

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

## THE RANGERS

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During the Seven Years War and the American Revolutionary War the Corps of Rangers had an active and distinguished military role. As veteran Rangers settled in the District of Gaspé, it is fitting to recall the origin and unique status of the Rangers.

KEN ANNETT

THE RANGERS

FOREWORD      The historical article, "AN EARLY TOURIST IN GASPEZIA", published by SPEC on July 29, 1981, opened with the following extract from a letter of Governor Haldimand to Felix O'Hara of Gaspé Basin:

"...Captain (Justus) Sherwood of the Loyal Rangers does not wish to return to the Colonies or to risk the attempt, and being desirous of settling on the sea coast, I send him down, accompanied by other Loyalists attached to him, to take a view of the Bay of Chaleur and that quarter..."

The article, which featured the MEMORIAL of Captain Sherwood, recalled his former residency in the New Hampshire Grants of the Province of New York and County of Charlotte and referred to his service as a Captain in "HIS MAJESTY'S PROVINCIAL REGIMENT OF LOYAL RANGERS. It would, however, require a full volume to recall in full the daring and dangerous service of Sherwood in secret service operations along the Quebec-American frontier. His life would have been in jeopardy had he returned. Haldimand's phrase, "Other Loyalists attached to him...", is significant in that each Ranger Captain recruited the men of his Company and had a closer bond with them than was usual in the Army at large.

Again, other articles of the "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" series refer to Captain Azariah Pritchard the Elder who raised and commanded a Company of the "KING'S RANGERS". His son, Azariah, Junior, was a member of his father's Company. The Pritchards and other veteran Rangers settled in Gaspesia at the close of the American Revolutionary War.

The HALDIMAND PAPERS, published by the Public Archives of Canada, provide details of the military service of Sherwood, Pritchard and other Ranger officers and men.

## THE RANGERS

ORIGINS While many associate the RANGERS with the remarkable military career of Lieut.-Colonel Robert Rogers and the writings of Kenneth Roberts such as "NORTH-WEST PASSAGE", the name, RANGER, did not originate with Rogers. It had been used for at least a decade in the northern colonies of New England. In New York Colony, for example, records contain numerous references to the employment of "New levies to range the woods", for protective purposes and these military were known as RANGERS. In April, 1747, the General Assembly of New York sent a representation to Governor Clinton advising, "that in tender commiseration of the Out-settlements on the Northern Frontier, this House has passed a Bill providing for One Hundred Rangers to be employed for the protection and security of the said Settlements against the skulking parties of the enemy." The enemy referred to were war-parties of French and Indians from Québec raiding down into the New England settlements. In another reference Governor Shirley of Massachusetts reported in 1748 that part of Goreham's Independent Company of Rangers had been sent to Nova Scotia.

SEVEN YEARS WAR The Seven Years War (1756-1763), which culminated in Canada with the Fall of New France, established the role and the reputation of the RANGERS. In his remarkable book, "MONTCALM AND WOLFE", the historian, Francis Parkman, has left us the following portrait of the noted Ranger leader, Robert Rogers, in the year 1757:

"...Early in September a band of New England RANGERS came to Winslow's camp with three prisoners taken within the lines of Ticonderoga. Their Captain was Robert Rogers of New Hampshire - a strong, well-knit figure, in dress and appearance more woodsman than soldier, with a clear, bold eye and features that would have been good but for the ungainly proportions of the nose. He had passed his boyhood in the rough surroundings of a frontier



"village. Growing to manhood, he engaged in some occupation which, he says, led him to frequent journeyings in the wilderness between the French and English settlements and gave him a good knowledge of both. It taught him also to speak a little French. ...He was ambitious and violent, yet able in more ways than one, by no means uneducated, and so skilled in woodcraft, so energetic and resolute, that his services were invaluable...During the past summer he had raised a band of men, chiefly New Hampshire borderers, and made a series of daring excursions which gave him a prominent place in this hardy byplay of war..."

In addition to references to Robert Rogers in the works of Francis Parkman, the reader will find the volume, ROGER'S RANGERS by Lieut.-Colonel H.M.Jackson, M.B.E.,E.D. 1953, of great interest.

At the capture of the great French fortress of Louisbourg in 1758, an action in which a certain Major James Wolfe won a reputation that would make him a General and Commander of the British Expedition against Quebec in 1759, four RANGER companies were prominent in the landing and rout of the French defenders. Wolfe was impressed and included some six hundred RANGERS among the troops bound for Quebec. These included the Companies named for their Commanding Officers : Goreham; Dank; McCurdy; Brewer; Stark; Hazen and Rogers (James, brother of Robert) Following the victory of the British on the Plains of Abraham Captain Hazen's RANGER Company remained in Quebec over the winter with General Murray's garrison .

THE RANGER  
ROLE AND  
TACTICS

The men enrolled as RANGERS were usually a hard-bitten crew. Whereas the regular soldier and other provincial troops went into winter quarters when the cold and snow rendered forest travel impracticable for such forces, the RANGERS served in an active capacity all the year round. Troops trained in winter warfare in the War of 1739-45 were no innovation, for the RANGER of the Seven Years' War was at home on snowshoes or on skates. Rogers' JOURNALS (JOURNALS OF MAJOR ROBERT ROGERS, LONDON, PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR AND SOLD BY J. MILLAN, BOOKSELLER, NEAR WHITEHALL, LONDON, 1765) speak of many such expeditions in the Lake George area, just as they do of forays by canoe and whale-boat in summer by day and by night.

RANGERS frequently served as the advanced guard for the Army and when the Army retired, as the after or rear guard. Their essential role was to reconnoitre enemy country and secure information. They were, in brief, "the eyes and the ears of the Army". Their services were invaluable as the type of country in which the Seven Years' War was fought, with wooded terrain and an almost complete absence of roads, precluded the use of cavalry. The RANGERS had mobility and could travel faster and with greater ease and secrecy than the regulars. They could match the speed and tactics of the Indian or Coureur-de-Bois and beat them at their own game. In short, their chief functions were reconnaissance, securing information, delaying hostile forces, covering the flank of the Army and forming a mobile reserve to pursue the enemy or cover withdrawal. They were used extensively on scouts or patrols, raids and special missions. A parallel to the RANGERS of the 18th century can be found in the specialized units developed during World War II.

CLOTHING  
AND ARMS

Accounts of the clothing, arms and equipment of the RANGERS differ but such differences are likely due to the time period and the stage of evolution of the RANGER Corps. Parkman says that they wore a sort of woodland uniform and carried smooth-bores loaded with buckshot or bullets or both. The British Army Officer and historian, Major Knox, asserts that Rogers' men in Acadia in 1757 had no particular uniform. They wore their clothing short, were armed with a firelock, tomahawk and scalping knife, and carried a bullock's horn for powder slung from

the left shoulder, and a leather or sealskin bag about the waist for shot. He also states that a RANGER officer carried a small compass fixed to the bottom of the powder-horn. Later, Knox affirms that the RANGERS had new uniforms of black freize, lapelled and cuffed with blue. The famous QUEEN'S RANGERS, commanded originally by Col. Robert Rogers, wore dark green uniforms. The reader who may wish to trace the stirring history of the QUEEN'S RANGERS will find the account by James Hannay in the 1908 TRANSACTIONS OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA to be compact, complete and factful.

THE KING'S  
RANGERS

Gaspesians have a particular interest in the KING'S RANGERS as Captain Azariah Pritchard the Elder, a Company Commander of that unit, his son, Azariah Jr., and other members of the Company settled in Gaspesia at the close of the American Revolutionary War.

Following his retirement from the QUEEN'S RANGERS Robert Rogers obtained authorization from Sir Henry Clinton, the Commander-in-Chief of British Forces to raise Two battalions, each of ten Companies of RANGERS, to be enlisted for two years or the duration of the American Revolution. Clinton himself was to approve the Officers whose appointments were to depend on their success in recruiting. Before receiving a penny of his pay, a Captain had to recruit 32 men, a Lieutenant 16 men and an Ensign 12 men. A Major would be commissioned for the battalion when enough men enlisted to complete four companies. The new unit was to be known as the KING'S RANGERS.

COMPANY OF  
CAPTAIN  
AZARIAH  
PRITCHARD  
THE ELDER

Fortunately, the Nominal Roll of the Company of the KING'S RANGERS commanded by Captain Azariah Pritchard the Elder has survived, as follows:

Azah Pritchard, Capt.	Solomon Johns, Lieut.
Caleb Green, Ensign	Geo. Campbell, Serjt.
Levi Barnum, Serjt.	Peter Taylor, Serjt.
Andrew Reakley, Serjt.	Joseph Marsh, Corpl.
Abner Barlow, Corpl.	P..... McCoy, Corpl.
Nicholas Sweet	Lachs Granger
William Brown	Geo. Speed
Richd Antoney	Henry Cross
Geo. Cosby	John Connelly



<u>COMPANY</u> (ctd)	Jacob Dinnon Moses Harlbert Isaac Ives Elikah Munrow Jno Nichols Geo. Patterson Abel Davis Stephen Wakeley Martain Devoe Andrew Adams Joseph Brown Thos. Warder Willm Adames Brewin Hugh Asa Dribble Nadab Estman Willm Carrigain John Currey Danl Edy Wm Simon Place Jeramiah Ronelds Benjamin Spencer Thomas Spencer	Willm Farris John Knapping Francis Moor Jacob Miller Samll Philo Henry Pells Chrisr Curtis Jacob Busk John Carkner Nathan Noyes Jonathan Davis Joll Adames Levi Warren, Sr. James Currey Peter Cruller Charles Brown Thomas Philo Isaac Busco Hiram Chappel Azah Pritchard, Jr. Jeramiah Spencer Pelge Spencer
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(Signed) S. Johns, Lieut.

The Officer Commanding the KING'S RANGERS was Major James Rogers, a brother of Colonel Robert Rogers.

REFERENCES

Previous articles of the "GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY" series refer to Captain Azariah Pritchard, Sr. These include:

- #037 LOYALIST CLAIMS. PART II
- #136 PROCURATION OF CAPTAIN AZARIAH PRITCHARD THE ELDER TO RECOVER LOST LOYALIST LANDS.
- #150 AZARIAH PRITCHARD, Sr. AS SEIGNIOR OF BIC.
- #194 INCIDENT IN THE SECRET SERVICE OF CAPTAIN AZARIAH PRITCHARD, THE ELDER.

The true and remarkable story of the RANGERS is the "stuff" of which great literature and films can be produced.



Roger's Rangers were mostly white American frontiersmen, like the group above drawn by the artist, Ronald Embleton. The Ranger on the left wears winter campaign dress, the rest wear green uniform with buckskin additions.



