

Mercenary Troops (1776)

Abstract

In the eighteenth century, the landgraves of Hesse-Kassel, particularly Frederick II (r. 1760-85), financed their lavish court expenditures and the expansion of their capital of Kassel into a center of arts and culture by leasing Hessian-trained soldiers to warring foreign monarchs. Many of the soldiers “recruited” from across Germany, such as Johann Gottfried Seume (1763-1810), were actually forced into Hessian service. From 1776 to 1784, Landgrave Frederick II delivered approximately 12,000 mercenaries to King George III of England, who employed them in the fight against American revolutionary troops. The image below shows a contingent of mercenaries being taken aboard a ship bound for North America.

Source



Source: Colored copperplate engraving by an unknown artist, 1776.

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