



# The BATTALION JOURNAL

*The Newsletter of Jaeger's Battalion,  
Rogers' Rangers*



N<sup>o</sup> 81

Fall 2016

## Field Craft

Submitted By Pvt. Lou Framelli  
Michigan Company

*"...enlist none but such as were used to travelling and hunting."*  
Rogers Journal; March 23 1756

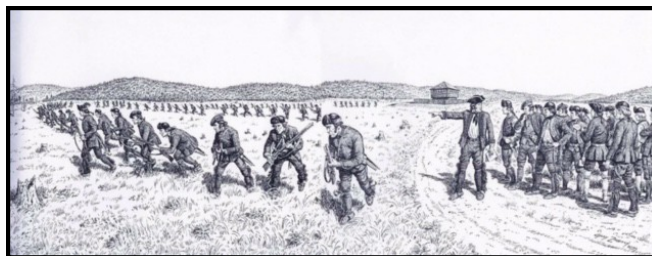
*"What distinguished the 18th C Ranger from other military forces of the century?"*

Let's start by acknowledging that it was not the uniform or equipment. Primary sources indicate that Ranger uniforms and equipment varied greatly over time and by unit. Differing uniform standards are documented for various Ranger units, even those under Rogers' command. Some are known to have been un-uniformed, and others incorporated elements of civilian and Native dress. It should come as no surprise that the snowshoe units in New England were dressed and equipped differently than the mounted Rangers of the Southern Provinces. Even though such differentiation due to climate, assignment, funding and tradition is expected, it largely misses the point. The uniform didn't make these men "Rangers" anymore than wearing a cassock would have made Rogers a priest.

The modern tendency to interpret the historic in terms of material culture is a wholly inappropriate methodology for fundamentally understanding who the 18th C Ranger was. In fact it can largely be an exercise in futility. Simply put, there were few, if any, tools unique to the Ranger or his craft. North American Rangers of this period typically used the weapons and equipment common to the area they operated in. Archeologically, there would be little physical evidence to distinguish them from the common soldier or militia man in the same theatre of operation. More significantly, an examination of the

items the Ranger carried offers little in terms of measuring his purpose or worth. As you are aware, the unique mission parameters of the typical 18th C Ranger necessi-

*Field Craft ...continued on page 6*



*"Rogers' Rangers Cadet School" image used with permission of Artist/Historian Gary Zaboly.*

## The 2017 School of the Ranger

Submitted by Pvt. Lou Framelli  
Michigan Company

The 2017 School of the Ranger focus is "The 18th C Reconnoitering Party." The weekend event will involve a mix of lecture, hands-on, and simulated patrolling exercises designed to familiarize the participants with the skills necessary to understand all facets of the historic military specialization, as well as lend insight to future research and portrayals. Lodging in the fort, firewood and meals will be included.

Registration is \$60.00 and will be limited to the first 30 paid applicants. This year the School is set up as a semi-immersive, living history workshop with a "train-the-trainer" mandate.

Ultimately the SOR goal is to equipped participants with knowledge and materials to share with their units. All experience levels are welcome.

The SOR is being co-sponsored by Jaeger's Battalion of Rogers' Rangers and the Friends of Fort Frederick. All proceeds benefit the Friends of Fort Frederick.

For more information email  
2017SOR@oaksedge.net or visit our website:

**Battalion Staff**

Commanding Officer: Major Tim Todish      [tjtodish@juno.com](mailto:tjtodish@juno.com)  
 Adjutant: Captain Bill Blair      [JaegerAdjutant@cox.net](mailto:JaegerAdjutant@cox.net)  
 Recruiter: Capt./Lt Chris Matheney      [Battaliondrum@gmail.com](mailto:Battaliondrum@gmail.com)  
 Armor: Capt./Lt James Brown      [jbrown\\_14105@yahoo.com](mailto:jbrown_14105@yahoo.com)  
 Sgt. Major: Sgt. Tim Green      [tcgunner54@gmail.com](mailto:tcgunner54@gmail.com)  
 Battalion Webmaster ... Ensign Mark Ulrich      [mru61@yahoo.com](mailto:mru61@yahoo.com)

**Battalion Web Address**

Battalion Web pages ... <http://www.rogersrangers.com/>

**Battalion Yahoo Group Address**

Battalion Dispatch ... <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BattalionDispatch/>

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**Battalion Journal Staff**

Publisher: Thomas Pray ...      [atlatl@charter.net](mailto:atlatl@charter.net)  
 Editor: Jerry Knitis ...      [fknitis@aol.com](mailto:fknitis@aol.com)  
 Associate Editor: Lou Tramelli ...      [lou@oaksedge.net](mailto:lou@oaksedge.net)  
 Proofreader: Dave Fagerberg

Send all correspondence to  
 Thomas Pray, Publisher  
 Battalion Journal  
 637 Telegraph Road  
 Peru, New York 12972

**Renewal Information**

By Jerry Knitis, Editor

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 Battalion Journal  
 637 Telegraph Road  
 Peru, New York 12972  
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## So you want to build your own Powder Horn

Submitted by Pvt. Greg Waldron  
Michigan Company

This is a subject that has been written on many times and I doubt there is anymore that I can add to what is all ready written. My hope is that I can inspire someone that has been wanting to make their own but is a little unsure where to start, or what to look for in a good horn. You can look at hundreds of horns online and depending on what type of powder horns you are looking at, and who made them, it can be overwhelming. The craftsmanship, and art work of some of the powder horns out there is astounding.

Let me assure you that while there were powder horns out there that were of great beauty and incredible works of art, most were just ordinary cow horns that were scraped smooth. A plug of some sort of wood, most commonly pine was inserted in the large open end. The tip was cut off and a hole would be drilled in the end for the powder to be poured from. Then a plug would be made to fill the small hole. That is a powder horn in the simplest form. Nothing fancy, nothing that would catch the attention of the common folk, because it was a common horn. That is what I will attempt to show you how to build in this short article.

So where do I find a horn? That is the most common question I'm probably asked. You can go to local butchers, sometimes they have a few on hand, but you need to boil them for a while to soften the horn, and do your best to knock the core out. It is a lot of unpleasant work, and I would advise if you went this route that you boil the horn outside and away from your wife. Also don't use her good pans for this either. I have found cow horns at garage sales, antique stores, and also you can buy them on line. Let people know you are looking for horns, I have been given a set of mounted horns that people just want out of the basement. Don't overlook horns that are already mounted on a plaque hanging on the wall. These are all cleaned up and ready to go. Cost can vary greatly so it is up to you what you are willing to spend, and what is in your budget for this project.

What do I look for in a horn? Well there are a few things that I look for. It also depends on what type of horn that I want to build. If I'm wanting to do some engraving or scratch work I would like a horn that was fairly light in color, it does not have to be perfectly white, they rarely are. If I'm making a simple undecorated horn, then color is not as important. While on this subject, there were a lot

of plain horns. There were also horns with painted, stained and burned designs, as well as shallow carvings. If you are interested in a horn that fits a certain time period, and persona, I would try and find examples of those types of horns. You do not want to take the time to make a horn and then find out that it does not represent what you are trying to portray. Viking horn while very cool would be out of character for a Ranger or a Indian. Now both a Indian and Ranger from the French and Indian war could carry the same style horn, simple with little to no art work. It could have a painted or stained design, but one highly engraved and a work of art would be more likely for an officer. This is a subject that is covered in many volumes of written work, and I will not go into it any farther. It is your job, and responsibly to do that research, and make your own decision.

Size is another thing to consider. Do you need a horn for a day's hunt, or extended time out on a campaign? Don Wright wrote a good article "Design and Construction of Powder Horns". In his writing he measured 48 Golden Age powder horns around the curve. I assume he is measuring along the long outer curve of the horn. His findings were that most of the horns were between 15" and 17" in length. That does not mean that there were not smaller or larger horns. The size of your horn will depend on what you can find and also your preference. If all you are doing is hunting for the day, you may



not want to carry a pound and a half of powder.

You will find a verity of shapes as well as sizes when you are searching for your horn. There are two horns on every cow. So you have to decide on which side are you going to carry your horn. This is a personal choice. When you hold a horn up to your side, does it fit nicely? Is it to straight and the tip jets out to far in front of your body, will it catch on things as well as always hitting your arms. Is the twist to tight and it does not lay tight to your body. Is the tip pointing up, straight across your chest, or down. I like a tip the points slightly up, if I lose the plug out of the end of my horn, then I don't dump

### Perils of Patrol

Submitted by Ensign Thomas Pray  
New York Company

Provincials and Rangers were sent out on many scouts from Fort Edward or the Camp at Lake George in the campaign of 1758. They patrolled the roads and woods in all directions. They were sent Northward to patrol around Fort Ticonderoga. They were sent Southward escorting and patrolling from Four mile post to Halfway brook. They patrolled East to South Bay and Wood Creek. They were sent Westward to explore and search the Mountains and Ridges overlooking Lake George. On some exploratory trips, they were lucky, like Lieutenant Samuel Thompson who was on a scout with only 9 men between Fort Edward and Lake George camps. He mentions seeing no large groups or evidence of the enemy. Sometimes patrols weren't so fortunate as he reports in his journal. It was a dangerous job to be done.

#### Excerpt from the Diary of Lieutenant Samuel Thompson ... 1758 Camp at Lake George.

**July 17.** Monday. In forenoon we went out in a scout with 9 men but we see nothing and returned. Scouted in ye afternoon and see nothing. I was not well. I had a bad spell. This night we were alarmed by ye watch.

**July 18.** Tuesday. Divided some stores. Mr. Ephraim Kendall died and there was a very smart thunder shower - 3 or 4 as hard claps as ever I heard and a rainy afternoon. And Mr. Kendall was buried. Myself not well.

**July 19.** Wednesday. Some poorly yet I went about and camped.

#### Deaths July 20th 1758

Killed & Scalped by Indians

Capt. Jones,  
Lt. Godfrey,  
Capt. Lawrence,  
Capt. Dakin,  
Lt. Curtis  
Ens. Davis.

**July 20.** Thursday. In the morning, 10 men in a scout

waylaid by the Indians and shot at and alarmed the Fort and a number of our men went out to assist them and the enemy followed our men down to our Fort and in their retreat, Capt. Jones and Lieut. Godfrey were killed and Capt. Lawrence and Capt. Dakin and Lieut. Curtis and Ensign Davis and two or thre non-commissioned officers and privates - to the number of fourteen men who were brought into the Fort - all scalped but Ensign Davis who was killed within 20 or 30 rods from the Fort and there was one grave dug and all of them were buried together, the officers by themselves at one.... end, and the rest at the other end of the grave and Mr. Morrill made a prayer at the grave and it was a solemn funeral and Nathaniel Eaton died in the fort and was buried and we kept a very strong guard that night of 100 men. Haggit and William Coggin wounded.

A List of Men's names that were killed in this fight.

*Captain Dakin of Sudbury.*  
*Lt. Samuel Curtice of Sudbury.*  
*Pvt. Samuel Grout of Sudbury.*  
*Lt. Simon Godfrey of Billerica.*  
*Capt. Lawrence of Groton, Mass.*  
*Corp. Gould of Groton Gore.*  
*Pvt. Abel Sawtell of Groton.*  
*Pvt. Eleazer Eames of Groton.*  
*Pvt. Stephen Foster of Groton.*  
*Sgt. Oliver Wright of Westford*  
*Private Simon Wheeler of Westford.*  
*Ens. Davis of Methuen*  
*Sgt Russell of Concord.*  
*Pvt Abraham Harden of Pembroke.*  
*Pvt Payson of Rowley*  
*Pvt Patterson \_\_\_\_\_ ?*

We have also an account that there are seven of our men carried into Ticonderoga which make up the number of those that were missing.

Nicholas Brown and Moses Haggit died.

**July 21.** Friday. In ye forenoon a party of about 150 went out to find more men that were missing and we found 4 men who were scalped and we buried them and so returned.

## The Other Rogers Island

Submitted by Ensign Thomas Pray  
Schroth's New York Company

In the township of Panton Vermont, from 1796 to 1869, a small island just off the East side of Vermont, was named and recorded on Maps as Major Rogers Island. James Whitlow, cartographer for Vermont printed updated maps from 1797 to the 1850's with the designation as such.

On the 1869 Beers Map it is redesignated as Mud Island. I have found no indication as to when it was so named or recorded as in any written memo to date. There is, of course no doubt it was named for Major Robert Rogers. Panton is only 6 miles North of Crown Point and Three miles South of Otter Creek. The surrounding townships were all issued to French and Indian War Veterans.



The lands had all been part Hocquart and M. Michel Chartier de Lotbiniere seigniories, North of Hospital Creek and Chimney Point., The first survey in 1762 was done by Colonel Samuel Elmore, Zadock Everest, Samuel Chipman, and other Connecticut Veterans who had been at Crown Point in 1760. They opened 15 building lots and a sawmill on the Otter Creek. In 1763, Colonel, later General, David Wooster would receive a grant from New York for acreage along the Lake beginning near the South line of Addison, running East to Dead Creek. Colonel Charles Forbes would receive a grant in the area as would Lieutenant Ramsay. In 1766, Peter Ferris, another New York Veteran would come to settle in the immediate

area. In 1771, Lieutenant Colonel James Montresor, Chief Engineer under General Amherst at Crown Point in 1759, obtained a grant of 10,000 acres of land along the Otter Creek in the township of Panton. All of these men were familiar with Major Robert Rogers. Nowhere in any of the town's Histories, (Ferrisburgh, Panton, Vergennes,) can I find any reference to the naming of the island or why it would later change. There is a line of Rogers family names in the township of Panton, but none, so far, are related. At the time of this article I am still digging into that history and finding much that is circumstantial but nothing concrete. Like many other facets of Major Robert Rogers, the more one finds out, the more questions arise. The search continues.

## Ambush of Capt. Lawrence's Company

Submitted by Ensign Thomas Pray  
Schroth's New York Company

This is the Newspaper report of the action which killed Capt. Lawrence and members of his company near Halfway brook on the road from Fort Edward to Lake George in July of 1758.

It illustrates the dangers that Rangers faced every day as they were on this road constantly escorting, patrolling, and guarding troops. I think these type of stories and accounts, though not strictly Ranger show the type of environment the Rangers volunteered to be in all the time. I was also going through the inventory of the personal items being auctioned off from the Dead and find a lot of Tumplines, Indian Stockings, and cut down hats.

## The Boston-Gazette, and Country Journal, August 14, 1758

The following Particulars may he depended on, of the Skirmish between a Party of Gov Nichols's Regiment and the Enemy, near Halfway- Brook, Stockade, at Half Way-Brook, July 20. 1758.

*Last Evening we sent ten Men to escorte a Post to the Lake, and as they were returning early the next Morning they met an Indian within half of a Mile of the Advance-Guard of the Lake, who said he belonged to General Johnson — he was destitute of Arms and Ammunition, but*

*Ambush - continued on page 7*

*Perils- continued from page 4*

In addition- **Private Lemuel Lyon** who was on Rogers Island working on the Smallpox Hospital records his version of the ambushed scout.

**Thursday 20th.** Still at work Colonel Worster sot out to go down to Albany and a number of men with him this morning 10 Men were a going to the half way Brook to guard the Post and the Indians way laid them and kild 9 of them & 1 got in safe and they rallyd out from the Brook 100 & went back to see what was the Matter and they laid wait for them & they fired upon the front first and kiled 2 Captains and 2 Leiutenants on the spot & our men were surprised and run back all but a few and they stood a little while &, lost 17 men the engagement began son 2 hours high about a nowr after Leiut. Smith & 200 of our men went down to help guard the teames down to Fort Edward.

**Friday 21st.** This day at knight Leiut. Smith came back & very poor he was the rest of the guard returned well.

**Private Rufus Putnam**, escorting and working on the roads between Fort Edward and Lake George mentions it also, though briefly. To a Ranger, like Rufus Putnam, though the ambush and fighting might have deserved mentioning, he doesn't elaborate. Maybe it was because he was used to the threats, deaths, and dangerous duties.

**Lake George-Rufus Putnam Private.**

**July 20.** Near the Half-way Brook, was Killed by a party of Indians, Capt. Sam'i Dakin of Sudborough, Capt. Lawrence of Groton, Capt. Johns of Wilmington,

*Lieut. Curtis of Sudbury, Lieut. Godfrey of Billerica.*

There was a High risk to life, in patrolling and traveling the roads and woods in the region from Saratoga to Lake George. The Rangers did it everyday.

*Field Craft- continued from page 1*

tated they practice an early form of the "leave no trace" ethic, and a successful day in the field often meant the ranger unit endeavored to leave few indications of their presence. This combined with the material commonality of the potential physical evidence leaves little for the modern "material culture" historian to work with. Confining our study of the 18th century Ranger to matters of material culture then, is busying ourselves with ephemera at the periphery. While I greatly respect the work of 18th century material culture specialists and feel it is imperative to portray even the minutia as accurately as possible, I would suggest the key to understanding the 18th C Ranger is something else entirely.

*Consider the following:*

*Captain Rogers, possessing a bold and adventurous spirit, soon mustered a band of rugged foresters, every man of whom, as a hunter, could hit the size of a dollar at a hundred yards distance; could follow the trail of man or beast; endure the fatigues of long marches, the pangs of hunger, and the colds of winter nights, often passed without fire, shelter, or covering, other than their common clothing, a blanket, perhaps a bearskin, and the boughs of the pine or hemlock.*

-Memoir and Official Correspondence of General John Stark.

The Stark Memoir excerpt above notes that the Rangers were all essentially "foresters" or what we would call frontiersman, and catalogs several woodsman-related skills they possessed. This list of abilities is indicative of the kind of recruits the Rogers sought. It also suggests the essence, or distinguishing characteristic of the "rangers" overall.

In modern military terms, Stark is stating the men possessed a skill set known as Field Craft. Field Craft, in this context, should be understood as the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the colonial woodsman, as adapted for the small-unit, partisan skirmishes of the frontier. The adaptation is the key to understanding this military specialization. While true Rangers should be considered woodsman, the converse isn't necessarily true. The reason is simple. Field Craft is "woodsmanship" tailored to the war zone. It is the bush craft of opposing



*Field Craft- continued on next page*

*Field Craft - continued from previous page*

humans that are simultaneously both the predator and prey of each other. Hunting and surviving the elements in a primordial forest is a significant challenge that requires certain skills. Surviving these conditions while the quarry you seek is a superior military force that is actively hunting you is the distinction. Warfare in the wilds of North America was the change in circumstance that required a modification of the standard applications of a woodsman's skills in order to maximize the chances of survival and mission success.

Field Craft is the catalogue of abilities needed to perform the specialized Ranger mission. Likely honed through a lifetime spent in the North American forest, field craft should be understood as the reason the British Command Staff found the Provincial Rangers largely irreplaceable, and the determining factor of their effectiveness. Given its prominent role in both the identities and mission tasking of these men, there is little doubt that field craft should be a foundational element of any serious Ranger study or impression.

At this point, some of you may be wondering if it is possible to learn this type of Field Craft without having spent a lifetime in the forest. The historical record shows that not all Rangers were civilian woodsmen prior to enlistment. As the F&I War drew on it grew increasingly difficult to recruit only those "used to traveling and hunting". It became imperative then, to transmit this knowledge to other volunteers who would have to learn these skills quickly to survive the occupation. Robert Rogers himself acknowledged that Ranging techniques could be learned by volunteers when he stated;

*About this time Lord Loudon sent the following volunteers in the regular troops to be trained to the Ranging or Wood Service, under my command and inspection; with particular orders to me to instruct them to the utmost of my power in the ranging discipline, our methods of marching, ambushing, fighting & etc...*

-Rogers Journal entry April 22, 1757

Rogers "Cadet School" and his 28 Rules or Plan of Discipline were an attempt to codify the Rangers hard learned field craft skills into adaptive patrol techniques in order to facilitate the training of men without the requisite background in woodsmanship.. His journal

tells us that this training included shooting at marks, drills in garrison and taking the "students" on actual scouts. The fact that a dozen of these Cadet School gentleman volunteers eventually obtained commissions in Rogers Rangers attests to the training's success. More significantly, the patrol maxims, hidden within the archaic phrases used by Rogers, are still the basis of modern small unit patrolling and a testament to his field craft acumen.

The 18th C Ranging Service was a skilled profession with a steep learning curve. To portray it accurately or understand it beyond a cursory level requires some familiarity with skills and tasks they performed. Everyone "understands" the tasks. In the Stark quote just like they understand piloting an airplane, deep sea diving or performing surgery. How many of us can actually speak knowledgeably about these endeavors?

For those that are interested in learning more about these subjects there are many resources available. I would recommend beginning by scheduling a P/C hike and bivouac with experienced members. The more miserable the conditions the better. There is no substitute for the experience of actually carrying and using your gear to lend insight.

Look into the Senior Ranger Program and / or the School of the Ranger, etc. Both programs have skills components. Send an email to [lou@oaksedge.net](mailto:lou@oaksedge.net) if you would like to correspond about the topic.

*Ambush - continued from page 5*

*said he was going to the Lake after his Powder-Horn and his Gun, he had left at the Stockade Fort there, and so he passed them : Our People had not travell'd three Miles before this Indian overtook them, having his Powder-Horn, and would saine have passed them, but they travelling very fast kept him Company till they came within a Mile and half of this Stockade, where lay in Ambush near 50 of the Enemy, who cahoop\*d, at which the Indian sprung out of the Road towards the Enemy, and cahoop'd likewise, then the Enemy fired upon them ; all which was done in an Instant : All these unhappy Men fell into the Hands of the Enemy, except one, who was reliev'd by a Party consisting of near 100, which was sent out immediately at the Hearing of the Guns; two Indians who were pursuing the Soldier, fled*

*Ambush - continued on next page*

*Ambush- continued from previous page*

back near the Place where the Ambush was, where lay a large Body of the Enemy in a curve Line, with a great Advantage of Ground, which they arose from and fir'd, which was well answer'd from our Front ; the Enemy being very numerous attempted to flank us, but a second Party being sent out covered a Retreat, and prevented their Design: However artfully they laid their Scheme, it appears from several Circumstances plain, that the Enemy had a Design to keep us in play, till they could cut us off from Fort Edward, which if they had, the parties posted between the Fort and the Lake must have been cut off and destroyed, as the enemy did consist of eleven or twelve hundred- by the great Marks they left behind them where the main Body lay, we have Reason to believe that we kill'd and wounded a considerable Number of the Enemy, by the Number of Poles cut and hew'd for Beirs ; they left on the Ground, as also Spears, Poles, Packs and Blankets: They left Peas, Pork, Indian-Meal, a considerable quantity on the ground, a considerable number of the enemy They march'd off in 5 Paths or Columns towards South-Bay, all which was discover'd by Major Gage and his Party. — Among our Slain are several brave and worthy Officers, and the others narrowly escaped, who also behaved well.

## Duly Noted

### BACKGROUND

The Rangers of Major Rogers Companies performed various duties for the British army. Scouting was foremost as was information gathering, obtaining prisoners, and keeping the French occupied with their movements. They also were escorts and many times guards for both Provincial and Regular soldiers. They protected Work crews that gathered Spruce, built Bateaux, cut firewood, or made roads. It was the Ranger presence and safety provided by them that allowed this work to progress. These Duly Noted writings attest to their value.

#### Daily Scouts at Fort Stanwix.

16 December 1758

*“Major Clephane gave orders Eight Day's ago to Capt. Wendell of the Ranger's that every Evening an hour before sun Sett he shou'd send a Sufficent party to Examin the Woods Round the Fort, and to Do the Same every Morning an hour before Day Break, and report made to the*

*Commanding Officer of the Fort what they Observed.”*

Orders: December 16, 1758. Orderly Books of the 78th Regiment of Foot. P. 32-33.

Submitted by Timothy Green Sgt Major Jeager's Battalion

#### Crown Point

23rd July, 1759

In the afternoon a boat coming in with a blue flag, the signal I had ordered for any appearance of an Inferior number of the Enemy, which the Capt of Gages was to make. I saw four boats following this whale boat so guessed it could be nothing but Capt. Tute, as Gages Capt with the English boat still remained out. It proved exactly so,- Capt Tute arrived, the Indians firing & making the yell of having Scalps and a very great noise for a very little they have done. Capt Tute lay opposite to the Enemys Sloops some time but nobody came on shore; he then crossed to the east side & finding a canoo with some things left with it, knew a Scouting Party must be out & so resolved to wait for them. His Party of 40 men behaved ill or they should have taken the six Enemy Indians, three French men & two men of Prideaux's, instead of killing one Indian; one of Prideaux's escaped & joined him. They supposed they wounded two more Indians, and our own Rangers firing at they knew not what, wounded two of their Comrades, a pretty opportunity lost of taking all that Scouting Party. The luck of finding the canoo waiting for them, and attacking them properly (if it had been executed) ; could not have failed of taking the whole and there was no Risk.

General Jeffrey Amherst

Submitted by Thomas Pray, Ensign New York Company

#### Isle au Noix

August 26, 1760

*Orders for a number of men to go on bord the Prize vessels consisting of 165 men officers included to go volunteers from the Provincials, also for 41 men to List out of the Massachusetts Regt. To Joyne Major Roggers as Rangers in lieu of that number of the New Hampshires that was not fit for Rangers. Thompson Maxwell, of Capt. Whitings Company listed a Ranger.*

Sgt. David Holden

Submitted by Thomas Pray, Ensign New York Company

*Duly Noted - continued on next page*



*Duly Noted... continued from previous page.*

### 28 April 1760 Boston Post

RAN away from the Widow Rogers of Rumford, in New Hampshire, about a Month ago, a Negro servant Man, belonging to Major Robert Rogers, named Prince, of a middling Stature, about 30 Years of Age, has had the SmallPox, looks very serious and grave, and pretends to a great deal of Religion.—Since his Departure, he has sold most of his Cloaths, and now is but meanly dressed; he was in the Service the last Year, and has offer'd to enlist sundry Times, pretending himself to be a Freeman: He was lately taken up, but by his insinuating Discourse made his Escape again.

### 22 Nov 1762 Boston Post

RAN away from me the Subscriber at Londonderry, in the Province of New Hampshire, on the 18th of September, a Negro Man Servant named Prince about 40 Years of Age, about 5 feet 5 inches high, speaks good English, had on when he went away a green Coat, blue plush Breeches, diaper Jacket, several pair of thread Stockings with him; he looks very serious and grave, and pretends to be very religious: He is the property of Major Rogers and has been several Years to the Westward, and pretends to be free.

James Rogers

Submitted by Thomas Pray, Ensign New York Company

## Preparing For Winter



Several of us have been or will be taking to the field hunting as well. I got to do some of that myself last Saturday when I travelled down to Lyle Wolding's

place for some squirrel and turkey hunting. It was a grand time and I cannot thank Lyle enough for his hospitality!

Photo supplied by Matt Wulff

*Powder Horn - continued from page 3*

powder out all over the ground. I know others that like it pointing across their chest. Again this is a personal preference, something to think about. Which horn should I get, a right or left. Common opinion is right hand carry, left hand twist.

Thickness is very important. You don't want a horn that is paper thin but you don't want a horn that is  $3/8$ " thick either. You can tell a lot about horns when you start picking up and handling them. When looking at good finished powder horns, note the thickness and weight of the horn. You will be trimming off the large end of the horn so look at the thickness of the horn in the area that you will be cutting it back to. It should be about  $1/16$ " to  $1/8$ ". Does the cavity go a good distance up to the tip? Does the tip have enough thickness to do some file work to make a ring to secure the strap or to drive a staple in to hold the strap? If there is too much of a curve in the end of the tip you will have a hard time drilling your powder hole without drilling thru the side. If that happens don't worry I have seen many horns with a patch to cover a misplaced hole. It is not the end of the world, patch it in. The most important thing is, can you drill the hole so the powder will pour out the end. I like a hole  $1/4$ " to  $5/16$ " in diameter.

I hope that I'm not losing you at this point. Working with cow horn is very enjoyable. You should enjoy this project. Horn is made of keratin, it's primarily hair, and also the same as your finger nails. It is easily worked with hand tools. You don't need power tools to build a powder horn. Of course if you have power tools it makes things go faster, sometimes too fast. So take your time and enjoy the process.

This is not a race. I probably should put in the safety disclaimer here. I, any of my living relatives, or the publishers of this fine publication are not responsible for any injuries or death caused by the reading of, and or, in the building of a powder horn using this article. You should observe all safety processes, and warnings. If your wife gets mad at you, that is your own problem. Use safety glasses and dust masks. There, that should cover it. In this day and age probably not, but it's up to you to be a responsible adult.

Ok so you found a cow horn that you like, so now lets get started. If the horn is rough and scaly you will need to make it smooth. You can do this using a rasp, scraper, or sandpaper. If you use a power sander be careful that you do not sand thru the horn, or make any flat spots. I recommend rasps, and scrapers to smooth

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the horn. You can also use sand paper with a sanding block. Feel for any ridges and flat spots and try to make the horn smooth and flowing. You will need to make a nice clean cut on the large end of the horn. Use masking tape or a wide rubber band, wrap it around where you want to make the cut. Try and make it as square to the horn as possible. Let your eye be your guide. Use a hacksaw or a coping saw to make the cut. Any fine tooth saw will work.

Once you have the end cut, tape a full sheet of 80 grit sandpaper to a flat surface, rub the cut end on the sandpaper to smooth, and flatten the cut that you just made. Once you get the end cut and sanded make sure to check the wall thickness, you want to have about  $1/16''$  to  $1/8''$  of thickness.

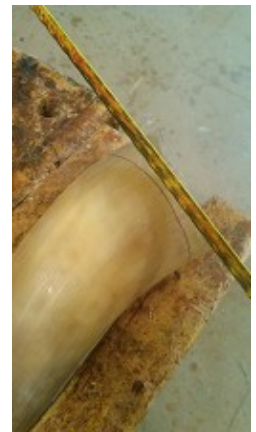


The variations of plug styles and shapes are limitless. You can go with the natural shape of the horn, or you can make it round. If you want a round plug you will need a wood lathe. You will have to turn a tapered wood form to fit the end of the horn. You will then need to boil the end of the horn until it is hot, and pliable. Push the form into the end of the horn to make it perfectly round. Leave it there until the horn is cool. If you do not have access to a lathe then I would recommend that you shape the plug to fit the shape



of the end of the horn. The Base Plug can be flat, dome-shaped, fluted, engraved, carved, anything that you can imagine, they did. Pine was often used because it was easily shaped, that is what I would recommend.

Find a good clear piece of pine  $3/4''$  thick, set the end of the horn on it and trace around the end of the horn. If you are leaving the end in the natural shape I would put a mark with pencil both on the horn and the wood so that you orient the plug the same way every time. A coping saw is a great tool for cutting out the plug. Since you traced the outside of the horn and the plug has to fit on the inside, you need to angle your cut so that the inside of the plug is smaller than the outside. How much to taper I cannot say. Let your eyes be the judge of that. Go slow and keep the angle consistent, and not too steep, follow your line as best as you can. You now have the plug cut out. You will have to do some final fitting to the base of the horn. Use a rasp to shape and smooth your cuts. Watch the alignment marks that you put on the horn and wood to make sure you are putting it on the same way each time. You only need about  $1/2''$  of wood to fit in the base of the horn. The rest you can sand flat, or take your jackknife and make it a small domed shape, or any of the other ideas you have. Now I like to take a piece of wire and run up inside the horn. I push this so it is running on the outside of the curve of the horn, mark the wire with a marker. Now lay the wire on the outside curve of the horn. Put the mark you made with the marker at the cut end of the horn. At the other end mark the horn with a pencil, this is where the cavity ends. I now measure another  $1/2''$  longer. I now cut the tip off as square as I can.



I like a  $1/4''$  to  $5/16''$  hole in the tips of my horn. Once installed in your drill, measure the length of the exposed drill bit. Now measure from the end of the cavity mark that you made on your horn, the length that you need to drill. Make sure your drill bit is long enough. Clamp the horn in a vise, being careful not to damage the horn. The horn is hollow so you can crack it if you are not careful. Take the drill and by eye align the drill bit so that you can drill to the cavity. This is hard to explain and you have to visualize where the cavity is and the angle of the drill. Good luck, if all goes well you will drill straight and true. If you drill out the side don't panic. It has happened countless times, make sure you get a hole

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to the cavity and then plug the hole that came out the side with wood, horn, or epoxy. You than can hide it later with a brass collar or the strap. There are many ways to cover the patch. Don't worry about it at this time. Move on and an idea will usually come to you later. Now that you have the hole drilled in the tip, blow out the horn,



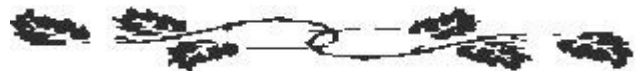
clean it up some, because now we will attach the end plug.

You can use anything to glue the plug in that you want. Anything from pine pitch, bees wax, to epoxy. Also you will want to attach the plug with some type of "nails". My favorite is thorns from a Hawthorn tree, but I have seen steel, and brass nails as well. Again your choice. Try and space the nails evenly around the horn. I use a pencil and dividers to lay out the nails. You will do a lot of erasing before you get the spacing that you want. Drill small holes thru the horn so the nails do not crack the horn. If you are using thorns, I dip the thorns in glue then use a small hammer to drive them home. Once everything is dry, blow in the end of the horn like you are trying to blow up a balloon. You are checking that your horn is air tight. If there is any leakage, then you will have to find it and seal it up.

You can now bend a heavy wire and make a wide staple, drive this into the wood plug. Wood stoppers for the tip of the horn can be anything that you like, I just take a dry piece of limb and whittle out a plug, but you can make them as fancy as you please. Some even use Violin pegs. Now for the neck area. You will need a way to hold the strap in place. You can file a simple ring or groove to attach the strap to. Or you can make a iron staple as a strap keeper. One mistake people make with the staple is they attach the strap right to the staple. I believe the strap



should go around the neck of the horn, the staple is to keep the strap in place so that the strap will not slide of the end. If you tie the strap to just the staple, I believe there is too much pressure on the small staple and it will pull out in time. Just use it to hold the strap in place because the horn is thin in this area. You now should have a functional powder horn that will serve you for many years. I purposely didn't get involved in detailing the neck and tip area. Since this article is to motivate you to build your own simple horn there were a lot of things left out. There are other books and web sites out there that deal in all aspects of horn work I decided to leave that up to you. You can take this as far as you want. I hope that this article will inspire you to try your first powder horn. Good Luck and may God Bless you and your family.



*A reproduction of the powder horn carried by Chief Paugus of the Narragansett Tribe, who was killed at the Battle of Lovewell's Pond in 1725. Another fine horn but one that would be best suited for a native than for an English colonist.*





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*The Battalion Journal*  
*637 Telegraph Road*  
*Peru, New York 12972*

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