

Fletcher's Scouting Company's guidelines for *la petite guerre*

As far as we know Lt. Thomas Fletcher and his men had no drill manual for how to act as a scouting company on the march. What they did have was experience in the art of *la petite guerre* (the little war) on the frontier of the Province of Maine. They used techniques put in place by Benjamin Church and his Native American Allies during the latter 17th century and early 18th century, later written down and recorded by Robert Roger's (1759) as "Roger's Rules of Ranging". If you read Roger's rules you will soon realize many of them pertain to a large group of men operating in tactical support for a larger body of soldiers - sometimes on rivers and waterways. Based on accounts of Fletcher's Company, the company strength in 1755 was no more than 30 men, when on the march they acted with no large groups of soldiers (colonials or British regulars) and the majority of their actions were conducted on land. With this in mind and in order to simplify our own actions in the field, members of the current Fletcher's Scouting Company researched and developed a list of guidelines which we believe best pertain to an 18th century scouting company on the coast of Maine. These actions are conducted by the group in the field when on a scout or at public events. These guidelines are based on Roger's rules as well as first hand accounts of colonial scouting companies.

Fletcher's Scouting Company's guidelines for *la petite guerre* are as follows:

Company is awake at dawn.

Company falls in and role call is taken along with safety inspection and equipment check.

When on the move, march in Indian (or single) file with enough space between personnel so as one bullet will not harm more than one person at a time.

Move quietly. Keep communication to whispers and signals.

When marching over soft open ground, march abreast.

Send one or two men forward to reconnoiter an area; the rest make a stand.

When halted in Indian file all kneel. The lead file faces forward. All others face outward alternating left and right. Rear file faces to the rear.

When moving through a ravine secure the high ground before moving the main body through.

When receiving fire fall / squat down till enemy discharges then rise and discharge. If advancing or retreating use the "leap frog" fire method with file mates.

Firings are conducted in firing pairs. One musket in each pair is to be loaded at all times.

When faced with a superior enemy, disperse to a rendezvous point. If party is surrounded form a square or circle.

When passing a defile secure the passage before moving the main body through.

Sentries will be posted at night and when resting on the march.

Circle back when pursued from the rear.

Lay in ambush for attack.

Take different route back to camp.

When leaving encampment send out small parties to make sure no one has tracked the company.