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From the Archives: Fighting the Ranger Way

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From the Archives

Fighting the Ranger Way

Major Robert Rogers fought for the British in North America during the French and Indian War. His skill in wilderness fighting and his dynamic leadership helped establish an elite unit known as Rangers. As a pioneer in the development of irregular warfare, his rules have relevance even today.

Don't forget nothing.

When you're on the march, act the way you would if you was sneaking up on a deer. See the enemy first.

Tell the truth about what you see and what you do. An army is depending on us for correct information. You can lie all you please when you tell other folks about the Rangers, but don't never lie to a Ranger or officer.

Don't never take a chance you don't have to.

When we're on the march, we march single file, far enough apart so one shot can't go through two men.

When we camp, half the party stays awake while the other half sleeps.

If we take prisoners, we keep 'em separate till we have had time to examine them.

Don't ever march home the same way. Take a different route so you won't be ambushed.

No matter whether we travel in big parties or little ones, each party has to keep a scout 20 yards ahead and 20 yards in the rear, so the main body can't be surprised and wiped out.

Don't sit down to eat without posting sentries.

Don't cross a river by a regular ford.

If somebody's trailing you, make a circle, come back onto your own tracks, and ambush the folks that aim to ambush you.

Don't stand up when the enemy's coming against you. Kneel down, lie down, hide behind a tree.

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 hatchet.

Source: "Major Robert Rogers' Famous Ranging Rules," Appendix D, Field Manual 7-85, *Ranger Unit Operations* (Washington: Headquarters Department of the Army, 1987).