

*The Book list for the Serious Reenactor  
Who portray British soldiers and followers during the  
Seven Years War*

*By*

*Barton J. Redmon*

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This listing will not be a general listing of sources for the Seven Years War. This is a list of works I feel will help any reenactor portraying a soldier the British Army during the Seven Years War era. These works I highly recommend for the reenactor who enjoys the character of a soldier, Non-Commissioned Officer, Officer, or follower, of the British army of this time. I have used these works to a great extent in researching the life of the soldiers and officers of King George. You will also find them helpful in creating a character biography. You will find nothing here of general histories of the war except one title, the majority of the works mentioned are recommended to help give you a better portrayal and understanding of these people.

1. **The Military Experience in the Age of Reason 1715-1789** by Professor Christopher Duffy.

This work is absolutely needs to be read by anyone wishing to have a firm knowledge of the military art of this time period. Sections cover the Officer corps, Private soldiers, all branches of service, and the general conditions that soldiers would expect to see during a campaign or in garrison. Christopher Duffy is a fellow member of the Seven years War Association and has written many works on the life of the soldiers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. If you have no other at all this book must be on your bookshelf. If you cannot read this one give it up now, as you will never get it.

2. **Redcoats, Yankees, and Allies: A History of the Uniforms, Clothing and Gear of the British Army in the Lake George - Lake Champlain Corridor 1755-1760** By Brenton C. Kemmer, illustrations by Joe Lee.

This affordable little gem of a book is an absolute gold mine of information about the British soldiers that fought in up State New York during the war. Complete details about clothing and equipment, marking of gear rations, etc. are included. Reasonably priced and still in print from Heritage

Books I believe. If you can afford to add another book to your bookshelf alongside Duffy's work above, then add this one.

3. **Gone For a Soldier: A History of the Life in the British Ranks from 1642**  
by Victor Neuburg

OK if you can dig a bit deeper into your pocket and purchase this book you have added another valuable source to your collection. Neuburg has written a wonderful account of the soldiers from this era. Well illustrated and gives the life of soldiers on campaign, in barracks, on foreign duty, their women etc. much useful information to help give the reenactor the attitudes of the military society and community he found himself in during the Seven Years War.

4. **The Rambling Soldier** by Roy Palmer

Written back in 1977 this work gives wonderful first hand accounts of soldiers from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, many of the songs that were sung by these very same soldiers of King George are included. This book has been out of print for years and definitely needs to be brought back into print. Can be hard to find, but well worth trying to get through Enter-Library loan. A good read and the stories give a strong look into the soldier's life.

5. **Empire of Fortune** by Francis Jennings

This is the only general work of the French and Indian War that I will list. Let me put it this way. I admire this gentleman for writing this work as it stirs up thought on this war. Many readers either love this book or hate it. However, it does give a wonderful account and chronology of the war and is useful for that. In fact, I enjoy reading Mr. Jennings work even if I do not agree with his ideas.

It is extremely apologetic toward the Native Americans, which according to the author were victims of European exploitation. He Pictures all white men from this period, either in Europe or in America, French or British as evil doing fellows destroying and down right ethnic cleansing the Native Americans who cannot stop this monstrous destruction of their way of life.

Well history is what it is and I know of no instances when a new group moves into an area where the weaker indigenous population did not suffer. This makes our early founders no better or worse than any other conqueror in history. I'm sure the Mycenaean's did not like their new Dorian overlords in Bronze Age Greece. Gaul (France) suffered and was engulfed by the expanding Roman Empire. Later, The Romio-British were vanquished by the Saxons who in turn suffered under the invasions of Vikings, Danes, and final conquest by the Normans. All these people in turn invaded (Colonized) North America and the Native Americans suffered their lifestyle and culture destroyed. Unfortunately, the Native Americans of North America were only next in line in the long history

of human movement and conquest. Stand in line please it's your turn next. That's the way it was folks, and probably the way it always will be.

Nothing changes in Nature without a violent change and Human history is no different. Unfortunately, Mr. Jennings is far too short sighted to understand that change always happens, in history, and hand in hand with nature nothing happens without conflict and the weaker side usually loses to the higher order. This always will continue within the cycle of things. There are no good guys, but I've never walked in the shoes or felt the real experiences these people lived in that time, and I will not judge any of them. Read it by all means as it makes good discussion.

6. **A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue** By Captain Francis Grose

OK now here is a real treat to obtain if you can find a copy. This is a real dictionary written by a British officer and describes the SLANG words spoken by the poor and lower classes of Great Britain. This work will give you a good understanding of the language used by the majority of Englishmen during this time. Very reasonable priced copies were available at Bargain bookstores several months ago. It might still be obtainable.

7. **Albion's Seed: Four British Folk Ways in America** by David Hackett Fischer

This is a large work over 900 pages in length. It deals with the four early British folk groups that came to North America during the colonial times. These early English traditions can be used to build up the basic background information on the common people of the English countryside, and the early colonist. You will find this work absolutely necessary in working up a believable character for an 18<sup>th</sup> century British soldier.

8. **Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army 1715-1795**

By J. A. Houlding

A wonderful and informative work covering every aspect of the readiness, discipline, shortcomings, drill, and the methods of training of the army during peacetime and war. Can't get by without reading this one, and it's better to read it again just to pick up what you missed the first time. Study it and understand it.

9. **Redcoats The British Soldier and the War in the Americas, 1755-1763**

By: Stephen Brumwell

This is a new work, which came out last year, and already, in my opinion, it is the bible for those portraying British regulars in North America during the Seven Years War. Every part of the soldier's life is covered in this work, which is highly readable and very well researched. This author has done us all a very great duty with his work. Buy it and read it.

10. **Mother Ross the adventures of Mrs. Christine Davies**

By: Daniel Defoe

This might be one of the hardest works to find but find it as it is indispensable for you ladies wishing to follow the army. This work had Good descriptive language of her life as a soldier, and later as Sutleress following the soldiers of the army.

11. **Judy O'Grady and the Colonel's Lady The Army Wife and Camp Follower Since 1660**

By Noel St. John Williams

A very informative work, which concentrates on the women who followed the British army from the 17<sup>th</sup> through the 19 centuries. Has some very good info on our era. Recommended

The above listed books will be excellent help to anyone wishing to portray a British soldier or Camp follower during this Seven Years War. Yes, I said Camp followers also; women who followed the army were part of that military community. These women got up the same time the soldiers did, and went to bed at the same time. They were affected by the same military law and punishment. Their food was the same, and their lives were regulated around the military system, which now were her community as well as the soldier she follows or married. You need to know the same material, and many of the works relate to the army wives as well.

These books will give a very good understanding of who they people were, how they acted, and what their tools, equipment and surroundings would be like. Of course there are other works to be looked over and studied. However these works will be the core of your knowledge into the soldiers of King George II and the women who followed them. If you are portraying an officer you cannot stop here as you have additional material to grasp.