

are still expected to receive it at unit level. The task force medical platoon is being given a job it cannot realistically support without augmentation.

Once the decontamination site has been established, it is too cumbersome to break, dismantle, and move forward rapidly enough to continue being effective. As the FLOT continues to advance, the lines of evacuation lengthen, and this distance devours the time available for decontaminating a critical casualty. Moreover, even after the casualty has been decontaminated, he still has to be treated.

One technique for dealing with this problem is to place a "clean" treatment facility next to the decontamination station. If the treatment assets are to keep

up with the fight, however, they must be able to continue moving forward, and linking such a treatment facility to the decontamination site simply removes it from the battle. Given these issues, an alternative to the current situation must be devised if the medical platoon is to remain effective on both the integrated battlefield and the conventional battlefield.

Another point needs to be made: Our unit was the last active-duty heavy task force to undergo an NTC rotation with M113-equipped mechanized infantry. The medical evacuation system therefore went through the rotation with the same vehicles as the maneuver forces. The next time the task force fights, however, the combat units will be equipped with Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting ve-

hicles while the medical platoon will still have M113A2s, leaving a mobility gap between the combat and the combat service support elements. It is therefore imperative that the tactics, techniques, and procedures of the task force medical platoon be refined to narrow, not widen, this gap. The alternative is a heavy task force medical support system that can meet a critical need on the modern battlefield—the need to facilitate, not impede, the momentum of friendly operations.

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The Real Rules of Discipline Of Major Robert Rogers and the Rangers

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There is scarcely a soldier in the Army today who has not been exposed, to one degree or another, to the 19 "standing orders of Rogers' Rangers." These rules—which include such advice as "Don't forget nothing," "Don't never take a chance you don't have to," and "Don't sit down to eat without posting sentries"—have been attributed to Major Robert Rogers, leader of the original independent companies of New England rangers of the French and Indian War in North America.

The orders, dated variously 1756 and 1759, have been reproduced in large quantities both by the Army and by commercial presses (most prominently in SH 21-76, *Ranger Handbook*) and distributed to thousands of soldiers around the world. As a result, for decades U.S. sol-

diers have been struck by the straightforward simplicity and the rough-hewn tone and grammar of what have become some of the best-known thoughts on light infantry in our military community.

As a projection of these orders, Major Rogers himself has come to represent the original American yeoman-hero, physically strong, possessed of plain common sense (instead of, and superior to, formal education), unencumbered by social refinements, brave, cunning, and ultimately triumphant over all enemies.

The truth is, however, that both this image of Rogers and the 19 "standing orders" themselves are fabrications. The orders attributed to Rogers are in fact a mid-20th century corruption of an earlier fiction. They were drawn, almost verbatim, from Kenneth Roberts' 1936 nov-

el *Northwest Passage* (Ballentine Books, 1991), which was set among Rogers' Rangers during the French and Indian Wars. The orders are, specifically, a paraphrasing of a conversation between the fictitious characters Sergeant McNott and Langdon Towne, in which McNott, a bumpkin-like character, tells Towne what he needs to know about the Rangers (pages 87-88).

In about 1960, almost a quarter-century after Roberts penned this conversation, a captain assigned as a doctrine writer at the Infantry School lifted it out of context, paraphrased it, attributed it to Rogers, and included it in the early version of Field Manual 21-50, *Ranger Training and Ranger Operations*. There, in an appendix on Ranger history, the purported orders embedded themselves

in Army doctrine where they have remained substantially unchallenged until now.

As for Rogers, although he was of humble origins, he was actually an educated and literate man for his time and place. He routinely corresponded with the most senior military and political leaders of his day, and his insights into combat on the North American frontier were based far more on direct observation and study in an operational environment than on some innate superhuman instinct.

Sometime between 22 April and 17 December 1757—at the direction of Lord

Loudoun, who then commanded British and American forces in the Northeast—Rogers did, in fact, prepare and note in his personal journal 28 rules or a “plan of discipline...to be observed in the Ranging service.” These rules were intended for use in training a company of volunteer Rangers then mustered at Fort Ticonderoga on the frontier, in what is now upstate New York. In London in 1765, Rogers published his French and Indian War *Journals*, which included the rules of discipline.

In late 1961 or 1962, these rules of discipline, and the questionable nature of the popular “Rogers’ standing orders,”

came to the attention of the Infantry School staff when the recently reprinted *Journals of Major Robert Rogers* (published by Corinth Books, Inc., 1961) arrived and was read. Some of the cadre members tried to set the record straight. Instructors in the Fort Benning phase of the Ranger Course, for example, began to promote the authentic Rogers “rules of discipline.” A copy was printed and made into a poster, which was given to all Ranger Course graduates in the early 1960s. Nevertheless, for reasons not altogether clear, the more popular rules were never purged from the literature, and they eventually superseded the

ROGERS' RULES OF DISCIPLINE

I. All Rangers are to be subject to the rules and articles of war, to appear at roll-call every evening on their own parade ground, each equipped with a firelock, 60 rounds of powder and ball, and a hatchet, at which time an officer from each company is to inspect them to see that they are in order, so as to be ready to march at a minute's warning, and before they are dismissed the necessary guards are to be chosen, and scouts for the next day appointed.

II. Whenever you are ordered out to the enemy's forts or frontiers for discoveries, if your number is small, march in single file, keeping far enough apart to prevent one shot from killing two men, sending one man or more forward, and the like on each side, at a distance of 20 yards from the main body, if the ground you march on allows it, to give the signal to the officer of the approach of an enemy, and of their number, etc.

III. If you march over marshes or soft ground, change your position and march abreast of each other to prevent the enemy from tracking you (as they would do if you marched in single file) until you get over such ground, and then resume your former order and march until it is quite dark before you encamp. Camp, if possible, on a piece of ground that gives your sentries the advantage of seeing or hearing the enemy at considerable distance, keeping half of your whole party awake alternately through the night.

IV. Some time before you come to the place you would reconnoiter, make a stand and send one or two men in whom you can confide to seek out the best ground for making your observations.

V. If you have the good fortune to take any prisoners, keep them separate until they are examined, and return by a route other than the one you used going out so that you may discover any enemy party in your rear and have an opportunity, if their strength is superior to yours, to alter your course or disperse, as circumstances may require.

VI. If you march in a large body of 300 or 400 with a plan to attack the enemy, divide your party into three columns, each headed by an officer. Let these columns march in single file, the columns to the right and left keeping 20 yards or more from the center column, if the terrain allows it. Let proper guards be kept in the front and rear and suitable flanking parties at a distance, as directed before, with orders to halt on all high ground to view the surrounding ground to prevent ambush and to notify of the approach or retreat of the enemy, so that proper dispositions

may be made for attacking, defending, etc. And if the enemy approaches in your front on level ground, form a front of your three columns or main body with the advanced guard, keeping out your flanking parties as if you were marching under the command of trusty officers, to prevent the enemy from pressing hard on either of your wings or surrounding you, which is the usual method of savages if their number will allow it, and be careful likewise to support and strengthen your rear guard.

VII. If you receive fire from enemy forces, fall or squat down until it is over, then rise and fire at them. If their main body is equal to yours, extend yourselves occasionally, but if they are superior, be careful to support and strengthen your flanking parties to make them equal with the enemy's, so that if possible you may repulse them to their main body. In doing so, push upon them with the greatest resolve, with equal force in each flank and in the center, observing to keep at a due distance from each other, and advance from tree to tree, with one half of the party ten or twelve yards in front of the other. If the enemy pushes upon you, let your front rank fire and fall down, and then let your rear rank advance through them and do the same, by which time those who were in front will be ready to fire again, and repeat the same alternately, as occasion requires. By this means you will keep up such a constant fire that the enemy will not be able to break your order easily or gain your ground.

VIII. If you force the enemy to retreat, be careful in pursuing them to keep out your flanking parties and prevent them from gaining high ground, in which case they may be able to rally and repulse you in their turn.

IX. If you must retreat, let the front of your whole party fire and fall back until the rear has done the same, heading for the best ground you can. By this means you will force the enemy to pursue you, if they pursue you at all, in the face of constant fire.

X. If the enemy is so superior that you are in danger of being surrounded, let the whole body disperse and every one take a different road to the place of rendezvous appointed for that evening. Every morning the rendezvous point must be altered and fixed for the evening in order to bring the whole party, or as many of them as possible, together after any separation that may occur in the day. But if you should actually be surrounded, form yourselves into a square or, in the woods, a circle is best, and if possible make a stand until darkness favors your escape.

XI. If your rear is attacked, the main body and flanks must face

about to the right or left, as required, and form themselves to oppose the enemy as directed earlier. The same method must be observed if attacked in either of your flanks, by which means you will always make a rear guard of one of your flank guards.

XII. If you determine to rally after a retreat in order to make a fresh stand against the enemy, by all means try to do it on the highest ground you come upon, which will give you the advantage and enable you to repulse superior numbers.

XIII. In general, when pushed upon by the enemy, reserve your fire until they approach very near, which will then cause them the greater surprise and consternation and give you an opportunity to rush upon them with your hatchets and cutlasses to greater advantage.

XIV. When you encamp at night, fix your sentries so they will not be relieved from the main body until morning, profound secrecy and silence being often of the most importance in these cases. Each sentry, therefore, should consist of six men, two of whom must be constantly alert, and when relieved by their fellows, it should be without noise. In case those on duty see or hear anything that alarms them, they are not to speak. One of them is to retreat silently and advise the commanding officer so that proper dispositions can be made. All occasional sentries should be fixed in a like manner.

XV. At first light, awake your whole detachment. This is the time when the savages choose to fall upon their enemies, and you should be ready to receive them.

XVI. If the enemy is discovered by your detachments in the morning, and if their numbers are superior to yours and a victory doubtful, you should not attack them until the evening. Then they will not know your numbers and if you are repulsed your retreat will be aided by the darkness of the night.

XVII. Before you leave your encampment, send out small parties to scout around it to see if there are any signs of an enemy force that may have been near you during the night.

XVIII. When you stop for rest, choose some spring or rivulet if you can, and dispose your party so as not to be surprised, posting proper guards and sentries at a due distance, and let a small party watch the path you used coming in, in case the enemy is pursuing.

XIX. If you have to cross rivers on your return, avoid the usual fords as much as possible, in case the enemy has discovered them and is there expecting you.

XX. If you have to pass by lakes, keep at some distance from the edge of the water, so that, in case of an ambush or attack from the enemy, your retreat will not be cut off.

XXI. If the enemy forces pursue your rear, circle around until you come to your own tracks and form an ambush there to receive them and give them the first fire.

XXII. When you return from a patrol and come near our forts avoid the usual roads and avenues to it, the enemy may have preceded you and laid an ambush to receive you when you are almost exhausted with fatigue.

XXIII. When you pursue any party that has been near our forts or encampments, do not follow directly in their tracks, lest you be discovered by their rear guards who, at such a time, would be most alert. But endeavor, by a different route, to intercept and meet them in some narrow pass, or lie in ambush to receive them when and where they least expect it.

XXIV. If you are to embark in canoes, or otherwise, by water, choose the evening for the time of your embarkation, as you will then have the whole night before you to pass undiscovered by any enemy parties on hills or other places that command a view of the lake or river.

XXV. In paddling or rowing, order that the boat or canoe next to the last one wait for it, and that each wait for the one behind it to prevent separation and so that you will be ready to help each other in any emergency.

XXVI. Appoint one man in each boat to look out for fires on the adjacent shores, from the number and size of which you may form some idea of the number that kindled them and whether you can attack them or not.

XXVII. If you find the enemy encamped near the banks of a river or lake that you think they will try to cross for their security when attacked, leave a detachment of your party on the opposite shore to receive them. With the remainder, you can surprise them, having them between you and the water.

XXVIII. If you cannot satisfy yourself as to the enemy's number and strength from their fires and the like, conceal your boats at some distance and ascertain their number by a patrol when they embark or march in the morning, marking the course they steer, when you may pursue, ambush, and attack them, or let them pass, as prudence directs you. In general, however, so that you may not be discovered at a great distance by the enemy on the lakes and rivers, it is safest to hide with your boats and party concealed all day, without noise or show, and to pursue your intended route by night. Whether you go by land or water, give out patrol and countersigns in order to recognize one another in the dark, and likewise appoint a station for every man to go to in case of any accident that may separate you.

authentic work of Rogers.

While the errant version is essentially a code of conduct with rules for patrolling, Rogers' authentic rules of discipline are a comprehensive and balanced discourse on skirmishing and scouting. These rules, with some adjustments for technological changes in weaponry, are still relevant to light infantry today, particularly to rural counterinsurgency operations. While the popular rules may be quaint and entertaining, the authentic work of Rogers has a brilliance that is undiminished by time. (The version printed here has been edited only as needed to clarify some of the 18th century language.)

It was Rogers who made the New England rangers famous throughout the world, and his "rules" constituted the first military field manual written in North America. They also stand as an enduring example of excellence in military thinking that is worthy of continued study and emulation. This is not to say that all those who have believed in the less accurate version of Rogers' rules should be criticized for promoting the rules. Rather, they deserve praise for their intent of commemorating the military genius and the continuing relevance of Major Robert Rogers.

The loss of the authentic rules—which were masked for 30 years by the less ac-

curate version—simply underscores the need for an appreciation of the history and art of American land warfare. Hopefully, Rogers' authentic rules of discipline will now come to occupy their rightful place among scholars, historians, and the soldiers of the line.

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