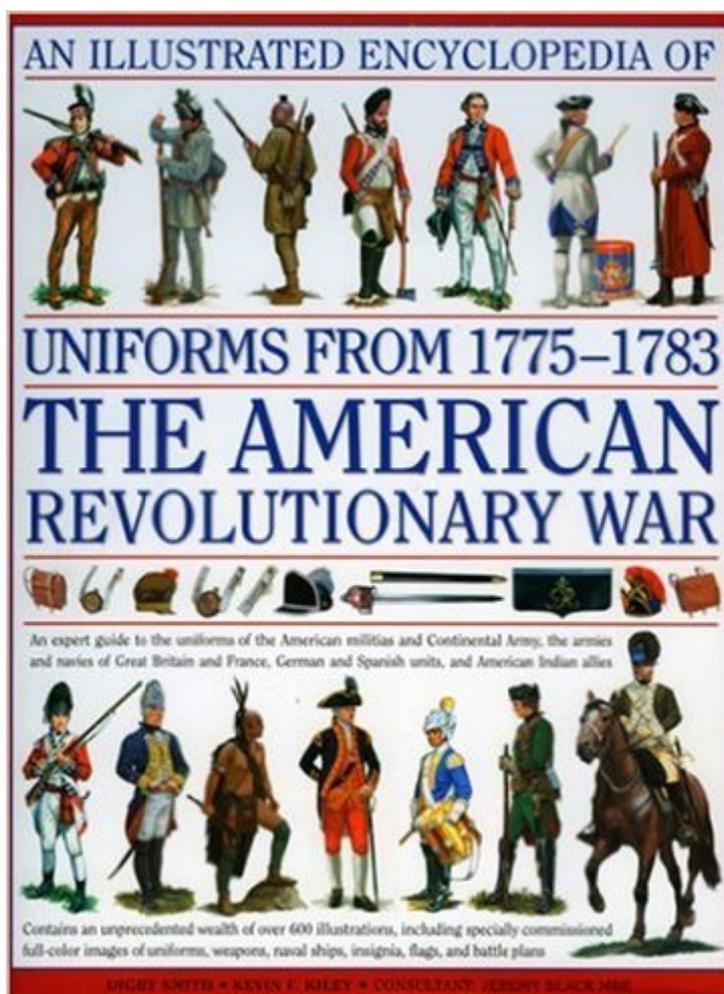


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An Illustrated History Of Uniforms From 1775-1783: The American Revolutionary War



Synopsis

A definitive analysis of the weapons, equipment, deployment, tactics and motivation of these national forces, as well as fascinating detail of day-to-day life for the soldiers that fought the battles

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have to say I have been waiting for this book for quite some time, having first ordered it back in May & apparently there was a long delay in actually having it in stock to ship. It finally arrived today & I am quite pleased, not only as an American Revolution buff & reenactor but this is the first book since John Mollo's *Uniforms of the American Revolution* from 1976 to feature a well-illustrated guide to ALL the forces of the War for Independence. Even the Spanish forces made "the cut"! There are a number of errors which hopefully will be corrected in a future 2nd edition including the unfortunate transposing of uniform figures with the captions such as a British Legion private & Newfoundland Regiment soldier on page 157 (No idea why this unit was included, they never fired a shot in action nor left Canada!), the 1st Continental Light Dragoon captioned as an "officer" is actually a sergeant due to the yellow epaulette on the right shoulder & the slung carbine. There's also a bit of "creative licence" with small-clothes such as substituting black for green for the private & officer of Sherburne's Regiment. Also quite a few uniform captions have dates too early or late for the figure depicted. While many of the illustrations might not exactly break new ground or show too many uniforms not shown before, the book does get major points for showing the full "rainbow" of Continental Infantry uniforms including early-war Militia, the Continental Army of 1776, the Additional Continental Regiments, red-clad Patriots of Webb's Continentals & the 1st Connecticut, Riflemen &

Light Infantry, frontier units, a wide variety of the German hired troops, French forces as well as both early & late-war Continental Marine uniforms & state navies. The inclusion of Native Indian & substantial coverage of Loyalist troops' uniforms also contributes to the book's wide ranging value. About the only section I found to be a bit sparse was that covering the Continental Light Dragoons. For a book that covered so much it's odd not to see a green-uniformed 4th Light Dragoon in addition to the early captured red-faced blue British uniforms or a 1779-regulation-uniformed 1st/2nd Light Dragoon with blue-faced white. A somewhat unforgivable example of sloppy scholarship/editing is a private & officer of the Virginia regiments dressed according to the 1779 regulations but shown in blue-faced blue with white lace which was assigned to the North & South Carolina & Georgia regiments. Virginia was in the Mid-Atlantic group with Delaware, PA & Maryland which was to have red facings. Also the captioning of a 1779-regulation private of the New York or New Jersey Line as belonging to the red-faced Pennsylvania Line. What also strikes me as rather odd was almost identical illustrations of gunners in the British Artillery section. The section on navies & ships of the War is also very informative & a nice bonus considering the book is predominantly focused on uniforms. The lengthy introduction should be quite useful for younger readers or as a nice refresher to the subject. As a former member of the recreated 2nd Light Dragoons/Tallmadge's Troop I couldn't help but notice that the uniform depicted was the blue-faced buff which may not be totally accurate. It would have been much more accurate to show a 2nd LD private in 1779-regulation white facings or the rare 1780 green-faced white uniform. I don't fault the research done way back in 1949-50 for the Company of Military Historians plate, but surviving paintings & artworks which show buff facings may simply be white facings faded with age. It's often said that "too many cooks spoil the pie" & in this case I am inclined to agree since it seems like if one author had written the book on his own (yes, a monumental undertaking, but John Mollo did OK 23 years ago!) & the book had more efficient editing/fact-checking we would have a very definitive work. The book could definitely have benefitted from the input of authors/researcher members from the Company of Military Historians in the editing process. This is still a very valuable work which I highly recommend especially for younger readers & really hope a revised edition is in the future. Update 5/5/09: To "retort" to another reviewer of this book, even the "EXPERTS" do make mistakes on occasion, especially as here in the editing process. It isn't "quibbling" to dispute errors of uniform depictions/facing colors but rather getting the facts right for the period depicted even if the difference is 1777 instead of 1776. Would you not question say, Robert E. Lee being shown wearing a purple frock coat instead of grey?

Review of AN ILLUSTRATED ENCYCLOPEDIA OF UNIFORMS FROM 1775-1783, THE AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR, by Digby Smith and Kevin Kiley. First and foremost: this is a big beautiful book, full of color and useful information. I paid \$23 for it through . It is a great value for the money. My credentials as a reviewer are twofold: I'm a Ph.D. in American history, with my focus on the Revolution; and, I've been collecting AWI miniatures since 1961, Jack Scruby 30mms that are still serving alongside my Hinchliffes of the 1970's and my Old Glory and Perry 28s from the present. What I am NOT is an expert of uniforms. I depend on published sources for information I need to paint my miniatures as accurately as I reasonably can, but I do not obsess over small details - particularly ones that do not show in 28mm. I bought Mollo's and Elting's books on AWI uniforms when they were published in the 1970's, and I own all the relevant Ospreys, etc. published since then. I found only a little NEW information in the ENCYCLOPEDIA. Many of the uniforms illustrated are clearly derived from the Mollo or Elting book. Nevertheless, I am glad I bought this new book. The illustrations are large and clear, usually from a different angle, with the soldier in a different pose. It is also useful to have all this information in one volume. There was a significant exception to the "no new information" statement. If one visits the website of the Company of Military Historians, one can see small and not-very-clear reproductions of SOME of the plates from this organization's great collection of plates illustrating "Military Uniforms in America." Elting's book contains many, but not more than half, or less, of these. But a good many of these plates are no longer available from the Company, and one cannot see them unless one goes to a library that has them (which few do). This new ENCYCLOPEDIA contains figures that I am confident are derived from the Company's series, but which I had never been able to see. These include such as the Baltimore Troop of Light Dragoons, Richardson's South Carolina Light horse, the Illinois Troop of Virginia Light Dragoons (two figures), De La Porte's French Company of Virginia State Forces, the Virginia Frontier Independent Company, Stockbridge Indians, Dabney's Virginia State Legion, and the Virginia State Navy (three figures). For me, these illustrations alone are easily worth the small cost of this book. The section on warships seems very useful, and the Spanish section is new information to me. There ARE problems. I suspect that no single editor read both the text AND the notes to the illustrations. Two examples I noticed are probably representative of others. On p. 135 is an illustration of a drummer of the 4th Foot in blue coat faced red. The text on the same page explains (correctly) that musicians of Royal Regiments with blue facings, such as the 4th, wore red coats faced blue. A less experienced reader will not know which of these conflicting bits of information is correct, and (by my guess) is more likely to assume that the illustration is correct, which it is not. On p. 188 is an illustration of an officer of the "Musketeer Regiment von Knyphausen"

(clearly derived from Mollo and making the same mistake) while the table of Hessian units on the same page correctly lists von Knyphausen as a fusilier regiment. So . . . this is a useful volume, well worth the price, but which seems to have uncritically used a great deal of information from earlier books, repeating mistakes as well as accurate information. I will use it a lot in painting my armies, and I also will enjoy just reading and looking through it. I do recommend it. My only caveat would be for gamers new to the period to be careful about relying on this book only. But the older books often contain the same errors, unfortunately.

This is a massive and impressive work on the uniforms of troops fighting during the American Revolution. Many previous texts included only written descriptions and black and white line drawings of soldiers. This book has masterfully performed color images of many more aspects of the war. While other books have presented examples of Continental and British soldiers, other combatants such as Loyalist, German, French, Native American and Spanish forces were often underrepresented or absolutely ignored. Fortunately, this text includes extensive color illustrations of the uniforms of understudied aspects of this conflict. Irish and Highland troops are nicely represented. There is a fine presentation of the Naval and Marine forces of the participating countries which have often been ignored in other sources. Controversies regarding the uniforms of the American Revolution abound. Some controversies, such as the color of the facings and types of covers of Butler's Rangers, have been attributed to the lack of original uniforms and the limited documentation available following the war. It is therefore difficult for all readers to be content with any one book on uniforms of this important era. This book is an excellent study of a massive and difficult subject. The illustrations are brilliant works of art.

This is a great reference book! Yes, there's some slight inconsistencies and errors with artwork of uniforms and some uniform descriptions, but for the breadth and depth of research and reference of Revolutionary War uniforms, the errors are easy to accept and overlook. This is a must-have book for Revolutionary War enthusiasts, historian hobbyists, and in my case, for historical writers.

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