Chapter 1  An Uncommon Defense

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1.1 Powhatan Describes War among the Natives (1607)

As the seventeenth century dawned in North America, European empires staked their claims to the continent. They established outposts in distant corners of North America: the Spanish at St. Augustine and Santa Fe, the French at Québec, the Dutch at Fort Nassau, and, most significantly for the future United States, the English at Jamestown. Arriving in 1607, the English colonists of Virginia included a few military veterans such as Captain Christopher Newport and Captain John Smith. They encountered a powerful chieftain named Powhatan, who governed the Native people along the James River through tribute, diplomacy, and trade. Called a Werowance, or great ruler, he asserted supremacy over a host of Algonquian-speaking tribes. They were loosely affiliated in what rather grandly came to be known as Powhatan’s Confederacy. For their common defense, the warriors practiced a mode of combat that accentuated “skulking” tactics such as the ambush. They battled with enemies to win honors or to gain captives, but not to destroy them. Powhatan initially considered the strangers from England as potential allies in a struggle to extend his power still further over Indian tribes living around the Chesapeake Bay. He tried to negotiate with the English and sought to trade with them. In addition to their loyalty, he desired to acquire their technologically advanced swords, guns, and powder. However, relations between the Indians and the English in Virginia grew increasingly violent over the years, especially once the starving English colonists began raiding Indian food supplies.

Captaine Newport, it is not agreeable to my greatnesse, in this pedling manner to trade for trifles; and I esteeme you also a great Werowance. Therefore lay me downe all your commodities together; what I like I will take, and in recompence give you what I thinke fitting their value [...] 

If your King have sent me Presents, I also am a King, and this is my land: eight dayes I will stay to receive them. Your Father is to come to me, not I to him, nor yet to your Fort, neither will I bite at such a bait: as for the Monacans I can revenge my owne injuries, and as for Atquanachuk, where you say your brother was slaine, it is a contrary way from those parts you suppose it; but for any salt water beyond the mountaines, the relations you have had from my people are false. Whereupon he began to draw plots upon the ground (according to his discourse) of all those regions [...] 

Yet Captaine Smith, sayth the King, some doubt I have of your comming hither, that makes me not so kindly seeke to relieue you as I would: for many doe informe me, your comming hither is not for trade, but to invade my people, and possesse my Country, who dare not come to bring you corne, seeing you thus armed with your men. To free us of this feare, leave aboord your weapons, for here they are needlesse, we being all friends, and for ever Powhatans [...] 

Captaine Smith, you may understand that I having seene the death of all my people thrice, and not any one living of these three generations but my selfe; I know the difference of peace and warre better then any in my Country. But now I am old and ere long must die, my brethren, namely Opitchapam, Opechancanough, and Kekataugh, my two sisters, and their two daughters, are distinctly each others successors. I wish their experience no lesse then mine, and your love to them no lesse then mine to you.
But this bruit from *Nandsamund*, that you are come to destroy my Country, so much affrighteth all my people as they dare not visit you.

What will it availe you to take that by force you may quickly have by love, or to destroy them that provide you food? What can you get by warre, when we can hide our provisions and fly to the woods? Whereby you must famish by wronging us your friends. And why are you thus jealous of our loves seeing us unarmed, and both doe, and are willing still to feede you, with that you cannot get but by our labours?

Thinke you I am so simple, not to know it is better to eate good meate, lye well, and sleepe quietly with my women and children, laugh and be merry with you, have copper, hatchets, or what I want being your friend: then be forced to flie from all, to lie cold in the woods, feede upon acornes, rootes, and such trash, and be so hunted by you, that I can neither rest, eate, nor sleepe; but my tyred men must watch, and if a twig but breake, every one cryeth there commeth Captaine Smith: then must I fly I know not whether: and thus with miserable feare, end my miserable life, leaving my pleasures to such youths as you, which through your rash unadvisednesse may quickly as miserably end, for want of that, you never know where to finde. Let this therefore assure you of our loves, and every yeare our friendly trade shall furnish you with corne; and now also, if you would come in friendly manner to see us, and not thus with your guns and swords as to invade your foes [...]

Captaine Smith, I never use any *Werowance* so kindely as your selfe, yet from you I receive the least kindnesse of any. Captaine Newport gave me swords, copper, cloathes, a bed, towels, or what I desired; ever taking what I offered him, and would send away his gunnes when I intreated him: none doth deny to lye at my feet, or refuse to doe what I desire, but onely you; of whom I can have nothing but what you regard not, and yet you will have whatsoever you demand. Captaine Newport you call father, and so you call me; but I see for all us both you will doe what you list, and we must both seeke to content you. But if you intend so friendly as you say, send hence your armes, that I may beleive you; for you see the love I beare you, doth cause me thus nakedly to forget my selfe [...]

I gladly accept your salute of love and peace, which while I live, I shall exactly keepe, his pledges thereof I receive with no lesse thanks, although they are not so ample as formerly he had received; but for my daughter, I have sold her within this few daies to a great *Werowance*, for two bushels of *Rawrenoke*, three daies journie from me [...]

I desire no former assurance of his friendship, than the promise he hath made, from me he hath a pledge, one of my daughters, which so long as she lives shall be sufficient, when she dies, he shall have another: I hold it not a brotherly part to desire to bereave me of my two children at once. Farther, tell him though he had no pledge at all, hee need not distrust any injurie from me or my people; there have beene too many of his men and mine slaine, and by my occasion there shall never be more, I which have power to performe it, have said it, although I should have just cause, for I am now old, & would gladly end my daies in peace; if you offer me injurie, my countrie is large enough to goe from you: Thus much I hope will satisfie my brother.

Now because you are wearie, and I sleepie, wee will thus end.

1.2 John Mason Campaigns against the Pequot (1637)

The colonists of New England established a militia system to defend new settlements, to act as a police force, and to operate in the backcountry. In contrast to the stylized and ritualistic combat common to the Native Americans, the English governments sanctioned bloody wars of extirpation. From 1636 to 1637, tensions over trade relations exploded into New England’s first major Anglo-Indian war. The Pequot Indians constituted a polity whose location at the mouth of the Connecticut River enabled them to deal with Dutch traders from Manhattan and English colonists in the Massachusetts Bay. The death of two traders sparked fears among the English that the Pequot planned an uprising. Militia companies from New England towns and allied warriors from the Mohegan and the Narragansett tribes launched preemptive strikes against the Pequot. After his campaign along the Mystic River, Captain John Mason testified about the destruction of a Pequot community. On May 26, 1637, he urged the English militiamen and their Indian allies to torch Fort Mystic and to kill those gathered behind the palisades. They set fire to wigwams, shot fleeing warriors, captured women and children, and divided the spoils. They killed as many as 700 at Fort Mystic and drove the Pequot away. Some survivors were forced into “praying towns” for conversion to Christianity. Others were sold to Caribbean slave traders. The Pequot name was outlawed in New England thereafter.

In the Beginning of May 1637 there were sent out by Connecticut Colony Ninety Men under the Command of Capt. John Mason against the Pequots, with Onkos an Indian Sachem living at Mohegan, who was newly revolted from the Pequots; being Shipped in one Pink, one Pinnace, and one Shallop; who sailing down the River of Connecticut fell several times a ground, the Water being very low: The Indians not being wonted to such Things with their small Canoes, and also being impatient of Delays, desired they might be set on Shoar, promising that they would meet us at Saybrook; which we granted: They hastening to their Quarters, fell upon Thirty or forty of the Enemy near Saybrook Fort, and killed seven of them outright; having only one of their’s wounded, who was sent back to Connecticut in a Skiff: Capt. John Underhill also coming with him, who informed us what was performed by Onkos and his Men; which we looked at as a special Providence; for before we were somewhat doubtful of his Fidelity: Capt. Underhill then offered his Service with nineteen Men to go with us, if Lieutenant Gardner would allow of it, who was Chief Commander at Saybrook Fort; which was readily approved of by Lieutenant Gardner and accepted by us [...]

Questions for Consideration

1. What, according to Powhatan, were the essential differences between “peace and warre” under his rule?
2. Why did he dread fighting against the English in particular?
3. How did he propose to prevent more fighting in the future?
In Matters of War, those who are both able and faithful should be improved; and then bind them not up into too narrow a Compass: For it is not possible for the wisest and ablest Senator to foresee all Accidents and Occurrents that fall out in the Management and Pursuit of a War: Nay although possibly he might be trained up in Military Affairs; and truly much less can he have any great Knowledge who hath had but little Experience therein. What shall I say? God led his People thro’ many Difficulties and Turnings; yet by more than an ordinary Hand of Providence he brought them to Canaan at last [...]

We then Marching on in a silent Manner, the Indians that remained fell all into the Rear, who formerly kept the Van; (being possessed with great Fear) we continued our March till about one Hour in the Night: and coming to a little Swamp between two Hills, there we pitched our little Camp; much wearied with hard Travel, keeping great Silence, supposing we were very near the Fort [Mystic] as our Indians informed us; which proved otherwise: The Rocks were our Pillows; yet Rest was pleasant: The Night proved Comfortable, being clear and Moon Light: We appointed our Guards and placed our Sentinels at some distance; who heard the Enemy Singing at the Fort, who continued that Strain until Midnight, with great Insulting and Rejoycing [...]

In the Morning, we awaking and seeing it very light, supposing it had been day, and so we might have lost our Opportunity, having purposed to make our Assault before Day; rowed the Men with all expedition, and briefly commended ourselves and Design to God, thinking immediately to go to the Assault; the Indians shewing us a Path, told us that it led directly to the Fort. We held on our March about two Miles, wondering that we came not to the Fort, and fearing we might be deluded: But seeing Corn newly planted at the Foot of a great Hill, supposing the Fort was not far off, a Champion Country being round about us; then making a stand, gave the Word for some of the Indians to come up: At length Onkos and one Wequosh appeared; We demanded of them, Where was the Fort? They answered: On the Top of that Hill: Then we demanded, Where were the Rest of the Indians? They answered, Behind, exceedingly afraid: We wished them to tell the rest of their Fellows, That they should by no means Fly, but stand at what distance they pleased, and see whether English men would now Fight or not. Then Captain Underhill came up, who Marched in the Rear; and commending our selves to God divided our Men: There being two Entrances into the Fort, intending to enter both at once: Captain Mason leading up to that on the North East Side; who approaching within one Rod, heard a Dog bark and an Indian crying Owannux! Owannux! which is Englishmen! Englishmen!

We called up our Forces with all expedition, gave Fire upon them through the Pallizado; the Indians being in a dead indeed their last Sleep: Then we wheeling off fell upon the main Entrance, which was blocked up with Bushes about Breast high, over which the Captain passed, intending to make good the Entrance, encouraging the rest to follow. Lieutenant Seeley endeavoured to enter; but being somewhat cumbred, stepped back and pulled out the Bushes and so entred, and with him about sixteen Men: We had formerly concluded to destroy them by the Sword and save the Plunder.

Whereupon Captain Mason seeing no Indians, entred a Wigwam; where he was beset with many Indians, waiting all opportunities to lay Hands on him, but could not prevail. At length William Heydon espying the Breach in the Wigwam, supposing some English might be there, entred; but in his Entrance fell over a dead Indian; but speedily
recovering himself, the Indians some fled, others crept under their Beds: The Captain going out of the Wigwam saw many Indians in the Lane or Street; he making towards them, they fled, were pursued to the End of the Lane, where they were met by Edward Pattison, Thomas Barber, with some others; where seven of them were Slain, as they said. The Captain facing about, Marched a slow Pace up the Lane he came down, perceiving himself very much out of Breath; and coming to the other End near the Place where he first entred, saw two Soldiers standing close to the Pallizado with their Swords pointed to the Ground: The Captain told them that We should never kill them after that manner: The Captain also said, _We must burn them_; and immediately stepping into the Wigwam where he had been before, brought out a Fire-Brand, and putting it into the Matts with which they were covered, set the Wigwams on Fire. Lieutenant Thomas Bull and Nicholas Omsted beholding, came up; and when it was throughly kindled, the Indians ran as Men most dreadfully Amazed.

And indeed such a dreadful Terror did the Almighty let fall upon their Spirits, that they would fly from us and run into the very Flames, where many of them perished. And when the Fort was thoroughly Fired, Command was given, that all should fall off and surround the Fort; which was readily attended by all; only one Arthur Smith being so wounded that he could not move out of the Place, who was happily espied by Lieutenant Bull, and by him rescued. The Fire was kindled on the North East Side to windward; which did swiftly over-run the Fort, to the extream Amazement of the Enemy, and great Rejoycing of our selves. Some of them climbing to the Top of the Pallizado; others of them running into the very Flames; many of them gathering to windward, lay pelting at us with their Arrows; and we repayed them with our small Shot: Others of the Stoutest issued forth, as we did guess, to the Number of Forty, who perished by the Sword.

Source: John Mason, _A Brief History of the Pequot War_ (Boston: Printed by S. Kneeland and T. Green, 1736), 1–6, 7–9.

### Questions for Consideration

1. What were the Pequot doing when Captain Mason and his militia first arrived at the fort?
2. Who provided the intelligence regarding the Pequot for his attack?
3. How did he justify his command decisions in the field during the Pequot war?

#### 1.3 Elizabeth Bacon Observes Skirmishes in Virginia (1676)

_The English tradition of militia trainbands and watch patrols blended into the colonial style of warfare. It gave the provincials an exaggerated sense of localism and a naive faith in amateur rather than professional armies. Though Governor Sir William Berkeley of Virginia proposed to erect a series of forts along the western frontier, he refused to permit the new settlers to bear their arms in attacks on Native Americans. The militia thus turned..._
to a 29-year-old planter named Nathaniel Bacon, who settled in Virginia during 1674. Writing a letter to a sister in June of 1676, his wife Elizabeth observed the escalating skirmishes that led him to take command of the militia. He demanded a commission from the governor and, without waiting for it, launched sorties on Indian communities. When the governor refused to grant the commission, Bacon then led his militiamen to seize Jamestown. The governor, who traded ammunition and powder to the Appomattox Indians, eventually issued the officer’s commission, though he ordered “General” Bacon to cease his operations. The officer chased the governor from the capital and torched it. The militia spread havoc in Virginia for weeks. On October 26, Bacon suddenly died of dysentery. Meanwhile, the governor marshaled cannons and crews from merchant ships to crush the rebellion. After regaining control of Virginia by 1677, he hanged more than 20 of Bacon’s lieutenants.

Dear Sister,

I pray God keep the worst Enemy I have from ever being in such a sad condition as I have been in […] occasioned by ye troublesome Indians, who have killed one of our Overseers at the outward plantation which wee had, and we have lost a great stock of cattle, which wee had upon it, and a good crop that wee should have made there, such plantation Nobody durst come nigh, which is a very great losse to us.

If you had been here, it would have grieved your heart to hear the pitiful complaints of the people, The Indians killing the people daily the Governour not taking any notice of it for to hinder them, but let them daily doe all the mischief they can: I am sure if the Indians were not cowards, they might have destroyed all the upper plantations, and killed all the people upon them; the Governour so much their friend, that hee would not suffer any body to hurt one of the Indians; and the poor people came to your brother to desire him to help against the Indians, and hee being very much concerned for the losse of his Overseer, and for the losse of so many men and women and children’s lives every day, hee was willing to doe them all the good hee could; so hee begged of the Governour for a commission in severall letters to him, that hee might goe out against them, but hee would not grant one, so daily more mischief done by them, so your brother not able to endure any longer, he went out without a commission.

The Governour being very angry with him put out high things against him, and told mee that he would most certainly hang him as soon as hee returned, which hee would certainly have done; but what for fear of the Governour’s hanging him, and what for fear of the Indians killing him brought mee to this sad condicion, but blessed be God hee came in very well, with the losse of a very few men; never was known such a fight in Virginia with so few men’s losse. The fight did continue nigh a night and a day without any intermission. They did destroy a great many of the Indians, thanks bee to God, and might have killed a great many more, but the Governour were so much the Indian’s friend and our enemy, that hee sent the Indians word that Mr. Bacon was out against them, that they might save themselves. After Mr. Bacon was come in hee was forced to keep a guard of soldiers about his house, for the Governour would certainly have had his life taken away privately, if he would have had opportunity; but the country does so really love him, that they would not leave him alone anywhere; there was not anybody against him but the Governour and a few of his great men, which have gott their Estates by the Governour; surely if your brother’s crime had been so
great, all the country would not have been for him, you never know any better beloved than hee is.

I doe verily believe that rather than hee should come to any hurt by the Governour or anybody else they would most of them willingly loose their lives. The Governour has sent his Lady into England with great complaints to the King against Mr. Bacon, but when Mr. Bacon’s and all the people’s complaints be also heard, I hope it may be very well. Since your brother came in hee hath sought to the Governour for commission, but none would be granted to him, so that ye Indians have had a very good time, to doe more mischief. They have murdered and destroied a great many whole families since, and the men resolving not to goe under any but yor brother, most of the country did rise in Armes, and went down to the Governour, and would not stir till hee had given a commission to yor brother which hee has now done. He is made General of the Virginia Warr, and now I live in great fear, that hee should loose his life amongst them. They are come verry nigh our Plantation where wee live.


Questions for Consideration

1. Which functions of the militia seemed most important to Elizabeth Bacon?
2. What official commission did her husband receive from the governor?
3. Why was she so fearful about her husband’s commission?

1.4  Benjamin Church Plans for Action in New England (1704)

From King Philip’s War to Queen Anne’s War, provincials honed their strategies and their tactics in fields of battle. To encourage Indian alliances, they paid bounties for enemy scalps. Colonial arms trading with Indians, though officially outlawed, lessened the technological advantages that the English militia initially possessed against Native warriors. The latter learned to master the flintlock musket and became quite skilled at utilizing firearms in deadly “hit-and-run” raids. Likewise, the former grew to appreciate the use of mobile units on multiple fronts to harass an enemy in hiding. Chief among the English veterans of these wars, Colonel Benjamin Church was born in the Plymouth colony and later resided in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. He led assault teams that successfully penetrated forests and swamps. Most famously, he commanded an “Army of the United Colonies” during 1676. His expedition killed the belligerent Wampanoag chieftain known as King Philip, although sporadic fighting continued to cost blood and treasure in New England for decades. English antagonism toward the Indians drove many Algonquian speakers into the arms of the French. During 1704, Massachusetts Governor Joseph Dudley requested that Colonel Church draw up a plan of action to fight the French and the Indians. Thereafter, he conducted special operations in Maine, Canada, and Acadia. By the time of his death in 1718, all sides were engaged in a fierce struggle for dominion over North America.
According to your request, when I was last with yourself, and in obedience thereunto, I present you with these following lines, that concern the preparation for next spring’s expedition, to attack the enemy. According to my former direction; for it is good to have a full stroke at them first, before they have opportunity to run for it. For the first of our action will be our opportunity to destroy them, and to prevent their running away, in waylaying every passage, and make them know we are in good earnest. And so we being in a diligent use of means, we may hope for a blessing from the Almighty, and that he will be pleased to put a dread in their hearts, that they may fall before us and perish. For my advice is,

First. That ten or twelve hundred good able soldiers, well equipped, be in a readiness fit for action, by the first of April at farthest; for then will be the time to be upon action. Secondly. That five and forty or fifty, good whaleboats be had ready, well fitted with five good oars and twelve or fifteen good paddles to every boat. And upon the wale of each boat, five pieces of strong leather be fastened on each side to slip five small ash bars through; that so, whenever they land, the men may step overboard, and slip in said bars across, and take up said boat that she may not be hurt against the rocks. And that two suitable brass kettles be provided to belong to each boat to dress the men’s victuals in to make their lives comfortable.

Thirdly. That four or five hundred pairs of good Indian shoes be made ready, fit for the service for the English and Indians, that must improve the whale boats and birch canoes; for they will be very proper and safe for that service. And let there be a good store of cow hides well tanned, for a supply of such shoes, and hemp to make thread, and wax to mend and make more such shoes when wanted, and a good store of awls.

Fourthly. That there be an hundred large hatchets, or light axes, made pretty broad, and steeled with the best steel that can be got, and made by workmen, that they may cut very well, and hold, that the hemlock knots may not break or turn them, to widen the landing place up the falls. For it may happen that we may get up with some of our whale boats to their falls or headquarters.

Fifthly. That there be a suitable quantity of small bags, or wallets provided, that every man that wants may have one to put up his bullets in, of such a size as will fit his gun, (and not be served as at Casco.) That every man’s bag be so marked that he may not change it. For if so, it will make a great confusion in action. That every man’s store of ball be weighed to him, that so he may be accountable and may not squander it away and also his store of powder, that so he may try his powder and gun before action. And that every particular company may have a barrel of powder to themselves and so marked that it may by no means be changed. That men may know beforehand, and may not be cheated out of their lives, by having bad powder, or not knowing how to use it. And this will prove a great advantage to the action.

Sixthly. That Colonel John Gorham, if he may be prevailed with, may be concerned in the management of the whale boats, he having been formerly concerned in the eastern parts and experienced in that affair. And whalemen then will be very serviceable in this expedition, which having a promise made to them, that they shall be released in good season, to go home a whaling in the fall, your excellency will have men enough.

Seventhly. That there may be raised for this service three hundred Indians at least, and more if they may be had; for I know certainly, of my own knowledge that they
exceed most of our English in hunting and skulking in the woods, being always used to it. And it must be practised if ever we intend to destroy those Indian enemies.

Eighthly. That the soldiers already out eastward in the service, men of known judgment, may take a survey of them and their arms, and see if their arms be good and they know how to use them in shooting right, at a mark, and that they be men of good reason and sense to know how to manage themselves in so difficult a piece of service as this Indian hunting is, for bad men are but a clog and hinderance to an army, being a trouble and vexation to good commanders, and so many mouths to devour the country’s provision, and a hinderance to all good actions.

Ninthly. That special care be had in taking up the whaleboats that they be good, and fit for that service, so that the country be not cheated as formerly in having rotten boats and as much care that the owners may have good satisfaction for them.

Tenthly. That the tenders or transports, vessels to be improved in this action, be good decked vessels, not too big because of going up several rivers having four or six small guns apiece for defence, and the fewer men will defend them, and there are enough such vessels to be had.

Eleventhly. To conclude all, if your excellency will be pleased to make yourself great and us a happy people, as to the destroying of our enemies and easing of our taxes, &c., be pleased to draw forth all those forces now in pay in all the eastward parts, both at Saco and Casco bay, for those two trading houses never did any good nor ever will, and are not worthy the name of Queen’s forts; and the first building of them had no other effect but to lay us under tribute to that wretched pagan crew; and I hope will never be wanted for that they were first built; but sure it is, they are very serviceable to them; for they get many a good advantage of us to destroy our men and laugh at us for our folly, that we should be at so much cost and trouble to do a thing that does us so much harm, and no manner of good: but to the contrary when they see all our forces drawn forth, and in pursuit of them they will think that we begin to be roused up, and to be awake and will not be satisfied with what they have pleased to leave us, but are resolved to retake from them that they took formerly from us, and drive them out of their country also. The which being done, then to build a fort at a suitable time, and in a convenient place, and it will be very honourable to your excellency, and of great service to Her Majesty, and to the enlargement of Her Majesty’s government (the place meant being at Portroyal.)

Twelfthly. That the objection made against drawing off the forces in the eastward parts will be no damage to the inhabitants, for former experience teacheth us that so soon as drawn into their country, they will presently forsake ours to take care of their own. And that there be no failure in making preparation of these things aforementioned; for many times the want of small things prevents the completing of great actions. And that every thing be in readiness before the forces be raised to prevent charges, and the enemy’s having intelligence. And that the general court be moved to make suitable acts for the encouraging both English and Indians, that so men of business may freely offer estates and concerns to serve the publick.

Source: Benjamin Church, *The Entertaining History of King Philip’s War. As Also of Expeditions More Lately Made Against the Common Enemy, and Indian Rebels, in the Eastern Parts of New-England* (Boston, 1716; rpt. Newport, Rhode Island: Solomon Southwick in Queen Street, 1772), 245–249.
1.5 James Oglethorpe Strikes Spanish Outposts (1739–1741)

Seeking a military buffer against the Spanish, French, and Indians near South Carolina, Great Britain chartered the colony of Georgia in 1732. James Oglethorpe, a British army officer serving as royal protector of the colony, received in 1736 an appointment as commander in chief of His Majesty’s forces in both Georgia and South Carolina. The general dealt peaceably with scores of Native American bands and confederacies. The Creek Indians resided chiefly in the area extending west by north from the middle and upper Chattahoochee River. To the north and northeast of them were the Cherokee; to the northwest, the Chickasaw; and to the west and southwest, the Choctaw. In 1739, General Oglethorpe traveled with his regiment to a grand Indian assembly at Coweta. While pausing in Augusta, he received instructions from Great Britain to “annoy” the Spanish in Florida. He was delighted to contribute to what was declared the War of Jenkins’ Ear. Gathering 500 Indians, 400 South Carolina militia, 500 regulars, 400 Rangers and Scottish Highlanders, and several British naval vessels, he conducted a siege of Fort San Marcos in St. Augustine. He eventually abandoned it, because his cannonading failed to penetrate the walls. In 1743, he struck St. Augustine once again to no avail. He returned to London that year to answer charges by a regimental officer and to impress upon Parliament the necessity of defending the Georgia coast.

July the 24th. The General set out with about twenty Five Persons in Company and some Indians all well Armed, it being very Necessary so to be, for not long before a Party of the Choctau Indians came down to the General who gave them Presents and they staid amongst the English as Friends, but did not prove so, for in their Return home, they met two English Men who traded among the Indians, one of these they killed and shot three of the others Fingers off, however he made his Escape to a Town of the lower Creeks, Who upon hearing his Relation of what the Choctau’s had done, immediately armed themselves and went in pursuit of the Choctau’s whom they find encamped round a Fire; The Creeks immediately charged them, killed a great many and took the rest Prisoners. The General had also at this time two of the Choctau Indians with him who had put themselves under his Protection for fear of the People of the Creek Nation who would have killed them for the Barbarity of their Countrymen to the two English Traders. But now I return to our Journey, which we Continued being Supplied with Venison by the Indian Hunters, and also Wild Honey of which they took Plenty […]
July 31st. We Travelled over many Hills from which we had a very Pleasant Prospect of the Valleys which abounded with fine green Trees and abundance of Grapes and other Fruits, but which were not Ripe. From the Top of one of these Hills we perceived a great Smoke at a Distance from us, which we Imagined to be at the Camp of a Party of Spanish Horse which were sent out on Purpose to hinder us if possible from going to make this Treaty of Peace with the Indians and which has since been of so great Service to us, the Friendly Indians annoying the Spaniards very much. We encamped at Occomy River where we found a Horse belonging to one of the Spaniards; We crossed the River and killed two Buffaloes of which there are abundance, We Seeing Several Herds of sixty or upwards in a Herd. We Camped at Ocmulgas River where are three Mounts raised by the Indians over three of their Great Kings who were killed in the Wars [...] 

Septr. 10th. The Cherokees came to settle a Peace with the General. 

Septr. the 13th. This day arrived advices to the General of a Declaration of War with Spain, at noon the General gave the Cherokee Indians their Presents they took their leave of him and returned very well Satisfied. 

Septr. 16th. The General set out from Fort Augusta and about Seven or Eight Miles from thence we stoped at a Fort belonging to Carolina which saluted the General with 15 Guns, the General staid and Dined there, this Fort is situate on a Hill and Commands two rivers; near the Fort are about one hundred Houses. 

Septr. 17th. We set out from this Fort and as we were going down the River we met a Trading Boat going to Fort Augusta, the People on board her told us the Negroes in Carolina had raised up in Arms and killed about forty White People. We went to the Uchee Town and from thence to Fort Prince George where we found thirty men come from Purysburg to Strengthen the Fort [...] 

December the 3d. His Excellcy General Oglethorpe set out for the Spanish Look out to observe the motions of the Spaniards and see what preparations they were making, taking a body of two hundred men with him; but they discovered us before they could Land and fled to Augustine leaving us the House built for a Look out. We marched along the Beach and came within 25 Miles of the Town of St. Augustine, where we discovered a Party of Don Pedro’s Horse with some Indians and Negroes but as soon as they saw us they made the Utmost speed to the Town of St. Augustine and our Indians pursued them till they came to Diego Fort, in the Pursuit they killed one Negroe as he was going into Diego Fort and brought his Scalp to the Genl. Who rewarded them very well [...] 

May the 3d. The General set out for the siege of St. Augustine with a Body of 600 Men also giving me orders to attend him. We [had] also 150 Indians of Different Nations the Main Body of them being to follow us as Soon as possible with provisions and other Stores. 

May the 8th. At night we landed at the Spanish Look-out on the Florida side of St. Juan’s River [and] here we lay very quiet ’till about four o’th’ Clock the next morning, then we sent out a party of about 50 Indians on the Scout who returned at night with a Spanish Negro who they had taken Prisoner they also pursued six other Spaniards as far as the Fort from which the Spaniards fired several Cannon shot at them but did no Execution, this day arrived two sloops and four Schooners from Charlestown with provisions and men for the Siege.
May the 10th. The men being landed we proceeded in order to attack a Fort about twenty three Miles distance from St. Augustine [...] 

June the 5th. The General went with a Body of 800 Men along the Sea Beach to See if the Spaniards would venture out and hazard a Battle. He marched as far as Moosa a Small Fort about $2\frac{1}{2}$ Mile Distant from St. Augustine and found it Deserted by the Spaniards who on their discovering our Troops fled to St. Augustine. We displayed Six Stand of English Colours on the Ramparts to try if we could Provoke the Spaniards to come out and give us Battle but all would not do, so we set Fire to the Fort and returned to Diego, struck the Tents and put them on board the Vessels in order to go to St. Augustine Barr. 

June the 11th. Came up with the Men of War who lay off the Barr of St. Augustine to assist at the Siege. 

June the 12th. The General landed on the Island of St. Eustatia over against the Castle of St. Augustine [...] the Captains of the Men of War landed 400 Men at the same time, a Party of our Indians came up with a party of Spanish Horsemen and killed four [...] 

August 15th, 1741. General Oglethorpe preparing to Cruize on the Spanish Privateers that sculk’d along shore from Saint Augustine ordered me to attend him. He set out on board the St. Philip Guard Sloop, the Schooner Norfolk and Sloop Faulcon in Company and about 200 Men on board.


1. Where did General Oglethorpe and his regiment first notice signs of a Spanish party in Georgia?
2. How did the Indians near Diego Fort earn a “reward” from the general?
3. What was the general’s primary military objective in St. Augustine?

1.6 Robert Rogers Provides Rules for the Rangers (1757)

Between 1754 and 1763, European states clashed in the Great War for Empire. Also known as the French and Indian War, the fighting in the North American theater permitted colonial militia to support major combat operations. One volunteer company of irregulars from New Hampshire was commanded by Captain Robert Rogers, who dubbed them the Rangers. Whatever his questionable reputation, Rogers took responsibility for mustering, equipping, and leading them. His Rangers trained at an island fortress identified today as Rogers Island, which was situated in the Hudson River across from Fort Edward. They prepared to maneuver undetected, to scout locations, to capture prisoners, and to gather intelligence. Disrespected by many British regulars, they represented one of the few non-Indian forces able to overcome harsh conditions and
mountainous terrain. They undertook long and seemingly impossible winter marches, trekking with crude snowshoes across frozen waters. In 1759, General Jeffrey Amherst dispatched Rogers, then a major, to sack the Indian town of Saint Francis. Provincials in British America celebrated the sacking while also rejoicing over the fall of Quebec. The French and the Indians at Fort Detroit surrendered to Rogers in a ceremony on November 29, 1760, solidifying the British hold over the vast territory along the Great Lakes. Rogers’ Rangers took command of the western outpost and raised the British flag in triumph.

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

Whenever you are ordered out to the enemy’s forts or frontiers for discoveries, if your number be small, march in a single file, keeping at such a distance from each other as to prevent one shot from killing two men, sending one man, or more, forward, and the like on each side, at the distance of twenty yards from the main body, if the ground you march over will admit of it, to give the signal to the officer of the approach of an enemy, and of their number, &c.

If you march over marshes or soft ground, change your position, and march abreast of each other, to prevent the enemy from tracking you till you get over such ground, and then resume your former order, and march till it is quite dark before you encamp, which do, if possible, on a piece of ground that may afford your sentries the advantage of seeing or hearing the enemy at some considerable distance, keeping one half of your whole party awake alternately through the night.

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

If you have the good fortune to take any prisoners, keep them separate till they are examined, and in your return take a different route from that in which you went out, that you may the better discover any party in your rear, and have an opportunity, if their strength be superior to yours, to alter your course, or disperse, as circumstances may require.

If you march in a large body of three or four hundred, with a design to attack the enemy, divide your party into three columns, each headed by a proper officer, and let these columns march in single files, the columns to the right and left keeping at twenty yards distance or more from that of the center, if the ground will admit, and let proper guards be kept in the front and rear, and suitable flanking parties at a due distance as before directed, with orders to halt on all eminences, to take a view of the surrounding ground, to prevent your being ambushed, and to notify the approach or retreat of the enemy, that proper dispositions may be made [. . .]

If you are obliged to receive the enemy’s fire, fall, or squat down, till it is over, then rise and discharge at them. If their main body is equal to yours, extend yourselves
occasionally; but if superior, be careful to support and strengthen your flanking parties, to make them equal with theirs, that if possible you may repulse them to their main body, in which case push upon them with the greatest resolution, 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 before the other ten or twelve yards. If the enemy push upon you, let your front fire and fall down, and then let your rear advance thro’ them and do the like, by which time those who before were in front will be ready to discharge again, and repeat the same alternately, as occasion shall require; by this means you will keep up such a constant fire, that the enemy will not be able easily to break your order, or gain your ground.

If you oblige the enemy to retreat, be careful, in your pursuit of them, to keep out your flanking parties, and prevent them from gaining eminences, or rising grounds, in which case they would perhaps be able to rally and repulse in their turn.

If you are obliged to retreat, let the front of your whole party fire and fall back, till the rear has done the same, making for the best ground you can; by this means you will oblige the enemy to pursue you, if they do it at all, in the face of a constant fire.

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

If your rear is attacked, the main body and flankers must face about to the right or left, as occasion shall require, and form themselves to oppose the enemy, as before directed; and the same method must be observed, if attacked in either of your flanks, by which means you will always make a rear of one of your flank-guards.

If you determine to rally after a retreat, in order to make a fresh stand against the enemy, by all means endeavour to do it on the most rising ground you can come at, which will give you greatly the advantage in point of situation, and enable you to repulse superior numbers.

In general, when pushed upon by the enemy, reserve your fire till they approach very near, which will then put them into the greater surprise and consternation, and give you an opportunity of rushing upon them with your hatchets and cutlasses to the better advantage.

When you encamp at night, fix your sentries in such a manner as not to be relieved from the main body till morning, profound secrecy and silence being often of the last importance in these cases [. . .]

At the first dawn of day, awake your whole detachment; that being the time when the savages choose to fall upon their enemies, you should by all means be in readiness to receive them.

If the enemy should be discovered by your detachments in the morning, and their numbers are superior to yours, and a victory doubtful, you should not attack them till the evening; as then they will not know your numbers, and if you are repulsed, your retreat will be favoured by the darkness of the night.
Before you leave your encampment, send out small parties to scout round it, to see if there be any appearance or track of an enemy that might have been near you during the night.

When you stop for refreshment, 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 waylay the path you came in, lest the enemy should be pursuing.

If, in your return, you have to cross rivers, avoid the usual fords as much as possible, lest the enemy should have discovered, and be there expecting you.

If you have to pass by lakes, keep at some distance from the edge of the water, lest, in case of an ambuscade, or an attack from the enemy, when in that situation, your retreat should be cut off.

If the enemy pursue your rear, take a circle till you come to your own tracks, and there form an ambush to receive them, and give them the first fire.

When you return from a scout, and come near our forts, avoid the usual roads, and avenues thereto, lest the enemy should have headed you, and lay in ambush to receive you, when almost exhausted with fatigues.

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

If you are to embark in canoes, bateaux, 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 parties of the enemy, on hills, or other places, which command a prospect of the lake or river you are upon.

In paddling or rowing, give orders that the boat or canoe next the sternmost, wait for her, and the third for the second, and the fourth for the third, and so on, to prevent separation, and that you may be ready to assist each other on any emergency.

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

If you find the enemy encamped near the banks of a river, or lake, which you imagine they will attempt to cross for their security upon being attacked, leave a detachment of your party on the opposite shore to receive them, while, with the remainder, you surprise them, having them between you and the lake or river.

If you cannot satisfy yourself as to the enemy’s number and strength, from their fire, &c. conceal your boats at some distance, and ascertain their number by a reconnoitring party, when they embark, or march, in the morning, marking the course they steer, &c. when you may pursue, ambush, and attack them, or let them pass, as prudence shall direct you […]

Such in general are the rules to be observed in the Ranging service; there are, however, a thousand occurrences and circumstances which may happen that will make it necessary in some measure to depart from them and to put other arts and stratagems in practice; in which cases every man’s reason and judgment must be his guide, according to the particular situation and nature of things; and that he may do this
to advantage, he should keep in mind a maxim never to be departed from by a commander, viz. to preserve a firmness and presence of mind on every occasion.


### Questions for Consideration

1. How, according to Robert Rogers, should the Rangers respond to being surrounded by a superior enemy?
2. What circumstances did he say might “make it necessary in some measure” for a ranger to depart from his rules?
3. Why do you think his rules appeared to be repetitious?

### 1.7 Parliament Passes a Quartering Act (1765)

*After the French and Indian War ended, the military presence along the Atlantic seaboard exacerbated colonial anxieties regarding the British Empire. Lieutenant General Thomas Gage, the commander in chief of the British forces in North America, faced resistance from colonial assemblies unwilling to pay for the quartering and for the provisioning of the regulars. They disputed the legality of the impositions and denounced the retention of “a standing army” in peacetime. From New York to Charleston, provincials often mistrusted the red-coated troops and considered them dangerous. Irrespective of their concerns, General Gage asked the Parliament to pass the Quartering Act in 1765. The act required the colonial assemblies to pay for certain supplies given to regiments stationed within their borders. To the dismay of King George III, the act was circumvented in each of the colonies except Pennsylvania. When the New York assembly refused to comply, the Parliament prohibited the royal governor from signing any further legislation until the assembly implemented it. In Massachusetts, British officers carefully followed the act’s stipulations to quarter their soldiers in public spaces, not in private homes. They pitched tents on the Boston Commons, but trouble was brewing along the waterfront. Surrounded by angry mobs, the regulars became involved in street brawls that culminated in the Boston Massacre of 1770.*

WHEREAS in and by an act made in the present session of parliament, intituled, An act for punishing mutiny and desertion, and for the better payment of the army and their quarters; several regulations are made and enacted for the better government of the army, and their observing strict discipline, and for providing quarters for the army, and carriages on marches and other necessary occasions, and inflicting penalties on offenders against the same act, and for many other good purposes therein mentioned; but the same may not be sufficient for the forces that may be employed in His Majesty’s dominions in America: and whereas, during the continuance of the said act, there may be occasion for marching and quartering of regiments and companies of His Majesty’s forces in several parts of His Majesty’s dominions in America: and whereas the publick
houses and barracks, in His Majesty's dominions in America, may not be sufficient to supply quarters for such forces: and whereas it is expedient and necessary that carriages and other conveniences, upon the march of troops in His Majesty's dominions in America, should be supplied for that purpose: be it enacted [...] That for and during the continuance of this act, and no longer, it shall and may be lawful to and for the constables, tithingmen, magistrates, and other civil officers of villages, towns, townships, cities, districts, and other places, within His Majesty's dominions in America, and in their default or absence, for any one justice of the peace inhabiting in or near any such village, township, city, district or other place, and for no others; and such constables, tithingmen, magistrates, and other civil officers as aforesaid, are hereby required to quarter and billet the officers and soldiers, in His Majesty's service, in the barracks provided by the colonies; and if there shall not be sufficient room in the said barracks for the officers and soldiers, then and in such case only, to quarter and billet the residue of such officers and soldiers, for whom there shall not be room in such barracks, in inns, livery stables, ale-houses, victualling-houses, and the houses of sellers of wine by retail to be drank in their own houses or places thereunto belonging, and all houses of persons selling of rum, brandy, strong water, cyder or metheglin, by retail, to be drank in houses; and in case there shall not be sufficient room for the officers and soldiers in such barracks, inns, victualling and other publick alehouses, that in such and no other case, and upon no other account, it shall and may be lawful for the governor and council of each respective province in His Majesty's dominions in America, to authorize and appoint, and they are hereby directed and impowered to authorize and appoint, such proper person or persons as they shall think fit, to take, hire and make fit, and, in default of the said governor and council appointing and authorizing such person or persons, or in default of such person or persons so appointed neglecting or refusing to do their duty, in that case it shall and may be lawful for any two or more of His Majesty's justices of the peace in or near the said villages, towns, townships, cities, districts, and other places, and they are hereby required to take, hire, and make fit for the reception of His Majesty's forces, such and so many uninhabited houses, outhouses, barns or other buildings, as shall be necessary, to quarter therein the residue of such officers and soldiers for whom there should not be rooms in such barracks and publick houses as aforesaid, and to put and quarter the residue of such officer and soldiers therein [...] And whereas there are several barracks in several places in His Majesty's said dominions in America, or some of them provided by the colonies, for the lodging and covering of soldiers in lieu of quarters, for the ease and convenience as well of the inhabitants of and in such colonies, as of the soldiers; it is hereby further enacted, That all such officers and soldiers, so put and placed in such barracks, or hired uninhabited houses, out-houses, barns, or other buildings, shall, from time to time be furnished and supplied there by the persons to be authorized or appointed for that purpose by the governor and council of each respective province, or upon neglect or refusal of such governor and council in any province, then by two or more justices of the peace residing in or near such place, with fire, candles, vinegar, and salt, bedding, utensils for dressing their victuals, and small beer or cyder, not exceeding five pints, or half a pint of rum mixed with a quart of water, to each man, without paying any thing for the same [...]

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And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That this act and everything herein contained, shall continue and be in force in all His Majesty’s dominions in America, from the twenty fourth day of March, in the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty five, until the twenty fourth day of March in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and sixty seven.


Questions for Consideration

1. Which buildings, according to the act, could be outfitted for the reception of His Majesty’s forces?
2. When was the act scheduled to expire?
3. Who might have found the stipulations of the act most inconvenient?

1.8 An Unknown Soldier Sings “Yankee Doodle” (1775)

A song native to the colonial era was variously titled “A Visit to Camp,” “The Lexington March,” and even “Doodle Dandy.” It is known today as “Yankee Doodle.” In all likelihood, no original documentary source for its verses exists. Rather, competing versions entered the oral tradition at different times and places, eventually worked by broadside printers into a composite. Folk circulation began as early as 1745, though no published copy of the stanzas appeared until approximately 1775. Certain lines were attributable to Richard Shuckburgh, an army surgeon for a British regiment stationed in New York. They parodied the training days and camp life of the armed forces. Moreover, the chorus offered a derisive epithet for the militiamen. “Yankee” probably derived from a Dutch nickname for the provincials, whereas “doodle” in English denoted playful, shiftless, or menial activities. Given a martial beat with fife and drums, the cadences resonated in Boston during the 1760s. Festivals, fairs, and parades featured the air. Its performance involved dancing, gesturing, mocking, and frolicking. Its lyrics contained innuendo, jokes, and nonsense. The printed versions often expurgated the most irreverent quatrains, particularly the crude references to masturbation and scatology. They questioned authority with a distinguishing mix of satire and irony, which insinuated that the regular officers, not the citizen soldiery, were the foolish ones.

Father and I went down to camp, along with Captain Gooding,
And there we saw the men and boys, as thick as hastypudding.

And there we saw a thousand men, as rich as 'Squire David;
And what they wasted every day, I wish it could be saved.

The 'lasses they eat every day, would keep an house a winter;
They have as much that I'll be bound they eat it when they're a mind to.
And there we saw a swamping gun, large as a log of maple,
Upon a deucid little cart, a load for father’s cattle.

And every time they shoot it off, it takes a horn of powder;
And makes a noise like father’s gun, only a nation louder.

Cousin Simon grew so bold, I thought he would have cock’d it;
It scar’d me so, I shrink’d it off, and hung by father’s pocket.

And Captain Davis had a gun, he kind of clap’d his hand on’t,
And stuck a crooked stabbing iron upon the little end on’t.

And there I see a pumpkin shell as big as mother’s bason,
And every time they touch’d it off, they scamper’d like the nation.

I see a little barrel too, the heads were made of leather,
They knock’d upon’t with little clubs, and called the folks together.

And there was Captain Washington, and gentlefolks about him,
They say he’s grown so tarnal proud, he will not ride without ’em.

He got him on his meeting clothes, upon a slapping stallion,
He set the world along in rows, in hundreds and in millions.

The flaming ribbons in his hat, they look’d so tarring fine ah,
I wanted pockily to get, to give to my Jemimah.

I see another snarl of men a digging graves, they told me,
So tarnal long, so tarnal deep, they ’tended they should hold me.

It scar’d me so, I hook’d it off, nor stop’d, as I remember,
Nor turn’d about ’till I got home, lock’d up in mother’s chamber.

Yankee Doodle, keep it up, Yankee Doodle dandy,
Mind the music and the step, and with the girls be handy.


Questions for Consideration

1. What types of weaponry did the colonial militia display in camp?
2. Which verse humorously described a martial drum?
3. Why do you think one of the verses mentioned “digging graves”? 
Further Reading


