited to only a number and not the name and rank of each soldier. However, we have located three complete payroll lists that will allow us to show the distribution and identities of the soldiers for the years 1693, 1700 and 1735.²⁰ They are key in allowing us to better analyze the distribution and organization of the King's army in Chile and the role of the officers within its ranks.

¹⁶Concha Monardes, Raúl, *El reino de Chile: realidades estratégicas sistemas militares y ocupación del territorio (1520-1650)*, CESOC Printers, Santiago, Chile, 2014.

¹⁷Stewart, Daniel, *Elite Militar y formación económica de un espacio regional: Concepción, 1598-1700 (tierra, población y mercado)*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Chile, 2016.

¹⁸Inostroza, Iván *Historia de Concepción: Organización colonial y economía agraria 1600-1650*. Universidad de la Frontera 1998.

¹⁹Stewart, Daniel, *Elite Militar y formación económica de un espacio regional: Concepción, 1598-1700 (tierra, población y mercado)*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Chile, 2016.

²⁰Two of the three payroll lists studied in this investigation correspond to backpay since financial difficulties in Perú caused long delays in the arrival of the military supply ships. However, this does not reduce the importance or historical usage of these lists. The 1693 payroll list corresponds to the payment of soldiers for the years 1687-1689. It also includes an initial payment made to soldiers who enlisted between the years 1689-1692. The payment list for the year 1700 corresponds to the years 1690-1692 and a partial payment for food costs between 1690-1695. ANH.CG vol. 917 item 1; ANH.CG vol. 876 item 13; AGI.Ch,25,R.1,N.43; There are also partial lists for the years 1602, 1605, 1613 and 1654.

Military Installations	1693	1700	1735
Arauco	495		118
Buena Esperanza	25	10	
Chillan	105	79	18
Chiloe	207		
Colcura	9	10	10
Concepcion	468	871	161
Nacimiento		17	23
Puren	206	202	75
San Christobal	14	14	
San Pedro	22	19	17
Santa Juana	10	7	3
Talcamavida	26	21	23
Tucapel	66	522	32
Valparaiso	49	2	
Yumbel	482		108
Total Number of Soldiers	2184	1774	588

Figure 2: Distribution of the soldiers in the Spanish army in Chile²¹

While there were 2184 soldiers on military payrolls in 1693, those numbers entered into a steady decline when financial problems in Lima led to a substantial reduction in the size and frequency of the *Real Situado*. By 1735 the army had reached a low of 588 soldiers, which was maintained until 1752 when the Spanish crown reorganized its army in Chile.

Military distribution and payroll charts are only the beginning of any analysis of the colonial army in Chile. While they clearly show the areas of high military concentration such as the *tercios* of Yumbel and Arauco, they fail to show the daily activities of those who appear stationed there on paper. While the number of soldiers was drastically reduced between 1693 and 1735, the general population of the region of Concepcion continued to grow. The soldiers who left the army generally did not leave the region and only solidified

²¹ ANH.CG vol. 917 item 1; ANH.CG vol. 876 item 13; AGI.Ch,25,R.1,N.43.

a colonial system whose foundation was put in place by Alonso de Rivera and his predecessors.

Furthermore, it is necessary to stress that Chile's remote isolated location made civilian emigration a rare sporadic occurrence directly related to the arrival of a newly appointed government official. Thus, the vast majority of those who immigrated to Chile during the seventeenth-century were military recruits from Peru, Ecuador, or Spain, a large portion of which stayed in Chile upon leaving the military. They were met with an equally large influx of Mapuche women and children, who upon being enslaved in military raids south of the military frontier were shipped north to Concepcion and Santiago, where they were integrated into the local society, in many cases becoming the wives of the newly arrived soldiers.

Capitanes Reformados: the role of the semi-retired officers in the Chilean army

Long years of military service with a lack of consistent military action led to an inherent problem within the ranks of the Chilean army, what to do with the inactive aging soldiers who had no initial connection to Chile and no way of returning to their homelands upon retirement or permanent injury. The architect of the Chilean army, the Governor Alonso de Rivera, pleaded with the King of Spain to send him soldiers who were previously farmers and craftsmen, so that upon retiring they could form part of emerging agriculture society.²² During the first two decades of the 17th-century, over a hundred of these original Spanish soldiers, now as officers, received land grants and formed farms and ranches along Chile's southern frontier, while hundreds more received land grants in the hinterland of the capital city of Santiago. The governor's master plan to fill the countryside between the southern frontier and the central city of Santiago with hundreds of farms and ranches, thereby eliminating the potential that a new Indian uprising would push the colonists further north worked to perfection. Each estancia or hacienda recreated, on a miniature scale, the feudal

²²Inostroza, Iván. *El mercado regional de Concepción y su articulación al mercado virreinal y mundial. Siglo XVII*. Ediciones del Archivo Histórico de Concepción, Chile, 2018; Stewart, Daniel M. "Las viñas de Concepción: distribución, tamaño y comercialización de su producción durante el siglo XVII", RIVAR, Vol. 2 N° 4, 2015, pages 106-124; Stewart, Daniel M. "Indian labor: the evolution of the encomienda and indigenous slavery within Chile's 17th century frontier society", *América en Diásporas: esclavitudes y migraciones forzadas en Chile y otras regiones Americanas (Siglos XVI-XIX)*, Edited by Jaime Valenzuela Marquez, RIL Editores, Santiago, 2017, pages 251-291.

land system of medieval Europe where the retired officers were the Lords of the manor and the local Indian and mestizo population the serfs.

While the feudal system was appealing to many of Chile's aspiring upper class, it had little effect on the lives of the common soldier. As the colonial historians explain, the common soldier had very little if any post-military aspirations. For example, the Santiago town council constantly railed against Spanish military officials they accused of furloughing common soldiers who were little more than highway robbers and armed marauders.²³ Consequently, they were not permitted to end their military service and if they were lucky enough to get furloughed, they soon found out that they were not able to receive land grants or *encomiendas* and could only aspire for a job on one of the many Chilean farms or ranches, in the general vicinity of Concepcion, as cowboys or sharecroppers.²⁴

On the other hand, colonial military officers received a very different treatment within the civilian society; they were able to obtain land grants (*Mercedes de tierras*), *encomiendas* and civilian government jobs upon leaving active military service, based on the assumption of nobility and social class that came with being part of the colonial officer corps. They were able to travel to Santiago and were received on good terms by the town council.

Each year a portion of the newly retired officers would petition the Spanish governor for the status of *benemérito*, which would make them eligible for more powerful or prestigious positions outside of Chile within the Spanish empire. The governor was able to reward a couple of these *beneméritos* each year, by sending them to Peru, where they received government jobs or permanent military positions from the Viceroy. However, there

²³Contreras, Hugo. *La soldadesca en la frontera mapuche del Biobío durante el siglo XVII: 1600-1700*. Tesis magister en historia, Universidad de Chile, 2001; Contreras, Hugo. "Una enfermedad vieja y sin remedio: la desertión en el real ejército de la frontera de Chile durante el siglo XVII", *Fronteras de la Historia*, Vol. 16 (2), 2011, pages 443-468; Contreras, Hugo. "Como una guerra contra Santiago. Las licencias invernales de los soldados del real ejército de la frontera y su impacto en Chile central, 1602-1655", *Cuadernos de Historia*, Vol. 50, June 2019, pages 43-74; Prades, Mario. "Contra los "Cuadrilleros de la inicua libertad". La función retórica de los "desórdenes soldadescos" en los discursos de denuncia de la Real Audiencia (Santiago de Chile, siglo XVII)", *Diálogo Andino*, N° 65, 2021, pages 201-217.

²⁴Many common soldiers were not able to retire until they were too old or sickly to continue their military service. Some were forced to stay on as punishment for bad behavior while others had long term debts with their company commanders that had to be paid off before retiring.

were only a handful of such positions available each year and dozens of officers trying in vain to be selected.²⁵

To reward the officers who were not selected as *beneméritos* and whose military careers were nearing an end, companies of semi-retired officers (*Capitanes Reformados*) were formed that only mustered in during the summer military campaigns or in times of emergency. During the rest of the year, they were able to live with their families and work in a variety of civilian or government occupations. Thus in theory, these companies were made up of the military elite of the Chilean army, concentrating the best most experienced soldiers, while excluding them from menial military tasks such guarding the fords of the Biobio River or accompanying the Jesuit priests in their mission trips.

One company was stationed in Santiago, while a second much larger company was formed in the frontier city of Concepcion. As the civilian population increased additional militia companies were formed in the ports of Castro, La Serena, Valparaiso and the rural districts of Aconcagua, Colchagua, Maule, and Rancagua. These secondary militia companies, that were not entirely made up of *Capitanes Reformados*, and were used for ceremonial and judicial purposes, but also could be called into regular military service in times of need or during the summer military campaigns.

Each *Capitan Reformado* received a monthly salary slightly higher than that of a normal soldier, but much lower than that of an officer in active service.²⁶ The real reward was not in the amount of money they were paid, but that they were paid a year's salary, while only working a few weeks or months a year. These elite military units were also tasked with protecting the governor and rode with him during the summer military season and a few special religious and government ceremonies. Furthermore, they were leading citizens of the city where they lived and were assigned its defense against native and European powers. Those stationed in Santiago defended the city itself and the port of Valparaiso, while the

²⁵ Some of the early applications for the title of *benemérito* included references to military service prior to arriving in Chile, however, by the mid-17th century the applicants military service was almost exclusive to Chile and the Arauco Indian War.

²⁶The common soldier received 12 pesos a month while a semi-retired Captain (*capitan reformado*) received 17.5 pesos a month. Alférez Reformados and Lieutenants Reformado received only 12 pesos a month while pertaining to the Company of Capitanes Reformados. This is an import detail to understand since earlier historical analysis of the Chilean colonial army have erroneously inferred that each Capitan or Lieutenant was paid equally.

other company defended the port city of Concepcion and joined the governor in all the regular military campaigns.²⁷ While some of these semi-retired officers returned to active duty when positions opened up within the formal command structure of the regular army, most were content to remain in civilian life while receiving their military salary and benefits.

During the first half of the 17th-century, the company of *Capitanes Reformados* was capped at 50 soldiers, however, by 1652 the number of officers wanting to retire forced the governor Antonio Acuña de Cabrera to raise the limit from 50 to 128 and then again to 214 in the year 1655.²⁸ Many of Chile's contemporary historians and political leaders questioned the origin and need for so many officers. They asked how there could be over 200 officers wanting to retire in an army which rarely reached its allotted 2000 soldiers. During the last half of the seventeenth-century, hundreds of officers received land grants and *encomiendas* and newly arrived civilian leaders started complaining that the army had an unnaturally high number of officers within its ranks and that most of them could never have really served as officers.²⁹ Some leaders accused the governors of buying favors with military titles, while others gave examples of young children whose parents had purchased them ranks or positions within the military.³⁰ These accusations of political favors and widespread fraud in military salaries dogged many of Chile's colonial governors, whose job it was to distribute the *Real Situado*.³¹ However, a closer look at the specific accusations

²⁷Góngora, Mario. *Encomenderos y estancieros: Estudios acerca de la constitución social aristocrática de Chile después de la conquista 1580-1660*. Universidad de Chile Sede de Valparaíso. Santiago, 1970.

²⁸Vargas Carriola, Juan Eduardo. *Ejército de Chile en el siglo XVII*. Doctoral Thesis, University of Sevilla, Spain, 1981.

²⁹While most of the contemporary colonial histories (crónicas) revolve around the Arauco Indian war and the role of the Spanish army the most detailed ones were written by officers or Jesuit priests who spent most of their adult lives in active military service; Pineda y Bascañán, Francisco. *Cautiverio feliz y razón de las guerras dilatadas de Chile*, En COHCH, Santiago, 1863; Quiroga, Jerónimo. *Compendio de los más principales sucesos de a conquista i guerra del reino de Chile hasta el año de 1656*. En COHCH, XI, Santiago, 1878; Rosales, Diego. *Historia general del reino de Chile*, 3 tomos, Valparaíso, 1877; Ovalle, Alonso. *Histórica relación del reyno de Chile*. Universidad de Chile, 1965; Tesillo, Santiago. *Guerra de Chile: causas de su duración, advertencias para su fin*. (1647) Colección de historiadores de Chile i documentos relativos a la historia nacional, tomo 5, Santiago, 1861.

³⁰ANH.RA vol. 1857 item 1, in 1657 the Quartermaster General of Valdivia Pedro Leon Jiron was accused of making his six-year-old son an Alférez and paying him as an active-duty officer.

³¹Berger, Eugene Clark. Permanent war on Peru's periphery: frontier identity and the politics of conflict in 17th century Chile. Doctoral Thesis University of Vanderbilt, 2006; Rodríguez Ridao, Antonio Luis. "La administración del Real Situado en tiempos del gobernador Tomás Marín de Poveda: corrupción en detrimento del Ejército de Chile (1692-1700)", *Revista Complutense de Historia de América*, N° 43, 2017, pages 101-126; Rodríguez Ridao, Antonio Luis & Soler Lizarazo, Luisa Consuelo. "Mecanismos de regulación del Real Situado: una aproximación a la eficiencia de los recursos fiscales destinados al ejército de Chile en el siglo XVII", *TEMPUS Revista en Historia General Medellín (Colombia)*, N° 6, 2017, pages 22-56.

against Antonio Acuña de Cabrera and other colonial governors, show that they were not directly related to military promotions they handed out but the command positions that specific unexperienced soldiers were placed in.³²

In theory, the officers who were not currently actively serving were assigned to the company of *Capitanes Reformados* in Concepcion or Santiago. The size of these companies fluctuated greatly each year as older soldiers died off and younger ones returned to active duty. In 1673, the company in Concepcion reached its all-time peak of 237 soldiers.³³ In order to better serve the increasing officer population, a second company was formed in Concepcion called the *Guardias* or Guards. This company included semi-retired officers and common soldiers who were permitted to leave the ranks of the regular army to live in the city of Concepcion. Records show that many of the officers in these two companies received their promotions just before transferring into the company.

By 1630, the companies of *Capitanes Reformados* only corresponded to a portion of the semi-retired officers within the army in Chile. Apart from the nearly one hundred active officers, there were hundreds more *oficiales reformados* serving as common soldiers within the ranks of the colonial army in Chile. In 1693, there were over 250 officers serving as common soldiers while in 1700 there were 230. Some of these officers also returned to active posts when openings occurred, but most kept serving as common soldiers until their deaths or full retirement. The officers who served as common soldiers received the same pay benefits as those in the company of *Capitanes Reformados*, however, they were only allowed to stay in their rural farms with their immediate commanding officer's written permission. At one-point Chile's commanding officer Jeronimo de Quiroga complained that the majority of the soldiers were at their farms and that the only ones at their posts were those too old or sick to travel without help.

For example, army pay records show that each company in the colonial army was allotted three officers, five non-commissioned officers, and one musician. Sometimes one

³² Antonio Acuña de Cabrera was accused of fraud and mismanagement for placing his unexperienced brothers-in-law in key military posts and not for the hundreds of promotions that he gave to regular soldiers; Stewart, Daniel, *Elite Militar y formación económica de un espacio regional: Concepción, 1598-1700 (tierra, población y mercado)*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Chile, 2016.

³³Villalobos R, Sergio. *Historia del pueblo Chileno, 4 tomos*. Editorial Universitaria.

of the junior officers was transferred to a nearby fort, where he commanded the small garrison and helped with civilian tasks such as notarizing documents and administering military justice. Only these active officers and a small group of staff officers located in the city of Concepcion were paid officer salaries as stipulated by the King’s military planners. All other officers received either the salary of a common soldier or if their rank was Captain or higher the salary of a *Capitan Reformado*.

Rank	1693	1700	1735
Field Marshall	2	6	0
Sergeant Major	8	9	2
Comisario General	3	19	16
Capitan	166	159	80
Lieutenant	141	127	32
Alferez	151	103	74
Staff Officer	26	34	1
Sergeant	134	111	44
Corporal	35	11	31
Musician	40	38	16
Common Soldier	1478	1157	292
Total Number of Soldiers	2184	1774	588

Figure 3: Soldiers of the Spanish Army in Chile divided by rank and year.³⁴

In the payroll for the year 1693, there were 497 registered officers in the army in Chile, which corresponds to 23% of the total number of soldiers.³⁵ However, only a quarter of them were in one of the two companies of *Capitanes Reformados* in Concepcion. The other 353 officers were deployed throughout the thirty remaining companies.³⁶ The same pattern is visible in the officer distribution for the 1700 and 1735 payrolls. Most of the officers were serving as common soldiers in any one of the frontier forts and only a portion of them belonged to one of the militia companies created especially for them.

Rank	1693	1700	1735
Commissioned Officers	23%	26%	35%
Noncommissioned Officers	9%	9%	15%
Common Soldiers	68%	65%	50%

Figure 4: Distribution of the soldiers in the in Chilean colonial army³⁷

³⁴ ANH.CG vol. 917 item 1; ANH.CG vol. 876 item 13; AGI.Ch,25,R.1,N.43.

³⁵AGI.Ch,25,R.1,N.43.

³⁶ A small portion of these correspond to soldiers who were officers in companies of new recruits that were later dissolved when they reached Concepcion.

³⁷ANH.CG vol. 917 item 1; ANH.CG vol. 876 item 13; AGI.Ch,25,R.1,N.43.

For example, in the military base (*Tercio*) of Puren we find the Calvary company belonging to the Sergeant Major Bartolomé Pérez de Villagrán (commander of all the forces in Puren and the southern coastal forts), who within its total of 56 soldiers we see 1 Sergeant Major, 2 Captains, 5 Lieutenants, 4 Alféreces, 6 Sergeants, 1 Corporal, 1 Trumpeter, and 37 common soldiers.³⁸ In other words, there were 12 officers instead of the allotted three, who were the only ones who received active office's salaries. Another company in Puren, commanded by Captain Joseph Mendoza, shows the same pattern with 5 Captains, 5 Lieutenants, 2 Alférez, 1 Sergeant, 1 Corporal, 1 Trumpeter, and 39 common soldiers.³⁹ The same trend is found in every company on the 1693, 1700 and 1735 payrolls. In other words, hundreds of soldiers who on paper appeared as officers were serving as common soldiers in regular army companies and not in the companies of *Capitanes Reformados*. There were just too many officers to go around.

Colonial documentation indicates that many of the reinforcements that the Peruvian Viceroy sent to Chile were vagrants and petty criminals pulled off the streets of Lima or Quito. Some of these new soldiers saw military service as a natural extension of their previous activities and were intent on just surviving and not on setting down roots in their new surroundings. On the other hand, a large portion of the army saw military service, forced or voluntary, as a natural steppingstone on a path that included forming a family and owning a ranch or shop. Without a doubt, they knew that becoming an officer was an essential step in reaching those goals. For that reason, they tolerated or even praised the criminal actions of the military minority whose raids on peaceful Indian villages and Spanish ranches extended and reignited the often stagnate military conflict.

As Eugene Berger explained, Chile's colonial population depended economically on the *Real Situado*. Without its yearly influx of material goods from Lima, local civilian leaders feared the Concepcion economy would completely collapse. Therefore, it was in their best interest that minimal military conflicts continued from year to year. Each year that the conflict was extended meant that much needed supplies would arrive and a new group of soldiers would be able to become officers and form part of the emerging civilian

³⁸AGI.Ch,25,R.1,N.43.

³⁹AGI.Ch,25,R.1,N.43.

population. Just how that system worked is key to understanding the unnatural and intentional extension of Chile's military struggle.

Military Promotions in the Colonial Army in Chile: Valdivia 1646-1678

The widespread lack of surviving administrative military records for the 17th-century colonial army in Chile has limited many past attempts to analyze everyday military activities, such as promotions, food, and pay. That is not to say that precise accurate and detailed military records did not exist at one time, only that today few such records have been located due to the destruction of the quartermaster's archives in the tsunamis that destroyed the city of Concepcion in 1657 and again in 1730 and 1751.⁴⁰ That being said, one such document has been located, which allows us to see the service records of 26 soldiers stationed in the military enclave of Valdivia between the years 1646 and 1678. Similar service records have been found in petitions sent to the Spanish authorities by individual Chilean military officers hoping to obtain military and civilian advancement outside of Chile, however, the Valdivian document is unique because the 26 service records were recorded at the same time using a standard criterion.

The records form part of Judge Manuel Ibarra investigation into backpay owed to soldiers from the Valdivia garrison. The soldiers petitioned the Judge to take their cases for backpay personally to the Peruvian Viceroy. The requests of the 26 soldiers from the Valdivia garrison never made it to Viceroy and ended up in misfiled papers of the Real Audiencia of Chile, where the case was first presented⁴¹. The soldiers included as evidence that they were owed a substantial portion of their salaries, detailed copies of their service records, which include not only the amount of money they were and were not paid but the dates and amount of time they spent in each military position. It's this second part that allows us to better understand the Chilean colonial military system and how the lack of money to pay the soldier's complete salary led to the creation of a variety of methods where

⁴⁰ Stewart, Daniel M. "Historical tsunamis in the Concepcion Bay, as seen in the reconstructed flood levels from the colonial city of Concepción (Penco), Chile (1570-1835)", *Revista Historia*, N° 26, Vol. 2, 2019, pages 97-127; Stewart, Daniel M. "El terremoto de 1657 en Concepción, Chile. Un análogo colonial del terremoto en Maule 2010", *Cuadernos de Historia*, N° 55, December 2021, pages 191-221.

⁴¹ It is very probable that a report was created for each soldier in the Valdivia garrison and that for some unknown reason these 26 records never made it to Lima with the rest of the documentation, whose whereabouts today is unknown.

soldiers were paid in part with secondary benefits whose value was better appreciated once their military service was completed.

The twenty-six soldiers, from the fortress of Valdivia, whose service records we have, represent what we see in the other military installations in the colonial army in Chile during the seventeenth century. The group includes 2 Captains, 19 Alféreces (Ensign), 4 Sergeants and 1 Gunner.⁴² They averaged 17.5 years of military service with the longest having served a little over thirty-four years. While each of the soldiers used the privileges associated with their rank to present their case for back pay in the Spanish courts, a closer look at their service records shows us the hidden reality of the colonial officer within the Chilean army.⁴³

Before going into any more detail, we need to emphasize that the fortress of Valdivia and its series of frontier forts was not part of the main Chilean army. Its soldiers originated from the garrison of the Peruvian port of Callao and were paid with funds from their own *Real Situado*, which also never came to the amounts or timing that the law required. Most of Valdivia's military governors were *Capitanes Reformados* from the Chilean city of Concepcion, which further complicated its unique position, since most years the soldiers in Valdivia participated with the rest of the Chilean army in the summer military campaigns, receiving their military orders from the Chilean Governor.

The annual *Real Situado* of the Valdivia garrison consisted of two parts: first, three boats from the Chilean port of Valparaiso loaded with flour, meat, shoes, wine, and other foodstuffs supplied by Santiago's merchant class, and a fourth boat from the Peruvian port of Callao loaded with clothes, military supplies, and silver coins for the remaining portion of the soldier's pay. As with the *Real Situado* that went to the rest of the army in Concepcion, the monetary value of the supplies that reached Valdivia never was enough to pay the soldiers full salaries or accumulated war debts.⁴⁴ Each soldier received only a portion of his yearly salary and the unpaid portion was recorded on his service records under the pretext

⁴² Most officers only use the honorific term "don" in civilian records which during the XVI and XVII centuries shows a clear class distinction in Chile.

⁴³ ANH.RA vol. 2230 items 7,9, 11, service records of soldiers from the Valdivia garrison, 1678.

⁴⁴ Stewart, Daniel, *Elite Militar y formación económica de un espacio regional: Concepción, 1598-1700 (tierra, población y mercado)*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Chile, 2016.

that when more money arrived, they would be paid in full. For example, in 1657 one of the better years, the total value of the food and clothes that the common soldier received was valued at 104 pesos or 72% of the 144 pesos that corresponded for the yearly salary of the common soldier.⁴⁵ The remaining 40 pesos were recorded as pending on their individual service records.

While there are small variations in the service records of the twenty-six soldiers whose records we now have, they all show a specific pattern related to their advancement within the Valdivia garrison and how that advancement allowed them to receive benefits within the colonial society, when they retired and moved north to the cities of Concepcion or Santiago⁴⁶. The records show that on average after deducting their food costs and material pay, at inflated military prices, each soldier was owed nearly 40% of their accumulated salaries.⁴⁷ They also demonstrate that each was paid for the position they occupied and not the rank they had while occupying that position.

In order to better describe and analyze the patterns that appear within these service records and those of other soldiers in Concepcion, we will focus on a few specific soldiers, who represent what the group as a whole looks like. For example, Captain Francisco Espinoza joined the army as a common soldier on February 4th, 1644, in Peruvian port of Callao during the open enrollment for the expedition that rebuilt the fortress of Valdivia.⁴⁸ He served with a monthly salary of 20 pesos until February 10th, 1645, when he reenlisted as a common soldier with a salary now of only 12 pesos a month, a position he maintained until the 21st of November 1656 when he received the rank of Alférez (Ensign) with a salary of 30 pesos a month. However, eleven days later on December 2nd, he returned to his old position as a common soldier with a salary of 12 pesos a month. Five and a half years later, on June 2nd, 1662, he was called again to serve as Alférez and this time also as the company flag bearer with a combined salary of 42 pesos a month. This time he remained in the position for a little over a year before returning to his position as a common soldier on June 25th, 1663. Nine months later he received permission to go to Santiago for medical treatment

⁴⁵ ANH.RA vol. 1857 item 1.

⁴⁶ Valdivia was a military enclave and did not allow civilian settlement until the eighteenth century, for that reason upon retiring the Spanish soldiers emigrated north by boat to Concepcion.

⁴⁷ ANH.RA vol. 2230 items 7,9, 11, service records of soldiers from the Valdivia garrison, 1678.

⁴⁸ ANH.RA vol. 2230 items 7,9, 11, service records of soldiers from the Valdivia garrison, 1678.

from which he returned to active service as a common soldier on January 5th, 1665. Eight years later on January 19th, 1673, he was promoted to rank of Infantry Captain with a salary of 65 pesos a month, yet again just like his first promotion, one day later on January 20th he returned to his earlier position as a common soldier, this time with a new semi-retired officer's salary of 17.25 pesos a month. He was still in that position in 1678 when he petitioned the Viceroy for his backpay.

During the 34 plus years that Francisco Espinoza served as a soldier in Valdivia more than thirty-three were as a common soldier. That being said, he used the title of Alférez for 17 years and Captain during the last five. Other than the one year he served as company flag bearer, there is nothing in his service record that would place him within the ranks of the colonial officers. That said, he would retire as a Capitan, being able to use that title during the rest of his civilian life.

A second example is the Alférez Gregorio Quintero, who arrived in Valdivia as a common soldier on August 26th, 1657, as part of the reinforcements that were sent after the 1655 Indian revolt.⁴⁹ Over nine years later on September 25th, 1666, he was promoted to the rank of Corporal (*Cabo de Esquadra*), a position he held for the next eight years. In 1674, after seventeen years of military service he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant, a position he held for one day. A year and a half later, he was promoted to Alférez, where yet again he served only one day. After each promotion, he returned to his position as a common soldier. So, when he retired from the army the end of December 1676, Alférez Gregorio Quintero had during his 19 years of military service 1 day as a Sergeant and 1 day as an Alférez. Yet again, in the civilian world, he became a retired military officer, with access to land grants and *encomiendas*.

We see the same pattern with Alférez Domingo Valencia, who joined the garrison in Valdivia on December 16th, 1646, as a common soldier.⁵⁰ After nearly fifteen years of continuous military service, he was promoted to Corporal, a position he held for the next two-plus years. Then on November 29th, 1663, became a Sergeant and the next day on November 30th he returned to the ranks as a common soldier. A little over four years later

⁴⁹ANH.RA vol. 2230 items 7,9, 11, service records of soldiers from the Valdivia garrison, 1678.

⁵⁰ANH.RA vol. 2230 items 7,9, 11, service records of soldiers from the Valdivia garrison, 1678.

on December 30th, 1667, he was promoted to the rank of Alférez and two days later on January 1st, 1668 he returned yet again to the ranks of the common soldier, where he was in August 1678 when he petitioned the King for his back pay. In over thirty-two and a half years of military service, he had one day as a Sergeant and two days as an Alférez, a title he legally used for over the last twelve years of his military service.

Of the twenty-six soldiers whose service records we analyzed, 18 were promoted to Sergeant, 13 of which served for four or fewer days and only three remained at least one year in the position. Twenty-one of them became officers when they received the rank of Alférez, however, just as before, nineteen of the twenty-one served four days or less in the position before returning to the ranks as a common soldier. The only difference was that nine of the twenty-one Alférez returned to the position at a later date, where they were concurrently assigned the company flag, normally for a period of one year. The same pattern is seen with the four soldiers who became assistants to the Sergeant Major and the two who became Captains, only two of them served more than a couple of days in the position.⁵¹

⁵¹ANH.RA vol. 2230 items 7,9, 11, service records of soldiers from the Valdivia garrison, 1678.

Name and Rank	% of Military Service Common Soldier	% of Military Service Noncommissioned- Officer	% of Military Service Commissioned Officer
Alferez Balthazar Valencia	75,58%	24,39%	0,03%
Alferez Bernardo Chávez	89,72%	0,03%	10,25%
Alferez Cristobal Moya	99,97%	0,01%	0,01%
Alferez Domingo Valencia	92,95%	7,04%	0,01%
Alferez Estevan Núñez	99,98%	0,00%	0,02%
Alferez Gregorio del Castillo	85,56%	14,43%	0,02%
Alferez Gregorio Quintero	58,81%	41,17%	0,01%
Alferez Hernando Santander	96,71%	3,26%	0,02%
Alferez Ignacio Perez de la Cruz	95,87%	0,03%	4,10%
Alferez Joseph de Origuela	57,00%	28,32%	14,68%
Alferez Joseph Mejia Lugones	68,47%	22,12%	9,40%
Alferez Juan Cazar	99,92%	0,00%	0,08%
Alferez Juan Ruiz de Barahona	37,42%	62,56%	0,01%
Alferez Nicolas Vitor	81,61%	18,38%	0,01%
Alferez Pedro Ibarra	93,48%	6,48%	0,04%
Alferez Sebastian Polanco	99,95%	0,04%	0,01%
Ayudante Francisco Montero	90,59%	1,27%	8,13%
Ayudante Isidro Coronado	95,19%	0,01%	4,80%
Ayudante Joseph Beliz	72,61%	18,48%	8,91%
Capitan Francisco Espinoza	96,90%	0,00%	3,10%
Capitan Martin Parga	74,26%	0,00%	25,66%
Gunner Francisco Losada Quiñones	100,00%	0,00%	0,00%
Sergeant Diego de la Peña	91,79%	8,21%	0,00%
Sergeant Francisco Antonio Venegas	99,98%	0,02%	0,00%
Sergeant Jeronimo Villegas	63,57%	36,43%	0,00%
Sergeant Joseph Valdes	99,98%	0,02%	0,00%
	85,96%	11,09%	2,88%

Figure 5: Officers from the Valdivia garrison showing the distribution of their military service⁵²

A look at the twenty-six soldiers service records shows that while twenty-one were officers on paper, in total they had only spent an average of 3% of their military service in a post reserved for officers. Sixteen of the officers spent less than 1% of their military service as officers, while on average 86% percent of their time was spent as common soldiers, with the remaining 11% as noncommissioned officers. Yet most were like the Alferez Esteban Nuñez who in 15.5 years old military service spent only one day as an Alferez or Cristobal Moya who in nearly 21 years in Valdivia spent one day as Sergeant and one day as Alferez.

Similar patterns are seen in the service records that we have from soldiers in the main Chilean army in Concepcion. For example, Captain Pedro Gomez Granizo joined the army as a common soldier in Peru on November 10th, 1662.⁵³ He arrived shortly thereafter in Chile with the reinforcements brought in by Captain Julian Davila. Nearly ten years later on

⁵²ANH.RA vol. 2230 items 7,9, 11, service records of soldiers from the Valdivia garrison, 1678.

⁵³ANH.MLS, vol. 1.

October 1st, 1672, he was promoted to Corporal (Cabo de Esquadra), a position he held for a little of four months until on February 4th, 1673, he was promoted to Alférez where he served until March 8th, 1674, when he returned as a common soldier. Over three years later on April 29th, 1677, he became Lieutenant of a Calvary company, where he served for a little over a year until May 26th, 1678, when he went back to his position as a common soldier. Nearly two and a half years later, on October 10th, 1680, he was promoted to Infantry Captain and the next day joined one of the companies of *Capitanes Reformados*, where he served as a common soldier until his retirement on June 26th, 1685. Upon retiring he used his rank and military experience to become a successful merchant in Concepcion and was later able to move his family to the city of La Serena, where they formed part of the regional elite and received a land grant in the valley of Copiapo.

The same pattern is visible in the military records of officers who achieved even greater financial and social success after retiring from the military. One such officer was the Sergeant Major Francisco Heredia, who enjoyed one Concepcion's largest *encomiendas*, which provided him with laborers for his vineyards and fields.⁵⁴ He also served as Town Mayor and Corregidor of the city of Concepcion on more the one occasion. His military service spanned thirty-three plus years where he achieved the rank of Capitan and Sergeant Major. Even with his exceptional military record, only 16% of his military service corresponded to the time where he actively served as an officer. His economic and social status was in large part due to the fact that he was an officer on paper during 95% of his long military service.

Common Soldier	18 months
Alférez	1 day
Common Soldier	14 months
Alférez	16 months
Common Soldier	39 months
Infantry Captain	3 days
Common Soldier	13 months
Infantry Captain	12 months

⁵⁴ ANH.RA vol. 2496 item 4^a pages 240-241.

Common Soldier	79 months
Calvary Capitan	36 months
Common Soldier	160 months
Sergeant Major	1 day
Common Soldier	13 months

Figure 6: Francisco Heredia's military service record, 1668-1701⁵⁵

The described military records clearly show that many military promotions did not serve a specific military purpose. When Francisco Espinoza was promoted to Alférez and Capitan it was not with the intent of filling a vacancy within the command structure of the Valdivia garrison. There were no delusional ideas that his promotion would integrate him within the military elite of Valdivia or allow him to be at the same level as the Spanish governor or garrison commander. There was no anger or resentment upon returning to the ranks as a normal soldier because in reality he and each of those who had been promoted never left their positions or duties as a common soldier. What they did know was that with their promotion, they could obtain, in the future, an officer's position within the regular command structure, a position in the company of the *Capitanes Reformados*, or the possibility of retiring from military service. Furthermore, in the case of Francisco Espinoza, while his rank did not provide him with a specific military post within the garrison of Valdivia, it did allow him to travel to Santiago for medical attention, and later upon retiring return to the city as a respected officer with a long distinguished military career.

Military Promotions in colonial Chile: debts and paperwork

So how exactly did a common soldier get a promotion? What were the costs involved and who made the choice as to whom to promote and who not to? Fernando Silva is a recent article explained how the Spanish government in Madrid sold government posts in Chile and throughout her American colonies during the 17th-century to the highest bidder.⁵⁶ Jorge

⁵⁵ ANH.RA vol. 2496 ítem 4^a pages 240-241.

⁵⁶ Silva Vargas, Fernando, *Notas sobre la venta de honores, oficios y plazas en Indias y en Chile (1650-1750)*, Boletín de la Academia Chilena de la Historia, Año LXXVI-Nº 119-2010, pages 47-90. Jiménez Estrella, Antonio. "El precio de las almenas: ventas de alcaldías de fortalezas reales en época de los Austrias", *Revista de Historia Moderna*, num. 22, 2004, pages 143-172; Jiménez Estrella, Antonio. "Militares y oficiales de la administración militar: estrategias de ascenso social e integración en las elites del reino de Granada durante el siglo XVI". In *La movilidad social en la España del Antiguo Régimen*, Editorial Comares, Granada, 2007,

Abarca showed the same reality in Chile itself during the 17th-century by analyzing the payments (bribes) that numerous high-ranking officers made to the local governor for their posts in the King's army and the colonial administration.⁵⁷ What is clear is that career officers within the military command structure such as company and base commanders all purchased their positions.⁵⁸ The same is true for the Corregidores who were named by the governor.

Garrison commanders and other active-duty army officials were able to use their positions to control the cross-border trade with Chile's indigenous communities and the sale of wine and other merchandise inside the forts. The profits from these lucrative business ventures allowed them to recover what they had invested in purchasing their posts, all the while solidifying their post-military business empires.⁵⁹

Therefore, it should surprise no one that military promotions or ranks were also purchased from the Spanish governor. While little documentation exists today detailing the purchase of positions within the military command structure, the purchase of military promotions was recorded in colonial treasury records, which were rarely questioned or audited before the eighteenth century.

The system of buying promotions within the colonial army in Chile came to a temporary halt in 1695 when the governor's personal secretary Juan Ugarte filed suit against the local government for backpay and fraud in his purchase of the position of the governor's personal secretary.⁶⁰ He claimed that he was owed the royalties that were collected on the official decrees that he produced since he had paid the astronomical price of 8000 pesos for the position, which had been confirmed by the Court in Madrid⁶¹. As evidence of the work

pages 193-221; Jiménez Estrella, Antonio. "Poder, dinero y ventas de oficios y honores en la España del antiguo régimen: un estado de la cuestión", Cuadernos de Historia Moderna, vol. 37, 2012, pages 259-272.

⁵⁷Abarca, Jorge, *La corrupción burocrática: corruptos, corruptores, delitos y justicia en Chile colonial (1621-1700)*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Chile, 2010.

⁵⁸Andrien Kenneth J, *The sale of fiscal offices and the decline of royal authority in the Viceroyalty of Peru, 1633-1700*, in the Hispanic American Historical Review, #62, 1982, pages 49-71; Rodríguez Ridaeo, Antonio Luis. "La administración del Real Situado en tiempos del gobernador Tomás Marín de Poveda: corrupción en detrimento del Ejército de Chile (1692-1700)", Revista Complutense de Historia de América, N° 43, 2017, pages 101-126.

⁵⁹Stewart, Daniel, *Elite Militar y formación económica de un espacio regional: Concepción, 1598-1700 (tierra, población y mercado)*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Chile, 2016.

⁶⁰ANH.RA VOL. 2102 item 8.

⁶¹AGI.Ch, 38,N.15, Confirmación de oficio: Juan de Ugarte Urrispuro.

he had done during the last three years, he presented his logbook that showed hundreds of notarized documents that he or his assistants had produced between the years 1692 and 1695, and the commission (fee) that had been paid for each one⁶². He further claimed that military accountants had failed to deduct the cost of the purchased ranks from the recently arrived *Real Situado*.⁶³

While many of the official documents were decrees naming new local government officials or organizing *encomiendas*, nearly a third were military promotions. Each rank had a specific monetary value that if not paid upfront, was later deducted from the soldiers pay upon the arrival of the next *Real Situado*. A Captaincy was worth either 34 pesos (Infantry) or 42 pesos (Cavalry), while the title of Alférez, Lieutenant, or Staff Officer cost 13.75 pesos. Even non-commissioned officers such as Sergeants had to pay a specific fee.⁶⁴ Between the years 1692 and 1695, soldiers in the army in Chile purchased 164 promotions from the governor's secretary. Another 77 promotions were purchased by local landowners in the regions of Maule, Colchagua, and Aconcagua, where militia companies had been formed to protect the local inhabitants.⁶⁵

⁶² The fees that were paid were not recorded in the books from the Caja Real or Real Hacienda and were only written in the secretary's personal records. He would later charge the military quartermaster who would deduct the price from each soldier's individual accounts.

⁶³ The fees were not deducted from the *Real Situado* that arrived in 1695 because it corresponded to the year 1689.

⁶⁴ ANH.RA vol. 2102 item 8.

⁶⁵ Very little has been written about the colonial militia in Chile, especially during the 17th century. What is known is that the inhabitants of Santiago and the countryside assigned to the city were divided into militia companies. Mario Góngora makes reference to the companies that were present in Santiago in 1655: Góngora, Mario. *Encomenderos y estancieros: Estudios acerca de la constitución social aristocrática de Chile después de la conquista 1580-1660*. Universidad de Chile Sede de Valparaíso. Santiago, 1970.

General Army Ranks		
Rank	Media Anta Tax	# Number of Recipients
Field Marshall	50 pesos	2
Sergeant Major	50 pesos	2
Commissioner General	42 pesos 1 real	6
Calvary Captain	42 pesos 1 real	11
Infantry Capitan	34 pesos 3 reales	60
Lieutenant	13 pesos 6 reales	14
Alférez	13 pesos 6 reales	37
Fort Commander	12 pesos	8
Sergeant	8 pesos	19
Staff Officer	13 pesos 6 reales	5
Total	4019 pesos 1 real	164
Militia Ranks		
Rank	Media Anata Tax	# Number of Recipients
Militia Field Marshall	15 pesos	8
Militia Sergeant Major	15 pesos	2
Militia Captain	15 pesos	37
Militia Lieutenant	8 pesos	7
Militia Alférez	8 pesos	23
Total	945 pesos	77

Figure 7: Military titles sold by Juan Ugarte between 1692 and 1695⁶⁶

When pressed to explain how the system worked, Juan Ugarte explained that in April 1692 he deputized the Captains Antonio Veni Varron and Miguel Oñate to be his Lieutenants and to create decrees and titles for him in Concepcion and Chiloé. In 1692, Miguel Oñate reported that he charged the *Real Situado* 629.5 pesos for military promotions that he had sold earlier that year and later accompanied his testimony with a list of all the promotions that he had sold over the next three years. While most soldiers over the three-year period only purchased one promotion, there were some notable exceptions, such as Alférez Joseph Astorga who in 1693 purchased the ranks of Calvary Captain and Infantry Captain. He then requested (purchased) a pass to be able to travel to Santiago to see his family. We also have Fernando Bustamante, who while serving in the fort of Arauco purchased the ranks of Alférez and Infantry Captain.

While military promotions were not the only documents that Juan Ugarte created and sold for the Spanish governor, they represented a large portion of his income. Their

⁶⁶ ANH.CG vol. 917 item 1; AGI.Ch,25,R.1,N.43.

importance increases even further when all the costs related to *encomienda* and land titles by the newly promoted soldiers are included in the equation. Furthermore, Ugarte's records confirm the separation between him and the military command structure in the purchase of ranks or promotions. The sale of promotions was a civilian exercise detached from the internal military networks used to fill vacancies within the command structure. Records show that while any soldier could purchase a military promotion from Juan Ugarte or one of his lieutenants, officers would purchase a vacant officer's command position from the governor or one of his aides in a separate financial transaction. However, it should be noted that base commanders did have to purchase their titles from the secretary, after they were awarded the post by the Spanish Governor.

Colonization and frontier expansion by semi-retired officers: Chile (1670-1700)

A clear example of the non-military usage of purchased promotions can be seen in Capitan Felipe Arce. He was born in Santiago, Chile around 1660.⁶⁷ On the 26th of March 1676, he enlisted in the company that Francisco Garcia de Sobarzo organized in Santiago. Upon arriving in Concepcion he was assigned to one of the Yumbel infantry companies where he served for the next thirteen years. Sometime during that time period, he received the rank of corporal and on 16th of December 1689, the Governor of Chile Joseph Garro promoted him to the rank of Alférez in the same company, a position he held for a total of eleven days.⁶⁸ The 1693 payroll list shows Felipe Arce as a common soldier first in Yumbel and then in Arauco.⁶⁹ In early 1694 he purchased the rank of Capitan from Juan Ugarte, where he presented himself only as "don Felipe Arce." On March 22nd, 1694, he received an *encomienda* of two Indian youth that he had acquired during his years as a soldier. In his application he referred to himself as "Capitan Felipe Arce" and that he was a "*Vecino Morador*" of the city of Concepcion⁷⁰. A few months later, on November 15th he officially

⁶⁷ ANH.RA vol. 544, item 1, pages 84-86, testimony of Captain Felipe Arce Cabeza de Vaca, Concepción, 1710.

⁶⁸ ANH.CG vol. 839, pages 277-280, service records of Capitan Felipe Arce, Concepción, 1701.

⁶⁹ This is no surprise since as mentioned earlier the 1693 payroll was covering the years 1688-1689.

⁷⁰ "*Vecino Morador*" is a legal term that indicates that first he was living in the city of Concepcion and second that his social status was accepted by the town council.

retired from the military. In 1710 and 1717, he testified in civil court cases where he referred to himself as “Capitan Felipe Arce Cabeza de Vaca”.⁷¹

On December 6th, 1701, the Quartermasters Office in Concepcion presented Felipe Arce with a copy of his military records, to which he included his promotion letter from Joseph Garro where he received the rank of Alférez⁷². Strangely, his service record makes no reference to his promotion to Corporal or Capitan. While, overlooking his promotion to Corporal would be understandable considering his future promotion to Alférez, not recording a registered promotion to Capitan would not be. Simply put, he never registered his promotion because its only purpose was to position himself within the civilian population of the city of Concepcion.

A second example can be seen in Capitan Mateo de la Jara Villaseñor. He was born in Concepcion in 1662 and in 1690 joined the army in Yumbel, where his family had their ranch.⁷³ In 1694 he purchased two Captaincies from Miguel Oñate for positions within the recently formed Rere civilian militia. However, he appears on the 1693 regular army payroll as a common soldier, with a secondary note referring to the fact that he had joined too late to be part of the main list.⁷⁴ In 1700 he appeared on the payroll as a common soldier in Tucapel⁷⁵. That said, in March 1697 he requested 1500 cuerdas of land outside of the fort of Nacimiento, where he referred to himself as “Capitan Mateo de la Jara Villaseñor with ten years of military service⁷⁶.” Shortly after the year 1700, Mateo retired from the army, using regularly in civil court cases and commercial records the title “Capitan Mateo de la Jara Villaseñor”.⁷⁷

A third example can be seen in the city of Chillán where we find the Alférez Estevan Lagos. Sometime around 1690, he joined the town council as the chief procurement officer and tax collector.⁷⁸ In 1693 he appears on the army payroll in the Chillán Calvary company

⁷¹ ANH.RA vol. 544, item 1, pages 84-86, testimony of Captain Felipe Arce Cabeza de Vaca, Concepcion, 1710; ANH.RA vol. 2606, pages 260-261, testimony of Capitan Antonio Vidal, Concepcion, 1717.

⁷² ANH.CG vol. 839, pages 277-280, service records of Capitan Felipe Arce, Concepcion, 1701.

⁷³ ANH.RA vol. 219, ítem 1, probate records for Comisario General Tomas Sotomayor, Concepción 1719.

⁷⁴ AGI.Ch,25,R.1,N.43.

⁷⁵ ANH.CG vol. 917 item 1.

⁷⁶ ANH.CG vol. 124, page 402, land grant to Capitan Mateo de la Jarra Villaseñor, Concepción, 1697.

⁷⁷ ANH.RA vol. 219, ítem 1, probate records for Comisario General Tomas Sotomayor, Concepción 1719.

⁷⁸ ANH.RA vol. 1206, item 1, Chillán City Council, 1686.

with the rank of Alférez.⁷⁹ During that same year, he purchased the rank of Infantry Captain from Juan Ugarte. However, on the payroll from the year 1700, he appears only as an Alférez in the Chillán Infantry Company.⁸⁰ That being said, over the next twenty years consistently used the title of “Capitan Estevan Lagos” in civil court cases and city council documents.⁸¹

The same pattern can be seen with Andres Gonzalez de Meneses who was born in 1654.⁸² In 1693 he appears as the Lieutenant in Capitan Antonio Perez de Valenzuela’s Calvary company in the fort of Arauco.⁸³ That same year he purchased the rank of Infantry Captain from Miguel Oñate. In 1700 he appears still as a Lieutenant, but this time as a common soldier in a Calvary Company in the city of Concepcion.⁸⁴ A civil court case from that same year indicates that “Capitan Andres Gonzalez de Meneses” had been hired to administer the hacienda Tomeco near Yumbel.⁸⁵ Over the next decade, Andres would appear many more times using the title of Capitan.⁸⁶

Juan Ugarte sold 164 military regular army promotions during the three years that we were able to analyze. Of the officers who purchased their ranks between the years 1692-1695, some 94 (57%) of them appear on the military payroll for the year 1700. After subtracting those that purchased more than one promotion, we are left with 83 different soldiers who purchased promotions from Juan Ugarte who were still active in the military in the year 1700. Since the 1700 payroll corresponded to the year before the ranks purchased from Juan Ugarte, only 33 of them appear on the official payroll using the rank they purchased. The other 50 appear either without a recorded rank or with the rank they had when they purchased the promotion.⁸⁷ Some of those who appear without ranks such as

⁷⁹AGI.Ch,25,R.1,N.43.

⁸⁰ANH.CG vol. 917 item 1.

⁸¹ANH.RA vol. 1206, item 1, Chillán City Council, 1686; ANH.RA vol. 698, item, Capitan Esteban Lagos purchased 2000 cuerdas of the Estancia Larque near Chillán, 1700-1719; ANH.CG vol. 434, page 520, receipt for 5 arrobas a wine from the Jesuits in Concepcion, 1711.

⁸²ANH.CG vol. 171, pages 364-367, testimony by Capitan Andres Gonzales de Meneses, age 55 years, Concepcion, 1709.

⁸³AGI.Ch,25,R.1,N.43.

⁸⁴ ANH.CG vol. 917 item 1.

⁸⁵ANH.RA vol. 1347, item 2, pages 138-142, administrative records for Tomeco, 1700-1704.

⁸⁶ANH.CG vol. 31, pages 11-11v, request for four former Indian slaves by Capitan Andres Gonzales de Meneses, Concepcion, 1703; ANH.CG vol. 171, pages 364-367, testimony by Capitan Andres Gonzales de Meneses, age 55 years, Concepcion, 1709.

⁸⁷ This occurred because the payroll for the year 1700 was backpay for the year 1690-1692 which meant that ranks purchased that year were not included.

Antonio Gasco de la Torre, Antonio Garces, Domingo Quijada, Juan Ortiz de Zuñiga, Fernando Tello de Guzman, Juan Luna, and Pedro Arias de Molina appear in numerous civil records using their purchased ranks, in similar fashion as those previously mentioned above.

While some of the soldiers only purchased military promotions, a group of them also were able to use their promotions to receive land grants (*mercedes de tierras*). Most of the land grants during the last three decades of the 17th-century were located in the frontier regions of Chillán, Laja, and Ultra-Biobío.⁸⁸ Dozens of semi-retired officers requested land grants based on the created merits of their military service. The previously mentioned Mateo de la Jara Villaseñor used his recently purchased Captaincy in the recently formed Rere militia company to infer that he had served the King for nearly ten years as an Infantry Captain, for which he received 1500 *cuadras* (5800 acres) of prime farming land just south of the Bio-Bio River.⁸⁹

An analysis of the colonial documentation for the dioceses of Concepcion, which included all the frontier military installations, reveals that between the years 1670-1700 the Spanish governors awarded 351 land grants.⁹⁰ Within that group, 302 (86%) were awarded to petitioners who used their rank as officers and years of military service as the basis of their land grant petitions.⁹¹ The other 14% of the land grants corresponded to noncommissioned officers (4%), sons of military officers (7%) and daughters or widows of military officers (3%). None of the 351 land grants used any pretext other than military service in petitioning the Spanish crown.

⁸⁸Stewart, Daniel, “*Colonización Española en la Ultra-Biobío: 1641-1713*”, en *Historia de Arauco Nuevos Aportes: XII Garcíadas Cañetinas*, Trama Impresores S.A, Hualpén, Chile, 2016, paginas 105-131.

⁸⁹ANH.CG vol. 480 page 49, land grant for Capitan Mateo de la Jara Villaseñor.

⁹⁰Stewart, Daniel, “*Colonización Española en la Ultra-Biobío: 1641-1713*”, en *Historia de Arauco Nuevos Aportes: XII Garcíadas Cañetinas*, Trama Impresores S.A, Hualpén, Chile, 2016, paginas 105-131; Stewart, Daniel, *Elite Militar y formación económica de un espacio regional: Concepción, 1598-1700 (tierra, población y mercado)*, Doctoral Thesis, University of Chile, 2016.

⁹¹The same pattern can be seen in earlier land grants in other regions of Chile.

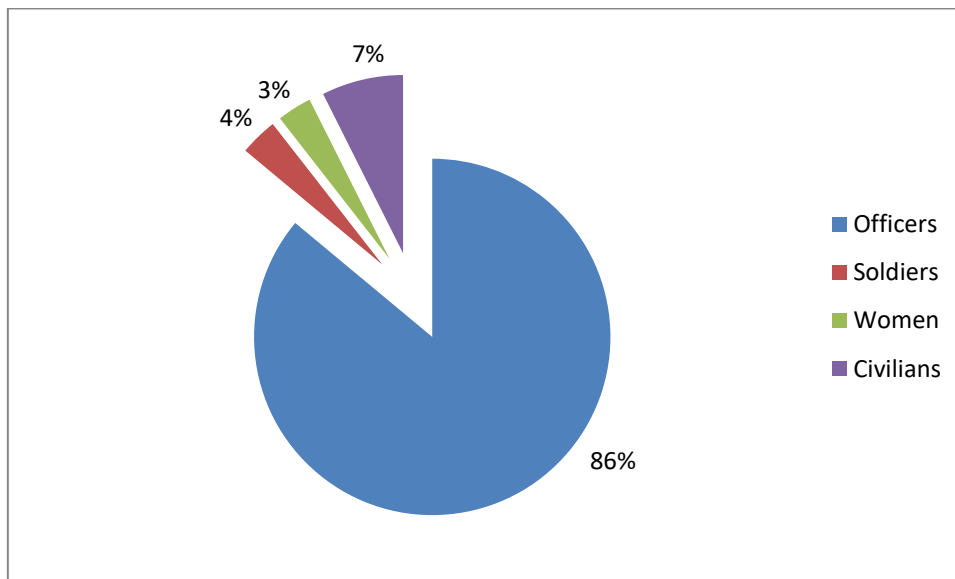


Figure 8: Social distribution of the recipients of land grants in Concepcion (1670-1700)⁹²

The same pattern can be seen on a similar scale with the Chilean *encomienda* system. For example, the Spanish governor awarded 532 *encomiendas* between the years 1670 and 1679.⁹³ Of this select group, 332 (62%) were officers using their military service to petition the king, 1% were noncommissioned officers, 15% were sons of deceased officers, and the remaining 22% were daughters and widows of deceased officers. As with the land grants, all the petitioners used their military service and that of their ancestors in their original petitions.⁹⁴

⁹²ANH.CG vols. 8, 39, 68, 74, 86, 89, 171, 189, 402, 431, 449, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 580, 841, 846; ANH.RA vols. 412, 1272; ANH.ES vol. 343.

⁹³ The decade 1670-1679 corresponds to the end of legalized Indian slavery. Most slaveholders choose to change the legal status of their Indians from slaves to *encomienda* which explains the extremely large number of *encomiendas* in this period. For more information about the new *encomienda* system and its implementation within the Chilean society refer to, Stewart, Daniel, "*Indian labor: the evolution of the *encomienda* and indigenous slavery within Chile's 17th century frontier society*" in the book "*América en diásporas*", edited by Jaime Valenzuela, Santiago 2016.

⁹⁴Most *encomiendas* started with a petition to the King that was submitted to the governor which followed this general pattern, "el capitan Pedro Verdejo dice que ha servido a su magestad en la guerra de este reino en el tercio de Arauco 30 años...". (The capitan Pedro Verdejo says that he has served your Majesty 30 years in this kingdom's war in the *Tercio* of Arauco.) ANH.CG vol. 473 folio 100.

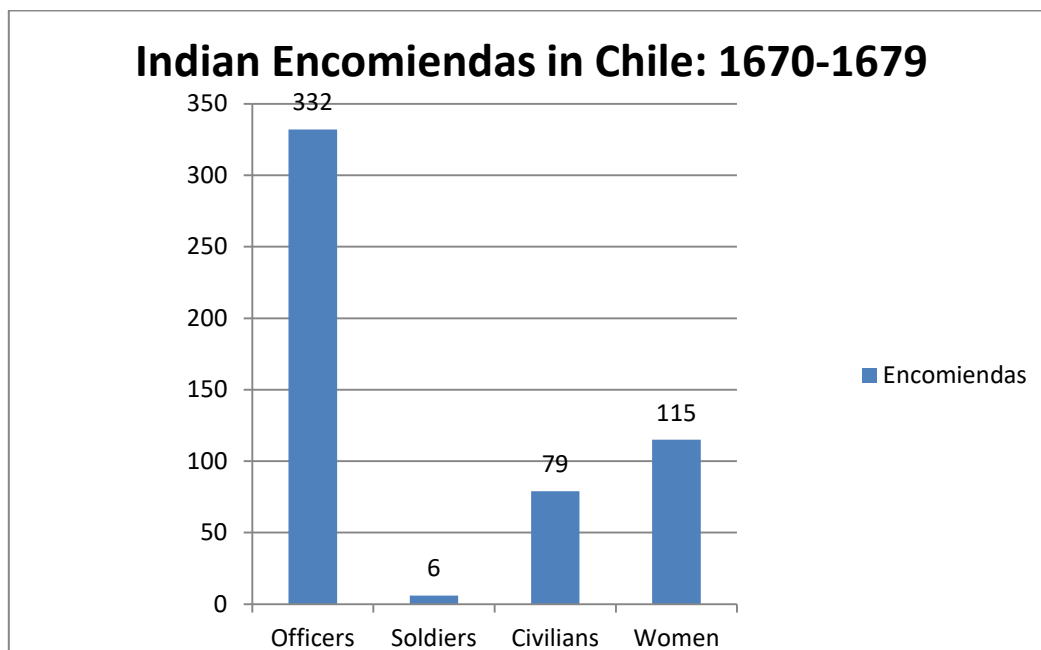


Figure 9: Social makeup of recipients of *encomiendas*, Chile 1670-1679⁹⁵

Just as with the purchase of military promotions, obtaining land grants and encomiendas required secondary payments to the Governor's secretary for the creation of the official titles and deeds of ownership. Further payments were then needed to survey the land and clearly mark the boundaries, for future land acquisitions.

Final Thoughts and Conclusions

The military historian Geoffrey Parker explains that one of the main factors that affected the overall military readiness in Europe during the 17th-century was the high turnover of qualified soldiers and the evolution in the recruiting practices. Both factors were also heavily felt by the Spain's American colonies, who had to defend themselves from hostile natives and European superpowers. The colony of Chile found itself in a unique situation within the 17th-century Spanish empire in that its local population was insufficient

⁹⁵ ANH.CG vols. 29, 57, 83, 402, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 500, 501, 524, 527, 547, 551, 552, 563, 565, 580, 841, 846; ANH.RA vols. 1106, 1264, 2500; ANH.ES vol. 343; ANH.CMI vol. 1198, 1200, 1201.

for its military manpower needs and its periphery location made it imperative to maintain in a high level of military readiness against potential European threats.

Geoffrey Parker's 17th-century military revolution did not contemplate what would happen to the soldiers once they left the military or the specific technical differences between those serving in Europe in comparison to those in Spain's colonies.⁹⁶ While most ex-soldiers in Europe technically were able to return to their homes upon finishing their military service, those sent to defend the interests of the crown in one of her overseas colonies did not have this option. For them, it was imperative to integrate themselves within the new American society.

Many of the soldiers in colonial Chile joined the military with an eye for glory and riches. However, for most of them, the accumulation of material wealth was impossible due to irregular pay, harsh living conditions and the lack of everything except the bare minimum needed to sustain life. For that reason, most were forced to use what little they received of their salary to buy essential items such as wine and clothes in order to maintain their basic living conditions. Even during the best years, a substantial portion of the money allotted for military salaries was spent on other essential items related to the war effort and not the regular soldier's salaries. Year after year the soldiers accumulated unpaid salaries with little or no hope of ever being paid in full.

As a direct consequence, many soldiers or their families were forced to purchase items with credit in stores run by their commanding officers at artificially high prices, thus shifting the unpaid salaries from the soldier's account to that of their commanding officers. Such debts were collected upon arrival of the *Real Situado*, leaving many soldiers with no salary whatsoever. The lack of money in the forts and frontier cities, in general, caused rampant price inflation, where prices on some common products such as wine or flour doubled or tripled before finally reaching the soldiers and their families. For example, a barrel of wine that sold for 3 pesos in Concepcion, sold for 12 pesos in the military base of Valdivia. Furthermore, since the amount of wine that entered the fort each year was far

⁹⁶ Parker, Geoffrey. *The army of Flanders and the Spanish road, 1567-1659*. Cambridge Press, 1972; *The military revolution: Military innovation and the rise of the west 1500-1800*, Cambridge Press, 1988.

below the demand, the officers who received the overpriced wine as part of their salaries were able to resell it for even larger profits.⁹⁷

Some soldiers were able to use strategic friendships within the military to enter into a system that allowed them to use part of their backpay to increase their social status outside of the military. The only way for a common soldier to ascend socially was by becoming an officer, however, the army only had a finite number of positions for officers, all of which were normally held either by career soldiers who came over from the wars in Flanders or by friends and relatives of the current governor.

This lack of opportunity for promotion within the ranks was solved by the creation of companies of semi-retired officers, whose ranks were bolstered yearly by common soldiers who used their connections to purchase promotions such as *Alférez*, *Lieutenant*, or *Captain* with a portion of their back pay. As an officer, on paper, they were able to petition the King, through the governor, for land grants, *encomiendas*, a spot in one of the companies of *Capitanes Reformados*, and other government benefits, all of which were paid for with their accumulated unpaid salaries.

During the 17th-century hundreds if not thousands of common soldiers used part of their back pay to become officers. Many who purchased their ranks, semi-retired soon thereafter and settled down in the city of Concepcion as distinguished officers, as shown in future requests for benefits from the King or applications for government employment. Their children also used their rank and social status to receive their own benefits, thus changing their lives as well. Consequently, for the great majority of the Spanish soldiers in Chile during the 17th-century, the purchasing of a military title had little to nothing to do with the Arauco Indian War and everything to do with securing their place with a closed class society of the Spanish empire.

By the end of the 17th-century, unlike what occurred in other frontier outposts of the Spanish Empire, where most soldiers immigrated back to distant urban centers upon retiring, southern Chile had a thriving militarized economy with hundreds of haciendas, whose

⁹⁷ Stewart, Daniel M. "Las viñas de Concepción: distribución, tamaño y comercialización de su producción durante el siglo XVII", *RIVAR*, Vol. 2 N° 4, 2015, pages 106-124; Alioto, Sebastián Leandro. "La rebelión indígena de 1693: desnaturalización, violencia y comercio en la frontera de Chile", *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, vol. 71, N° 2, 2014, pages 503-537.

founders had served actively in the Chilean army. The strength of the economic bonds formed within the ranks of the army opened permanent trade routes with the Mapuche Indians and led to the reduction of standing army from 2000 soldiers in the 17th-century to 500 by 1750. Furthermore, these innate social bonds allowed future Spanish governors to create the frontier towns of Coelemu, Hualqui, Los Angeles, Nacimiento, Quirihue, Rere, Santa Barbara, Talcamavida, Tucapel, and Yumbel, during the latter half of the eighteenth century.