

New Book Gets Official Seal of Approval

Re-enacting is recognised for its roles in Education and History

As a dedicated re-enactor for over 20 years, the author of a new book considered it was time that the real purpose of wartime living history was recognised.

Like many other re-enactors John Leete has been asked variously by members of the public such questions as, why do you dress up as though you were living in the 1940's, what right do you think you have to wear that uniform and what's the point of dwelling on the horrors of war?

These perhaps are reasonable questions because the public is not that well informed about the role of living history of such a recent era. Whilst they can admire and 'understand' the role of Civil War re-enactors for example, they get a somewhat 'confused' opinion about exactly what motivates children to portray the role of evacuees, young men to kit themselves in American uniforms and people of older years to become members of the Home Guard. Well that's a simple overview of course.

Despite the fact that more and more events are embracing living history re-enactors, portraying characters from the Second World War and despite the fact that the public nonetheless find such portrayals fascinating, there has been no continuity in linking these portrayals with the fundamental roles of Education and Remembrance.

The author says 'I have witnessed the growth of the WW2 living history community over the past two decades or more and with that growth I have also seen the expansion of associated activities including dance, music and song as well as the collecting of period artefacts. New portrayals have also emerged, for example, Press Photographers, Doctors, Greengrocers, even Radio Presenters. So to try and make that link clear and put wartime living history on the heritage map so to speak, I decided to write the book'.

'A Re-enactors War' mixes anecdotes from veterans and people who lived through the war years on the Home Front with re-enactors stories, interviews and contributions from several venues where living history is embraced enthusiastically. Colour and black and white original period and re-enacting images, complement and help to reinforce the message of the work.

However, it is the three 'official' endorsements within the book that give real meaning to the purpose of A Re-enactors War. 'I am delighted that the Introduction has been written by the **Royal British Legion**. In their words, re-enacting is vital to the continuance of our history and to the remembrance of those who served' said Leete. Endorsement two is **the contribution made by Helen Patton** who has written the Foreword, not only in her capacity as the granddaughter of General George S Patton, but also in her role as someone who actively supports and promotes living history.

'Finally and by way of (probably) the best possible acknowledgement of the value of what we do as re-enactors, the end piece has been graciously written by Dame Vera Lynn' added John Leete.

The book is packed with stunning colour and black and white images and it is the only book of its type on the subject of home front living history.