



Special Operations in the American Revolution

Robert Tonsetic

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When the American Revolution began, the colonial troops had little hope of matching His Majestys highly trained, experienced British and German legions in confrontational battle. Indeed, Washingtons army suffered defeat after defeat in the first few years of the war, fighting bravely but mainly trading space for time. However, the Americans did have a trump, in a reservoir of tough, self-reliant frontier fighters, who were brave beyond compare, and entirely willing to contest the Kings men with unconventional tactics.

In this book, renowned author, and former U.S. Army Colonel, Robert Tonsetic describes and analyzes numerous examples of special operations conducted during the Revolutionary War. While the British might seize the coastlines, the interior still belonged to the Americans should the Empire venture inward. Most of the operations were conducted by American irregulars and volunteers, carefully selected, with specialized skills, and led by leaders with native intelligence.

While General Washington endeavored to confront the Empire on conventional terms—for pure pride’s sake at the founding of the Republic—he meantime relied on his small units to keep the enemy off balance. The fledgling Continental Navy and Marines soon adopted a similar strategy. Realizing that the small American fleet was no match for the powerful British navy in major sea battles, the new Navy and its Marines focused on disrupting British commercial shipping in the Atlantic and Caribbean, and launching raids against British on-shore installations first in the Bahamas and then on the British coastline itself.

As the war continued, Washington increasingly relied on special operations forces in the northeast as well as in the Carolinas, and ad hoc frontiersmen to defy British sovereignty inland. When the British and their Indian allies began to wage war on American settlements west of the Appalachians, Washington had to again rely on partisan and militias to conduct long-range strikes and raids targeting enemy forts and outposts.

Throughout the war, what we today call SpecOps were an integral part of American strategy, and many of the lessons learned and tactics used at the time are still studied by modern day Special Operations forces. As this book establishes, the improvisation inherent in the American spirit proved itself well during the Revolution, continuing to stand as an example for our future martial endeavors.

Special Operations in the American Revolution Details

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Justin says

The book reads as a series of independent military events, with no real attempt to tie them into the doctrine of special operations warfare, or place them in the wider context of the War itself. When the author's analysis does happen it's mostly at the end of the chapter and perfunctory - the longest attempt being the Epilogue. In short, while it was interesting to learn more about the various examples chosen, the text essentially reads as 'this happened, and this happened, and then this' - the narration and analysis being largely absent throughout.

There are also some mistakes with the text in nearly every chapter - the publisher/author guilty of poor proofreading before the final printing - and this can be irritating after repeated instances.

Roderick says

It is easy enough to find a military history of the American Revolution. It is, however, remarkably difficult to find one that tells, in detail, how a battle or skirmish or ambush was actually fought. In "Special Operations in the American Revolution" by Robert Tonsetic, this former U.S. Army Colonel revealed the mechanics of an operation from the viewpoint of the soldier, rather than from the academic who never got close than the general's report. A refreshing change.

FLOYD KNOWLTON says

The birth of special ops.

An interesting and enlightening look at the origins and accomplishments of early special ops forces during the revolutionary war in North America.

Naomi says

Read my full review: <http://bit.ly/11Ll36L>

Loved this concisely written interesting book. Now, I will admit that a chunk of readers will know the stories in this book, but most will not know specific incidents/points of the stories. Although I read a number of books on this time in history, I did learn a lot from this book.

Bruce Hesselbach says

This is a wonderfully readable and informative review of Revolutionary War raids, skirmishes and small unit

actions from the perspective of what we now call "special operations." Many of the military actions vividly described in this book are unknown to the general public and make exciting reading. The author shows that the small scale actions of the war, no less than the famous battles, were instrumental in the final American victory. Using the modern perspective on special operations helps unify and clarify the accounts of individual heroism and cunning strategy.

Jimmie Aaron Kepler says

"Special Operations in The American Revolution" by Robert Tonsetic tells nine stories of battles or campaigns during the American Revolutionary War. In each case, the American colonist used unconventional warfare.

Experience the battles/campaigns of the American Revolutionary War. Learn the background of the principal leaders. See American know-how demonstrated by the army, navy and marines in their operations.

My favorite chapters were one and eight. "The Capture of Fort Ticonderoga" is the title and story of chapter one. It tells of Ethan Allen's leadership. "The Whaleboat Wars" is the title of chapter eight. It includes the story of Benjamin Tallmage.

The author is a very good story teller. He brings the events to life through the stories of the participants.

The book fills a void in the literature of the American Revolution.

Added bonuses are the book's bibliography. It is excellent. The operational maps and photos also compliment the narrative.

Casemate Publishing published "Special Operations in The American Revolution" by Robert Tonsetic. It is a must addition to the library of every military historian as well as students of the American revolutionary War.

Dr. Tonsetic has crafted an exciting book.
