

This Redlands man's relative fought in the Revolutionary War. Now he's telling his story



Charles E. Frye is the author of “The War has Begun,” a historical fiction novel based on the Revolutionary War experiences of his great-great-great-grandfather Issac Frye. Photo by Frank Perez

By [Kristina Hernandez](#), Redlands Daily Facts

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REDLANDS >> A fifth-grade history project and a distant relative's connection to the country's independence led an Army veteran to create a series of novels highlighting one man's journey through the American Revolution.

“The War has Begun” is Charles E. Frye's first of four books following the life of Isaac Frye, a New Hampshire farmer serving in the Continental Army. The book is historical fiction, meaning the names and their contributions are real, but the dialogue is not.

“It was a lot of research, but once you know this, turning it into a novel was more about learning about that form of writing,” said Frye, who lives in Redlands. “And what I got from it was more information that I could fit in one book.”

Frye’s interest in the life of Isaac Frye, his great-great-great-great grandfather, was piqued years ago while helping his son with a fifth-grade history project. Using technology he learned on the job, Frye helped his son create a map of battles in the war, particularly those in which Isaac Frye fought.

About four years ago, Frye said, he tried to write a book about his relative’s life.

“I only got 90 boring pages out of it and knew it wouldn’t be something I would have wanted to read,” he said.

A trip to the Los Angeles Times Book Festival changed all that, when his wife and her friend met Andreas Kossak, an adjunct professor of communications study at Cal State San Bernardino. Kossak was at the festival advertising [Written by Veterans](#), a program designed to “open the world of creative writing” to all military veterans and their families. The program, established in 2014, is supported by Cal State San Bernardino’s Veterans Success Center.

Frye’s wife struck up a conversation with Kossak and brought what she learned back to her husband, who decided to learn more about the program.

Though writing was a bit out of his comfort zone, Frye, 50, decided to attend the group’s free course on screenwriting. He was hooked and soon found himself with more material than he knew what to do with, leading to his decision to create the four-part series.

“This was his story to tell,” Kossak said of Frye’s work. “What we look for are authors looking to tell a story that’s authentic, and he had the raw energy of telling this story and the obsession over it.”

Frye hired a professional editor to look over his book before publishing it under the Written by Veterans label through CreateSpace. He wanted his work to reflect his passion for the project. It paid off in the end, he said.

“When you first look to publish a book, there’s a bit of trepidation when giving your work to someone else,” Frye continued. “But this was well worth doing and it gave me a lot of confidence.”

Frye is publicizing the book himself, hoping others would be interested in learning more about Isaac Frye, who stayed with the Continental Army until the last unit was disbanded. According to a news release about the book, “No other man, including George Washington, served longer as an officer” in the war. Frye is advertising the book as a take that will answer someone’s wonderment about what it was like to stand “beside the men and women who fought for American independence.”

“The War has Begun” is available through [CreateSpace](#) and [Amazon](#) starting at \$7.99.

Frye is currently working on completing his work and documents updates on his website at dutyinthecauseofliberty.wordpress.com. Blog postings provide some insight into the men and women featured in his books, as well as any additional research he comes across.

Frye also plans to continue attending Written by Veterans discussion groups and workshops in hopes others will follow in his footsteps.

Kossak, too, is looking forward to [seeing the program grow](#). In the first three years of the program, 17 books have been published.

“This is very purposely a safe environment with the goal to critique someone’s work but not bring them down,” Kossak said. “We are wanting to help them figure out their voices and how to use it.”

What: A free creative writing program for veterans, sponsored by the Cal State San Bernardino Veterans Success Center.

Details: Since its founding in 2014, a total of 17 works by veterans have been published.

Information: 909-537-5195; writtenbyveterans.com