



George Washington's First War: His Early Military Adventures

By David A. Clary

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Renowned historian David A. Clary studies George Washington's early military career as a young colonel during the French and Indian War, and how those campaigns influenced his leadership and strategy as a general during the Revolutionary War and as the first president of the newly formed United States of America.

The searing, formative military adventures of the inexperienced boy colonel of the French and Indian War who grew up to become one of the great soldier-statesmen of his age.

George Washington wasn't born a military leader. He became one the hard way—through trial and error and perseverance at a very early age and in the most trying circumstances imaginable. From the massacre of a French diplomatic party by soldiers under his command (thereby starting a world war), to his surrendering of Fort Necessity to the French, to his leading a harrowing retreat of British troops under fire, we see Washington learn the lessons of command.

George Washington's First War is a story told in vivid language, combining dramatic depictions of battle with the anxieties and frustrations of an adolescent who's not yet a great man. Readers learn of harrowing ordeals in the wilderness, the hitherto little explored role played by the Indian nations whose continent this was, and the epic clash of empires that all combined to turn the young Washington into the great commander and president of his age.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

What Washington, who secured his first military appointment at 21, lacked in experience he made up for in ambition. Governed from afar by colonial elites, mid-18th-century Virginia was "no more ready to conduct military campaigns" than Washington himself. Yet one of the untested officer's first assignments was to confront French traders over their claim to Ohio River Valley land. Some deemed it "extraordinary," he would reflect, "that so young and inexperienced a person should have been employed on a negotiation with which subjects of the greatest importance were involved." In well over his head, Washington got his diplomatic party into a messy military skirmish that fueled the start of the Seven Year's War. Despite this, an appetite for adventure won Washington an opportunity to return to the wilderness (where on his second assignment he and his men surrendered to the French after becoming trapped). Clary expertly chronicles how Washington navigated command layers and adapted-or failed to adapt-to the wild American terrain, revealing that these early military failures shaped Washington to become a versatile commander, capable of leading not only a revolution, but a country.

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Review

"In the 1750s the Ohio Valley was as strange as Afghanistan. "George Washington's First War" shows the confusion and cross-purposes of a world war waged on the frontier, and the steep learning curve of a twenty-something who would become (but was not yet) our first great warrior."

--Richard Brookhiser, author of "Founding Father"

"Clary's portrait of the young George Washington is a revelation, offering incredible insights into the great Virginian as military thinker. A marvelous historical accomplishment. Highly recommended!"

--Douglas Brinkley, Professor of History at Rice University and author of "The "

"Wilderness Warrior"

Advance Praise for

"GEORGE WASHINGTON'S FIRST WAR"

"A wonderful book on George Washington before he became an American icon. In lucid and gripping prose, Clary chronicles Colonel Washington in the French and Indian War, showing his glory-seeking imprudence and numerous--and sometimes monumental--errors. But Clary also demonstrates how young Colonel Washington learned from his mistakes, so that he was better prepared for the challenges he faced during the Revolutionary War. This not only is one of the better books on the French and Indian War, it is perhaps the best book on George Washington during that war."

--John Ferling, author of "The Ascent of George Washington"

"With drama and insight, David Clary lays out the suspenseful coming-of-age tale of George Washington's determined march from callow youth to eventual glory."

--A. J. Langguth, author of "Patriots: The Men Who Started the American Revolution"

"This ripsnorting tale traces the adventures--really, the "mis"adventures--of a raw, striving, sometimes bewildered and often overwhelmed George Washington. Through his fast-paced, deeply informative tale of hard lessons learned, David Clary shows that in his youth our 'indispensable man' was almost anything but. Humanizing, exciting, Clary's story delves into matters all too often glossed over in biographies of the Great General, reminding us of weaknesses from which sprang President Washington's mature strengths."

-- William Hogeland, author of "Declaration "and "The Whiskey Rebellion"

"A well-written and well-informed portrait of a young and untried George Washington struggling against enormous challenges to come of age both as a soldier and a man. Washington emerges from his first war not yet the leader he will become, but watching him mature during these early years helps us understand and appreciate him all the more."

--Walter R. Borneman, author of "The French and Indian War"

About the Author

David A. Clary is the author of *Adopted Son: Washington, Lafayette, and the Friendship That Saved the Revolution*; *Rocket Man*; and most recently *Eagles and Empire: The United States, Mexico, and the Struggle for a Continent*. Clary is the former Chief Historian of the U. S. Forest Service, has taught history at the university level, and lives in Roswell, New Mexico, with his wife, Beatriz.

Users Review

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Daniel Carter:

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Dana Richardson:

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