



# Spies, Patriots, and Traitors: American Intelligence in the Revolutionary War

By Kenneth A. Daigler

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Students and enthusiasts of American history are familiar with the Revolutionary War spies Nathan Hale and Benedict Arnold, but few studies have closely examined the wider intelligence efforts that enabled the colonies to gain their independence. *Spies, Patriots, and Traitors* provides readers with a fascinating, well-documented, and highly readable account of American intelligence activities during the era of the Revolutionary War, from 1765 to 1783, while describing the intelligence sources and methods used and how our Founding Fathers learned and practiced their intelligence role.

The author, a retired CIA officer, provides insights into these events from an intelligence professional's perspective, highlighting the tradecraft of intelligence collection, counterintelligence, and covert actions and relating how many of the principles of the era's intelligence practice are still relevant today. Kenneth A. Daigler reveals the intelligence activities of famous personalities such as Samuel Adams, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Nathan Hale, John Jay, and Benedict Arnold, as well as many less well-known figures. He examines the important role of intelligence in key theaters of military operations, such as Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and in General Nathanael Greene's campaign in South Carolina; the role of African Americans in the era's intelligence activities; undertakings of networks such as the Culper Ring; and intelligence efforts and paramilitary actions conducted abroad.

*Spies, Patriots, and Traitors* adds a new dimension to our understanding of the American Revolution. The book's scrutiny of the tradecraft and management of Revolutionary War intelligence activities will be of interest to students, scholars, intelligence professionals, and anyone who wants to learn more about this fascinating era of American history.

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## Spies, Patriots, and Traitors: American Intelligence in the Revolutionary War By Kenneth A. Daigler Bibliography

- Rank: #199618 in Books
- Published on: 2015-04-27
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.90" h x .80" w x 5.90" l, 1.02 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 336 pages

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"An interesting history and useful textbook. As a history, it is impressive in both scholarship and readability." ? *Naval Intelligence Professionals*

"Even those familiar with the broad outlines of his story will find professional insights beyond the knowledge of academic historians... perhaps the best you are going to find on the birth of American intelligence." ? *The Washington Times*

"Provides a good review of intelligence in the Revolutionary War as viewed by a professional." ? **Hayden Peake**, *Studies in Intelligence*

"The most accessible and authoritative examination so far of the history of American Revolution intelligence." ? *Studies in Intelligence*

"Impressively and meticulously weaves together information from over 170 sources, including works by John Bakeless, Carl Van Doren, John Nagy, and other eminent historians, to create an exceptionally broad, inclusive, and thoroughly-researched volume on American intelligence.... With hard-hitting conclusions, the book is always interesting and often gripping ? there is no shortage of exciting spy stories here. Not only did I learn from the book, I enjoyed reading it." ? *Journal of the American Revolution*

"Lively, engaging narrative covers intelligence gathering in practically every theater of the conflict." ? *Choice*

"There have been a few books on this subject in recent decades but none have the breadth and scope of this one. And none are as well documented and written. Daigler reaches across the panoply of espionage activity and paints the big picture while diving deep in areas that are bound to fascinate the reader.... One of the many things that sets this work apart from others like it is the author's personal experience in the trade of espionage. He draws from that to analyze many of the cases and he explains the aspects of espionage that have remained eternal: planning, security and communications." ? *Yankee Doodle Spies*

"Mr. Daigler has pulled together much information from many sources, and illustrates why their actual stories are better than the vague memories most of us have carried away from primary school... this well-written book makes learning about this important part of our history a pleasure." ? *American Diplomacy*

"We are just beginning to appreciate how patterns of digital data can be mined to yield a great deal of intelligence about our enemies ? and about us, too. We accordingly should seek to uncover what lessons we can from historical precedent about how best to navigate this brave new world of intelligence, and Kenneth Daigler's Spies, Patriots, and Traitors allows us to begin at our nation's start, when the desire for independence pulled us headlong into the game of spies." ? *New England Law Review on Remand*

"A great read on the American Revolution, particularly if, like me, you are not well versed in its details, as well as its geographic and political sweep. And for those of us in CI, it serves as a source of object lessons in how to do things well, and what mistakes to avoid." ? *Proactive Intelligence*

"Provides insights... from an intelligence professional's perspective, highlighting the tradecraft of intelligence collection, counterintelligence, and covert actions and relating how many of the principles of the era's intelligence practice are still relevant today." ? *The Intelligencer*

"A wonderful read from two perspectives: first, as a look at American intelligence in our own Revolution, and second, as a compressed walk through the history of that Revolution." ? *International Association for Intelligence Education Newsletter*

"A highly readable account of American intelligence activities during the Revolutionary War, from 1765 to 1783, describing the intelligence sources and methods used and how our Founding Fathers learned and practiced their intelligence role. The author, a retired CIA officer, provides insights into these events from an intelligence professional's perspective." ? *Perspectives on Politics*

"A fascinating, well-documented, and highly readable account of American intelligence activities during the era of the Revolutionary War... Of interest to students, scholars, intelligence professionals, and anyone who wants to learn more about this fascinating era of American history." ? *2015 University Press Books for Public and Secondary Schools*

"Ken Daigler's well documented and researched study demonstrates how integral the panoply of intelligence disciplines ? obtaining secrets from spies, covert action, and counterintelligence ? was to the conflict that won American independence. From his unique perspective as a professional intelligence officer, he provides new insights into well known stories of the Revolution and also sheds light on the role of intelligence in rarely treated events. The book is an essential read for anyone interested in the Revolutionary War and in the origins and development of intelligence in US history." ? **Michael Sulick**, retired CIA intelligence operations officer, former director of the CIA's National Clandestine Service, and author of *Spying in America and American Spies*.

*"Spies, Patriots, and Traitors* is the most comprehensive book yet on American intelligence activities in the War of Independence. Kenneth Daigler's fascinating work of synthesis and original research makes a valuable contribution to the study of the American Revolution." ? **Steven Siry**, professor of history, Baldwin Wallace University

## Review

"This is an excellent addition to the general intelligence literature and particularly to American intelligence history. ... Bottom line: this reviewer recommends it as a primary introduction in American intelligence courses as well as a general readership volume. ... Above all, this is a well-researched and indexed volume, clearly reflecting the author's extensive and impressive credentials. The source listing is outstanding and in itself worth the purchase price. ... Perhaps the second great value here is the way professional analysis of events and persons provides the reader with a most useful perspective, taking those readers—who are not themselves experienced partners in the profession—to a much deeper and far more valuable understanding. In this manner, the author takes one well beyond a simple chronology which in it-self has value, but is nonetheless incomplete history. ... Some chapters deserve particular note. Chapter Two, The United Front Campaign That Led to the American Revolution. The discussion on the ramp-up to the Revolution is excellent and most informative. Bottom line: Chapter Two is as good a concise primer on how to foment revolution as probably exists anywhere. ... Chapter Four, Covert Action in Europe Leading to the French Alliance. The focus here on British and European intelligence operations as subjects is a major contribution to better understanding the Intelligence War introduced in Chapter Three. There is an excellent summary linkage between classic covert action concepts and the Revolution with Benjamin Franklin's and Silas Dean's specific roles well highlighted. Inclusion of British intelligence operations, including both successes

and failures, provides a refreshingly balanced perspective. ... Chapter Twelve, The African American Role in American Intelligence Activities. This chapter rounds out the volume. " International Association For Intelligence Education Newsletter, Winter 2014, Vol. V, Issue No. 5.

*"Spies, Patriots, and Traitors* is the most comprehensive book yet on American intelligence activities in the War of Independence. Kenneth Daigler's fascinating work of synthesis and original research makes a valuable contribution to the study of the American Revolution."?Steven Siry, professor of history, Baldwin Wallace University

#### About the Author

**Kenneth A. Daigler** is a retired career CIA operations officer. He has a BA in history from Centre College of Kentucky and an MA in history from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University and has served in the US Marine Corps. He has written articles about intelligence for the CIA Historical Division's journal *Studies in Intelligence*, the Association of Former Intelligence Officers' *Intelligencer*, and other publications.

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