

ROGERS' RANGERS STANDING ORDERS REVISITED

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Major Robert Rogers' Standing Orders are viewed as questionable in origin, colorful, but obsolete lessons from an era when the fastest message moved at the speed of a horse and rider, and when the bow and arrow (a weapon from the dawn of man) was superior in many respects to the matchlock, musket, and rifle. (The bow and arrow was silent, still operated in the rain or when wet, fired faster, and ammo and parts were only as far as the nearest hardwood tree).

Upon closer examination, these 19 orders, which were forged in frontier combat around Fort Carillon/Ticonderoga, still provide relevant guidance for the platoon or squad leader taking a patrol through the back alleys of Baghdad.

Translation follows:

1. Don't forget nothing. A military mission has many component tasks. So we don't forget something we use the eight-step Troop Leading Procedures, the five-paragraph operations order (OPORD), standard operating procedures, and battle drills.

2. Have your musket clean as a whistle, tomahawk scoured, sixty rounds powder and ball, and be ready to march at a minute's warning. The self discipline of each Soldier maintaining his weapon, equipment, supplies, and being physically fit to march at a minute's warning are a big part of unit readiness. His leader's duty is still to inspect but the Soldier will be ready and no time is lost on remedial action. "...at a minute's warning." refers to a good intelligence and communication network.

3. When you're on the march, act the way you would if you was sneaking up on a deer. See the enemy first. Camouflage, situational awareness, and noise and light discipline are key in stealthy movement. By stealth you will be able to "see the enemy first." You then have the advantage and option to attack or evade and bypass.

4. Tell the truth about what you see



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and what you do. There is an Army depending on us for correct information. You can lie all you please when you tell other folks about the RANGERS, but never lie to a RANGER or an officer. This is the collection of priority intelligence requirements (PIR) and accurate SALUTE (size, activity, location, unit, time and equipment) reports. Report only what is actually seen, heard, smelled, or touched — no more, no less.

5. Don't take a chance you don't have to. Know yourself and your unit's capabilities and limitations, and employ them accordingly.

6. When we're on the march we march single file, far enough apart so one shot can't go through two men. This order refers to formation and order of movement on foot and in vehicles. Keep your interval, don't bunch up, watch your sector, and communicate (hand/arm signals and radio).

7. If we strike swamps, or soft ground, we spread out abreast, so it is hard to

track us. No beeline movements (even in the air). Try to deceive the enemy as to your real destination and intention(s).

8. When we march, we keep moving till dark, so as to give the enemy the least possible chance at us. Time is a precious resource, don't waste it. Time, when measured as daylight/darkness, the tides, or an approaching storm, has a profound effect on one's ability to fight and navigate. Keep time on your side.

9. When we camp, half the party stays awake while the other half sleeps. Security first, always. Part of your squad or platoon should always be ready to fight 24/7.

10. If we take prisoners, we keep'em separate till we have time to examine them, so they can't cook up a story between 'em. Remember the five S's: Secure, Search, Silence, Segregate, and Safeguard.

11. Don't ever march home the same way. Take a different route so you won't be ambushed. Don't be predictable. Your routines, patterns, and habits can be used against you. A convoy of four up-armored HMMWVs leave FOB Able every two days traveling northeast at 50 mph with an interval of 150 meters between vehicles. Each vehicle has a mounted .50 cal with shield and a gunner, driver, and front-seat passenger. The destination is Log Base Easy, which is 110 miles away. They spend an hour at LB Easy then make a return trip. Sooner or later, what do you think will happen? Returning from the objective your Soldiers will be also fatigued, and as they get closer to friendly lines there is a tendency to think they're safe and they will lessen vigilance. DON'T let them get complacent!

12. No matter whether we travel in big parties or little ones, each party has to keep a scout 20 yards ahead, 20 yards on each flank, and 20 yards in the rear so the main body can't be surprised and wiped out. Three hundred and sixty-degree security is essential during all movements and halts as well as while in assembly areas and in patrol bases. Get in that combat

frame of mind and be ready to fight at all times. Scouts to the front and flanks, advance guard, main body, and rear guard. The main body never makes unexpected contact.

13. Every night you'll be told where to meet if surrounded by a superior force. Always make a contingency/five-point plan and designate rally points.

14. Don't sit down to eat without posting sentries. Establish priorities of work; number one should be security. Then, post observation posts/listening posts (OP/LPs), assign team/squad sectors, position crew served weapons, and send out patrols.

15. Don't sleep beyond dawn. Dawn's when the French and Indians attack. Know your enemy, learn their tactics and their habits.

16. Don't cross a river by a regular ford. Use OCOKA (observation and fields of fire, cover and concealment, obstacles, key terrain, avenues of approach), METT-TC (mission, enemy, terrain, troops, time, civilians), map and aerial recons to spot danger areas. Don't let terrain force you into a position of disadvantage in respect to the enemy. Properly utilize your intelligence assets.

17. If somebody's trailing you, make a circle, come back onto your tracks, and ambush the folks that aim to ambush you. You take your tactics and adapt them from what you have learned about the enemy and strike them when and where they least expect it.

18. Don't stand up when the enemy is coming against you. Kneel down, lie down, or hide behind a tree. Fight smart use cover and concealment, individual, buddy, and team fire and maneuver techniques, and marksmanship to defeat your enemy.

19. Let the enemy come till he's almost close enough to touch, then let him have it and jump out and finish him up with your tomahawk (hatchet?). Use your weapons and weapon systems in depth like they were designed to be used and include courage and discipline. Don't falter, break, or run. Train realistically and often with your equipment and unit. It builds skill and confidence. With the will and the skill you will WIN!

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Book Reviews



Avenging Eagles: Forbidden Tales of the 101st Airborne Division in World War 2.

By Mark Bando. Detroit: Mark Bando Publishing, 183 pages, \$33, hardcover. Reviewed by Randy Talbot, TACOM Life Cycle Management Command historian.

Mark Bando's sixth book, *Avenging Eagles: Forbidden Tales of the 101st Airborne Division in World War 2*, is an engrossing, gripping, fast-paced rendering of one of the most celebrated units in the U.S. Army. Bando is a historian worthy of praise, as *Avenging Eagles* shows the value of oral history interviewing and recording. The use of official historical reports and documents combined with vignettes by actual participants in a narrative style make this book a great read. For Bando, this is the culmination of almost 40 years work as an interviewer of nearly 1,000 "Screaming Eagles," as recorder, reporter, chronicler, and author for the 101st Airborne.

World War II still holds a fascination in the American psyche; maybe this is because life and warfare seemed less complicated then than it does now. With our nation once again engaged in a long war with an uncertain conclusion, is there anything new to learn from those who went to war more than 60 years ago? What made the Airborne troopers of World War II suffer such horrendous losses in combat, yet continue to fight and accomplish their missions? Bando's work offers insight into these questions as *Avenging Eagles* takes the reader through the uncertain and chaotic beginnings of the division, its training, and eventual first exposure to combat operations: Normandy.

Avenging Eagles is more than another history of this unit; it is a tribute to the tenacity, courage, and leadership abilities of the Airborne veterans, those who volunteered for a new and untested concept in American military history. Central to this work is the "unsanitized version of the unusual, offbeat and unfortunate events of the 101st." It is through these vignettes that Bando reaches the heartbeat of his work, the "Soldier's Story" — the incidents and experiences that combat veterans talk about amongst themselves,

not to outsiders. Second, the use of oral history interviews confirm many of the stories in this work, some that are hard to read, others teaming with "gallows humor" from those who faced death the moment they jumped into a hail of bullets and enemy fire. Finally, an underlying theme throughout *Avenging Eagles* centers on the impact of leadership on raw troopers about to face the ordeals of combat for the first time. There is a commonality in the selection of stories and characters that military members and veterans can identify with from their own service.

Calling training for the 101st tough is an understatement; it was at times cruel and sadistic, but there was also a sense of fear instilled in the 18 to 20 year olds. Failure to complete all phases of training — especially qualifying jumps — led to the embarrassment of dropping out and reassignment to the "leg" infantry. Leaders believed that self-sacrifice in training would carry over to the battlefield. They trained their men to believe they were gods, better than anyone else in the Army. Of course, this swagger led to many incidents of Soldiers proving themselves against the other services, often with disastrous and near riotous consequences.

Training hoped to instill a sense of discipline in what was a "pick-up" team. All were volunteers and though many "washed-out," still many more were sent packing due to prejudice, something one troop recalled cost the division a lot of killers needed for combat.

Training increases physical abilities and endurance. It also teaches combat skills for battlefield survivability. However, one officer chastised training since there were no operational plans or regimental exercises, and "what we knew about tactics wouldn't fit on a postage stamp." This officer believed that success and finally victory on the battlefield is attributed to the individual Soldier, not to leadership and their inability to teach them survival skills — skills that would cost men's lives in Normandy.

From the time that the paratroopers approached their drop zones, things

started to go awry. Transport pilots missed the drop zones; some due to evasive action that threw them off course, others in a hurry to get rid of their load and head back to base. Troopers were shot out of the sky, others were stuck in trees or butchered where they landed, many with their own weapons. Ordered not to fire their weapons in the drop zone areas and not to take prisoners for the first two days, many troopers found themselves in both a moral and ethical dilemma.

Every Soldier's experience in combat is a highly personalized recollection of events; actions and reactions are unpredictable in the chaos of battle. Many can be in an area where something happens but only a few actually see it happen. This is very indicative of the airborne trooper who may have fought alone for days, evading and escaping the enemy while trying to find his way back to the lines. Many would not leave their buddies while others who were evacuated found a way back to continue the fight. There was a bond of brotherhood amongst the Normandy survivors — a bond that exists to this day. Their bond has become more than a legacy for generations of warfighters following in their footsteps. It is the essential key element that kept them together, that saw them not only survive, but overcome some of the most intense combat battles of World War II.

Avenging Eagles adds to that legacy by providing past and present combat commanders and leaders a primer on leadership, ethical conduct in wartime, and the importance of the impact of their orders. Through their actions and reactions, their behavior, "boys will be boys" antics, and moral courage and character, these stories by the veterans of the "Screaming Eagles" do not paint them as angels, far from it. However, it is the willingness of World War II veterans over the years to share their mistakes and fears that adds to the "toolbox" of the current combat leader to lead his troops through the most difficult times in combat operations.

***War, Terror and Peace in the Qur'an and in Islam: Insights for Military and Government Leaders.* By T.P. Schwartz-Barcott. Carlisle, PA: Army War College Foundation Press, 2004, 401 pages,**

\$26.95. Reviewed by Brigadier General (Retired) Curtis H. O'Sullivan.

In the preface to the book, former Central Command Commander in Chief Marine Corps General (Retired) Anthony C. Zinni points out the weakness in our national and military decision making in not being sufficiently aware of the history and culture of possible opponents. We need to be more aware of what motivates them so as not to be caught by surprise or expect them to share the same values.

Americans have not been void of exposure to Islam. We learned about the Crusades and the infidels in Sir Walter Scott's *Waverly Novels*. In high school, students learn about the wars with the Barbary pirates. In World War II, we landed on the shores of Algeria and Morocco. Our return to the Islamic world at that time started a tide of engagement that has hit a present peak.

There is a need now more than ever to realize that we have an enemy who doesn't play by the same rules. Why? The influence of the Koran is a partial answer. The author dissects that holy book in an attempt to show its applicability to current actions. There is perhaps an embarrassment of riches here as well as a minimizing of the other factors that shape culture and consequent conduct. The direction of individual and group behavior starts with the environment — the shape of the terrain and its resources and the climate. From these come ethnicity and social and economic institutions, which take such forms as nationalism and imperialism.

The book analyzes Muslim warfare through the ages to better understand behaviors in combat. This is intended to make our leaders better informed and realistic in dealing with matters of war, terror, and peace.

This is useful, but does not stand alone. There is a wealth of information on the subject, of which the bibliography only taps the surface. There are several special values to this effort. It gives a good summary of Muslim conflicts including naval actions. There could have been more maps, but those provided are helpful. There also also 10 tables and figures which clarify the text.

Overall, this is a book to be read selectively. There is much material not essential to the usual reader. I would

supplement it with more material on sociological motivation, but that's a matter of individual need.

***Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq.* By Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor. New York: Pantheon Books, 2006, 603 pages, \$27.95.** Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Rick Baillergeon.

There have been few recent books that have caused the early stir and release anticipation that *Cobra II* did. This anticipation also brought a great deal of high expectations for the book. I believe all this pre-release "hype" stemmed from two factors. First, there is simply a large amount of interest on any book involving operations in Iraq. This interest is peaked even more, when a book claims to have the inside story on the invasion and occupation of Iraq. Second, was the superb reputation of authors Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor. In particular, their collaboration on the first Gulf War (*The General's War*) was highly regarded by both readers and critics alike. Thus, when you combine current, emotional subject matter with authors who have an established pattern of excellence, you have a book that will greatly intrigue potential readers.

I, too, shared the anticipation and had the same high expectations as many others. After reading the initial chapters, I quickly found the volume was certainly worth the wait. More importantly, as I turned each page, I discovered the book was meeting most of my expectations. There was no doubt that Gordon and Trainor had crafted yet another excellent history.

In *Cobra II*, the authors seek to detail the planning, preparation, and execution of the invasion and initial occupation of Iraq. They state their objective (in the book's forward) as, "Our mission was not to offer up a slice of the war, to cover the action of a single unit, or to concentrate exclusively on the decision-making in Washington. Instead, we sought to prepare a contemporary history of the entire conflict with all of its complexity, to relate the planning behind closed doors, the bloodletting on the battlefield, and the

parallels among disparate battles, and to provide a comprehensive account and rationale of the foreign policy strategy, generalship, and fighting.” Truly, this is an ambitious goal, especially considering how recent these events took place. However, I believe the authors succeeded in most of their lofty aspirations.

Cobra II is organized into three sections. In section one, the authors go into succinct detail into the planning and foreign policy jockeying that led to the invasion. They provide readers with a solid background of the recent history between the United States and Iraq and then delve into the decisions and personalities that led to the attack. The second portion of the book focuses on the combat operations of the attack. The final section of the volume touches on the initial occupation of Iraq and Phase IV operations.

Trainor and Gordon have written a book that contains numerous strengths. Perhaps, the first that will immediately become apparent to readers is the exhaustive research the authors conducted in writing the book. This research includes dozens of personal interviews they conducted with leaders and Soldiers at all levels and the use of various unpublished military planning documents to add detail. This research is reflected in a substantial notes section and an appendix section that holds dozens of planning documents previously unreleased. Most readers will agree that *Cobra II* is one of the best researched books they have read.

The second strength of the book is the ability of the authors to discuss many controversial decisions and topics and provide analysis. These include the reasons to invade Iraq, troop levels to initiate and conduct the invasion, and the amount and detail of planning to conduct Phase IV operations. Additionally, Gordon and Trainor focus on the civilian and military leaders and provide accolades and criticism as appropriate.

Another key strength of the book is the skill in which the authors are able to move throughout the levels of war during their discussion of combat operations in Iraq. Gordon and Trainor translate decisions made at the strategic level and how they were then fought at the operational and tactical levels. The authors’ treatment of actions on the ground is particularly effective as they continue to shift from actions between the Army and the Marines

as they raced to Baghdad. I must admit that the focus at the “foxhole” level was something I wasn’t expecting and was an excellent bonus.

I believe the biggest strength of the book (related to the authors’ ability to provide analysis) is the volume’s epilogue. In it, the authors address areas (both in the military and political realm) that they feel hindered operations on the ground and the subsequent Phase IV operations. You may agree or disagree with the authors’ views, but they are without a doubt, thought-provoking.

Despite these and many additional strengths not covered in this review, there was one area that could have been improved in my opinion, and that was the scope of the book itself. As highlighted in the book’s title, the volume promises to address the occupation of Iraq. It is not the fault of the authors, but due to the publication date of the book, the occupation was in its opening period. Thus, the authors merely whet the appetite of their readers in this discussion. I contend that Gordon and Trainor should have postponed this treatment for possibly a future book. I simply felt this was taking on a little too much.

In summary, *Cobra II* is a superb book. There is no question that it has set the current standard for books of this genre. This is especially true for books focusing on the planning and invasion of Iraq. As is the case with many earlier histories, over time many more sources will become available and consequently, more definitive histories will be published. However, until that time, Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor have provided the reading public with a superb service. It is a book that will inform, bring about emotions, and simply make people think “what if?” For me, there is nothing more I can ask for in a book.

***All American All the Way: The Combat History of the 82nd Airborne Division in World War II.* By Phil Nordyke. St. Park, MN: Zenith Press, 2005, 868 pages, \$35.** Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Albert N. Garland and Patricia A. Weekley.

There is little question as to the author’s primary objective: “This is the story of the 82nd Airborne Division during World War

II, told in the words of those courageous men who fought in some of history’s most critical battles.” Along the way to completing this massive book, the author, a retired high-tech industry official, pulls together more than 900 oral and written statements to give us a readable history of the division’s training and 171 combat days. In order to be able to do that pulling together, Nordyke had to do a tremendous amount of research in mounds of material and by visits to the division’s battlegrounds in Europe. This effort is amply documented in his chapter notes and bibliography.

Unfortunately, while plugging away at this task, Nordyke apparently became enamored with his subject; this shows throughout the book, from the beginnings at Fort Benning to the end of the war in Europe and the occupation of Germany and confrontations with the Russians. Thus, at the beginning, Nordyke believes Colonel Jim Gaven, commander of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, proved himself to be head and shoulders above any other commander in the division, including Colonel Reuben Tucker, commander of the 504th PIR. Tucker protested vigorously when the 505th was chosen to make the first drop in Sicily in July 1943. From this time on, Gavin could do no wrong.

Then, Nordyke believes the fighting qualities of the 82nd troopers were such as to be held “in awe” by any U.S. unit that served in combat with or near them, and even by some German units that opposed the division.

I am terribly sorry to say that, as a member of the 84th Infantry Division, I did not hold “in awe” any of the airborne divisions in Europe except maybe their extra pay. My troops felt the same, but if we held anything in awe it was the Corcoran boots — the leather boots issued only to airborne Soldiers — while we had to wear the worst boots any combat Soldier ever had to wear.

These are but a few examples of what I mean to imply about Nordyke’s approach. So, if you like to read a lot of war stories while learning only a little history (i.e., Operations Giant I and II), this book is for you. One final point: To the day — I am not airborne — I do not believe Colonel Tucker and his 504th Soldiers ever received the recognition they deserved.