

Will update with class of 10-21 data***

From Class 10-21 A Co Darby, MTNs, FL

Attrition

Attrition
111 start A Co
92 after PL/SU
85 after run
82 - 3 down on way to CHSA
78 after RTTs
22 failed Day 1 LN, 19 retest b/c 3 Fail RTs
66 after land nav retest
58 after ruck
55 after ruck layout
+20 Darby recycles
L 48 airborne, 26 non airborne
lost 1 to Darby Queen
7 dropped end of phase 42
49 forward, 20 recycle B Co 31 forward, (106)
45 in A Co units, 1 ND, Swanson (patrol), Hedra (patrol), Chavaz (patrol)
Jungblom (patrol), Smith (patrol), Conkey (patrol), Tame (patrol)
37 A Co forward to FL
42 A1 FL, (5 recycles)
L only 4 NAPS (12T, 12A, 35A, 11B 101st)
10 C Co Grad, A-2 Co Grad, A-1 12 Grad
28/111 Straight through
153/171 in FL grad - 15R, 20/20 recycles graduated

Most Recent Patrol Advice

- make a COA sketch for a mission, get leadership on same page then continue plan - make a copy with the tentative route and give to the terrain model guys ASAP
- pitch an OPORD like you're briefing the boys on how you're going to egg some houses and go break shit, a WARNO is like a text from your mom on what everyone needs to do to prep for thanksgiving - tasks to subs and information dissemination is the most important part of a WARNO, the scheme of maneuver and key deductions for how a plan is personalized to terrain and enemy for the mission is most important for the OPORD
- TLs need to know they run everything and PL manages the SLs managing the TLs

- if you have two trash bags duct taped together to form a bivy that works a little better and quicker when it's raining than actually pulling out your bivy which will then be wet when you don't want it to be instead of waterproofed inside your ruck

Advice for Peering Well

- be the guy with your ruck on first everytime, be ready first always
- go out of your way to volunteer or offer help for everything - be selfless, if it sucks, do it
- people will notice if you are the last one out of your bivy
- quiet guys don't peer well
- guys that are never team leaders don't normally peer super well

SOM

Scheme of Movement & Movement by phase

- phase begins w/...
- what are adj. units doing? Why?
- what is the enemy doing?
- do we have information collection assets? what are they doing?
- Do we have fires? TTL0 - before, on, beyond CJ
- how are we moving? Footy/tear, distance, direction, etc.
- what if we receive contact? direct, indirect, non-hostile, obstacles, CBRN, aerial, visual, electronic, warfare
- where are key leaders?
- where are CCPs, ABPs, HLZs? (push/pull method)
- critical tasks - you can utilize SOP
- phase ends with...

Sectors of fire
Key leader placement

FCM

Terrain-Based

RP
Sector of fire

Engagement area

Direction of fire

Priority
REL, RFL, RPL

SD/70/60

Initial pulse

Forward pulse

Combat pulse

Final pulse

Activity, location, etc.

RTO can write 9 line, PS

in mechanism

in mechanism

FCM

Terrain-Based

TRP

Sector of fire

Engagement area

Direction of fire

quadrants

MEL, REL, RPL

Threat-based

ROC

WPNs ready posture

WPNs safety posture

WPNs control status

engagement priorities
trigger

engagement techniques

80/70/60

pedal pulse - BP 80

femoral pulse = BP 70

carotid pulse - BP 60

activity, low heart - pressing low blood pressure

RTO can write 9-line, PSG series, MIST 9-line not delegated

M mechanism of injury
I injuries/complaints
S symptoms
T treatment

S stable/unstable
I injury
T treatment

square =

AAR 10-7-21 Day 1
paint a picture, 590 move to close side

AAR Florida PL 2 - night raid
engagement criteria* - using squads better, more quickly
what app? gun math. — Mil GPS - send in attack
10 min ahead, talk to higher
prepped

waterborne insertion ✓
movement

ORP establishment

* success is not leadership*
hurt on withdrawal

recon
proaction
postmission

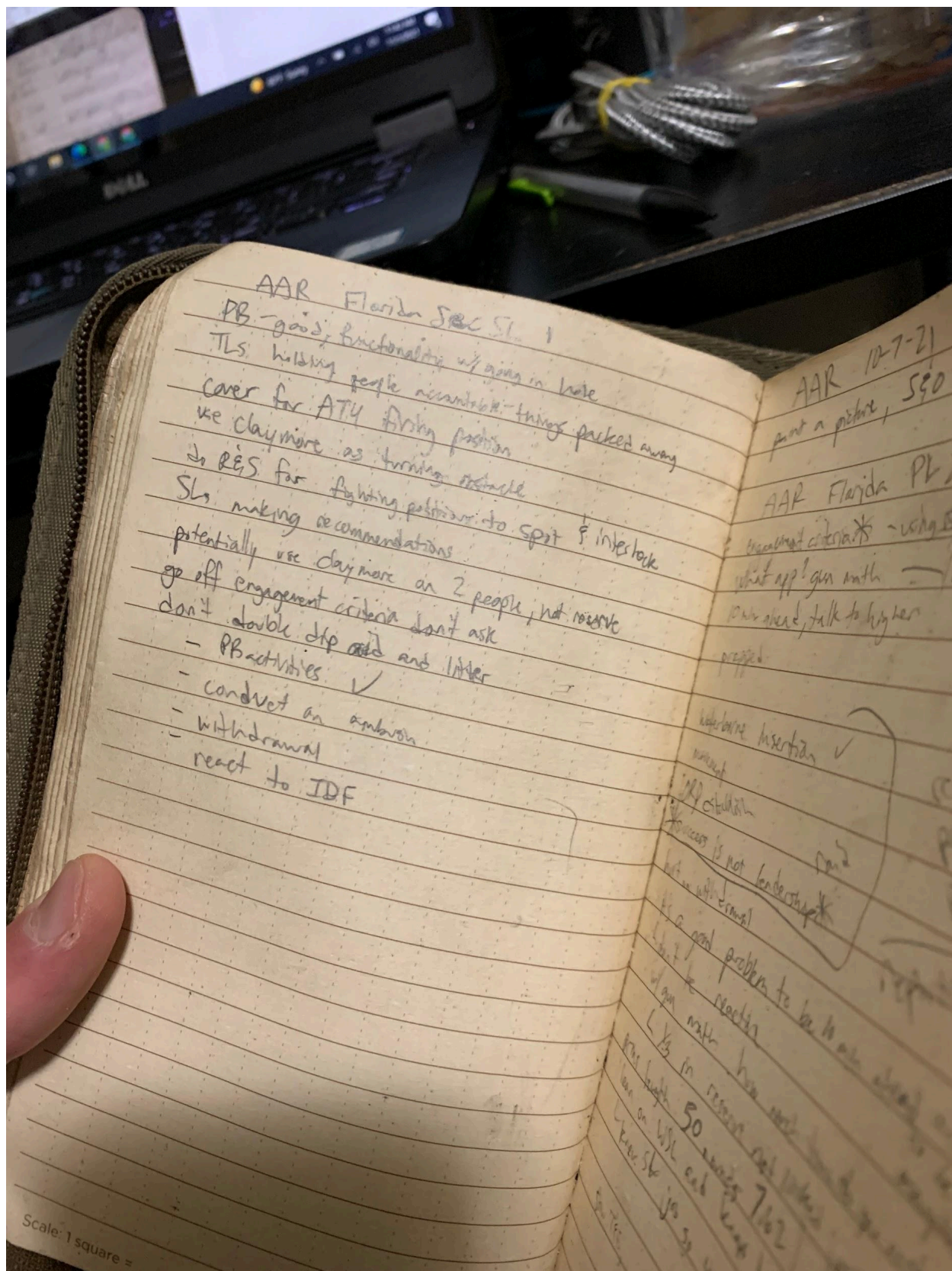
reporting

It's a good problem to be 10 min ahead and not need
to be doing anything
L don't be reactive
w/ gun math how much time do you need for spooling

L X3 in reserve not linked just in case
arms length 50 rounds 7.62

lean on WSL and know his job
L knew st job so you know what

show TEE



Basic Soldier Stuff that You Might Not Already Know

- an arms length of 7.62 is about 50 rounds
- go out of your way to volunteer for everything even though it sucks

Squad Go Tracking MTNs

100. Addington ^{1st} SAW SL RM AB RM PL GR AB SAW SAW
 2 1/3 patrols RM SL

108 Benson GR RM TL WSL RM RM SAW AB RM RM
 AB PL

113 Cardoso RM SAW FO MG SL TL FO AG TL GR

115 Cavell BL PL GR MG TL GR RM FG GR TL
 SL

116 Cooksey ^{1st} GR SL AB GR RM PS AG GR PL
 2 0/3 patrols SAW RM

142 Kyburz ^{1st} SAW PS MG SAW RM TL MG TL TL
 2nd SAW RM SL

162 Rowan SAW TL GR AG TL TL SL AB SL SAW
 TL SAW

172 Swanson ^{1st} SAW AB RM SAW SAW SL RM SL
 2 0/3 patrols SL MG

174 Teague GR RM AB GR SL RM AB SAW RM
 GR

500 Abercrombie RM PS GR SAW MG ^{1st} SAW RM TL MG ^{2nd} SAW
 SL

511 Jungblum SL ^{1st} TL AB SAW SAW GR MG RM GR
 PL PS

2 3 4 5 6
 PL/PSG DLG/Kleine
 ASS/2 Pannell/Smiley
 WSY/SE Stew/Jung

7 8 9 10

quare =

Rite in the Rain

attrition

Things I've Learned

- use competitions for teaching sked pack race
- go to the bar 20 min to get drink & start after prep, ^{or don't obviously}
- dog leg to see more parallel PB ^{decide early}
- Rad picks time EN picks location
- Arabish picks location EN picks time
- warno/opard just like mom on Thanksgiving
- fagers taught about ideal free & autumn migration
- pretty lost turn short now art - without road
- I hear target use center go, attitude (mfs), sweat
- ^{more} ^{care} more mistakes the less people will care
- opard is the plan - searching for ^{the} ^{best}
- application of Clausewitz friction - like ^{the} ^{best}
- red forward, blue backwards decisive point ^{the} ^{best}
- don't pull back and lose gained ground
- just make your NEOs go to Ranger School
- generally 15 min between TRPs - use sticks to show stuff
- follow & support vs. follow ^{the} ^{best} - P is always thinking 10 min ahead
- roll 1, 2, 3 level of care - min force s&d + gun

Tricks of the Trade

- insoles & socks in bag
- duct tape on lighter
- lum tape w/ clear tape
- bowline goth hitch
- CLP container on FLC
- marker on FLC
- racket in sleeping bag buttoned in
- bezel ring
- label guns/APEXes
- how to get the rock up
- wake up early and set your day

Scale: 1 square = _____

Sleep Data, Food

TX1	Day 0-22 AUG	2130-2300, 2330-0200	(4)	lay out
TX2	Day 1-23 AUG	2215-2300, 2330-0145	(3)	CUSA, PT test
TX3	Day 2-24 AUG	2200-0030, 0100-0510	(6.5)	lans ran
TX4	Day 3-25 AUG	2100-0045	(3.75)	no rest
TX5	Day 4-26 AUG	0230-0430, 2300-0200	(5)	12 mile
TX6	Day 5-27 AUG	2300-0100, 0200-05	(5)	
TX7	Day 6-28 AUG	2345-0440	(5)	(32.25)
TX8	Day 7-29 AUG	2345-0220, 0240-0440	(5)	Daily
TX9	Day 8-30 AUG	2240-0440	(6)	pregnant 2300-2320
TX10	Day 9-31 AUG	0145-0250, 0310-05	(3)	
TX11	Day 10-01 SEP	0400-0500	(1)	2 MRE
TX12	Day 11-02 SEP	0420-0520	(1)	2 MRE Day 1
TX13	Day 12-03 SEP	0425-0525	(1)	2 MRE Day 2
TX14	Day 13-04 SEP	0315-0800	(4.5)	21.5 MRE
TX15	Day 14-05 SEP	2345-0200, 0230-0515	(5)	2 MRE
TX16	Day 15-06 SEP	0220-0515	(3)	Day 15
TX17	Day 16-07 SEP	0340-0510	(1.5)	Day 16
TX18	Day 17-08 SEP	1.5 MRE snuck 30 in tent	(0)	Day 17
TX19	Day 18-09 SEP	map + cage + 2 MRE	(2)	2315-0050
TX20	Day 19-10 SEP	scattered food	(2.5)	0050-0500 day X
TX21	Day 20-11 SEP	bus. ride	(3)	2245-0400 (5)
TX22	Day 21-12 SEP	2000-0000, 0030-0400	(7.5)	(34.5)
TX23	Day 22-13 SEP	1815-0400	(9)	
TX24	Day 23-14 SEP	2345-0500	(5)	Yuna!
TX25	Day 24-15 SEP	0015-0230, 0300-0445	(4)	Yuna 2
TX26	Day 25-16 SEP	2330-0500	(5.5)	Techniques

Scale: 1 square = _____

Rite in the Rain

Sleep Data 2

Day 26 - 17 SEP 21 2330-0200, 0230-0500 (5) ^{airborne}

Day 27 - 18 SEP 21 2345-0500 (5) (41) raid

Day 28 - 19 SEP 21 2200-0200, 0300-0500 (6) TLP

Day 29 - 20 SEP 21 0315-0500 (2) FTX1

Day 30 - 21 SEP 21 0330-0500 (1.5) FTX2

Day 31 - 22 SEP 21 0230-0450 (2.5) FTX3

Day 32 - 23 SEP 21 330-450 (1.5) FTX4

Day 33 - 24 SEP 21 2130-0500 (7.5) FTX5

Day 34 - 25 SEP 21 2175-2200, 2230-0430 (6.5) Mfit (27.5)

Day 35 - 26 SEP 21 0130-0445 (3) FTX6

Day 36 - 27 SEP 21 0115-0445 (3.5) FTX7

Day 37 - 28 SEP 21 0130-0445 (3) FTX8

Day 38 - 29 SEP 21 0145-0430 (3) FTX9

Day 39 - 30 SEP 21 0230-0500 (3.5) FTX10

Day 40 - 01 OCT 21 2200-0300 (5) 0400-0800 (4) 9 last to Fla!!

Day 41 - 02 OCT 21 2300-0500 (6) (31)

Day 42 - 03 OCT 21 235-0445 (5.5)

Day 43 - 04 OCT 21 0115-0445 (3.5)

Day 44 - 05 OCT 21 2315-0445 (5.5)

Day 45 - 06 OCT 21 0000-0400 (4)

Day 46 - 07 OCT 21 0230-0530 (3) FTX1

Day 47 - 08 OCT 21 0115-0500 (4) FTX2

Day 48 - 09 OCT 21 0130-0500 (3.5) FTX3 (33)

Day 49 - 10 OCT 21 0215-0500 (3) FTX4

Day 50 - 11 OCT 21 0230-0530 (3) FTX5

Day 51 - 12 OCT 21 0230-0530 (3) FTX6

Scale: 1 square = _____

Sleep Data 2

Day 0 - 22 AUG

Day 1 - 23 AUG

Day 2 - 24 AUG

Day 3 - 25 AUG

Day 4 - 26 AUG

Day 5 - 27 AUG

Day 6 - 28 AUG

Day 7 - 29 AUG

Day 8 - 30 AUG

Day 9 - 31 AUG

Day 10 - 01 SEP

Day 11 - 02 SEP

Day 12 - 03 SEP

Day 13 - 04 SEP

Day 14 - 05 SEP

Day 15 - 06 SEP

Day 16 - 07 SEP

Day 17 - 08 SEP

Day 18 - 09 SEP

Day 19 - 10 SEP

Day 20 - 11 SEP

Day 21 - 12 SEP

Day 22 - 13 SEP

Day 23 - 14 SEP

Day 24 - 15 SEP

Day 25 - 16 SEP

Scale: 1 square = _____

Sleep Data 3

Day 52-13 OCT 21	0215-0530	(3)	FTX 7
Day 53-14 OCT 21	0300-0530	(2.5)	FTX 8
Day 54-15 OCT 21	0100-0500	(4)	FTX 9
Day 55-16 OCT 21	0145-0430	(3)	FTX 10 (2.5)
Day 56-17 OCT 21	2300-0500	(6)	
Day 57-18 OCT 21	1900-0300	(8)	plus time on bus
Day 58-19 OCT 21	1900-0500, 0630-0830, 1330-1630	(15)	
Day 59-20 OCT 21	2100-0445 0630-0700	(8)	
Day 60-21 OCT 21	2130-0400	(6.5)	
Day 61-22 OCT 21	home!		

Florida Equipment Tracker

100 Addington

AB/RM/PL/SAW/RTD/TL/RM/MG/AB/SL

108 Benson

AG/PL/TL/PSG/RM/RM/WR/RM/AB/FO

113 Cardoso

AG/320/FO/PL/TL/SAW/TL/WR/AG/TL

115 Cavell

AG/TL/320/320/PSG/SAW/320/AG/PL

142 Kibarrz

MG/TL/SAW/SL/SAW/320/SAW/AG/AG/SAW

153 Ong

AB/GR/SL/SAW/SAW/WR/RM/AB/AB/320

162 Rowan

WS/SAW/TL/TL/AN/TL/SAW/AG/MG/TL

174 Teague

AB/SL/RM/RM/GR/SL/320/AB/WR/RM

412 Cummins

AB/PL/SAW/RTD/TL/320/SL/MG/MG/SAW

500 Abercrombie

MG/FO/SAW/TL/SL/320/WR/TL/MG/AB/GR

603 Bilella

AG/SAW/320/320/GR/RM/WR/RM/MG/SAW

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
PSG2, PL1, PL1, PSG1, PSG1, PL2, PL2, PSG2, PSG2, PL4
WSL, ASS2, ASS2, SEC, SEC, ASS1, ASS1, WPAS, WPAS, ASS2

Things You Should Learn @ Ranger School

(not for)

working w/ others who are different skill levels (suck or sucking)

leadership in stress

principles of patrolling

point of a guy who has done shit doing shit who doesn't suck as bad

instant connection

decision making under stress - justifying what you do

how to learn/teach

communication/control/decision-making/individual role

AVI CO Florida FTX pt. 11

1 Walkers: CPT Bridger (PL), SSG Blanco (PSG), SFC Aviles
(Paid) Ambush

PL Wilson (CPT), Dickinson X ASLT1, Vero
PSG Baker, Cardoso X ASLT2 Aquilino
WSL¹³ Franck X Sec¹¹ Corbett

2 Walkers: SFC Poirce (PSG), SFC Becker (PL),
SFC Gibson, (Leval), SSG Saenz (SL) (MTC1) (MTC2)
PL Greening, Kien X Sec 1-2 Glasheen
PSG Montanez, Ramos X ASLT1¹¹ Martell
WSL¹⁴ Kinsley ASLT2¹³ Teague

3 Walkers: CPT McAfee (PL), SFC Aviles (SL), SSG Blanco (PSG)
(Paid) (Paid)
PL Allington, Apsey ASLT2 Ong
PSG Piroster, Blackman Sec Jiminez
WSL Rogers ASLT1 Haas

4 Walkers: SFC Francis (SFC), PSG Parody, SFC Price (PL)
(ambush) (Paid)
PL¹⁴ Thomas, Evans ASLT2¹⁴ Lippoli, Wilson
PSG Benson, Vance Sec (me) Bilello
WSL¹³ Rosser, Klein² ASLT1¹¹ Griffith, Talamantes

5 Walkers: SFC Aviles (SL), SSG Blanco (PSG), CPT Bridger (PL)
(MTC) (Paid)
PL Ward, DeLaGarza ASLT2 Lancoir
PSG Carrell, Volasquez Sec Abercrombie
WSL Pannell ASLT1 Montanoz

PL2, 4/3, 1/3, 1/4, 2/4, 2/3

ASLT1 → WPNS → ASLT2 → Sec PSG 1, 3/2, 4/2, 4/3, 1/3, 1/4
Scale: 1 square =

A Co. Mtns Walks ^{PL} ^{SSG} Marks
 17 Walkers: SEC Noto, ^{PL} CPT Greene, ^{SSG} Marks
 SFC Villalanzo, ^{PL} SSG Goss, SEC Wild RAID
 PL DLGX, Lippoli, ^{PL} SSG Klein, Cardoso
 14 ASS1 Pannell, Martell, ^{PL} ASS2 Jimenez, Ong
 14 WSL Stewart, Rogers, SEC Jungblum, Aberscholtz
 24 Walkers: SEC Lum, ^{PL} SEC Cummings, Ambush
 CPT Burton, SSG Campbell
 PL Cavell, Oliveres, ^{PL} SSG Smith, Kinsey
 13 ASS1 Talamantes, Griffith, ^{PL} ASS2 Addington, Roman
 14 WSL Vance, Tamer, ^{PL} SEC Ramos, Lancour
 24 Walkers: SSG Dujic, SEC Noto, ^{PL} SSG Goss, RAID
 SFC Battocchetti, SEC Gay, ^{PL} SSG me, Corbett
 13 ASS1 Cooksey, Swanson, ^{PL} ASS2 Cummins, Thomas
 14 WSL Evans, Glasheen, ^{PL} SEC Roser, Klein
 4 Walkers: SSG Marshall, SSG Campbell, CPT Frederick,
 SFC Woodward, Ambush down pilot
 PL Lipsey, Jungblum, ^{PL} SSG Lancour, Jimenez
 14 ASS1 Ward, Vero, ^{PL} ASS2 Velazquez, Haas
 13 WSL Benson, Teague, ^{PL} SEC Montanez, Rostker
 5 Walkers: SEC Lum, ^{PL} CPT Burton, ^{PL} SSG Moore, Ambush
 PL Ong, ^{PL} SSG Vance
 14 ASS1 Olivas, ^{PL} ASS2 Delagarcia
 14 WSL Ramos, ^{PL} SEC Cardoso

16/54 go's

Ass1 → WPNS → SEC → ASS2
square =

Rite in the Rain

Sunday

A Co Intros Walks 2

6. Walkers: SEC Guy, SSG Madore, SSG Dyrnic,
SFC Woodard ^{PL} Ambush

PL Addington, Cummins PSG Griffin, Klein
H2 ASS1 Smith, Wilson ^{CPT} ASS2 Teague, Cavell

HWSL Corbett, Lipsey ^{PL} SEC Kinsey, Wilson

7. Walkers: SSG Marshall, SSG Campbell, SSG Goss ^{PL} Ambush
CPT Frederick ^{PL}

PL Thomas, Evans PSG Cooksey, Pannell
1-3 ASS1 Rowan, ~~Rowan~~ ASS2 ^{PL} Ward, Ramos

1-2 HWSL Talamantes, Montano SEC ^{PL} Kleine, Marshall

8. Walkers: CPT Burton, SSG Dyrnic, SFC Long
SSG Milton Ambush

PL Velasquez, Benson PSG Vega, DeLaGarza
1-4 ASS1 Lippoli, Kinsey ^{PL} ASS2 Tamez, Rosser

1-3 HWSL Swanson, ~~the~~ SEC 30ng, Glasheen
84 9. Walkers: SSG Campbell, SFC Guy, SSG Goss ^{PL} Ambush

PL Talamantes ³, Rogers PSG Olivares ³, Jungblom
H1 ASS1 Vance ³, Klein ³ ASS2 Priester, Evans ³

1-4 HWSL Thomas ³, Cummins ³ SEC Rowan ³, Addington ³
96 10. Walkers: CPT Brickerood, SFC Ryan, SSG Lippoli ^{PL} Ambush

PL Cooksey ³ PSG Tamez ³
H2 ASS1 Glasheen ³ ASS2 Swanson ³
H1 WSL Rosser ³ SEC Lippoli ³

108 looks, 14, 30
114 looks, 27, 30

Scale: 1 square =

From Class 11-20 B Co Darby, B Co MTNs, C Co MTNs

RAP Week Attrition and On

literally do not go to B Co, if they put you in B Co, walk to another company, they'll be all (who fucked it up? and just play dumb and you'll be good). I seriously can't stress this enough how drastically different B Co is from the other companies. It's not even comparable at all. It's the worst in each phase. It wasn't that bad during it was just really dumb because we were like "Well this is what it's supposed to be like" then we'd talk to other companies (or recycle into them) and be like wait what. As a general rule of thumb, in B Co they will haze you worse and you will get much less sleep

B Co Start 96

After PU/SU 86

After run 82

CWSA 80

RTTs 76 (all drops LTs)

failed land nav originally 36

All ranger 221, 106 failed land nav day 1

A Co 40/85, B Co 38/76 (2 got dropped for RTTs and did not retest), C Co 28/71 failed day 1 after land nav 56 - (probably people that were more run down had a worse time with it because they were broken down or received worse instruction?)

after ruck 49

end of Darby 30 (averaged 4 recycles in each 14/15-man squad), 12 of 18 recycles that we met from the class before moved on to mountains with us

start mountains in B CO with 59 (3 platoons in BN), end with 55 with 2 LOM and 2 SOR (all darby recycles, only people that recycled darby failed knots first time in mountains, no recycles for knots in 11-20)

47 B Co mtns to FL

MTNS 2 - 42 in PLT with an early LOM and 2 NDs - 9 dropped/recycled

SOR means they got recycled, dropped, or 2 major minuses for a safety violation (ND, eating outside prescribed time, tossing ammo, wearing snivel gear on movement)

LOM means lack of motivation and they quit

RAP WEEK

first you have the layout

- this is just a way to get you frazzled, if they smoke you, don't actually do it because you have a pt test and that would be dumb, all of your shit will get wrecked and it's really annoying. you have to undo everything that's individually wrapped but you have enough time to do it for the most part, any organization is gone and the person next to you will probably end up accidentally taking some of your shit when you pack up real quickly at the end
- advice here is later that night they'll tell you that you can only bring in some bs in a trashbag for the pt test, obviously you won't take that to the pt test so just bring in a fleece cap, woobie, and some ear pro - people will be constantly moving around and it'll make it

harder to fall asleep. generally whenever i slept in ear pro when i woke up they were out of my ears so i wouldn't worry about waking up because people will make sure you are up. this goes for pretty much every night of rap week. one night i only brought in a towel and hygiene stuff like they said and i ended up freezing in the middle of the night and got in bed with Cam Wilson

- label everything (especially map markers as these will be stolen wholesale in darby)
- pack lots of ziplocs (i like the ones that are a couple gallons, gallon bags and small ones that are easy to close - i did not see a significant difference in the zipper seal vs regular so it doesn't matter, but if your stuff is in them during the layout then they will get torn up)
- pack lots of contractor bags/trash bags
- multiple headlamps/gloves/eye pro - these are what get lost, two is one, one is none but like even more so than normal
- waterproof gloves would be nifty for when it rains
- clear tape, illum paper and tape (yellow)
- bring expo, you can get hand sanitizer from medics
- bring a couple knives and tie them down (knife sharpeners)
- head lamp, eye pro, and tactical gloves get lost in patrol bases a lot - have extra
- Your quality of life from the objective to the ORP will be largely dependent on how bright and reliable your headlamp is
- IR chemlights and different color chem lights - these are money for marking in mountains and florida to make patrol bases and missions money
- dental pick and refillable CLP container for weapons cleaning - these, a cloth, and a wire brush are what you will actually use in the cleaning kit, the bat boys and random E5s will square away crew serves but if you bring those to the table you look useful (label them because they will get taken even if your cleaning kit is labeled)
- small shaving cream for darby, big rap and mountains
- big notebook and case - you want a rite in the rain that's 7.25 inches for each phase and a cover for it, have a couple mini ones for other bs that you want to take down quickly
- prep resupply stuff - have ziplocs, trash bags, extra headlamps, map marker, protractor in a package ready for someone
- warm tactical gloves - you want multiple pairs of warm tactical gloves or just winter gloves, i would wear them then when we started moving i'd shove them somewhere (which led to me losing a left hand of my winter gloves), these are nicer to have than regular tactical gloves because they're warm but your hands will heat up on movement.

Fire guard rosters are going to stress people out during RAP week. Get roster numbers down, make a couple copies and turn it in. Then just wake up the next bunk. This method fails the most but it doesn't really matter. In Darby, no one actually pulls fire guard because the medics would come at 05 and then the leadership would go get the order at 0530. The RIs always threaten to check but never did. If they say don't go to bed until 2300 or something in mountains they might check though

PT pit



the first day you do the PT test 49 pushups, 59 situps (due to covid there is a piece of rebar that someone holds their foot on a tennis ball), 5 mile run then you get back and you do the easiest chinups of your life. The anvil shaped piece of grass between the circular combatives pit and the malvesti obstacle course is where you'll have the PT test brief. An RI will be standing on a PT stand demonstrating and giving the speech by the woodline. Stand close to the circle because that's where you'll line up for push-ups. There's speculation that you need to be in the front of the line to pass. I went to the front of the line and had all of my push-ups counted. I wouldn't risk it and would just run to the front of the lines which will be on the outside edge of the circle. You'll run under a ranger tab, yell ranger and then go to the grader corresponding to your line.



you can see the sit-up rebar contraption



you can see it in action - this dude is also doing the most on his situps, head over the base of his spine is the standard so he is going further up than necessary

5 mile

<https://www.mapmyrun.com/routes/view/4012521652> - I'm not a very good runner, it's rolling baby hills but all in all pretty flat, if you're at cornett you can probably ask the RIs to take you there and they will. Kinda tough around mile 4 when you notice you went slightly down a hill on the way out

12 mile ruck course

<https://www.mapmyrun.com/routes/view/1722527456> - there will be dunk tanks every two miles on the course, use them at least in the first half so that you don't heat cat. I watched a female ranger student heat cat right in front of me at the 7 mile mark right after we passed a dunk tank, very avoidable and she could've chilled out since we were 8 minutes ahead of pace. go fast so that you have time to spare on the final miles because you won't want to go fast anymore, 60-120s or the casual "okay let's run to that light post" and shuffle all downhills is generally the way to go.

RTTs

Only LTs fail RTTs because they aren't familiar. Mainly LTs and PVTs will ND as well. know the 240 and 249 and don't be afraid of them. Ranger does a horrible job of teaching RTTs ahead of time but their paper guide is okay. Look up the EIB standard for a video and do that. I failed a couple RTTs for things like not tilting the 249 to the right as I loaded it, not holding the belt with my left hand as I loaded it.

The Ranger pro app has the wrong sequence for one of the 249 things just slightly wrong so watch those to get an idea and then verify with someone who has done EIB or a solid trainup.

People will ND with the 249 and 240 during RS a lot because they don't keep their hand on the charging handle in the rear when they open the feed tray to clear it. When they open the feed tray the bolt will go forward because the sear in the weapon is fucked. I'd find on the sbf someone would ND because they tried to clear the weapon and didn't hold the charging handle back for dear life. On several occasions, I took the barrel off to get the chambered round out and that worked reliably. If you can't get the barrel off you can probably shake it loose.

Volunteer to carry the SAW, especially during the techniques/instructor led days because it will make you have a better first impression.

Land Nav

[Land Nav Map](#)

This is my land nav map. We started in the top left at the red cross by 04 81. It is a self correcting course.

Land Nav Advice

Have a trash bag in your pocket ready so you can still plot points in the rain. I had an actual map case which I really liked having tied down to me. People had success with a gallon bag that they reinforced with duct tape and also taped down to themselves.

It'll start at 4 am and the sun will come up after a couple hours. Use the bezel ring on the compass to keep your azimuth during the day too

double check your plotting by checking where you plotted it with your protractor and double checking that the grid you find is where your point is. Use offsets, attack points, checkpoints. Dead reckon the least distance possible and use terrain association to your advantage. It's generally easier to find a point going downhill due to visibility. To find the most accurate azimuth, draw a straight line from your attack point to point through a gridline that does not get in the way. Then use the grid line to line up your protractor and get a better azimuth. This is where I like to draw the distance from the attack point and the grid azimuth.

My route

I plotted in my trash bag because we were doing it in a hurricane. The map is two-sided. When I was plotting and route planning I used my pencil to make contour lines visible for doing actual map checks at night (if you do a quick map check with a red lens you will likely not be able to see any of the brown contour lines at night). I started by traveling SEE down that trail and then I shot an azimuth at the 119 point (known point on map) after a few hundred meters. It was the highest point and I figured I'd have no trouble using the river as a backstop and was very confident in my land nav. I looked for that point (4) then eventually abandoned it even though I realized later in the day that I was right on it. (I shouldn't have taken this route because it was too far to dead reckon at night. I ended up going right up to the point and being wrong but I didn't realize it because it was in a weird marsh area. I used an azimuth from the dog leg in the road to the south of the point and found it really easily in daylight)

You can see up and to the right of the point circled and labeled 4 that I intended to go 560m for 73 degrees grid, that means I added the 6 in my head to make it magnetic as I walked. I went south and found the trail again but in actuality had no idea where I was, so I kept walking along a trail knowing if I went south I would be headed to the highway. I oriented myself based on an intersection and traveled northwest. Using intersections as checkpoints I made my way to the intersection at 06 81 then shot 90 degrees grid (96 magnetic) for 340 meters. At this point, it was completely black outside and I was bumping into trees and what not because we had 0% illum. I trusted my pace count (you should generally dead reckon less than 200 meters at night but I was cocky) and found myself in the micro valley area. Using terrain association, I knew I was generally in the right area and had done an extra 30 paces as I should (more paces are generally required, trust your azimuth) but I couldn't see shit so I sat down and pondered how I was a failure before turning on my head lamp. The point was 3 meters in front of me so I got up and triumphantly clanked that bitch with my compass and used my headlamp to make it clear there was a point there. Another dude came out of the woodworks and thanked me profusely.

Next I made my way up the hill going south through way thicker brush than I expected and for way longer until I got to the road. I was confused again but then I saw the bend in the road and kept heading East. I saw the water point and intersection and decided to go SE down the road. At around 075 798 there was an intersection with a medic on a 4 wheeler. I used that intersection to walk 240m at 0 degrees grid (6 degrees on my compass). I trusted the ranger trail (path of least resistance along your azimuth) and went the distance. I use 70 paces as my reference pace count so I walked 200 paces to estimate the 240m. I was still shy so I added some to my pace and walked right up onto the point. I then turned around and took the easiest path back S.

My next point I headed 1200m down the road ensuring I was on track by estimating distances (I think of a track leg as 100m and then look at a point further down the trail as a reference) between checkpoints. Due to the weather the road was a thick clay that stuck to our boots and we were effectively slip and sliding down the road. There was no advantage to running unless you were hungry for mud. I got to the intersection that is at the top of that hill on the ridgeline at 072 791 and went 233 grid (239 magnetic) and 540 meters. I knew I had the stream as a backstop so I did a slight offset to the north. I got down to the stream, saw I was offset to the north by identifying the spur to my east. I then traveled south along that stream (which was actually only a large erosion ditch) until I found my point. I clinked it and a dude came out of the woodworks and thanked me.

At this point the sun was coming up and the red lens was not very useful. I knew I had to make up a lot of time and still get my final point. The path that I had taken to that point would take too long so I went NW through the woods. I traveled until I got to the trail at 063 793 running N as my checkpoint. I decided that wasn't far enough and kept bushwacking NW. At some point bushwacking, I ran into a thick spiderweb and frantically swatted at my face. I lost my eye pro and spent a couple minutes until I found it so I wouldn't get a safety violation and fail land nav anyway. I got to the trail at 057 795 and then proceeded N. Eventually, I got to the dog leg in the road at 052 808 and shot an azimuth going generally N and walked right up onto the point. I then leisurely returned to the starting point having enough time.

Lessons learned, along your route don't just take the route that is on your way. Had I used the dog leg on point 4 initially I would've gone right to the point instead of wasting time breaking brush 600m at night. Running is helpful for time when you use it, but the better idiot-proofed your route plan and terrain analysis, you won't have to run. Use solid attack points and be accurate. At night use the bezel ring to keep you on track. During the day, you can have more accuracy at longer distances by using your compass to pick out a point on your azimuth in the distance then going to it while keeping your pace count. Always give those extra few paces to get to a point. If you are using the post method (which is best) make sure you have a good point of reference. Make sure you are in the correct grid square.

Darby

- use an mre heater for shaving (not in front of RIs)
- knee pad inserts are huge, maybe even have a spare for after mountains
- torch lighters are sick, sometimes not allowed, you can probably just hide them and have them they are so nice to have
- brief an opord like you're planning to egg a house with the boys
- move pieces as you brief (or have your rto) on terrain model
- wrap duct tape around foot powder and sharpies so you dont carry a whole roll
- the tie down with a bowline and a girth hitch is the most useful for not losing your knife and what not - this is forming a small loop with a bowline and then putting that through your belt loop or something then putting whatever is on the other end through the loop
- use retainer bands to keep your nods tighter because the j arms are horrible

- I never used a gerber pretty much. Having a knife dummy corded to me for opening MREs and cutting 550/electrical tape was really useful

The biggest thing that makes darby suck is that you will be standing on rocks after you finish a mission and you'll be really bored, you wake up at 5, warno at 6 until 630, pitch opord at 1030 to 11 depending on when you request at coordinations (at 8), step off for your mission at 12 or 1, generally do your mission somewhere between 1600-2100 and get back from 2130-0200 but stand on gravel until somewhere between 3 and 5. Use that time to bond with your squad and company as these will be largely the people in your platoon in mountains and florida 6 days of FTX (5 nights) but they are virtually indistinguishable from the two days before it where they are cadre led patrols. You'll shower twice during Darby (they will be really cold in what looks like prison showers, unlike the rap week showers which have great water pressure and are warm). Darby rucks suck because anything you have from sunday to sunday you will be carrying with you. You won't be doing laundry. Listen to the Darby recycles. The biggest thing here is notecards and map markers for planning

Mountains

You'll start with mountaineering: knots for a couple days then you go up to Mount Yona and put it into action then you'll have 3 days where you go over the patrol base, ambush, and raid. There are 2 5 day FTXs so you only have 8 nights in the field total. You'll have ~~plenty of~~ time in the barracks to get showers and refit. Time spent awake in the barracks is time not sleeping, but you could theoretically do your laundry every night and have a friend switch it on their fire guard shift. If people don't do 15 minute (or 20 minute shifts if small platoon), they are dumb.

Florida

you'll be in a patrol base for a much longer time during the day, sprint missions and they're at night, carrying more ammo

Do your best to be nice to everyone, it's the most cutthroat and on edge phase

you'll get fucked down on ammo here

you only actually do swamp movements twice

make sure cadre know you're attentive and ask good questions in florida so the RIs like you if you have a fresh pair of boots sent to you during mountains or buy them during mountains they'll be nice to have

you'll be walking under nods for pretty much every mission so know how to use your shit

Spots

If you get 3 major minuses or more then you spot out and you will recycle. If you get a spot report it's pretty much always a major minus unless it's on an obstacle course and you missed an obstacle. It's most common to spot Darby. You can get peered forward at 59 and sometimes 58 and you can get spotted forward but you will never get patrolled forward

Peers

Here's the peer form. The best way to get good peers is just being a good dude. If you help with planning on the morning, are one of the boys, carry the 249 and are a team leader often, you will peer well. If you don't do that and just sleep on the line and never carry anything and hurt people's looks, you will peer poorly. If someone peers you top $\frac{1}{3}$ then you get a 100, middle $\frac{1}{3}$ 75, bottom $\frac{1}{3}$ 50. Your score is the average. If you are in a 15-person squad, and 3 give you top 3 and everyone else peers you last, you would have 60.7 which passes you. People are sharky and will say they peered you high or that they will and then they won't so be ready for that

PEER EVALUATION FORM

Ranger rated _____ Roster # _____

Company _____ Platoon _____ Squad _____

Use criteria below in comments concerning this Ranger's performance in training

INITIATIVE _____

DEPENDABILITY _____

TEAMWORK _____

ATTENTION TO DETAIL _____

TACTICAL KNOWLEDGE _____

PHYSICAL STAMINA _____

Answer YES or NO to the following questions by circling the appropriate circle.

If you had the choice would you:

Go to war with this Ranger? YES NO

Share a foxhole with this Ranger? YES NO

RATER INFORMATION

(PLACE YOUR POSTER NUMBER HERE)

Roster # _____

FORWARD (F) (FORWARD TO NEXT RANK/GRADUATE)

RECYCLE (R) (RECYCLE THIS OR PREVIOUS THING)

DROP (D) (DROP FROM RANGER SCHOOL)

PEER RANKING

RANK THE RANGER WITHIN THE SQUAD FROM BEST TO WORST ONE BY ONE NUMBER PER RANGER WITHIN THE SQUAD. THIS WILL HELP DETERMINE THE RANGER'S STATUS IN THE COURSE.

(EXAMPLE: THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE RANGER RATED AS NUMBER 1 IN THE SQUAD)

BE AWARE OF THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER

1 2 3 4 5

1 Best

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

Worst

(RI USE ONLY)

SQUAD RANKING

BEST

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

WORST

Overall Peer Rating _____ (RI USE ONLY)

Here is some sleep data from me and Andy Davidson. Numbers in Mnts for B Co seem to be rounded up. Mnts 2 is C CO.

Sleep Tracker

Darby A	34442	21145	11185
Mtns A	57765	55561	11156 11115 6
Mtns B	46454	44452	10156 21005

MTNS Z

first 3 days 30 min later than earliest sleep

10/31	2330-04	11/7	0030-0200	11/14	0130-0500
11/1	2300-0415	11/8	2330-0440	11/15	0245-0445 FTX
11/2	2230-0345	11/9	0400-0510	11/16	0210-0445 FTX
11/3	2245-0500	11/10	guess 0330-0500 FTX	11/17	0145-0445
11/4	0030-0415	11/11	guess 0330-0500 FTX	11/18	0230-0445
11/5	0000-0500	11/12	0330-0500	11/19	
11/6	0030-0500	11/13	2030-0500	11/20	

~ 12.57 hrs 32 hrs
~ 12.57 hrs 18.5 hrs

Marking Duffel Bags. Go crazy marking your duffel bags so you can find them in a pile of 200 + other duffels. Some guys spray painted their whole duffel bags pink and blue, some wrapped them with obnoxious duct tape, some sprayed X's and dots and all kinds of things so they could find their stuff. There is no SOP for this like a deployment. You mark your stuff so you can find it.

Waterproof bag. On the packing list, it lists a 'waterproof bag.' Highly recommend you bring 2mm thickness flex trash bags (bigger than 30 gallons) for daily use, but for some events (like the CWSA), bring an Army wet weather bag with a strap sewn onto it, like a 2 quart canteen strap (or two of them) or something you can hook onto your shoulder(s). That will come in handy when you have to run to the

CWSA, or when en route to/from land nav. Rangers that don't have something like this have to toss their trash bags over their shoulders and march/run like that, which is awkward and some of their bags break. You'll have to make sure they reinforce the strap(s) you get sewn onto there because the wet weather bag isn't very strong, but you can fit a change of uniform and boots in there pretty easily without it tearing.

Packing List by Phase or Extras. Think about the optional items on the packing list and whether you'll need them during the first phase. If not, you can stash them away somewhere and have someone hand them to you on your pass or mail them to you later. Think about what items you might want more of also, like 550 cord or chapstick or foot powder or protractors. Packing list has 2 protractors, I brought 7. Easy to lose things, but you can also share if you need to. Also Ranger Joe protractors are best because they are laser cut.

Hot weather boots. The packing list only requires 2 pairs of hot weather boots, and 1 pair of cold weather boots. You'll want to bring at least 3 pairs of hot weather boots, and know what you want to use each type for. Things like Malvesti obstacle course (light pair of boots that dry quickly, like Nikes), land nav (something that stabilizes ankles without being overly heavy, like S2Vs), equipment runs or rucks (your choice). Think about that ahead of time and plan for it. Your boots will get wet during the CWSA and they won't necessarily fully dry with the random rain and humidity. If you only bring two pair, you're down to one. If you get your feet wet during land nav, you've got no dry boots for the ruck a few days later. That's why the 3 pairs. At least. Set aside a pair of boots for the ruck and don't touch them until the ruck.

Ziploc Baggies. 3 sizes of Ziploc (or other) baggies were useful. 2.5 gallon bags are useful for waterproofing your boots, and/or a spare set of ACUs. 1 gallon bags are useful for maps and land nav and keeping items together. Sandwich bags are good for score cards (which are approximately 4 x 5 inches in size) and for your Ranger Handbook. Make sure you get the larger, heavy duty looking sandwich bags though so you can fit your Ranger Handbook in there without it bending, at least until you waterproof it your own way with 100mph or reflective tape or whatever method you choose.

Label Everything. Everything you can get a sharpie marker or tape label or something on, label. You can get things sewn (like my hygiene kit), you can tape things obnoxious colors (my duffels had bright green and blue duct tape on them, and I brought them with me to label daily items like trash bags, etc), and I even put pieces of tape around my lighters/knives/pens so those items could make their way back to me. People don't always mean to grab your stuff, but you're in such close quarters and people are sleepy and don't always remember where they borrowed something from. Or they're taking it and you want to get your stuff back. I even wrote my name on every sock (especially the \$25 a pair socks) and was glad I did.

Events Once You Report:

Reporting. Make sure you have a pretty significant meal for breakfast/lunch. We didn't get lunch after reporting, they made us throw away all our food as contraband, and it was pretty late in the evening by the time we got hot chow (all 2 ½ minutes of it).

Ranger Physical. Make sure a doctor actually signs your physical, not a PA. Another student had to jump through hoops to get that signature on Day 0 and they didn't need that drama.

Packing List Layout. You're going to dump everything out of your bags within about a minute so you don't need to obsess about putting everything perfectly in there, just try to keep like items generally together. What I did for the little things was get 3 space saver heavy duty Ziploc type bags (probably about 2.5 – 3 gallon size each and made three categories in my head for what was inside them: military stuff (whistle, compass, reflective belt, 1"x6" illum tape, lighter, knives, multitools, helmet bands, nametapes, locks, 550 cord, etc), hygiene stuff (hygiene kit, shaving cream, soap and soap dish, etc), and writing items (3 x notepads, pens, markers, pencils, notecards, mini clipboard for land nav, THULS, status cards, alcohol markers, alcohol erasers, sharpie markers, stamps, envelopes, lamination sheets, document protectors, etc). You're going to have to dump everything out, but categorizing them that way allowed me to have three little piles where I could quickly go to when they called a little item. A lot of students had a hard time finding the little items that they had just dumped all together mixed into their duffels. You can also dump onto a towel which helps keep stuff together. As soon as the RIs checked off an item, I put it back in its baggie which made things a lot easier to find during short time hacks for the rest of RAP week. Another student gave me this tip from when they went through a twice last year and it was genius. During the packing list layout at the end of Day 1, pull out a copy of your packing list and have it on the rocks where you can see it during the layout. You're supposed to bring a blank copy anyway, but no one used it. They generally go in order of the packing list, and it will give you a heads up on what item(s) they'll want to look at next so you can search them out visually ahead of time. The quicker I was, the less they messed with me. It was the folks that couldn't find their stuff in that pile of two duffel bags that irritated the RIs.

CWSA. I've been swimming since I was 3 and used to be on a swim team. I'd typically identify myself as a strong swimmer. However, in RTAC and during RAP week and with gear on and after being smoked countless times, my body was feeling the effects and fatigue. I didn't identify as a weak swimmer and almost choked on water in gear during the RTAC water test. I had been at the back of the line and we got smoked the most before getting into the water. For RAP week, I swallowed my pride, identified as a weak swimmer (there were about 15 of us), and they moved us to the front of the line and we got smoked less before going into the water than everyone else. We also had more time to change into dry clothes, stretch, and elevate feet before joining the rest of the formation that was still going through the CWSA. You still get smoked, but it will be after you complete one more drop type event.

Land Nav Strategy. The course is not hard, but it will be if you screw yourself like I did and lose your scorecard after finding four points. Not only did I fail and have to do it again the next day, but I got a Major Minus as well for losing my equipment. Before every movement, take the thirty seconds to make sure you have everything secured, and then move out. The bigger implications for that is that you have to redo land nav the next day, putting more miles on your legs, less sleep in the bank, and all the day before the ruck march. Start off in the night by using the roads and improved surfaces until you get to your attack points. Don't handrail in the dark, because then you can't see the little Ranger trails thousands of Rangers before you have made, which makes it much easier and faster to get to where you need to go if you do need to handrail. The map is paper, not laminated, and you choose whether you

want to use the 1:25,000 side or the 1:50,000 side. I chose the 1:25,000 side, but up to your preference and comfort level. Make sure you double water proof everything, even if it isn't raining. There is moisture on everything in the mornings, and you can get wet in swamps. They didn't make us cover ourselves with a poncho or trash bag to plot our points in the beginning, but you can't move or stand with your red lens on. You have to be on a knee or in the prone, so remember that or they can drop you. I brought a mini clipboard which was money when plotting points, for helping keep my map straight and unwrinkled, etc.

Land Nav Extras. Think about worst case scenarios that could screw you during land nav, and plan for them. Would you be able to survive if your headlamp went out? As in broke? Or if the batteries died? Or if you lost your compass or it started sticking? I brought a second headlamp with me and a small red lens flashlight and batteries just in case. I brought 3 protractors, several plastic Ziploc baggies to waterproof my map and score card (some people had map cases, whatever suits you), and several pens/pencils.

Buddy Equipment Run. This is about a 2.1 mile run around the area within arm's reach of your assigned Ranger Buddy in ACUs, camelback, carrying rubber duck. This is not a drop event and is immediately followed by the Malvesti obstacle course/smoke session. Save your legs, just don't walk. The only guys that got negative spot reports were the ones that walked (that the RIs saw).

Mail. You're allowed to write letters and send them out, and you'll sign a sheet of paper saying you understand the incoming mail policy. Basically your friends/family can send you TA-50 as long as it is in a large flat rate box (or smaller) that is 12 x 12 x 5.5. Anything other than items on the packing list, you won't be able to have and will have to throw away (besides letters). Have your family write 'TA-50' on the box and tell them not to try to smuggle anything. Not worth it. Once you get your company assignment, you can send them a quick letter telling them what company you're in to try to help their mail get to you. Send your roster number so they can try to check online for whether you made it through the phase or not.

Taking Care of Your Body:

Uniforms. This might just be my OCD, but I numbered my uniforms, tops and bottoms so I could pair them together. My uniforms 4, 5, and 6 were the ones I sprayed with permethrin, so when I was heading out to something like land nav, I grabbed one of those to keep the bugs away. Also highly recommend sewing your name on the back right pocket of all your pants. Clothes get mixed up on the clothesline when drying, or in the washers/dryers so you'll want to be able to quickly identify what's yours. Besides that, I just had my name and US Army sewn on my tops, name and cat eyes sewn on my hats, so I didn't have to worry about nametapes coming off or anything.

Salt and Cerasport. The RIs do this 11 times a year. When they give you Cerasport to put into your canteens or camelback, do it, and drink it. When you eat, whether hot chow or MREs, find the salt and put it on your food and eat it.

Bedding and Sleeping. You won't get issued anything for bedding until Day 4. You'll sleep on a bunkbed, but put some uniforms together for a pillow, use your towel or something for a leg blanket, and toss an ACU top over your chest if you need to. Make sure you elevate your feet when you sleep. You can roll up your field jacket liner to do this, or throw your feet over the bars of the bunk bed to elevate them, but it's important to elevate so you can reverse the effects of being on your feet all day.

Rolling Out Muscles. I've never used foam rollers before or anything like that, but learned a great deal about it during RAP week. One guy had taken the heavy duty cardboard roll from the inside of his 550 cord and used it to roll out the lactic acid in his muscles during our CIF wait. I tried it and it was awesome. You can also use your shaving cream can to roll out your muscles. Always be stretching something or rolling something out when you can so you can prep your body for the next thing.

100mph Tape and Feet. During RTAC, it poured on us every day of the first week. My feet were soaked for about 8 hours each day of land nav (I did five days in a row since I played in a swamp the first test) and I had to try to preserve them for upcoming events. During foot checks, a medic saw the medical tape I'd put on previously (that was soaked and tore up) and he recommended 100mph tape. I thought he was kidding but he wasn't, so I tried it. Probably the best thing I learned for taking care of my feet. The tape keeps all moisture off your hot spots (I put mine on my heels and by my big toes), and keeps the friction completely off those areas as well. Take it off daily and reapply if you need to (which means don't just keep it on there for days and days), and let your feet air out at night, and tear it into thinner strips while applying. Make sure you don't constrict your blood flow either, remembering that feet swell over the course of the day or an event, like a 12-mile or obstacle course. It was amazing though, and already on the packing list. I used this as makeshift band-aids too and it worked great.

Laundry. Make use of the washers and dryers in the barracks as often as you have nasty wet clothes and have the time. Some guys waited until they were all out to start laundry after their stuff had sat in a trash bag festering for days and all they had was nasty wet clothes. You need to preserve yourself, so clean your stuff. Throw it in before you go to bed and toss it in the dryer when you wake up. The 3-in-1 laundry sheets (detergent, softener, static cling) sheets are perfect because they get the job done, they're lightweight, and you don't have to worry about Tide busting in your duffels all over your stuff.

Sewing kit and gear. When you get your CIF gear, immediately start sewing your nametapes and cat eyes while standing in line. I was told Shoe Goo can help reduce the number of stitches you need to use to keep it on there, but I haven't tested that. Your priority that day is for your ruck and your FLC because they will be inspected before/after the ruck march. Nametape sewn at the bottom of the ruck flap, cat eyes one inch above that and one inch apart. If you don't know what an inch looks like (doesn't have to be exact), the illumination tape they make you buy on the packing list is 1 inch tall. Your cat eyes on the back of your hat were probably cut to a 1/2" wide, which is what they need to look like on your ruck. You just have to sew your nametape on the back of your FLC on that strap where your shoulder blades are. Work on that immediately because that helps determine how much sleep you get that night. We got 22 minutes to 40 minutes the night before the ruck. Make sure your sewing kit has at least one thimble, two so you can share with others. White dental floss was great for heavy duty thread, and it's

waterproof. Heavy duty needles, but you don't want the pointy end of the needle to be too fat or it won't go through your nametapes and gear.

Ruck March. Miles 5 and 6 are all uphill. It's a tough route, and when we did it, it was 97% humidity. The packing list for us was: MOLLE Ruck with frame, 2 quart canteens on ruck x 2, camel back, waterproof bag, poncho, poncho liner, helmet/ACH complete, ACUs (top and bottom), 1 pair boots, 7 pair socks (waterproofed), 5 t-shirts, 1 piece of snivel (like waffle top or bottom), Goretex top and bottom, Black gloves with green inserts, eye pro, weapons cleaning kit, E-tool with carrier. We had to wear: ACU top/bottom, t-shirt, socks, boots, belt, reflective belt around MOLLE, FLC, ID tags, ID card, head lamp, patrol cap (but that went in our pockets that day), and carry rubber M16 duck. They said it was a 35 lb packing list, without the water. Add about 18 lbs with the water (camel back, 2 x 2 qts, 2 x 1 qts). Move out from the very beginning. Drink water, use the immersion tables to cool your body temp down if you need it, but keep moving. There will be a paceman, stay ahead of him the whole way. They have gates along the course that if you don't meet after a certain amount of time, they'll pull you from the course and not let you finish. Meet all those gates or you're done.

Health in General. Sounds like a common sense thing, but make sure you're 100% when you go. Any physical weakness/illness you have will be amplified. On a positive note, now that I've seen RAP week, I know and you should know that it's completely doable. Sucks, but is doable.

Content by Jacob D Minyard and Drew Maillet
Edited and tailored by Jordan Isham (Class 9-18) for West Point Early Rangers

This is just a few perspectives on what it is like to go through Ranger School straight out of West Point in the summer with the early Ranger program. This is not meant to be a play-by-play of Ranger School, and it is not intended to give you the "answers" to any tests.

Bottom line, if you show up to Ranger physically fit, mentally focused, and ready for the biggest suckfest of your life, you will get through it and earn your tab, and there will be no need to worry about whether you get the "best" patrol or the "easiest" graders. Stay positive, help your buddies out, know when to hold back and when to go all out, and you will surmount any obstacle Ranger School places in your way.

I. PREPARATION

Regarding preparation for the school, I have a lot more respect for West Point's training program than when I left in May. The best thing I did in my time at the Academy to prepare for Ranger was participation in the Sandhurst Competition. I did Sandhurst all four years at West Point, and while the year-long training program they have these days is probably a waste of time, sucking up the training for a full year and running in the competition at least once is highly beneficial. No part of Ranger School is comparably difficult over a 36-hour period; the Sandhurst Competition takes a much greater mental and physical toll on the human body. If you

can compete as the team captain/squad leader, even better. The lanes in the competition require exactly the same critical thinking and leadership skills as patrolling at Ranger; take advantage of the opportunity to be a Sandhurst squad leader if it comes your way.

As a graduate of West Point, you will have more than enough training in Infantry tactics from MS200/300, leadership details, Buckner, and CLDT to pass the Ranger course without going through IBOLC; for those of you who would rather wait, use the extra time at IBOLC to become proficient at practical Ranger skills with OPORDs, machine guns, tie-downs, tactical gear, and so forth. CLDT in particular is an excellent prep course for Ranger. While it is not run at anything like the same level of intensity, and you eat and sleep much more than in Ranger, the daily routine of CLDT is almost exactly the same, the movements are comparable, and the missions are more complex and difficult to execute than in Ranger. Take CLDT seriously and learn everything you can from your platoon trainers. In particular, take advantage of the opportunity to work with radios, tie-downs, and machine guns. You will not have anything like the practical experience of your enlisted buddies when you show up to Ranger School: make up for that as much as you can while you have the opportunity at CLDT. At a minimum, you should come out knowing how to program the ASIP and MBITR radios, how to load, clear, fire, assemble, and disassemble the M249 and M240B machine gun, a few basic gun drills, and hand-and-arm signals. You should also learn the basics of platoon ambush and platoon raid (the two missions you will run most frequently in Florida and Mountains), react to IDF, react to near ambush, and react to contact.

As an officer, you should also be thoroughly familiar with the format of an OPORD, and be capable of coming up with a hasty FRAGO within 1-2 hours of receipt of the mission. The enlisted guys in your squad and platoon will expect you to be able to plan out a mission regardless of whether or not you went to IBOLC; this is the best place you can contribute to the success of the team and get a Go on your patrol. In MS200 and MS300 they will give you tests that closely simulate planning conditions at Ranger School; study hard in these classes and you will directly contribute to the success of your Ranger squad/platoon. Pay especially close attention to planning for Paragraph 3 (COA Statement and sketch, timeline, tasks to subordinate units) and Paragraph 4. If your instructor requires you build a terrain model to accompany your order, go all-out. A good terrain model will get you a GO as an Alpha Team Leader in Darby and as a Security Squad Leader in Mountains. West Point is the best place in the Army to learn the fundamentals of the planning process, so put in the hours now to reap the rewards later.

Make sure you look over RTTs on YouTube or the RangerPro app before graduation. The Arms Room may or may not let you get your hands on machine guns during the school year, but you will need to practice RTTs before showing up to Ranger or you will be dropped during RAP Week. Find a way.

For physical preparation, you don't have to max your PT test, but you should be capable of running a sub-14 minute 2-mile and rucking 12 miles in under 2 hours 30 minutes. If you meet that time standard, there is no need to directly train rucking, except for competition purposes like Sandhurst or MIAD tryouts. Rucking is hard on your knees and the benefits of training it are marginal: you will be a good rucker if you can put up with pain and suck for a long period of time. Distance running directly translates into road marching: like rucking, running for miles sucks, but the pain will eventually end. Lifting is important for building up a baseline of strength, but it is less important for Army purposes than distance running. Squatting and deadlifting a decent amount (~300 lbs) is a must, but building up quickly will slow you down without helping you ruck heavier weights or move faster under load.

The biggest pitfall to be wary of at Ranger is push-ups: at West Point, cadets do not hold each other accountable for performing correct push-ups, and the standard is not much higher at the officer-graded APFTs during firstie year. The Ranger standard *is* different and it *is* stricter than in a normal APFT, so you will need to practice in front of a mirror and/or convince an RI in DMI to watch you perform push-ups. If you can do 80 push-ups in a cadet-graded APFT, you will be able to pass the RI-graded RPFT on Day 0. In my firstie spring, they brought up RIs from 4th RTB to grade an RPFT for the Infantry cadets in my class: I came in feeling confident with 91 reps on my firstie APFT—and only got 29 when my RI graded me. I had to swallow a ton of pride and ask that RI to help me fix my form, but I corrected the issue, and never came close to failing another RPFT. Unless you are scrupulous with your form, expect the same thing to happen to you, and even if you do your push-ups correctly, it always pays to be overprepared for the RPFT.

For rucking, if you are cutting it close to 3 hours for 12 miles in anything like normal conditions, you need to retrain. You will conduct the road march in RAP Week on less than 1 hour of sleep, over hilly terrain, bad roads, and starvation and sleep deprivation, with a ruck that weighs close to 50 lbs (not 35!) counting water weight.

Overall, West Point's physical training program prepared me very well for RAP Week; involvement in a Corps Squad or Club Team or Sandhurst also pays off and provides excellent training for Ranger School. The rest of Ranger School after RAP Week is not physically challenging: it is just low-intensity suck, with heavy rucks, long marches, and little sleep for days and days and miles and miles, but you will be able to get through it after enduring the epic beat down of your first week at Ranger.

II. RTAC

They will send all Early Rangers to RTAC as a prep course before Ranger School starts. RTAC is run by the Warrior Training Center and is the primary feeder course for the National Guard for Ranger School. In my opinion, the training is very useful: it is scheduled too close to Ranger but if you can pass RTAC you will be in good enough shape to tackle Ranger even if RTAC breaks you off a bit. RTAC is primarily preparation for the Darby phase: this is because the vast majority of students (around 85%) graduate Ranger after Darby phase.

Before you show up to RTAC, you will inprocess with 2-11 Infantry (IBOLC), do all of your inprocessing paperwork, settle DTS, turn in your orders, and draw TA-50. Use your West Point TA-50 for everything in the field if the Academy lets you keep it. 2-11 Infantry played Ranger games with us while we waited to class up for RTAC; they tried telling us at one point that we didn't have hard slots to Ranger and that we would get pulled back to IBOLC if we failed RTAC but never fear, you are hard-slotted, and you will go to Ranger regardless of whether you pass RTAC. Try your best to pass RTAC, the failure rate is high but it is good training and if you graduate you will have a leg up on your peers if you have to go to Ranger at some point later in your career. The POI (Program of Instruction) has changed a bit since I went, but it is all largely the same from year to year; there will be no surprises.

My RTAC class started with 129 pax and 31 West Pointers; we finished with 41 and 17 respectively. The big drop events at RTAC are land nav on Days 4 and 5 and the RPA/CWSA on Day 7. We dropped 11 pax before the land nav retest for heat cats, disrespect to cadre, and various injuries, then dropped 37 more after land nav; 24 people failed but were retained for

various reasons. We had 81 going into Day 7 but the RPA and CWSA knocked us down to 45; we lost 2 more on the 9-mile road march and 2 more on graduation day (failed a push-ups retest) so we finished with 41. 9 of the 13 West Pointers who made it through Ranger on 1 recycle or less were RTAC grads; (9/17 vs. 4/14—it pays off to pass the course). Here's the daily schedule for RTAC:

Day 0: Show up between 8 AM and noon and inprocess. Park your car in the parking lot at Camp Butler. You will do a packing list layout immediately after showing up, it's not a drop event but treat it as such. The RIs will confiscate contraband, be prepared for all your stuff to get disorganized. Make sure you have all of your Ranger paperwork with more copies at home for when you actually report to the school: RTAC will vet your paperwork, especially your medical records. West Point screwed ours up because it wasn't stamped by an MD: make sure you do not make the same mistake or you will have to redo everything during training at RTAC or on pass after RTAC ends.

You will be issued OCIE and spend many hours hanging out in the shade under the CTA. Use this time to adjust your equipment, do tie-downs, and memorize the Ranger Creed. You will say the Ranger Creed before every meal and get smoked every time you screw it up. Don't screw it up. You will do in-briefs in the evening after dinner and receive your RPA brief right before you go to bed around 2300. You will have fireguard on the CTA at night. The cadre will yell at you a little bit but you will not be smoked so you are fresh for the PT test tomorrow. You will learn to hate RIs.

Day 1. Wake up at 0230 and load the buses for the modified RPA: push-ups, sit-ups, 2.5-mile run in 20 minutes, and chin-ups. Everything is graded super strictly. You will get the piss smoked out of you immediately after the PT test before you load the buses. You will be smoked far more at RTAC than in Ranger School.

Get back to Camp Butler, change into ACUs, eat breakfast, get issued an MRE, then land nav training. You will do several pace counting courses during the day and into the evening. Be very precise with your pace count and make sure you get it right. Land nav instruction at RTAC is much better than at West Point. Go to bed around 2300-2400.

Day 2. Wake up at 0300 for the Kirby Mile, a one-mile formation run in ACUs, boots, FLC, and weapon. Time standard is ten minutes. The cadre will have a pace man running well under time at the front, stay with him and you will be fine. People fall out of the group but almost no one fails.

Immediately after Kirby ends you will form up in front of the pull-up bars and do a mock-up of the Malvesti O-course. Stay in the front as you will get smoked less, the whole thing is a suckfest but you will have time afterwards to shower.

You will spend the rest of the morning doing Land Nav pretest #1 on the Yankee course on Fort Benning: 2 points in 2 hours. Use this as an opportunity to practice using attack points: you cannot rely on terrain association on Benning, so you will have to use marked trails, accurate pace counts, and azimuths to get to your points. I found ½ points.

In the afternoon, they teach you the Recon 20-board, take notes and pay attention to the steps since you will follow them exactly over the next hundred or so days.

Day 3. Wake up at 0230 for the Land Nav Pretest #2: 4/5 points in 4 hours. Same course as Pretest #1. I found 4 points and got back in 3 hours. Spend the afternoon learning the Ambush 20-board, bed down early for the Land Nav Test the next day.

Day 4. Land Nav Test. Wake up at 0200. You will use the Echo Course next to Red Diamond Road, standard is 4/5 points in 5 hours. Legend has it the Echo Course is harder than the Star Course at Selection but this is ridiculous: the course is not difficult but the training area is large (~20 km square, about three times as large as the Buckner course) and you will have to run to pass. Listen carefully during the evening brief for off-limits areas and the usage restrictions on the railroad tracks: the RIs hide in the woods and snipe trainees for breaking the rules (I saw it happen several times). The test is a smoker. I failed Land Nav the first time with 2 points and contemplated sandbagging the next day to save myself for Ranger but didn't, which turned out to be a good decision. Only 29 people passed land nav on the first test; 89 people showed up the next day for the retest.

You will spend the afternoon doing more 20 boards and practical exercises (PEs). If you passed the first time, you will go to bed early and wake up late the next day. If you failed, you will receive a retraining brief before bedding down for two hours to wait for the next morning.

Day 5. Land Nav Retest. Wake up at 0130 if you failed, wake up at 0600 if you passed land nav the previous day. Some of my Guard contacts tell me they make everyone test on both days as of Class 04-18, with only one test counting for a grade. Retesters will eat an MRE then go out to take the test. I passed the retest with 4 points in about 4 hours 10 minutes. Conservatively I moved 12 clicks total and ran about 4 clicks to pass the retest. The retest pass rate is not high and you are wrecked for the rest of RTAC. I was still recovering from failing the land nav test during my Darby recycle.

Come back and get several hours of down time while they do boards for the land nav failures. We dropped 37 of 118 on land nav and retained 24 people who failed land nav both times. Our land nav pass rate was only 57 out of 118, with 28 out of 89 passing the retest.

The afternoon will be spent conducting classes and PEs. Retesters are absolutely smoked. Next big drop event is the RPA on Day 7.

Day 6. A light day, they will not smoke you because of the RPA the next day. Today is mostly spent on PEs and classes.

Day 7. RPA and CWSA. You will wake up at 0230 to take the RPA, this time it is the full test with a 5-mile run. My class got destroyed on push-ups. Immediately after the RPA you will load the buses, head to Bryant Wells Pool, and take a geeky modified version of the CWSA. You will be lined up nut-to-butt on the pool deck and get smoked but it is pretty much a joke (try doing mountain climbers on a slippery surface with your face in someone else's pants while he is trying not to fall in the water—pretty comical). Our class went from 81 to 45 with 8 people failing the CWSA and 26 people failing the RPA for the second time (if you passed the first time but failed the second time you are retained in the course).

Spend the afternoon practicing RTTs. Pay attention, this is the most and the best practice you will get before RAP Week.

Day 8. You will do the 9-mile ruck in the morning at 0145, test RTTs in the morning and mid-afternoon, then break down into 13-15 man squads for the FTX. The 9-miler is absolutely hellish. Time standard is 2:15; I finished near the back in 2:13, fastest time was 1:57 with the average at about 2:09. Make sure your ruck is properly adjusted or it will hurt you. Drink lots of water and use the dunk tanks on the course—the dunk tanks saved me from heat catting.

Test RTTs. This is not a drop event but treat it like it is.

Break down into your FTX squads, do tie-downs, and practice bay planning, you will bed down in the planning bays relatively early. Learn the tie-downs as they will come in handy later. They will call out the next day's leadership (Squad Leader, Alpha Team Leader, Bravo Team Leader) and special duty positions (RTO and Machine Gunner).

Days 9-11. FTX. Wake up at 0500, do the packing list and SI layout for the RI, conduct TLPs. The FTX at RTAC is shorter than the Darby FTX, movements are shorter, and the missions are easier, but it is still fantastic training for Ranger School. Take it seriously and get the RIs to tell you if you are a Go or No Go when you are in leadership. Leadership will rotate until everyone has had a look. At the end of each mission, you will be trucked back to your planning bays to do the orders process all over again. You will conduct peers and the DOGEX after Day 3, so make sure you have money.

Day 12. Weapons cleaning and equipment turn-in all day. I cleaned weapons from 0200 on Day 12 until 2300. Make sure you have gum and plenty of good cheer. They will claim that your cycle is the 'one class per year' where they have to inventory their arms room for turn-in but that is horseshit, RTAC uses you as slave labor to clean their weapons for them around the clock at the end of every class. Try to get your class leadership to work out a work/sleep rotation with the RIs, my class fucked up and never did so we just stayed awake for this whole period.

Day 13. Clean the barracks and "graduate" any time between 1100 and 1500. My class graduated 41 out of 129 but dropped 2 people about an hour before we got our paperwork back—these kids got retained despite failing push-ups twice but they had to pass a third push-ups test which they failed. You will have a short pass before Ranger; it is Thursday and you will class up on Sunday. Use the intervening time to restock on the packing list, do laundry, and get some rack time. You will show up early to Ranger to inprocess with RTAC. Passing RTAC looks good on your record in case you have to fight for a Ranger slot later; don't show up to the school and deliberately fail it like some of my buddies did. Of the 17 West Pointers who passed RTAC, 9 made it through Ranger on 1 recycle or less and all except 3 wound up getting their tabs.

III. WHAT TO BRING

This is a breakdown of the Ranger School Packing list. When you in-process at 2-11 IBOLC they will take you to CIF to draw TA-50. When you report to Ranger School (always a Sunday) you and all the other IBOLC graduates, will carry in their TA-50 and two duffel bags. Every other Ranger student will just have their two duffel bags and will be issued TA-50 the day before the ruck march, which is the final event of RAP week.

During the first full day of RAP week (a Monday afternoon) you will do a packing list layout under the covered training area (CTA) with your company cadre. This is an event in itself

because the Ranger Instructors (RIs) are going to smoke you and hand out spot reports for missing gear. Three minor minus spot reports is equivalent to one major minus and three major minus spots is grounds for going to a board review and recycling the phase. If I remember correctly I believe you can only receive up to one major minus during the packing list layout. This is probably because the RIs don't want students coming out of RAP week already having racked up enough spots to recycle the phase. Regardless if you happen to receive more than three deficiencies during the layout you are guaranteed to get the attention of the RIs in a bad way. I was in Alpha company and we didn't get smoked too bad, but I remember that bravo company took a lot of pride in smoking their ranger students with sprints and lunges. Coincidentally, a few more RS's failed the RPA 5-mile than in other companies.

The packing list layout is very company dependent. Some companies are notorious for trying to smoke the shit out of Ranger students while others get it done quickly, I really think it depends on who the head RI is for that day. Either way just be prepared to be smoked a bunch. I'm not going to tell you not to do all of the exercises to standard because if you're caught shitbagging they're going to pounce on you, it's like sharks and blood in water. If you try to do all of the exercises to standard you're going to reach muscle failure but it will be clear that you care and you can at least be proud that you didn't give up. Everyone is going to tell you to save your energy during RAP week for the ruck march, which I think is smart, but it's not like me to hold anything back and you should be able to 12 miles.

When it comes to the actual layout I reiterate that what passes and what doesn't is very company dependent (even RI dependent): what may fly in one company doesn't fly in another and what one RI may say is good might get you a minor minus with someone else. For example when I first went through RAP week I brought a pair of Rocky C4T boots which were unauthorized according to AR 670-1. A bunch of RIs saw the boots and didn't say anything but one RI came up to me and told me that if he ever saw me wearing unauthorized boots he would get me dropped from the course. I mean again there were a bunch of RIs and other dudes wearing unauthorized Nikes. Things like this will happen but part of the reason I put this together is so that you all can avoid getting minor minuses for having unauthorized stuff while still having the best equipment. Some companies let them bring in Body Glide, and others different. At one point, the RI's were asking each other if "x item" was authorized or not. If it's not authorized, they will just take it and throw it away. Don't worry about getting in trouble for bringing something that you're not sure about—just be honest about everything you have and they will let you know.

The other thing I hope this list will do is help you save some money. I was very meticulous with my packing list, what I bought and where I bought it. Most of my peers spent two or three times what I spent on my packing list but I honestly feel like their gear was as good as mine or maybe marginally better. There's basically three places to get your gear: military clothing at the Post Exchange, Commandos on Victory Drive, and Ranger Joes on Victory Drive. I suggest purchasing most of your stuff from either the PX or Commandos. Ranger Joes just doesn't seem to carry all the stuff that Commandos has and anything at Ranger Joes will be more expensive than at the PX. Commandos will carry pretty much everything on your packing list but it will definitely be cheaper to buy your more expensive stuff from the PX because they don't charge sales tax. Sales tax is 8% off-post and can really add up if you buy the majority of your packing list from Commandos. When you walk into Commandos you will see that they advertise for a "Ranger Bundle" which apparently has the entire packing list in two duffel bags. There really is no reason why you should buy the bundle; you will ultimately save money and get all

the brands you want from buying things individually. The bundle is really for guys that get orders for Ranger School on short notice and need the packing list quickly. **Also save all your military clothing receipts, they're tax deductible and can be written off as a work-related expense.** I kept a binder with all my receipts to make it easy to track how much I spent on work for tax season. Commandos does have a surplus store that is great for getting discounted and used uniforms and gear. The surplus store is not the same as the main store; the surplus store is located on the opposite side of the strip mall from the main store. You're guaranteed to get uniform items cheaper from them than you will from anywhere else and they'll be in pretty good condition.

The rest of this is a guide to the packing list. I'm going to suggest certain brands and quantities. As far as brands go you probably know best what works for you so get whatever you're used to, the ones I list are what worked best for me. When I suggest getting a higher quantity of an item than what is listed on the packing list I would go with it. You're able to bring more than what is listed on the Ranger School packing list, you just can't have less. Lastly, for all non-military related gear such as toiletries, good ol' Amazon will save you a TON of money—things like baby wipes, toothpaste, etc.

Ranger School Packing List

2/2/2015

RANGER TRAINING BRIGADE	
PACKING LIST EFFECTIVE FOR CLASSES STARTING AFTER:	30-Jan-15
*Examples posted on this packing list are meant to represent items that are similar to the required items.	
*Marines (Woodland MARPAT MCCUU), Navy & Air Force students will bring their own service equivalent uniforms or US Army Combat Uniforms (ACUs) where applicable	
*All mandatory & optional items must fit into 2 duffle bags	
ALL IOBLC AND ABOLC STUDENTS MUST BRING ALL TA-50 THEY WERE ISSUED AT THE FORT BENNING/KELLY HILL CIF SHOWN ON THE ATTACHED MENU. (CLICK FOR MENU)	
**Students must arrive with all MANDATORY items (highlighted).	
CLICK ON ITEM TO SEE EXAMPLE	

This is the most updated packing list but it'll probably be different by the time you report—make sure you find the most up-to-date packing list!. Again you can bring extras of any of the items, but anything that's not TA-50 has to fit in your two duffel bags. Make sure the bags you bring are flight bags and have the fastener at the top, not the zipper and clips that are issued now.

Students must bring 5 copies of their orders, 2 copies of the following documents: DD-93/SGLI, ERB/ORB, signed Commanders letter, signed packing list and ABN Certificate if Applicable		
Cap, ACU with cat eyes sewn on and name tape, (velcro or sewn on; Cover), Marine (with cat eyes sewn on and name-tape sewn on back) note #1	2 ea	CIF LIN: P12029
ID Card	1 ea	
Trousers, ACU	6 ea	CIF LIN: T85614
Coat, ACU	6 ea	CIF LIN: C10345
Boots, Hot Weather Desert (All Boots IAW AR 670-1 WITH NO BUCKLES)	2 ea	
Boots, Cold Weather (All Boots IAW AR 670-1 WITH NO BUCKLES)	1 ea	min. 200g thinsulate, max.400g
Shoes, Running	1 pr	
PT Uniform: Jacket, pants, Long Sleeve Shirt, Short Sleeve Shirt, and shorts	1 ea	
Name-Tape, Cloth (sew on, no velcro)	4 ea	
Drawers, Cold Weather; Military issue Poly-Pro or Gen III, level-1-bottoms.	2 ea	
Drawers, Cold Weather; Military issue Poly-Pro or Gen III, level-2-bottoms.	2 ea	Gen-3-Level-2 CIF LIN:
Undershirt, Cold Weather; Military issue Poly-Pro or Gen III level-1-tops	2 ea	
Undershirt, Cold Weather; Military issue Poly-Pro or Gen III level-2-tops	2 ea	Gen-3-level-2 CIF LIN: S08535
Eyeglasses (military issue, if required) each with retainer bands	2 pr MIN	
ID Tags with Breakaway Chain with Medical Alert Tags or Bracelet (if required)	2 Sets	
Civilian clothes consisting of: 1 Collar Shirt, 1 pr of Pants, 1 Jacket	1 ea	
Neck Gator Brown / Tan <u>NO BLACK</u>	1 ea	CIF LIN: G39744

Protect all the documents you bring by putting them in a clear plastic folder. You will really only need these for the first day. If you don't have your ABN certificate then you won't be able to jump. Obviously don't bring the original copy of any of these documents.

Two ACU caps will do. Most of the time (in the summer) we never even wore them on patrol. Take your PCs to any of the tailors around Fort Benning and they'll know exactly what to do. Protect your ID card by placing it in a waterproof bag. I suggest using the hot beverage bags that come in the MREs. When it comes to waterproofing anything in a Ziploc bag it pays to reinforce it with duct tape. This will prevent it from getting punctured or ripped and letting water in. You'll be sweating and getting wet every day so your CAC will get destroyed if it's not waterproofed. When it comes to the OCP trousers and blouses the pair you wear when you report to Ranger School counts toward the six you need. So basically you need to be wearing one and have at least five pairs in your duffel bags. 6 is plenty—you will "ruin" a pair during the Combat Water Survival Assessment (CWSA) and Malvesti and then you should use that same pair during the Darby Queen. You will be able to wash the uniforms in the barracks' washers in dryers during RAP week. Thrift stores on posts usually sell used OCP's for cheap and most guys get their nametapes sewed on their blouses and trousers so that they don't mixed up in the wash. Another good strategy is to number your uniforms on the tag with a sharpie. Rank does not get sewn on the patrol caps or blouses.

You should show up to Ranger School (in the summer) with three pairs of hot weather boots (wearing one and have two in your duffels). If not, you will want to have a friend or family member prepare a care package with a broken-in pair of boots to send you which will be a huge morale boost at the end of Mountains to bring to Florida. Along with your uniforms your boots will constantly get wet. The best way to dry out your boots is to wear them dry. Let them air dry for a while, change out the insoles, put on new socks, and wear them on patrol. The heat from your feet will dry out the boots quicker than just relying on the sun to dry them out. When it comes to the cold weather boots I saw some guys get away with bringing cold weather inserts for their hot weather boots. I wouldn't suggest doing this though, I would just go buy the 200mg thinsulate Garmonts because they're comfortable and basically work as another hot weather boot. If you buy them from Commandos you can go return them when you're done with Ranger School if you didn't get them dirty, they know you just need them for the packing list layout.

For the PT uniform I would bring two shirts and two shorts. At night during RAP week you'll have to pull fireguard and if you have clean PTs then you can wear them outside when you guard the gear under the CTA.

Buy your nametapes online. I would get 22 nametapes (4 for packing list, 2 for your patrol caps, 6 for ACU blouse, 6 for ACU pants, and 4 for ruck, camelback, assault pack, and FLC) plus 6 US Army tapes for ACU blouses.

You'll get at least one set of polypro from CIF. The other ones you get just buy used or get the cheap Rothco brand. You probably won't ever need two pairs anyway (if you're going in the summer).

Don't go crazy with the civilian clothes. Just bring a bland button up shirt, jeans, and a windbreaker jacket. When you get your eight-hour pass after Darby these are the clothes you'll change into and leave in. CIF will issue you a neck gator. I never used it.

Duffel Bag (Army issue only) No oversized Duffel Bags and no zippers. One additional Duffel Bag with lock for unauthorized item if coming from an overseas unit or TDY enroute.	2 ea/3ea	CIF LIN: B14729
Gloves, Leather, Blk with Inserts, Gloves, Cold, Foliage Green.	1 Pair	CIF LIN: G63382 CIF LIN: J62858
Socks, white (calf or above ankle only)	2 Pair	
Magazine, M4	7 ea	
Adapter, Firing, (M4 yellow) NOT M16 RED	1 ea	IO&E UNITS

Make sure you bring the duffel bags that open along the long side, NOT the ones that open from the top. This way when you have to dump and pack quickly, you will be good to go!

Gloves will be issued from CIF.

Ranger Platoon will give you the seven magazines you'll need. If not, Commando's surplus. You will put all of your mags into the platoon's stack any when loading rounds, so don't expect to get the same mags back.

I think you have to go buy the firing adapter, it's not something that gets issued to you.

Ranger School Packing List

2/2/2015

Belt, tan non-elastic (Rigger style)	2 ea	CIF LIN: B90343
T-Shirts, S/S; ACU tan or ACU green ; cotton loose fitting (t-shirt Service Specific)	8 ea	
Socks, cushion sole wool blend (Military Black, Tan or Green - non waterproof)	15 pr	
Watch cap; green micro fleece	2 ea	
Weapons Cleaning Kit, small arms with the following tiems: 1 cleaning rod handle, 4 cleaning rods, 1 eyelet, 1 bore brush, 1 chamber brush, 1 two ended tooth brush, 1 pack of chamber patches, 1 small bottle of CLP)		
Whistle, OD (military issue) NSN 8465-00-254-8803	1 ea	
Eye Protection APEL (Clear Lens only)	2 pr	
Belt, reflective (High Vis. Yellow)	1 ea	
Combination Locks (key locks unauthorized)1 additional for unauthorized bags if from overseas unit or TDY enroute	5 ea/1ea	
Compass, Lensatic (military issue)	1 ea	FSC LIN: E66317
Ear Plugs with Case	1 ea	
Extra Bootlaces	2 pr	
Camelback/MOLLE hydration system 70-100oz. Carrier will not have additional pockets/ CIF LIN: DA651E and DA652Q	1 ea	
Extra bite Valve and Blatter for hydration system	1 ea	
Flashlight, AA Style, with red lens	1 ea	
Batteries, AA and/or AAA cell (For Flashlights)	8 pk	
Headlamp	1 ea	
Luminous tape 1"X6" strip	1ea	
Mouth Piece (Athletic)	1 ea	
Nylon Cord (550 type)	100 ft	
Pens	10 ea	
Pencils	10 ea	
Notebook, pocket size	3 ea	
Protractor	2 ea	

Rigger style doesn't mean anything, just buy two regular belts or whatever works for you. Bring about 10 tan t-shirts. Make sure they don't have any graphics or print on them, but you can have your name stenciled with sharpie.

Having enough socks is obviously important so bringing more than 15 is probably smart. Most of the guys I know went out and bought only Fox River or Darn Toughs. I liked them a lot better but it depnds on how much you're willing to spend. Once your feet are submerged your socks are going to get wet. Find some socks that fit well and don't rub if they get wet. I suggest getting mostly plain OD green socks and buying a few pairs of the nicer socks. I found that Darn Tough are the best.

The new packing list calls for the black micro fleece beanies, I believe. Definitely bring at least two because it's always good to have an extra one on patrol for your boy that forgets his and the RIs won't let anyone wear them unless everyone has it.

The basic weapons cleaning kit that you buy will come with everything you need for the inspection expect CLP. The weapons cleaning kit is decent for cleaning your weapon when you can actually break the thing down, but for quick cleaning in the field I would have a small bottle of CLP, barber brush, copper wire brush, and some torn-up ACU tees for cleaning rags. In Mountains and in Flordia, we were all desperate for more CLP and keeping a small bottle in your TAPS will be a LIFESAVER for your squad. Because, when you're weapons squad leader, your "Go" will depend on how ell the weapons fire, and they WILL be very dirty/ malfunction if you don't clean them in the patrol base in the morning. Keep these in a small Ziploc bag inside your side pouch so you can get to it quickly when doing priorities of work in the patrol base. Again, I

HIGHLY recommend having dental picks, a barber bush, a star chamber cleaner, and several copper wire brushes. You'll use them for the duration of your career, anyway.

The color of the whistle probably doesn't matter but I bet there's an RI out there that cares.

Eye pro goes pretty quick during patrols. I would bring one good pair and three cheap APEX ones. During patrol your eye pro will fog up so at night under NVGS or when you stop and pull security you'll probably take it off. Once you take it off there's a good chance you'll forget about them or just straight lose them.

Get a fabric PT belt, it stretches better around your ruck sack.

Basic three-number combination locks work because you can set the combo yourself. Don't bring key locks or be the dude that keeps his combo on the back of his lock.

Ranger Platoon will issue you a compass, but buy an extra one to have in case you lose or break it. Make sure the compass you buy has tritium and lights up in the dark.

When you in-process into 2-11 you'll go get your hearing checked and they'll give you some ear plugs.

The laces on your boots could break, so extra laces are handy but you won't need more than two.

CIF will issue you a camelback carrier and bladder. You carry your camelback with you everywhere and it'll be in your ruck sack during patrol. When you drop your ruck sack a lot of dudes' camelback bladders pop. Make sure the bite valve you have has a cover on it so that it doesn't get dirt all over it when you put your ruck on the ground.

The flashlight on the mandatory packing list is like a mini L-shaped light that takes AA batteries, but you'll probably only use your headlamp on patrol.

For extra batteries bring whatever type your headlamp takes, bring more than eight. Also bring a few AA batteries in case your NVGs die mid-patrol.

The headlamp is one of those critical pieces of equipment. If you don't one for some reason everything will be exponentially harder as the patrol goes on. **Two is one and one is none** so get three-four headlamps. Princeton Tec ones work fine but you don't need anything super powerful or fancy. Whatever you get make sure it has a power lock or doesn't turn on easily because you don't want it to turn on in your pocket during a recon or something.

Buy a small roll of the luminous tape. There are different kinds that you can get, one is thick and comes in a fat roll and the other comes in thin roll. Either roll will count as your luminous strip.

The only reason it's on the packing list is so that you can cut it up to make cat eyes for your ruck sack and assault pack, but you'll already show up with these sewn on so it won't matter.

You'll only need your mouthpiece one time for combatives. RIs might check to make sure it's actually fitted to you.

Show up with more than 100 feet of 550 cord, it goes surprisingly fast with all the tie-downs you'll do.

Bring pens that you can put a cap so they don't explode all over your uniform. Rite in the Rain pens really work well but it's probably not worth your money to get more than one and don't use it during bay planning because you're bound to lose it somehow. Don't bring anything other than mechanical pencils. During the layout there's a very small chance that the RIs will actually go around and count your pens and pencils but don't chance it.

The notebooks you get don't have to be a particular size. A few medium-sized Rite in the Rain notebooks will last you and are big enough for making sketches on recons. Get the spiraled kind because you're constantly going to be ripping pages out of your notebook.

Buy at least three protractors and take some time to put a piece of 550 gut in it for quickly acquiring an azimuth on your map. Another thing I would do is put some clear tape over the edges of your protractor so that the numbers don't rub off and fade when it gets wet.

Razor, shaving (non electric)	1 ea	
Razor Blades	12 ea	
Sewing Kit	1 ea	
Shaving Cream	1 can	
Shower Shoes (Any Color)	1 pr	
Soap	2 bars	
Soap Dish	1 ea	
Toothbrush	1 ea	
Toothpaste (large tubes)	2 ea	
Towels, large (green or brown)	2 ea	
Towels (wash cloth) (green or brown)	2 ea	
Laundry Soap	as needed	
Wristwatch (non GPS or Internet capable)	1 ea	
Band, Helmet, Camouflage	1 ea	
Alcohol Marker, permanent (any color)	1 ea	
Camouflage Stick, light green and loam (or like item)	3 ea	NSN 6850-00-161-6204

Razors can be disposable or a handle with at least 12 heads. I would bring more than 12 but it depends on how thick your facial hair gets. Don't bring an electric razor.

A cheap sewing kit will do but buy a thimble, it will make it easier to sew nametapes on for the other students that get issued TA-50 during RAP week. Bring travel-sized cans of shaving cream.

A large can is unnecessary weight to carry in your ruck sack.

Two bars of soap will last you the phase.

Buy a soap dish that comes with a toothbrush case.

I suggest purchasing two travel-sized toothbrushes. Usually travel toothbrushes come with small case.

The packing list specifies two large tubes. Again I suggest purchasing small travel-sized tubes for your hygiene kit to reduce unneeded weight and conserve space in your ruck sack.

Don't bring cotton towels, buy microfiber. Microfiber towels will dry significantly faster. Most guys bought large or extra-large McNett microfiber towels but there are cheaper ones online.

Washcloths can be cotton, you probably won't use them.

You will have the opportunity during RAP week to wash your dirty laundry so bring soap. A lot of guys buy the Tide pods but they'll pop if they're not in the plastic case. Buy individual packs of laundry detergent.

Bring more than one watch in case the wristband breaks.

The helmet band is on the packing list for students that will be issued TA-50 during RAP week. Since you will draw TA-50 from CIF before Ranger School you should already have your ACH assembled with the ACU cover and helmet band. I brought an extra helmet band just for the layout.

You will use a permanent marker regularly for marking your gear and writing. You don't need a Magnum-sized Sharpie, a regular one works best.

Every day before you start your patrol you will camo up any skin that isn't covered by your uniform. Camo paint kits that come with multiple colors work significantly better than camo sticks. Buy a kit with a mirror so you can apply the camo correctly.

The rest of the items on the packing list are considered optional but a majority of the items are critical for success at Ranger School.

Ranger School Packing List

2/2/2015

The following optional items and quantities are authorized in the Ranger Course:			
Alcohol Markers (Blk/Blue/Red/Grm)	2 ea		
Alcohol Eraser	1 ea		
Black Tape, friction or electrical	2 rolls		
Finger/toe nail clippers	1 ea		
Foot Powder, (Anti-fungal, not containing menthol)	2 ea		
Large Trash Bags	1 box		
Lip Balm	1 ea		
Pocket Knife (folding blade 4" or less)	1 ea		
Small Mirror	1 ea		
Sunscreen	2 ea		
Waterproof Bags (zip lock, small)	25 ea		
Baby Wipes: Alcohol free and without additives	1 box		
Drawers Cotton, Underwear (white, brown or green)	6 pair		
Electric Hair Trimmer	1 set		
Gloves, Cold Weather, Civilian (black or subdued)	1 Pair		highly recommended
Gloves, Nomex or Tactical Style (Logo must be subdued or blacked in, (No Neoprene Type Gloves)	1 pair		highly recommended
Hand Sanitizer with or without alcohol is permitted	1 ea		
Index Cards	2 packs		
Insect Repellant (non aerosol)	1 ea		
Insoles, Boots (Any Type)	2 ea		
Lamination Paper	1 roll max		
Laundry Bag (mesh or green)	1 ea		
Leathermans Type Tool	1 ea		
Letter Writing Material	as needed		
Lighter	1 ea		

You must buy permanent map markers. If you buy non-permanent markers all of your graphics will smear. I suggest purchasing three packs of markers because you will inevitably lose them or a member of your squad will take them. Mark them with a small piece of luminous tape with your name.

The STAEDTLER 4-pack of markers does not come with an alcohol eraser pen. While you can use hand sanitizer to erase markings it is much easier to use the white eraser pen.

I used electrical tape for everything, you should have at least two rolls.

Bring finger/toe nail clippers if you want.

You will need foot powder. Tinactin sells bottles with a nozzle that controls the flow of the powder so you don't dump it all out at one time. Most of the powders you find will not contain menthol but this is something the RIs will check during the layout.

Buy large black **contractor** trash bags. They will help you waterproof your gear and you can even sleep in them instead of pulling your sleep system out if you don't have a lot of time to rest. Have at least ten.

I never really used lip balm but I know some guys that needed it to prevent their lips from cracking.

Do not bring a nice pocket knife. For some reason dudes bring Benchmade knives out to the field and they lose them because they don't tie them down.

A small mirror helps for shaving and checking your camo but the mirror in the camo kit works well.

You don't need to bring sunscreen, the medics or RIs will provide you with sunscreen and if they don't then you'll probably just sweat it off anyway.

You must have Ziploc bags for waterproofing your gear. Buy two packs of large bags with the snap fasteners because the slides can break or fall off. Also buy a bag of medium-sized bags for

waterproofing smaller items like your Ranger Handbook. Reinforce any waterproof bags that are carrying important items with duct tape to keep the bag from getting punctured.

For baby wipes I would buy five or six travel packages of Huggies wipes. You won't need a large package on patrol and it will just take up space in your hygiene kit.

My favorite pair of underwear was called Cool Max and I bought it at Ranger Joes. It was like a cloths version of spandex and extended down to a few inches above my knee so I had no issues with chafing. You really only need 2-3 good pairs and you will want to wear underwear during Ranger School because of chafing. During RAP week you will be wet and moving a lot so everybody chafes. I actually gave away underwear to guys that didn't bring them and were chaffing really bad. The RIs will check during the layout to make sure you bring a military color (e.g. black, tan, white, or brown). Do not bring compression shorts, the RIs will confiscate them because they say it traps heat and puts you at risk of becoming a heat casualty. I know several guys that wore Ranger panties during Ranger School but I don't know how they got them through the layout.

It's not necessary to bring an electric trimmer. A few guys will have them and it will be convenient for you to shave your head the night before your 8-hour pass so you don't have to worry about it the next day.

I didn't bring cold weather gloves but I did buy a few pairs of tactical gloves. Have more than one pair because on patrol you'll most likely take them off and you might lose them.

Bring some hand sanitizer for sterilizing maps during the OPOD process. Also, the medics will provide you with a small bottle.

Index cards get used up pretty quick during the planning phase. Buy two packs of regular 3 x 5 cards and a pack of the Rite in the Rain cards.

I brought insect repellent but never really used it. You'll either get used to the bugs or they'll stay away from you because you smell so bad.

I suggest bringing several pairs of insoles. Changing insoles and wearing your wet boots is the fastest way to dry them. Green Superfeet is hands down the best as it molds to your feet—many people I know liked them at Ranger school.

Stores usually sell lamination paper by the roll but you won't need the entire roll so just cut off a few feet. You will use lamination paper on your Ranger Handbook and to make patrol products (for example, if you put illum tape on an index card and write the shell of a GOTWA and then laminate the shell, you can fill in GOTWA's and hand them out to your team leaders in a hurry and at night. Same thing goes for the patrol base triangle to fill in your security, claymore emplacements, fires, black and gold plans, etc.)

Have a green barracks bag for your laundry.

A multi-tool is another piece of equipment you must have. It doesn't need to be fancy, it just has to get the job done. Take a long piece of 550 cord and tie a bowline to your multi-tool, a clove hitch secured by electrical tape to your lighter and tie the end to your belt loop. This will keep you from losing your multi-tool and lighter or having another dude borrow it and misplace it when you do all of your tie-downs.

A few envelopes and stamps are all you for letter-writing material. Don't forget to bring a piece of paper with your family or friends' contact information so you have a number to call to set up transportation for your 8-hour pass.

Buy a 4-pack of lighters, you'll either use or lose them. You 100% want the cheap torch lighters sold on the desk at the Commando's surplus store.

Liner, Field Jacket	1 ea	
Map Case	1 ea	
Moleskin	as needed	
Pace Cord	1 ea	
Packs of Non-Caffiene chewing gum	as needed	
Q-Tips	1 box	
Skin Care Lotion: (6 - 8 FL.OZ.) Free of alcohol, fragrance, and petroleum	1 ea	
Status Card NOTE: Status Cards Must be BLANK	1 ea	
Tactical Handbook, Unit Leader, Small (THULS)	1 ea	
Tape, 100 MPH	2 rolls	
Terrain Model Kit (small)	1 ea	
Waterproof Matches	2 boxes	
Whetstone	1 ea	
Wrist Compass	1 ea	
Potomac Field Gear approved items		
*Items must be sealed in their original package.		

I brought the green smoker's jacket on patrol and liked it much better than the polypro. The field jacket liner will keep you warm even if it gets wet.

Bring a good, thick map case for land navigation. Tie this down to you so you aren't one of those dudes that gets dropped for losing his map.

Bring Moleskin.

A pace cord is a cheap and simple tool to have.

During patrols you'll get two MREs per day but you usually eat them only a few hours apart.

Chewing gum will help keep your mind off the hunger you'll experience. Typically guys will chew about a pack of gum per day so bring about 20 packs. I would suggest you bring a variety of flavors because you'll get sick of mint pretty quick.

Q-tips are useful for cleaning your weapon but you won't need a large pack.

Lotion is much more useful during the winter months when your fingers and hands crack.

O'Keeffe's Working Hands cream is pretty popular and I recommend it—your hands will crack in the field from thorns and constantly holding your weapon.

You don't need to buy a status card from Commandos—the Darby recycles will make good ones.

Do not buy a tactical handbook, it's not worth the money and most RIs won't let you have it.

Bring olive drab duct tape so that you can write on it.

Most guys either make their own terrain models or buy them from Commandos. Most of the things that dudes bring in their terrain models kits they never use. All you really need are golf tees, yarn, and laminated index cards.

You won't need waterproof matches or a whetstone.

Suunto makes a wrist compass that is an extremely convenient tool for quickly acquiring and following a general azimuth. I often used my wrist compass more than my military lensatic compass.

Ranger School Packing List

2/2/2015

Administration Foot Notes:

- 1) Ranger eyes will be 1/2"x1" in size, sewn flush with name tape 1" apart.
- 2) Students must bring 1/2 the amount of velcro name tapes and US Army tapes in relation to the number of ACU's brought. Example: If a student brings 6 x sets of ACU's, he must have 3 x complete sets of velcro ACU name tapes and US Army tapes. Rank will not be worn while in Ranger School.
- 3) T-Shirts must be loose fitting cotton (NO TIGHT FITTING), UnderArmour or other athletic type Tshirts are not authorized
- 4) ALL INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ARE AUTHORIZED TO BRING THEIR OWN MILITARY ISSUED EQUIVALENT EQUIPMENT All other uniforms and equipment are issued by the Ranger Training Companies. It is not necessary for the student to purchase equipment other than the items stated above

ANY ITEM NOT LISTED ON THIS LIST IS UNAUTHORIZED!!! NO TA-50 UNLESS YOU ARE COMING FROM IBOLC OR ABOLC IS AUTHORIZED!!!!

THE RANGER TRAINING BRIGADE IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR STORAGE OF ANY UNAUTHORIZED ITEMS. THE ONLY EXCEPTIONS WILL BE FOR STUDENTS COMING FROM OVERSEAS ASSIGNMENTS OR TDY ENROUTE

These items will be confiscated and placed in hold baggage during initial layout. Students will sign a form stating that the Ranger Training Brigade is not responsible for any loss or damage to personnel items stored while students are attending the course. If items are found during subsequent inspections, that item will be confiscated and student will be released from course. (You must bring one extra duffle bag and lock to store unauthorized items)

The tailor at Commandos will sew the cat eyes on correctly, they do it all the time. I remember bringing Velcro ACU nametapes but I can't recall if they were checked during the layout. Keep in mind that anything you bring that isn't approved is going to get you a minor minus and you'll have to throw it away, they're not going to store anything for you.

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE UNAUTHORIZED AND ARE GROUNDS FOR POTENTIAL RELEASE FROM THE COURSE AND/OR SOR:

Cellular Telephone or any electronic items

Any product with caffeine
Tobacco products of any type
Civilian Long Underwear
Contact Lenses
Filled in Operations Order, FRAGO or ANNEX Formats,
Modified Shoulder Strap Pads or Kidney Pads
Spandex type Athletic Wear/Underwear (i.e. TIGHT fitting under armour)
Vitamins and Supplements of any kind
Gortex Socks
CIVILIAN MEDICATIONS I.E. ASPIRIN, TYLENOL, VITAMINS ETC
NO PERSONAL TA 50 (Carbiners, Pouches, Bungee Cords, etc.)
CASH OVER \$100

INSPECTOR MUST BE SERGEANT OR ABOVE
INSPECTOR SHALL PRINT, SIGN, AND PROVIDE A PHONE NUMBER

INSPECTED AND PACKED BY: _____

DATE: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

PRINT OUT THE FIRST 4 PAGES OF THIS PACKING LIST AND BRING WITH YOU FOR THE LAYOUT.

Bring cash, you will use it for the dog-x at the end of the phase. You won't need more than \$40. Any of your peers can inspect and sign your packing list, but it honestly probably won't even get looked at.

Again, not a systematic listing: if you have gear that you are familiar with and which is compliant with the Ranger packing list, bring it along with you. Bring **all** the items on the Ranger packing list, including the optional items: they are on the packing list for a reason. Don't try to bring contraband to the course and pay **VERY** close attention to the fine print on the packing list. You will be dropped if you don't have a critical item. At the layout before Day 0, they will inspect everything, don't rack up a major minus right away by failing the packing list inspection.

I also recommend purchasing as much of the packing list as you can off Amazon, local distributors in your hometown, or WalMart. The packing list will cost you at least \$1500 but buying through Amazon or locally will save you hundreds. The only places you can buy the Ranger packing list in Fort Benning are Ranger Joe's and Commando's. Of the two establishments, I recommend Commando's: Ranger Joe's definitely has better equipment, but Commando's has a much broader variety and better customer service. Use these outlets only for resupply and to get your equipment sewn: they will do quick sewing jobs on request but use this only as a last resort because it jacks up the (already unreasonable) price. Ranger Joe's and Commando's also sells this thing called 'The Complete Ranger Packing List' which includes all of the optional items on the Ranger packing list; it has some items in it which I wouldn't use but is definitely cheaper than buying everything individually. Be aware that you will have to buy some items—e.g., certain military issue items such as Level II tops—on your own, since they do not come in the 'Ranger Pack.' Double-check whatever you buy to make sure it is compliant with the packing list published by 4th RTB.

Here's a more detailed list of things that I found particularly useful at Ranger:

1. **Headlamp.** You will need a headlamp with red and white lenses for SI inspections at night, land nav, fireguard in the barracks, road marches, etc. Do **not** buy the cheapest brand available unless you are familiar with its performance characteristics. Generally anything between \$50 and \$75 will purchase a reliable headlamp, anything cheaper is unlikely to be reliable. I recommend PrincetonTec's tactical headlamps, although there are other good brands on the market. Bring 2 or 3 of them because you will lose one. If you can find a really bright red lens for land nav, it will help a lot.
2. **Grimlocks.** These are little carabiner-type plastic objects; you should have been issued 4-6 of them with your FLC and Camelbak. They are not carabiners; don't try to bring personal carabiners to the course or they will be confiscated. They are useful for holding straps together and for securing pouches, non-SI, and so forth. Be careful not to tie SI down to them since RTB has special SOPs for where you are and aren't allowed to tie things down.



3. **Baby wipes.** You will need baby wipes to conduct hygiene in the field and to wipe down weapons at the end of each phase. Use them sparingly, be prepared to share when people ask you for them.
4. **Trash bags.** Trash bags are a must for waterproofing. They are also useful for securing dirty laundry in-phase. Some people spend extra to get heavy contractor bags, and while these are certainly more reliable, in my opinion normal trash bags are just as useful.
5. **Knives.** You will want a knife but the Gerber suffices. I carried a knife on my person and another in my ruck just in case throughout Ranger; I used it every day to open MREs quickly and redo tie-downs. Avoid the cheap \$4 knives from WalMart. Your knife will go dull over the course of Ranger so make sure you know how to use a whetstone to sharpen it.
6. **Lighters.** You will need 5-7 lighters over the course of Ranger. I recommend using butane lighters; they melt 550 cord like nothing, although they are expensive and not very durable. You will have to re-burn tie-downs almost every day, especially if they aren't gutted.
7. **Parachute cord.** Bring 300 feet or so. This is mostly for repair work on existing tie-downs in the field. The RIs will usually provide 550 cord at the beginning of each phase to tie down platoon equipment, but they will make you use yours if they run out. Be prepared to share and make sure it is accessible. If possible, do not gut 550 cord for tie-downs, except for NVGs—these tie-downs **must** be gutted or they will come loose.
8. **Gum.** The average Ranger student probably chews between 150 and 200 sticks of gum per phase, and this is not enough. Gum is a godsend at the Ranger course: it will keep you awake and dull hunger if you chew enough of it. Have enough gum to share with your buddies when the going gets tough. Big League Chew is the most coveted brand; it has a ton of calories (200 per pack) and is bulky but is highly prized, especially if you share it out. Starburst Juicy Fruit is another solid, cheap brand.
9. **Gerbers/Leatherman/Multitools.** Highly useful in a variety of situations. If you carry one on your person, tie it down with some sort of slip knot so it is easy to use in a pinch.
10. **Eyepro.** I recommend having at least 3 pairs of APEL-approved eyepro for the packing list inspection. Some people bring contractor glasses which they wear instead of the APEL stuff, but this is risky. If you choose to wear contractor glasses, make sure they are shaped like eyepro and completely clear with a dark or subdued frame to avoid attracting attention. If you wear contacts, suck it up and wear the BCGs with the inserts—it's not worth an SOR just to wear contacts, and anyway it is close to impossible to maintain them under the field conditions at Ranger.
11. **Map pens.** Bring at least 2 sets (just the ordinary colors: red, green, blue, and black) and an eraser pen (at least two). The eraser pen in particular is useful.

12. **Hand sanitizer.** A must. I kept a small dispenser in my FLC and applied it every four hours or so. Hand sanitizer is also useful as a map marker eraser.
13. **Ziploc bags.** You'll need a box each of small, quart, and gallon-sized Ziploc bags. The 2-gallon blue bags are too big in my opinion, but some people put them to good use. A lot of my buddies recommended against using the bags with the sliding seal, but you can fit more inside them if you are careful to leave enough room at the top so that they don't tear. MRE beverage bags are also useful as waterproof bags; they are more compact and easier to compress than Ziplocs.
14. **SAW pouch.** Mount it on your TAPS; it's a really useful container for hand sanitizer, eyepuro when you are not wearing it, earpro, knives, a lighter, and so forth. Be careful to cinch it down and put anything that might fall out in a Ziploc bag or MRE beverage bag. Packing list will say not to bring personal TA-50 but I didn't even think about it and got away with bringing it, so you probably will too, since they never inspect TA-50 anyway.



15. **Things to avoid.** And now a short list of things to avoid. The stuff on this list isn't worthless, it's just very expensive and in my opinion not necessary for your success in the course. Top of the list is socks. Don't blow like \$300 to get 15 pairs of Fox River or Darn Tough socks to wear at Ranger; just use the issued Army woolen socks: I used them throughout Ranger and my feet were just fine throughout the course, and they are like \$15 cheaper per pair. The key to having healthy feet at Ranger is foot powder and regular sock changes, your feet are going to be wet regardless of how high-tech your footgear is. Just use what the Army gives you. You will need all 15 pairs of socks in every phase, so don't buy just 5 or 6 pairs of Fox River socks and then never change them out because they are your "field" socks.

I recommend against buying a terrain model kit. If you do, buy the smallest one available. Terrain model kits are useful but not at price; you will only use a few of their components. The only OPORD materials I recommend bringing are 3x5 notecards, colored yarn (red, blue, yellow, and black), and golf tees (useful as markers or to tie off yarn on terrain models). Good terrain models are made by creatively using the stuff you are always going to have on hand anyway—dirt, grass, leaves, ferns, and so forth—so buying all that extra stuff isn't going to do you much good. Besides, you can count on another officer in your squad to have a full-scale TMK, don't be the one to spend the money.

IV. RAP WEEK

RAP Week is by far the most physically challenging part of Ranger: you will not be pushed by anything after that. The individual events of RAP Week are easy, but the cumulative effects of sleep deprivation (average around 1 hour and 30 minutes a night) and constant physical activity will break you down. Be prepared for the biggest suckfest of your life. We lost 60% of our class in RAP Week; my company started with 140 pax and was down to 41 by the time we inserted into Darby.

Day 0: Inprocessing. RTAC shows up around 9 AM, so eat a good breakfast and get plenty of sleep. You will not eat until 11 PM tonight. The RIs technically cannot drop you if you bring along a lunch but I would not eat openly if you brought snacks. You will sit around and wait a lot under the CTA. Because it is affiliated with the National Guard, RTAC grads from the Guard and West Point are technically walk-ons, so in theory you could get bumped, but don't sweat it, you will get added to the course.

Biggest event of the day is the separation into your companies. They will separate you by group and evenly divide you into A, B, and C companies: this is the last time you will be together with your buddies. Some people try to wargame it and stand into a specific place to go to the "easiest" company or to avoid the "hard" company but in my opinion this is total bullshit, you will get honeydicked regardless of where you go and the standards are not that different across 4th RTB. Just stand next to your best buddies and hope you all go to the same place.

Once you are broken down into your companies, you will really start to get a feel for the demographics of each Ranger class. The school prides itself on the fact that no one wears rank and that every Ranger stud is equal to every other, and it is true. This is the last time in your Army career that you will be a private soldier, and it is perhaps the only time in your career (unless you go to Selection or some other specialty course) that you will interact with enlisted guys as equals. Enjoy being a Joe while you can.

Additionally, for most of you, this will be your first real exposure to the enlisted world. Beware that the stereotypes about West Pointers—arrogant, officious, and overbearing—run deep among enlisted guys. You will be accepted if you carry your weight, stay relaxed with the boys, and help your buddies out whenever you can. Most of your Joe buddies will be pleasantly surprised by how relaxed and helpful you are. Even if there are other West Pointers in your squad or platoon, make it a point to buddy up with the enlisted guys and learn everything you can from them, especially privates and specialists, who tend to be more accepting of officers and are a little less closed-minded about the Army, life, and the world than NCOs.

The two largest groups of students at Ranger School by far are IBOLC grads and "Batt boys"—junior enlisted soldiers from the Ranger Regiment; they account for about 50% of the students in each Ranger class. Beware of the stereotypes about both groups before you class up, especially regarding peers. While not all Batt boys are high speed or squared away, in general a Batt boy is your best friend when it comes to practical skills like tie-downs, weapons maintenance, and other "Joe stuff", thanks to Regiment's relentless training programs like RASP, SURT (Small-Unit Ranger Tactics), and so forth. Learn all you can from them and take advantage of the opportunity to become familiar with the culture of the Ranger Regiment. Likewise, IBOLC grads tend to have the orders process down pat, and are usually reliable when it comes to producing OPORDs and FRAGOs, which will consume a significant amount of your time. There is a persistent myth among both groups that the other guys will gang up to peer each other out but I never saw this happen; the best way to interact with both Batt Boys and IBOLC lieutenants is to relax, work hard, be calm in stressful situations, and carry your weight to help

out the rest of the team. The remaining half of each Ranger class comes from different units in the Army: again, take advantage of the opportunity to learn from them about their units and find ways to use their expertise for the benefit of the whole squad, especially if you are fortunate enough to have a senior NCO (E-6 or E-7) in your squad.

After you divide into companies, you will conduct the layout. The layout is a drop event so make sure you have everything **exactly** correct on the packing list. If you have questions about packing list items, Commando's and Ranger Joe's employees are a good source of knowledge and will be able to bless off or downcheck anything you might have. My layout was very relaxed but it was also 100 degrees outside and they did drop 2 people in my company for not having winter boot inserts. 5 other people were on the docket to get dropped but were allowed to stay for various reasons.

You will do inprocessing nonsense until very late in the evening before eating hot chow around 11 PM. They will overbook the course and there are not enough beds in the barracks, so you will sleep in shifts with the excess pulling guard duty under the CTA.

Day 1: RPA, CWSA, Land Nav Refresher. You will wake up at 2 AM to take the RPA but stand around and wait in formation for several hours at Malvesti Field before anything happens. Get used to it, don't get frustrated, don't ask questions, don't talk to RIs, and don't stand out.

Don't stress out about anything. If you paid attention and can do good push-ups, the RPA will be the easiest event of RAP Week for you. I can't remember the exact numbers but about 24 of my company of 113 failed the RPA. You will be surprised by how much your company will shrink after every drop event.

CWSA is easy, it's just a thing. Mind over matter. Be ready to yell something stupid as you go down the zipline.

Land Nav refresher training consists of a BS class and a terrain walk with a bored RI.

And now a note about RIs. Beware of how much starvation and sleep deprivation will affect your perceptions of the Ranger Instructors. In my experience, some of them genuinely are arrogant dickheads who will find any reason they can to fail you, but I was never walked by any of them. The vast majority are professional, squared away NCOs from the regular Army who went to Ranger as PFCs or Specialists and are marking time at RTB because they have to. Very few of them volunteered to be RIs, and most of them hate their jobs and hate watching Ranger students ("studs") mess up the easiest things day after day after day. The job sucks and involves a fair amount of writing along with many, many hours of continuous walking as you do your patrol.

On patrols, the RIs can only see so much, so their favorite method of evaluating you is simply to ask you what you are doing. The usual phrase is "Hey SL/PL/PSG, what the fuck is going on right now?"—which doesn't mean you are in trouble or that they have a problem with what you are doing; they are deliberately rude and overbearing to stress you out. Respond cogently and intelligently in a man-voice and they will back off and let you do your thing. I talked myself into a Go in both Darby and Florida; be confident in what you are doing and keep your head and your Q and A session with the RIs will go just fine. Likewise, I saw people talk their RIs into giving them No Go's by how stupidly they responded to a simple question or if their plan of action didn't make sense. The RIs are not fooled by bullshit, so if you don't know something, be honest and don't try to fake it.

You will hear recycles talk endlessly about which RIs are "better" to have on a patrol and which ones to avoid, but do not listen to them: the RIs get investigated if they pass or fail too

many people. There are *no* easy graders, so don't expect to get cut any slack if you get a "cool" RI or give up if you get that dick RI who yelled at you on Day 0 for not running everywhere. In general, the RIs are pretty relaxed: they yell at you to keep you awake and keep you moving. With a few exceptions, you will only get smoked if you actually mess something up, and even then, you will not get smoked very hard after RAP Week: there is no point in scuffing up starving, sleep-deprived, and half-crazed men. If you screw up something really important, like an ND or losing SI, fess up to it: the RIs will chew you out, but they will not be mad at you personally; they have seen everything at least a dozen times before you showed up, and you are definitely not the stupidest Ranger stud they have seen in their time.

Day 2: Land Nav, RTTs, Combatives. Wake up at an ungodly hour, get briefed on land nav, take the test. IBOLC's course is similar in difficulty as you just do the "night into day". 5 hours to get 4/5 points. There are more RI's lurking at Ranger school than at IBOLC so be careful of walking near somebody or white lighting. The paths aren't as defined as IBOLC but there are more inner roads to use intersections as attack points. The course is a little smaller than the IBOLC land nav training area but there is less terrain, you will use attack points and marked trails to get your points. Land Nav theoretically accounts for relatively few failures but the failure rate spikes in the summer because of the underbrush. The brush is thick and the RIs place points in the deepest thickets. Supposedly the RIs hang out with NVGs on the course and watch people test but I did not personally see an RI except a safety in the middle of the course. Most testers figure this out in a few seconds and act accordingly. I saw groups of 10 or 12 people get on line and white light to find points but be careful doing this; I hung back close enough to get to the point when they found it but far enough back to book it if an RI jumped out of the woods. There are apocryphal stories of studs cold-cocking RIs out in the woods and getting away with it but don't try it. My buddy got a "no go" just for being too close to somebody.

I lost my headlamp after finding my first point, walked blind to my second, ran back 4 clicks in 45 minutes after finding my fourth point, and still passed. You will want to run just to be safe and I recommend going to the farthest point during the first 2 hours of dark. You should get at least 1 point before the sun comes up. Of the 88 people in my company, only 29 passed land nav the first time. Pass land nav, you will sleep more tonight and you will not be utterly wrecked before the big smoker on Day 4.

RTTs immediately following land nav. The RIs will expect you to know how to do everything to EIB standard, their briefs suck, and you barely get any retraining if you fail the first time. Make sure you know how to do everything before you show up to Ranger.

I passed 6/7 tasks and got one minor minuses for the claymore. People will tell you to sandbag the claymore but go for it, it is easy if you remember the steps. My company dropped 10 of 88 on RTTs.

Combatives for four hours in the evening. This is the only part of RAP Week that is so stupid that it's kind of fun. You will get wet, dirty, and smoked, but they expect you to yell and show motivation. If they aren't watching, don't try. Be the average zebra in the zebra herd. We got rained off Malvesti Field and did combatives on the rocks underneath the CTAs, which sucked.

Day 3: Land Nav Retest, Malvesti. Retesters wake up at 0100, eat an MRE, and get "retrained" by powerpoint before the course starts. Not many people passed the retest. If you passed the first time, wake up at 0500 and stand around for a couple of hours until they take you

to hot chow. Enjoy the “Darby Dance”—falling asleep on your feet and trying to wake up before hitting the ground.

Retesters do not get hot chow. Do not fail land nav the first time.

Again, the retest pass rate is not high. 18 out of 49 retesters got it the second time, including a couple guys who did wind up going straight through, so it’s not completely hopeless if you retest.

We did Malvesti in the afternoon. It was too hot to do the Buddy Run so we missed out on that. Malvesti is actually a lot of fun, remember your pop songs (T. Swift and all that) so you can sing them while you wait for the course to start.

You will come back and do gear prep for the ruck. It is traditional to get the crap smoked out of you in the evening before the road march. It was so hot and my class had already suffered so much attrition from Land Nav that Brigade told the RIs not to smoke us. Our cadre came up with an ingenious workaround: we did bag dumps under the CTA from 9 to 10:30 PM. Expect your cadre to do something similar.

Pack your rucks well and make sure everything is adjusted right.

Day 4: Road March, Demolitions, BAR. The road march was the worst event of RAP Week for me. You are fucked down at this point, this is where physical endurance and mental toughness will make or break you. The ruck supposedly weighs 35 lbs dry but it is actually closer to 50 if you factor in the 2 gallons of water they make you carry in case you heat cat. You will stow 4 quarts (1 gallon) in your 2-quart canteens but do not expect to have time to access them on the course. Make sure your 2 quarts are tied down tight so they don’t flop. If you retested land nav, you are out one meal and have slept maybe 4 hours in all of RAP Week to this point. If you passed land nav the first time, you got 5 hours of sleep last night and an extra hot meal.

The course isn’t too bad, but there’s a big hill at the 6-mile turnaround point. You **MUST** find a buddy to ruck with and my strategy was to do 1 min running/ 1 min walking for flats, jog downhill, and walk uphill. I started real strong and after I knew I was good at the turnaround point, I finished in 2:55 at a nice slow pace, ahead of about 75% of the others who all come in at the last 5 minutes. I drank all of my water because it was so hot and even conducted in “en route” pee break towards the end. Don’t lose the popsickle stick they give you as proof that you turned around, I secured mine in a plastic bag in my left breast pocket.

After the ruck you will do foot checks and a brief on how your class is doing. You feel victorious for finishing the last RAP week event but the RIs don’t treat you any different. Training begins immediately following the ruck and what’s worse; two meals a day starts now so you will not eat again until around 7 PM. You will get out of the brief and run about a mile or so to demo, probably without changing boots or socks.

Demo training is fun, pay attention because you will use demo often.

In the afternoon the Airborne guys do BAR and everyone else does jump details, like loading parachutes at Lawsom Airfield. You are weak and broke off.

In the evening, the recycles will insert, and you will do weapons draw. The recycles in Darby are of much higher quality than in the other phases, you will have 2 or 3 squared away recycles in your squad. Pay attention to them and everything they do, the better ones will have products (status books, range cards, and so forth) that you will use repeatedly during the FTX.

Go to bed early for the sake of the Airborne guys. You will get 6 or 7 hours of sleep tonight, take advantage of it because it is the last time you will sleep well at night until you go on pass.

V. DARBY

Days 5-8: Jump into Darby, Classes. The jump into Darby is a chill day. If you are airborne, you will sit around for many hours in air conditioning. If you are not airborne, you will do easy camp opening details or wait to link up on Fryer DZ. Your first class takes place in the evening on Day 5: Formations and Order of Movement.

A word on the classes: pay attention, take good notes, and stay awake. Do not ask stupid questions, and do not ask “what if” questions, because the RIs will not help you. Expect the RIs to contradict themselves and to hear different things from different RIs about what is acceptable on patrols. Don’t sweat it. Learn the steps and volunteer for leadership during the PEs. Pay especially close attention during the OPORD class because the way they want you to do OPORDs is slightly different than what you learned at IBOLC. IMPORTANT: You can put notes in the Ranger handbook and Darby is very “step-based” meaning the RI’s want to see you execute the mission in the systematic way that they teach (unlike Darby and especially unlike Florida). Point being, copy down their step-by-step process, laminate your notes, and attach them underneath the front cover of your ranger handbook. In Darby, they check each block as you go through the mission. In Florida, they don’t have any notes and hardly talk to you at all during the mission. By Florida, just don’t commit fratricide as PL and you’re probably a go. Sounds easy? Nope—everyone is so tired and beat down that the dumbest things happen (such as people falling asleep and getting left at the OBJ). Or like my squad did, we all fell asleep at the LOA during Actions On.

On Sunday, you will eat Mermite on a short time hack (last hot meal until Mountains), take a 3-hour long TLPs class, practice OPORDs, and go to church. Go to church, they give you bread with peanut butter and it’s nice to sing Johnny Cash’s “Fly Away” as per ranger school tradition--only Protestant and Catholic services are available.

Days 9 and 10: Cadre-assisted Patrols. Actually real patrols, just not for a grade. Hopefully you get leadership on these days. You will get little sleep and operate under the same conditions as a normal patrol, so learn everything you can, ask questions, and practice SOPs, especially for LDA crossings, security halt, and ORP establishment. Pay attention to the recycles, they will teach you more than the RIs will.

Days 11-13: FTX 1. Your first day is the bay planning day where you will write the OPORD which everything else you do is based on. The first FTX is rocky for every squad while you work out your SOPs. In theory leadership rotation is random but in reality they tend to place officers in SL/ATL positions. Lower enlisted are almost never SLs. As an officer, you will be expected to be an expert on planning. Most officers will do that because they are comfortable with it, but you will only need 3-5 guys on the OPORD. **Task organize** most of your personnel to the terrain model and to the BTL’s tasks (the SI layout, the packing list layout, and supply distribution). You will begin the day with the WARNO (within 30 minutes of receipt of the order) and the SI layout. After the WARNO, your TTLODAC and route planning must be spot on, you will only have about 30 minutes to produce them, possibly less if the RI decides to AAR your WARNO. You will have plenty of time to write up the full OPORD, make sure your

Timeline, TKDDMK (route plan), Actions On, Task to Subs, and Paragraph 4 are squared away. You will brief **all** the 20 boards, so know them and be prepared to talk for 2 hours continuous.

You will do FRAGOs in the field on Days 2 and 3. Same rules as above apply. A lot of this will be covered in your OPORD so you can skip around a bunch.

Every day goes the same way. You will brief the order, your morning patrol base will be graded, you will step off, React to Contact and React to IDF, change out leadership, do a security halt, occupy the ORP, leader's recon of the objective, actions on, night movement to link-up, link up with the vehicles, return to Darby, change out leadership (my class did patrol bases, but they changed the POI at the beginning of this year).

My best advice for patrols is to be confident and aggressive—RI's don't want to see hesitation. Give clear and concise guidance to your team leaders—unlike the concept of "leadership", you need to micromanage your subordinates in Ranger school (in my opinion). Be meticulous, but do everything as quickly as you can. Do not waste time, and do not ask the RIs questions. The RIs will ask you questions, sometimes very rudely: respond confidently and cogently, and they will let you do your thing. Speed pays off, do not rush to failure but you must **maximize daylight** to be successful on the objective. Be in charge—I got a No Go on my first Darby because my RI did not think I was assertive enough with my guys. The RIs will expect you to swear and cuss, mostly to keep people awake (the f-word has a way of doing that), be hands on (physically touch your people when you are doing blood sweeps and handing out sectors of fire), and exaggerate everything. They want to see that you know what you are doing, put on a show for them. Don't be flustered by mistakes, and don't get mad at your guys if they screw up. Straighten them out, drive on, and continue mission. Everything is going to be OK.

You will find out whether you got a Go in your AAR after your mission. If you don't get a Go, don't sweat it, don't worry, and conserve your energy as much as you can for your next look. If you get a Go, do your level best to stay awake and help out your boys; one Go is all you need; the 50% rule (you must pass 50% of your looks to pass a phase) doesn't apply to Darby and hasn't been applied to either Mountains or Florida in years. Nobody got a go in my squad during their first look. Most guys without a go also got third looks. Don't blame RI's or weather or peers for anything that goes wrong—take extreme ownership of your mission and make it happen.

Pray for a full moon and good visibility at night.

Day 14: Retrain Day. You will spend all day with an RI who will run battle drills, evaluate your squad's SOPs, and critique your planning process. They will tell you that squads cannot have SOPs but they do, today is your last day to make sure everyone is on the same page about how to do everything. The first FTX is always rocky while your squad figures out SOPs.

Days 15-17: FTX 2. "Go time" for everyone, as your squad probably struggled during the first FTX. Your squad will operate much more smoothly this time around. This FTX is formatted the same as the first one.

If your land nav is good, ORP placement isn't too close to the objective, machine gun emplacement is solid, your security teams were well positioned (and kill the squirter aka stay awake), and your assault line fucks up the Humvee, there's no doubt that you'll be gucci. Once the mission is over, make sure night movement goes well. I got hit with a barrage of questions from my RI during the first hour or two of my patrol but after that he left me alone and let me do the Ambush: I convinced him that I knew what I was doing. You don't have to be perfect to get a Go, but you do have to act the part. We went 6/6 Go's for leadership that day.

You will come back around midnight on Day 6 and immediately begin cutting tie-downs, turning in squad equipment, cleaning weapons, and breaking down Camp Darby. You will do foot checks in the auditorium (too cold for comfort) and do peers. I remember guys falling asleep at the bay benches while trying to finish the tedious task of peer evals. Sometime thereafter you will be counseled on whether or not you passed or failed. It is a five-second process, do not ask to see your ORs (they won't let you) or your peers (they will lie about them to you). If you are a Go, you are euphoric, failures go to a board to hear what the CO and 1SG recommend for them. Double No-Go's go up to Battalion later in the day and Brigade the next day to make their case for staying in the course: the Brigade Commander in my day was For The Boys and let a lot of people get third chances.

It is the longest night of your life—it was SO FUNNY to watch people fall asleep standing in formation and fall over their ruck. It's happening all around you like a piano playing keys across a keyboard. Someday you'll think back on it and laugh. At some point the next day you will do the DOGEX and return on the bus to Camp Rogers. Forwards will be separated from recycles and from drops, Forwards will go on an 8-hour pass on Friday to eat, call home, and restock. Recycles go on pass for 10 hours on Saturday while drops go home anytime between Saturday and Wednesday the next week, depending on how quickly they close out CIF.

VI. RECYCLE

If you are unfortunate enough to recycle (I was blessed to avoid recycling) just be patient, rest and heal up, and get ready to crush it during the next phase. There is a fair amount of luck involved in going straight through: most grads do a bit of time in recycle to atone for their mistakes with the Airborne Ranger in the Sky. In general recycles decline in quality the further you go in the course. Passing Darby is something of a crap shoot: a lot of good guys recycle that phase, and you will rely most heavily on the Darby recycles in your squad because they are well-practiced in how the RIs want to see the 20 boards applied to real life. Recycles in every phase will have a vast store of knowledge about the day-to-day schedule, SOPs for tie-downs and so forth, and about which techniques work and which don't on patrols, but don't take everything they say at face value. Recycling is always a huge psychological blow; recycles are almost never completely objective about why they failed or about the circumstances in the companies they recycled out of. They are also under significant pressure to perform, especially if they failed patrols, since if they fail again they will have to suffer through the indignity of a board with a very real risk of being dropped and the certainty of spending much more time in Ranger if they are retained.

In general, life as a recycle is not bad. It is most controlled at Darby, but in every phase you will get more hot food than you can eat and more sleep than you need. Your body will heal up and you will be much better prepared to tackle the next phase than the forwards you will meet on Day 1. You will do many stupid work details, but the RIs generally leave you alone if you are well behaved. You will have a much better idea of what is going on in each phase, and if you are helpful and relaxed with the forwards, you will peer much higher when you re-insert. Take recycling for what it is: a chance to retrain and rest your body.

Use your time in recycle to reflect and promise myself that you aren't going to leave the course without a tab, something that may not have been sufficiently clear in your mind when you start.

VII. MOUNTAINS

Day 1. Take the bus to Dahlonga (even if you're Airborne), spend all four hours sleeping and eating your MRE. Once you reach Camp Merrill around noon, they will do a bag layout, and you will go to your Mountains company. Most of the day will be spent conducting gear issue (climbing equipment). At some point they will begin teaching you the knots for the Knot Pre-Test on Day 3, pay close attention since this is the easiest major plus you will get at Ranger School. You will be released to the barracks and go to bed fairly early. Mountain phase was my personal fav because we got a ton of food and sleep when not in the field and Mother Nature blessed us with beautiful weather the entire time—not a single day of rain.

Days 2-5: Mountaineering. You will learn military mountaineering during your first several days in Mountains. The Knots Test takes place on Day 3, it is very easy to score 3/3 on critical knots and 5/7 overall to pass, but go the extra mile and get the major plus on the pre-test. If you fail the pre-test, you will take the actual test, and then the re-test if you fail the actual test. No one ever recycles for failing the Knots Test. Pay close attention to the One-Rope Bridge, as you will make it again for a grade in Florida if you are Security Squad Leader.

Normally you go to Mount Yonah on Day 4 and return on Day 5, but my class stayed back in Camp Merrill because of the weather. We woke up at 0900 on Day 4 and did an extra two days of military mountaineering.

Mountaineering Week is very relaxed; it won't feel like Ranger School at all. Hot chow for breakfast and dinner every day—the DFAC is awesome, and there was a new policy where we were mandated to have 15 minutes to eat which was glorious. Beware of the Chow Nazis (recycles who manage the tables during chow). The day begins early (0500) but you will bed down around 2200 every night. They will not smoke you, and they let you eat and sleep because of the beatdown you will get once you start patrolling.

Days 7-9: Techniques. Take classes on Ambush, Raid, LDA Crossing, ORP setup, and Patrol Base setup and a refresher class on TLPs (doesn't change much from Darby). You will conduct platoon operations from now on. Pay attention during the Coordinations class and during the Paragraph 4 section of the TLPs class. Your Paragraph 4 will have to be much more detailed from now on, especially on your CASEVAC and MASCAL plans. When planning, make sure to coordinate HLZs, CCPs, and AXPs so you can conduct casualty pickup within a short distance from your route plan and *very* close to the objective.

Take the time to practice your SOPs. If they give you free time for SOPs, use it. Rehearse especially LDA Crossing, Security Halt, ORP setup, and Patrol Base setup. Actions-on is the easiest part of a Mountains patrol.

Days 10-14: FTX 1. First Mountains FTX. The 4 SL positions rotate on a 24-hour basis; PL and PSG rotate 3 times a day except for the last day of the FTX when they rotate twice. The three looks are generally divided between Planning and Movement, Movement and Actions-on, and Movement and Patrol Base, with React to Contact, IDF, and CASEVAC thrown in. There are a total of 96 looks over the course of the phase. Getting a Go in Mountains is easy if your platoon works well together and has well-established SOPs. We had a 99% pass rate in Alpha company (much unlike the 50% pass rate we had in Drby in Alpha company). The RIs grade on a much different philosophy in Mountains, hit the objective and accomplish the mission and you will be OK.

As a PL you will be expected to come up with a good route, brief an operations order, manage security during CASEVAC, take charge quickly during React to Contact, and properly set up a Raid or an Ambush.

As a PSG, you are responsible for accountability of personnel and the CASEVAC/MASCAL plans. The latter two are your bread and butter. You will take casualties during Actions-on and React to Contact; when this happens, the RIs will be evaluating your reaction, how quickly you send up the 9-line and package the casualty, and how quickly you move out to the AXP. Keep calm, be loud, and execute your plan from the OPORD/FRAGO, and you will be alright.

As a SL you are responsible for accountability of personnel. Security SL is responsible for Land Nav, the terrain model, and React to Contact if contact comes from the front. Assault 1 and Assault 2 stay motivated and make sure your guys stay in your lanes during Actions on and emplace properly in Security Halt/ORP/Patrol Base. The Weapons SL (most fun graded position in Ranger) is responsible for the gun teams and is essentially graded on how well-maintained the guns are and whether or not they fire properly on the objective. If your guns work (meaning that you cleaned them at some point the night before) you will be set.

Movements in Mountains sucks. Beware Winding Stair and Greasy Mountain. You will wake up at 0500 for SI layout and leadership changeover, conduct foot checks, and do TLPs till 1200 or 1300. You will move to the objective and hopefully emplace in daylight if your route is good (get high, stay high). At some point shortly after you exit the patrol base you will do a leadership changeout for PL/PSG. You will hit the objective shortly after dusk, then do SI, eat an MRE, and drink RI-brewed Gatorade on the objective before changing out leadership and moving to your patrol base. You will hit the Patrol Base around midnight. A good patrol base will be set up by 2 AM so you may get 2-3 hours of sleep before waking up and doing everything all over again. Day 5 is a modified schedule, so you will do everything super fast and on a ridiculously short time hack.

I got a first-time go in Mountains and Florida which was very nice. (Mountains was as PSG and Florida was as Assault SL).

You will have a “worst day” in Ranger School and you will probably cry at some point. For example, one account of a worst day looks like this: Day 3 in Mountains—we started the day by getting blown out of our patrol base across a river. Arti does explode in water. We went up several small, nasty hills, got attacked by bees, got lost, then climbed up a monstrous spike in the ground where the RIs set up a choke point and handed out major minuses to 80% of the platoon for not carrying weapons properly. Then the OPFOR hit us. Our PL for planning didn’t coordinate for AXPs or HLZs, so we walked about ~1km with casualties, then someone on the assault line murdered the enemy POWs right in front of the RIs, so we were all war criminals while the support by fire fratricided part of the maneuver element. We changed out leadership and wound up going down a cliff to the objective. The cliff was so steep the RIs set up a rope traverse and we went down on that and lost an hour of daylight while the platoon chilled out on the side of a cliff as the RIs set up the ropes. The objective was on a road behind a 50-degree side-slope next to a creek, so we spent about half an hour after we hit the ORP standing up and falling on our asses to get to the objective. Assault 1 fell in the creek, Assault 2 mutinied and refused to attack the objective. The RIs stopped Assault 1 before they hit the other side of the road because it was a sheer cliff face, several people fell over the cliff anyway and were saved by fallen trees from the hurricane. Our meal was interrupted by a band of hippies driving through the training area to a campsite, someone was retarded enough to ask for a sock change on the

objective; the RIs gave it to us to punish this Ranger for his stupidity, so we milled around for about an hour in the middle of the night doing absolutely nothing worth doing. We stepped off at about 2345 and within 15 minutes there was a 500-meter break in contact on the road. We were still walking next to a cliff so the RIs tied our platoon together and walked us to a bridge where we conducted tactical water resupply for about 45 minutes. Then we headed off down the Appalachian Trail. Multiple people ate shit headfirst over the next 3 kilometers; the trail is not well maintained. We ran into a hippie campsite on the Trail and had to re-route; in the process the RIs' GPS failed and we got lost climbing up a steep hill in a 2-km square bramble thicket. Some people tried to white-light in the thicket but they got shouted down by the RIs. We walked in circles on top of the mountain for several hours before the RIs finally figured out where we were and took us to an HLZ right next to the patrol base location. The platoon staggered to the end point over the next 15 minutes in a long, zigzag Ranger file. We spent the next hour doing SI checks and attempting to fill out the Lima-1 supply request, every 2 seconds someone passed out standing up or fell over their equipment and quite a few people were wandering around aimlessly trying to stay awake. Our platoon sergeant finished out the Lima-1 by asking for 7,000 rounds of .762 and 40 gallons of Gatorade, which got shouted down by a horde of angry Rangers. It was so bad we got admin-napped for an hour and no one in leadership got a Go that day ("it was a bad situation, but no one did anything to make it better"); we spent 16 hours under load and walked something like 15 miles in the training area; and of course we were so fucked down that the next day was a total disaster.

You will have many horrendous Ranger stories like that one. Even the RIs admitted that we went through "absolute hell".

Return to Camp Merrill in the afternoon on Day 5, do foot checks, eat an MRE, and go to bed early. Thank God you are halfway done with Mountains—unless you recycle.

Day 15: Retraining Day. Go to church and retrain with your RIs. Make sure your SOPs are good. Enjoy the blueberry pancakes in the DFAC; the RIs are less strict on the Chow Nazis now.

You will feel tired and weak, but it gets worse.

Days 16-20: FTX 2. Hit times move back by 1-2 hours so you will conduct Leaders' Recon and Actions-on mostly at night. Supposedly it is much harder to get a Go during the Second FTX but I think we got around 20 each phase. My platoon's final day was modified and went completely to crap but we returned relatively early in the afternoon. The ride back on the LMTVs was glorious. Foot checks and peers are completed quickly (try to stay awake during peers) and you will know within 2 hours whether or not you are a Go or No Go.

My body started to eat muscle on Days 7 and 8 of the second Mountains FTX. This has a distinctive ammonia smell, it is absolutely disgusting.

On Day 9 we got a Golden Walk. Our RI had rehearsed it for years so it was epic. The Star Wars theme song played from a boombox during React to Contact; we attacked the Objective with Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries* playing from a massive Subwoofer hidden in the trees. The vehicle we attacked had a freezer-sized box in it which we retrieved and gave to the RIs. During SI checks on the road the RI handed out Milky Way bars and sodas. We hit the patrol base at 0100, rushed through priorities of work, and were about to get 4 hours of sleep until the BC showed up (he knew it was a Golden Walk) and personally blew us out of the patrol base for not having security set up. One guy got an SOR for wearing a beanie in his sleeping bag and had to convince the same BC less than 24 hours later to let him stay in the course during his

battalion board. The RIs fought for him and he graduated three weeks later. Our platoon crushed everything else, and everybody in leadership for that day who got graded by that RI got a Go on their patrol.

Day 21: Recovery. Spend the day cleaning weapons for a few hours and packing for Florida. You will get an opportunity to go to the Mountains PX, which is very small and only carries essentials. I got a care package from my mom which was HUGE. Be proactive about DX'ing TA-50 because the RIs will help you as much as they can. Make sure you clean your personal M4 because the RIs hand out spots in Florida right off the bus for dirty weapons. You will get a phone call at the pay phones that night and if you want to sacrifice sleep, you can use the pay phones at like 0200 when everyone is asleep. Airborne guys do BAR and leave for the jump at an ungodly hour, legs wake up and get on the bus at an ungodly hour and knock out for 7 hours on the ride to Florida. Sleep as much as you can. You will not get 6 hours of sleep at night until the end of Florida phase in two weeks' time.

VIII. FLORDIA

Days 1-4: Mini FTX. Show up to Florida, inprocess with your company, get a few BS briefs about how it's the last phase of Ranger School, then go to bed. You will go to bed late and wake up early every day in Florida, so don't expect to sleep much in the barracks. Days 3 and 4 are the mini-FTX, you will stay out in the field and refine SOPs under the watchful eyes of the Florida RIs. Again, you will not get much sleep, so you are already exhausted by the time you hit the FTX. The Florida DFAC is the best at Ranger School; recycles are actually fat if they stay in Florida any longer than a week, but you will not eat there often.

Days 5-14: FTX. The last sprint to the finish. Florida sucks more than anything else at Ranger and 6th RTB is the saddest place in the Army. Camp Rudder is an airfield in the loneliest tract of land in Florida; a pall of depression, gloom, and despair hangs over the place like a cloud, even though the sky is pure and open after mountains and the sun is gorgeously warm. The FTX is long and difficult, you will dig *deep* foxholes in your patrol base and get maybe 30 minutes of sleep a night. The final orgy of sleep deprivation at the end of Ranger School is epic; I did not get 1 hour continuous of sleep for the entirety of the FTX and slept less than 4 hours every night until I got back to Camp Rogers.

Getting a Go is easy if your platoon works well together but gets harder and harder as sleep deprivation finally kicks in around Day 5. You are weak and emaciated; your ruck will weigh just as much as in any other phase but you will think it weighs over a hundred pounds. Everyone sits down to get into their ruck straps and pulls themselves up from the ground; almost no one uses their arms to swing it on or put it on overhead anymore. Your hormones are completely fucked up so you will be emotional all day, every day. The RIs are actually very relaxed and will almost never drop you but you will think they are all dicks because you cannot think or reason properly. You will cry at least once for no reason, everyone is paranoid, and people will make the stupidest decisions because they panic while they are in leadership. The recycles are skittish and jittery, some of them will literally have nervous breakdowns in front of you. If you can stay calm and collected for whole FTX in Florida, that is probably the most impressive thing you can do at Ranger School. Don't worry about your Go and everything will be fine.

On the other hand, missions in Florida are actually a lot fun. You will actually spend relatively little time in the swamps; your feet are high and dry most days. The weather is warm, even the rain is warm, and the water feels good unless you go in the wintertime. The objectives are real, the wrinkles the RIs throw at you (downed pilot drills, NAI clearance, IEDs, attacks in the patrol base, snipers, complex ambushes) are superb tests of your leadership abilities, and you will do some awesome things with Zodiac boats and helicopters. Your platoon by this time should have its SOPs squared away, so every day is a unique challenge. Best of all, there are no hills, you will have 30 meters of elevation change on a bad day.

The daily schedule runs something like this. Note that missions are almost always a complete botch-up in this phase—you will be a zombie at the end of Florida or you didn't try hard enough. You will dig hasty fighting positions at night in the patrol base and deliberate fighting positions as soon as the sun comes up; TLPs will be conducted until around 1200. I used the morning time in the patrol base to write down things I was looking forward to and I prayed often using the Ranger devotional called "The Way" which is handed out at service. I got lost in my happy place and used MRE coffee packets to help me space out and get excited about life without falling asleep. NOTE: The coffee packets were a lifesaver for me especially to use when it was my look or when I was really struggling (such as during the 8 mile long walk at night so that I didn't drone). Your patrol base will get attacked and the PSG/PL will be evaluated on how effectively they organize defenses and establish a QRF. In the afternoon you will step off to conduct your missions, which are more varied and complex than in any other phase of Ranger School.

Days 1-2: NAI Clearance and Link up. Normally the airborne guys jump into the FTX and the non-airborne guys conduct an air assault to link up with them, I actually had to do all 3 jumps in Ranger school which is usually unheard of. If you are unfortunate enough to jump, you will walk until dawn. Fortunately, many air assaulted in and got started on our mission in daylight. NAI (Named Area of Interest) clearance is just movement to contact; we walked quickly and conducted react to contact in daylight so a lot of people got Go's on Day 1. The second half of the movement and the night react to contact were both disasters and we still got less than an hour of sleep despite starting our mission in daylight. Day 2 was another NAI clearance. Same deal as above: move 2-3 clicks to contact, react to contact, conduct leadership changeover, then move 2-3 clicks at night and establish patrol base. Daylight operations were good but night ops were a catastrophe.

Days 3-4: Raid. Conduct a raid on a set of conexes not far from Camp Rudder DZ. Patrol base operations went smoothly. We got attacked almost as soon as we dismounted from the trucks. It took an hour to conduct CASEVAC operations as the PL waffled on whether to use the planned AXP (2 clicks away) or just go back to the drop-off point to evac the casualties. The RIs threw us a bone and revived the casualties with a highly improbable air extraction using the jungle-forest penetrator, theoretically allowing us to salvage the mission, but the PL insisted on using a wrist compass strapped to the shoulder of his FLC during the leader's recon, which got the recon party horribly lost and frittered away our remaining daylight. Bad weather rolled up on us at night as we did our raid, which turned into an utter clusterfuck and took about an hour and a half to complete. We walked back to Camp Rudder in the rain and spent the night in the barracks, so we got an extra planning day for Day 4. The next day was rainy but went much better; almost all of our platoon's Go's occurred during the first four days of the FTX.

Day 5: NAI Clearance and “Downed Pilot.” Another movement to contact, we ambushed a humvee near the end of our NAI after a 4-click movement then changed out leadership and got the FRAGO for the next mission. Although it is called the “downed pilot” mission, in reality only one platoon actually retrieves the downed pilot: the rest conduct supporting raids or ambushes to cordon off the decisive operation. This occasioned some confusion, as our planning leadership thought for some reason we were the platoon rescuing the downed pilot, despite no indication that we were doing so in the FRAGO. One guy got a major plus for straight-shooting an azimuth over two kilometers and walking to within 50 feet of the objective, at which point the PL had a panic attack and inexplicably refused to ambush the Humvee. We walked 6 kilometers to our patrol base and were put to bed by the RIs in preparation for tomorrow’s walk through the swamps.

Day 6: Raid/“The Weaver” Swamp Movement. One of the worst days in Florida phase. You will conduct TLPs in the patrol base, then move 1 kilometer or so to the boats, where you will conduct a water movement to the first swamp of the day. Movement through the swamp will last until almost dusk; then you will conduct the raid; after the raid, you will move 5-10 clicks to the entry point for the second swamp. The swamp itself takes around 2 hours to walk through and once on the other side you will walk another 3-5 clicks to the patrol base. The walk to the patrol base is miserable but nothing compared to the next day. If your platoon is doing well, the same group of 8-10 guys should start rotating through leadership now as everyone else punches their ticket to Victory Pond. You will know your platoon is doing poorly if everyone keeps getting looks.

Day 7: Ambush/Long Walk. You will be trucked about 15 kilometers away from your patrol base to start off the day, then conduct an ambush after a 3-4 click movement in daylight. Our ambush went completely to shit after the PL forgot where the objective was and Assault 2 was emplaced in the planned kill zone. The objective turned out to be a lone Humvee in a field; the RI who walked our platoon claimed to have been ready to hand out Go’s to the entire slate of leadership for the day had they called for fire on the objective in daylight. We walked 1 click back to the ORP and got a FRAGO for another ambush dropped on top of us. I think the RIs were trying to help out the day’s leadership by tossing in an extra mission but they failed miserably: the ambush site was on an abandoned runway after a 3-click movement, but we accidentally walked up on it without knowing where we were and the Humvee killed about half the platoon while the RIs sat and gleefully watched the horrendous MASCAL unfold. After your second FRAGO, you will conduct the Long Walk. You will not know how far the walk is or how long it will take; your platoon will walk until dawn in a disorganized zombie file over 100-200m of road. The Long Walk is one of the strangest events of Ranger School: if you are awake, you will see people stop and fall asleep standing up; some Rangers will veer off into the woods suddenly; others simply collapse into a heap in the middle of the road; still others will hallucinate and start talking to people who aren’t there. If you’re like me, you’ll poop your pants while trying to pee and end up asking the medics for Imodium to stop the diarrhea. The Long Walk ends at the patrol base where you started the day: my Long Walk was about 12 kilometers and lasted from 11PM to 4AM.

Day 8: Ambush/“The Boiler”. Second swamp movement of Ranger School; this time you will do the mission after the swamp. The mission is almost always a clusterfuck. Water levels in the Boiler were too high to allow us to cross through, so we did a 3-hour, 8-click Zodiac boat movement instead—then our point man somehow got us lost on marked trails. The ambush was so horrendously botched that the RIs re-cocked us twice before we ran out of ammo. Everyone is close to shutting down and Go’s become mighty hard to come by.

Day 9: Santa Rosa. All the guys who need Go’s are in leadership today. Also known as “No Go Island” if you get no go’s or “Santa Gosa” if you get go’s. The best day of Ranger School. You will move 2 clicks out to the trucking site and then board the buses for the embarkation point for the Santa Rosa raid. The Santa Rosa mission is epic; there is nothing more beautiful than watching a dozen Zodiac boats filled with armed soldiers rowing silently into the sunset. We were lucky enough to get motors. One of the boats next to us had a hole in it and everyone had water up to their chest because the boat was 2 feet below the surface but somehow still moving forward. There was a beautiful sunset and we had rode a bus thorough civilization again. I stayed awake just to see the restarants, normal people, etc. It’s the first time since your Darby pass that you’ve been out of the Ranger school world. My platoon’s Santa Rosa raid was disastrous. After the mission you will be trucked back to the vicinity of the barracks and have to run back about 2 miles. Everyone will be screaming the ranger creed and very excited.

Day 10: Return We got in late on Day 10, did the DOGEX immediately following foot checks, and ate like pigs for about an hour before showering and going to bed around 0300. I traded chocolate bars for entire MREs and consumed around 3,000 calories that night.

You will know if you are a Go well before the end of the FTX; in most cases you will stop rotating into leadership as soon as you have your Go. I had one look in Florida as an Assault Leader on Day 4 then never rotated back in, so I knew I was set, although I was a bladerunner for spots. Some recycles punched their ticket to Victory Pond on their fourth or fifth looks. It is best not to do this, the stress level is lower.

Day 15: Judgment Day. Wake up, eat breakfast in the DFAC, and go to church. After you get back from church, the RIs will form you up by platoon and you will hear whether or not you graduate. Going to a board is miserable but graduating isn’t much better, no one is capable of feeling anything and everyone is exhausted, weak, and broken.

You will spend most of the day cleaning crew-served weapons. At night you will have the BAKE-EX, where the Florida RIs’ wives will bake cakes and pies for you and you will get half an hour to stuff your faces.

Days 16-19: Closeout. Spend one more day in Florida cleaning M4s and TA-50 for turn in. If you are an Early Ranger or with IBOLC, don’t take your ruck apart unless you want to since you aren’t turning it back in when you get back to Camp Rogers. Early on Day 17 you will get on the bus and go back to Camp Rogers on the most glorious bus ride of your life. They will say threatening things about weapons turn-in not going well but you will finish before 1800 and eat dinner in the Rogers DFAC.

Days 18 and 19 are your pass dates, you will get released whenever the RIs feel like it if you are an Early Ranger or from IBOLC but everyone else leaves contingent on CIF turn-in. Enjoy it, get back early and don’t break any rules.

Day 20: Graduation. A relaxed ceremony by Army standards, preceded by Rangers-In-Action, which is actually really cool. Get your tab, celebrate, and go home.

From now on, you are a big boy in the Army. Enlisted guys will respect you and officers will treat you like an adult. “Be a bearer, not a wearer of the tab.” If you go to IBOLC after Ranger School, your buddies will likely have a million questions. Take advantage of the opportunity to be a teacher, it’s not an opportunity you will get many times in your career. One of the RTB CSMs told us that Ranger School is like 5 years of experience in the Army condensed into 62 days and he is right. You will be incredibly proficient at battle drills, decisionmaking under stress, and practical things like tie-downs, machine guns, weapons maintenance, and how to get the best performance out of your gear. You don’t learn much at Ranger, but you will become much better at the things you already know how to do.

Get back into it as quickly as you can after Ranger. Don’t get fat eating junk food like some grads do. I wouldn’t recommend heavy lifting for maybe a week or two, but don’t believe the nonsense about month-long profiles or anything like that. Take the weekend of graduation off, then get after it. There’s no point in wasting time pretending to be weak, and people will look up to your tab and expect you to be the best. Meet their expectations. Ranger School looks tough now, but you are much better prepared for it than you think you are. Go out and work hard every day and it will pay off. Challenge yourself and get better at your profession every opportunity you get. Be the best officer you can be every day.

Different opinions and advice through the years:

RANGER SCHOOL

Advice from Class 05-11, FEB – APR 2011

And 05-13, FEB- APR 2013

And 03-17, JAN – MAR 2017

And 04-18, JAN- APR 2018

(Disclaimer: Ranger School is always changing, and no one experience is definitive. Defer to the most recent information)

READING:

- ***Ranger School: No Excuse Leadership* by Brace Barber.** A lot of it is fairly outdated, but it will give you a good window into the heart of what it takes to graduate Ranger School, and the pride and responsibility you’ll carry afterward.
- ***So This Is Ranger School...*** from Commando’s at Fort Benning. It’s the best \$10 worth of Ranger School tips you can buy. If you’re not at Benning, call up Commando’s (www.commandosupply.com) at 877-689-0110 or 706-689-0110 and have them ship it to you. It’s worth it.
- **The Ranger Hand Book.** You don’t need to read the whole thing cover to cover, but at a minimum be familiar with the orders process, WARNOs, FRAGOs, OPORDs, ambush,

recon, linkup, and raid. Ranger School will teach you everything you need to know, but it's all a bit overwhelming and rapid fire, so going in with a bit of familiarity will give you a head start. Be aware though that you're not allowed to take a Ranger Hand Book with you. Ranger School will issue it to you on Day 1, and that's the only one you can use.

- **Ranger school website.** It has links to the actual 20 boards classes they give you at Ranger school, be familiar with these and you'll be like a recycle your first time through. It has all the battle drills, knots and waterborne operations on video: <http://www.benning.army.mil/infantry/RTB/> just click on training videos.
- **Ranger School Pro App.** You can buy this on the app store for \$5.99. Now that they are making RTTs a drop event it might be beneficial to purchase the app and you can start working through the videos. The application also has information on the schedule and what will go on during RAP week, a video of all the classes you will get in Darby and Mountains phase, a video for each knot to help with knots test during Mountain phase. They also have something called "Ranger Lessons" that are similar to this document and give a lot of pointers that are helpful.

PHYSICAL PREPARATION

- **Be sure you can easily pass the RPFT.** Unfortunately, a lot of the RPFT horror stories are true – it depends a lot on the RI you have as a grader. Regardless though, if you're pounding out perfect pushups with enthusiasm, a bad grader is more likely to pass you than if you're barely making 49. Be aware though, after RAP week there is no conventional PT. All you do is ruck.
 1. The pushup event is always the one that gets guys. Practicing metronome pushups helped me a lot. I just got a metronome app on my phone and every night I would set the speed on 60 and knock out a few sets of going as long as I could before going to bed. Doing pushup workouts a couple times a week is a good idea too. Throughout Ranger, you will be constantly assessed on whether you look, talk, and act like a Ranger. Although everyone (and every RI) has a different definition on what this means, you need to be confident in everything you do—this applies for the PT test. When you get into "the pit" show that you are confident and that you are motivated to be there.
 2. Do workouts separate from IBOLC. There are some weeks that you are in the field and don't have a chance to go to the gym, but there are other weeks that you are free to go in the evening. You always have weekends off too. The workouts vary at IBOLC and they tend to be run heavy, just don't expect that it will fully prepare you. I have noticed that guys that have the discipline to go to the gym on their own often do well during RAP week. This is one good reason to live in the villages (the housing on Benning) and not off post because you have access to two gyms less than 5 minutes from your home. So just get a couple of guys that can push you and make it a priority to go to the gym with them. The IBOLC PT plan varies depending on who your platoon cadre is, and how intensive they make the PT plan. For most people, the IBOLC PT plan is nowhere near enough to prepare your body for RAP week and the rest of Ranger.

3. Depending on your IBOLC graduation date and Ranger start date, you will likely spend at least a few weeks in Ranger Platoon. Ranger Platoon will vary depending on who is in charge. As of now, Ranger Platoon does PT every morning (usually run heavy) with a land nav course one day a week. Additionally, they split time between RTTs and 20-boards classes.

- **For the CWST, ensure you are confident in the water and don't be afraid of heights.** It's as simple as that. If you are both of these, it will be one of the easier things you do at Ranger School. If you are a weak swimmer, get some coaching on maintaining your composure in the water and swimming with ACUs and boots on. If you're afraid of heights, you'll have to either get over it or just suck it up for the balance beam and slide for life. There's no two ways around it.
- **Talk to guys who have been there in the recent past, both graduates and failures.** Get a breadth of perspective on it, and don't assume that any one individual's experience is the fact of the matter.
- **Have all your affairs in order well ahead of your report date,** so you can just focus on physical preparation and relaxing the week or so beforehand. Don't go to Ranger with any lingering issues – financial, medical, bills, vehicles, relationships, etc. – because it won't be possible to deal with any of it once you're there.
- **Memorize the Ranger Creed,** including the proper break points throughout each stanza. If you don't know them, look up a video of Ranger students reciting it on YouTube. Don't worry about memorizing anything else though (Roger's Standing Orders, Ranger history, etc.), the Ranger Creed is all you'll need.
- **Ask anyone and everyone to write you letters** while you're at Ranger. They are an incredible morale booster. It might not seem like a big deal now, but when you don't get anything at mail call, you'll feel like a kicked dog. And ask your writers to put a stick or two of gum in with the letters. Flat pieces of gum (like 5 or Wrigley's) folded inside letters or cards have the best chance of getting through. As of now, there is not any restriction on receiving gum so don't worry about trying to smuggle it through the mail.

PACKING LIST (going off the official Ranger School Packing List as of 26 JAN 2011)

- I did most of my shopping at the Commando Surplus. There is a guy that works there named Gibson that is constantly helping guys with the packing list. He does a great job of talking to guys when they come back and finding out what works and what doesn't work. He will walk you through the store and the entire packing list and tell you what has worked for past guys. A lot of his advice is good and it is a great place to start. The earlier you start on the packing list the better. Gibson still works at Commandos and was extremely helpful with the packing list. I would recommend going to him first. He will actually sit down with you and go through the packing list item by item recommending what to get and where to get it (he'll often send you to other places besides Commandos if you can get something cheaper elsewhere). Start collecting up packing list items EARLY as you will end up spending likely well over \$1,000 on the packing list alone.
- **Follow the specified items on the packing list *exactly*.** For example, I know of guys who were in a summer class, and thus assumed the winter boots were not required. They were

dropped on Day 0 for packing list deficiency. If it's on the list, be sure to have it. Other than that, as long as it's not on the contraband list, you have a lot of freedom to take extra stuff (for example, Ranger panties, Vaseline, extra socks and t-shirts, etc.). If you have anything questionable, the RI checking your stuff will look at it and either let it go or tell you to throw it away. The packing list should be the most straight-forward thing you do the entire time at the school. A lot of things are allowed by certain RIs in certain companies, and not others. Best bet here is to talk to guys who most recently went through RAP week and find out what items are getting through, and what isn't. Worst case scenario with most "questionable" items is that they will make you throw it away. Although this should go without saying, DO NOT bring anything flagrantly not allowed (i.e. GPS watch) – if caught with something like this you will likely get a kicked out on the spot.

- **If you lend a buddy something for the layout, be sure you get it back ASAP.** The RIs are usually pretty cool about letting you help your buddy out with extras of the small items on the initial layout (i.e. glove liners, batteries, socks, locks, etc.). However, be sure to get your stuff back right away, because that guy might get dropped or recycled an hour later and you'll never see it again. Lending other guys packing list items is great to do (part of being a good Ranger buddy) but only lend out an extra item—not something that you need for the inspection.
- **Good boots are a must, and break them in before arriving.** Take an extra pair of summer boots, so you'll have three summers and one pair of winters total. Have one pair of summers for trashing on obstacle courses/swamps, two pairs you really like wearing for everyday use, and the winters for cold nights. If you don't use the winters, leave the tags on and keep them in Ziploc bags to return afterward. Commando's is really good about returning stuff for new Rangers, even without a receipt.
- **You are authorized to wear any summer boot approved by the Army.** For example, Nike SFB, New Balance OTB, Rocky, Blackhawk, Oakley, re-soled issue boots with heel and toe cups removed, etc. For winter boots, you must have the exact pair specified on the packing list.
- **I highly recommend the New Balance OTBs.** Take whatever boots you're comfortable and experienced with, but if you're not sure, check these out. They are lightweight, comfortable, dry fast, and don't take much breaking in, but they're also still sturdy and supportive enough for rucking and patrols. Great all around boot. I wore mine for everything at IBOLC and Ranger School, and am still wearing them (12-mile ruck run at IBOLC, RAP week, patrols, rock climbing at Mountain phase, 20K rucks in the field, Florida swamps, etc.). Most guys really liked Garmonts for the field as well, but they are a bit heavier and have clunky soles for running around in. I wouldn't recommend Rockys though. Some guys bought the new lightweight Rockys and were disappointed at how fast they fell apart. Others wore the S2Vs cause they're comfortable, but I think they take too long to dry out. The same is true for Danners and Blackhawks. It's important to have boots that dry out fast, because you get wet a lot and often don't have time or the ability to change out. Some guys try to take boots for specific events (like Nike's for RAP week), which ends up being a nuisance carrying around extra boots and a waste of money. Just get good all-around boot. I wore Nike's for RAP week, Darby, and Florida. I wore the Garmont T8 Bafidas for Mountains. I also had the 400 insulate Rockys for my winter boots. All of these boots served me well. I brought the whole spread of Garmont boots (NFS, T8, and Extreme) along with a well-worn pair of Nikes. I bought the Garmont NFS 2 days before reporting and wore them for the majority of RAP and

all three phases. The Extreme's were not nearly as warm as I expected, and most guys who had brought the Garmont Extremes ended up buying the Rockies Cold Weather boots on Darby Pass. The Nikes were really nice for some RAP week events that required a lot of running (Malvesti, 12-mile ruck, etc.) along with during Swamps.

- **At least one extra pair of insoles for your favorite boots.** Dry insoles and a fresh pair of socks are almost as good as dry boots, and a lot lighter to carry in your ruck.
- **1-2 good pairs of lightweight tactical gloves,** and wear them as much as possible when patrolling to protect your hands. One of the big issues almost everybody will have at some point is their hands. They get unbelievably nasty and cracked and infected. At first I thought this would just be a nuisance, but it actually can be very painful and debilitating. The lightweight nomex flight gloves worked well for me. If you're in a winter class, also take an insulated (but not overly bulky), goretex pair. Consider having them sent to you at Mountains in a box labeled 'TA-50', because the Darby RIs might be stupid and make you throw them away. I had a great pair I wore all through Darby, then at the layout the night before we left for Mountains they decided to make me throw them away. Luckily the guy they told to throw them out snuck them into his bag and returned them at Mountains. **Good gloves is an absolute must.** Gloves were also the single item that I found people to lose more than anything else. If you are going in a Winter class, it is essential to bring a civilian Goretex pair. The Army-issued ones are bulkier and not nearly as warm, however don't go overboard with buying the nicest pair. One guy in my squad had \$300 gloves and ended up losing them in the first Darby FTX. I had two pairs of Mechanix tactical gloves that I really had liked from IBOLC, however because of the cold, I didn't wear them until Swamps. The Ready For Cold (RFC) gloves were a great, lightweight baselayer.
- **To receive a package of gear during Mountains or Florida, it must be labeled 'TA-50'.** Otherwise, the RIs will hold on to it until the end of the phase with the rest of the care packages. **Don't request any packages during Darby, because you probably won't receive them and you can restock anything you need on your Darby pass.** Care packages are no longer allowed, but you can receive packages of TA-50 (packing list items) or gum. **A care package of that fashion is nice at the end of mountains before going to Florida.** We received all of our mail for the entire Darby Phase the day of our Darby Pass, so don't expect any mail during Darby—Florida was a similar scenario.
- **Lotion and latex gloves** to put on while you sleep. This is a tip from *So This Is Ranger School* to keep your hands from getting cracked and infected. The RIs at Darby didn't like the gloves and made me throw them away, but it's worth a shot.
 1. **Working Hands** is the best lotion option in my opinion. They made us all throw it away to start Darby, then some companies allowed it at Mountains, and then it was allowed in Florida. Your hands will get beat up really bad and if you can have access to Working hands, lubiderm, or some type of lotion it is definitely worth it. It is frustrating that there is not a set standard throughout RTB. Just be prepared to have to throw it away when they do the initial layouts. There is now a standard for which lotions are allowed at RTB (check the packing list excel doc online). Working hands was great.
- **Invest in a quality pair of eyepro.** Just don't lose them. I recommend Oakley, and they give a military discount at www.usstandardissue.com. There's nothing worse than trying to

lead a raid at night with foggy glasses. Darby and Mountains don't allow shaded lenses, but Florida does. I thought it was a nuisance trying to trade between them though, so I just wore clear lenses the whole time.

2. Another option is to bring multiple cheap pairs you would find somewhere like Lowes or Home Depot. You can get like 5 cheap pairs from Harbor Freight for the price of the cheapest ones from Commandos. You can easily replace a scratched pair and have extras to replace if you lose yours. The RIs don't care as long as they are clear. I really liked having a retainer band on the back of mine so I didn't lose them and they stayed tight on my head. The RIs in some companies will be sticklers about eyepro being APEL approved. You can still get a relatively cheap pair of APEL approved eyepro at places like Commandos for around \$15. I brought 3 or 4 pairs and they served me well.

- **Generic, ACU pattern Camelback with no extra pockets.** Camelbacks with extra pockets are a NO GO. Write your name on it somewhere or sew on a nametape, because everybody has the same one. Sew on the nametape beforehand. They will likely make you sew it on during RAP week, and if yours is already sewn, it is one less thing to worry about. Commandos does the sewing for any type of TA-50 for reasonable prices. You can take anything to them for sewing (rucks, assault packs, FLC, camelback). Take your gear to Commandos and tell them you want the ranger standard and they will take care of the rest (i.e. cateyes the right size in the right place). Additionally, I would recommend bringing a small thing of super-glue. Although it isn't entirely RI-approved, using the super-glue to attach the nametapes and then going over with some thread is a much easier way to sew on the nametapes (caveat: I had all of my nametapes stitched on before IBOLC and none of my nametapes came undone throughout the entirety of IBOLC and Ranger—highly recommend using a professional service like Commandos for this).
- **If you're going in the summer, take 1-2 extra pairs of ACUs.** You'll sweat through them like there's no tomorrow. For the winter, the required six is more than enough.
- **If you're going in the winter, buy an extra fleece neck gaiter** to use instead of the issued one. It's only about \$6 at Commandos and is way more comfortable.
- **You will never use the black leather gloves.** Take them to fill the packing list, but leave the tags on to return afterward.
- **Buy the breakaway polypro.** They are fantastic during Mountains, but be aware that some RI's won't allow them during Darby.
- **IBOLC guys must bring everything they were issued at CIF.** Except for the IBA and plates be safe and bring everything you were issued at CIF because it is basically the whole Ranger packing list.
-There is a CIF packing list available for IBOLC and ABOLC, so I would just make sure you have everything on it and you should be good.
- **7 or so good pairs of socks.** Everyone has their own favorite socks, but personally I wouldn't wear the issue ones for anything. Spending the extra money for something like Fox River or Wigwam is well worth it. Then fill out the rest of the required packing list number with the green issued socks you'll never wear. I brought about 15 pairs of Fox River along with a few pairs of Darn Tough socks. I didn't waste space with the issued socks—your feet are your most valuable asset in the school and you can't afford to mess your feet up with cheap socks. The Darn tough socks are very expensive, but are well worth it for a few

pairs—especially their cold-weather pair (check out govX.com for deals on Darn Tough especially).

- **An extra fleece cap** incase you lose one, or to help out your poor freezing buddy who lost his. In the winter, there's an unwritten rule that everyone keeps their fleece cap on them at all times, so you can all put them on at the smallest opportunity.
- **Velcro-securing Rigger belt.** I used the same one everyday (Blackhawk), even through the swamps, and it worked great. The regular issued belts have a tendency to loosen up when they're soaked with sweat.
- **Extra permanent black alcohol markers and erasers.** You'll use alcohol markers quite a bit, especially the blacks and erasers, so take a few extra. Keep a pair on you at all times.
- **A quality white/red lens headlamp.** Consider taking a backup if you can afford it. You'll use it almost every night, and will be lost without it. Look for one with a protected on/off button, otherwise it will constantly turn on in your pocket or ruck and drain the batteries. I had about a \$25 Princeton Tech that worked well, except for the on/off button issue.
- **You'll never use the old-school flashlight,** so just buy the cheapest one possible and try not to take it out of the package so you can return it.
- **About 16 of whatever battery your headlamp uses.** You will very likely need and want more than this, but 16 is a good start for Darby—you can always buy more on your Darby pass.
- **Locks that let you set your own combination.** They are much faster to open, you can set them all to the same combo, and the smaller locking end actually fits through the duffel bag clasp. The old-school combo locks don't work with duffel bags.
 - **Definitely get these locks.** You are always in a rush when having to unlock your locker or duffel and want to be able to just change a couple numbers instead of trying to have to go through a spin cycle.
- **Electrical tape (3-4 rolls) and 100 MPH tape (1 roll)** are both essential.
- **You won't use the first aid dressings,** so leave them in the package.
- **An extra duffel bag.** Only fill the specified two for the 0-Day inspection, but after that you can have three bags. Sometimes there is literally no way to cram all your junk into two bags, and if you don't have a third you'll end up dispersing your gear out to guys who do. That's a great way to lose things. Spray-paint your duffels with a distinctive marking scheme so it will be easy to find them in a mass of hundreds of bags. Mark them with bright and obvious ways so that you can easily pick them out in a pile. The RIs don't care and never said anything to anyone about how their duffel bag looked so don't worry about that. You will keep all your duffels in a conex during Darby and being able to easily identify your bags makes it easier to get to your stuff. I also tried to mark each one a little differently and remember what I kept in each one. Darby is very disorganized and rushed, so being personally organized can go a long way.
- **Both finger and toenail clippers** (i.e. one big and one small).
- **You won't use the bootlaces,** so keep them in the package.
- **Extra footpowder.** You'll use it pretty much every day, so take an extra bottle or two. Buy the generic Desenex footpowder at Commandos, not the stuff that says "Cools and Soothes" on the front. Don't ask me why, but some RIs got particularly angry about this. There is an approved list of footpowder on the excel document packing list. Essentially, the main restriction is that the powder cannot have menthol in it. If you have any serious question about what is approved, the people at Commandos can help with this.

- **Good knee pads.** You will constantly be on one knee while patrolling, and without good pads you'll quickly be in pain and at risk of cellulitis. They're a bit expensive, but Arc'teryx Knee Caps are awesome. You'll never wear the elbow pads, so keep the tags on them. If you wear ACUs (which I would highly recommend doing), you can insert a cut-up bedroll as a foam pad into the kneepad slots. It is a lot easier than having to constantly put on and take off knee pads and is just as effective. As of now, there is a memo on the RTB site stating that you are approved to essentially wear any combination of tan/coyote boots with ACUs/OCP.
- **IBOLC students will already have their TA-50 setup properly with nametapes and cateyes,** so you won't use the small strips of lumetape. You still have to have it, just leave it in the package to return. Coming from anywhere else, you'll use the lumetape to sew cateyes on yourself. The same is true for the extra nametapes. Take this stuff with you to CIF so you can sew your gear while you wait.
- **Write In The Rain notebooks.** Anything else will just fall apart.
- **A good pocket knife, preferably a multi-tool.** Dummymcord it to your waist if you're prone to losing things. Something like a Leatherman is perfect. You'll use it nearly every day. I used the same \$4 multitool from Walmart all of Ranger school. Having something to cut into MRE's, cut 550, etc.. is important. I would recommend buying some type of whetstone/knife sharpener—nothing fancy is required here as you can get a cheap one for \$5 at Commandos.
- **At least 3 good protractors.** You'll lose and/or break these all over the place, so extras are a necessity. Ranger Joe's makes the best, Commandos not so much.
- **"Ranger Purse."** Cover one of your Ziploc bags with 100 MPH tape to carry your Ranger Handbook and keep it dry. I used the same purse all 62 days.
- **A dependable, waterproof wristwatch with an alarm.**
- **Optional items:**
 - **Baby wipes.** Take one set for weapon cleaning, and one set for your business.
 - **Underwear.** If it's a winter class, you'll definitely want these. It's an extra layer of warmth. I recommend Ranger panties if you don't like the brown military underwear. The RIs probably won't care on the initial layout, though you never know. Even though the packing list says they must be green or brown, as long as they are cotton the RIs didn't care what color they were. I wouldn't come with bright colored ones but grey or black briefs worked good for me. I bought a pair of the Potomac underwear, and although they are expensive (\$30 a pair) I used the same pair for every FTX.
 - **Don't worry about an electric hair trimmer.** Plenty of guys will have them, and yours will just end up getting used to pieces.
 - **Good gloves** are a must. If you are going through in the Winter then you want to have a nice winter pair along with multiple other pairs. You can get \$6 Mechanix type gloves at Harbor Freight.
 - **Hand sanitizer.** Take a few bottles, and keep one in your pocket throughout. Try to at least sanitize your hands before eating and after visiting the slit trench. This will help stave off the Ranger funk.
 - **Index cards.** Take plenty of these, as you'll run through them like crazy for OPODs and FRAGOs.
 - **Insect repellent** if you're in a summer class. I never used it, but bugs aren't an issue in the winter.
 - **Insoles.** Take at least one extra pair, and be sure to break them in ahead of time.

- **Lamination paper.** You'll use this to laminate your notes in the Ranger Hand Book, make sleepy Ranger cards, FRAGO shells, etc.
- **A laundry bag and several boxes of laundry soap.** There are only a few laundry machines per company at Camp Rogers, and you probably won't have time to use them anyway. However, there are tons of machines at Mountains and Florida, so take plenty of soap down for these phases (it's a good idea to have this staged to pickup on your 8-hour pass at the end of Darby).
- **Multi-tool.** I had (and still have) a lightweight Leatherman Skeletool, which worked great.
- **Pre-addressed and stamped envelopes.** You will have time to write.
- **Several disposable lighters.** You'll be singing the ends off lots of 550 cord.
- **Field jacket liner** (smoking jacket). This is an absolute must. Even if the RIs don't let you wear it, it makes a good pillow. Buy the old school green one with the elastic cuffs. It's warmer.
- **Waterproof map case.** This is essential for land nav, though you probably won't use it the rest of Ranger. I saw too many guys try to use flimsy Ziplocs for land nav and have their maps and scorecards in tatters from rain/dew/sweat. That's a NO GO. Don't chance it.
- **Moleskin.** If you are prone to blisters, use this stuff preventively to avoid the issue before it starts. The best blister solution is a patch of Moleskin stuck to a big patch of 100 MPH tape. The Moleskin protects your skin, and the tape lets your boots/socks slide without friction.
- **Pace cord.** This is a must not only for land nav, but also for everyday for patrolling.
- **Potomac Field Gear.** If you have it, great, take it. If you don't, I wouldn't spend the money on it. It's pricey stuff. The only real benefit is that it's easier to sneak the thin long underwear under your pants in the winter when the RIs won't let you wear snivel gear. I'm not saying that's a good idea, but it has been done.
- **Q-tips.** Take at least one box for weapon cleaning.
- **Corn Husker's Oil.** You'll definitely want lotion for dry, cracked hands, and this stuff is the best. They have it at Commando's.
- **Squad status card.** If you're Bravo Team Leader at Darby or a Squad Leader at Mountains or Florida, this status card will be a big part of your grade. It's the first thing your RI will ask to see, and will make a good or bad first impression.
- **100 MPH tape.**
- **Terrain model kit.** If you don't already have one, it's a good idea to buy a simple kit from Commando's or somewhere. Chances are there will be some stuff leftover in your bay at Darby, and guys will make a collective platoon kit to pass around at Mountains and Florida, so you probably won't need it. They're pretty cheap though, and it's a good idea to have one just in case.
- **Colored chalk** for OPORDs on the black boards at Darby. You should be able to find it at any department store.
- **You don't need waterproof matches or a whetstone.**
- **Small wrist compass.** One of these is good so you can just glance at your wrist for basic navigation without fumbling with your compass. I had a cheap little thing you slip on your watchband, and it worked fine. I bought a Suunto wrist compass for around \$30 and it was great for giving quick sectors of fire as a TL/SL.

- **70 pieces of gum.** Even if you don't like gum, you'll want it. You can start each phase with 70 pieces, and it can be any brand. The number of pieces per pack doesn't matter as long as you don't exceed 70. If you have extra during the packing list layout, they'll let you either give it to your buddy who doesn't have enough or make you throw it away. Choose your gum carefully. I recommend Trident or something that's moderately good for your teeth; MREs are packed with sugar and you often won't have time to brush. A lot of guys get cavities at Ranger. Also, be disciplined and ration yourself to 3 pieces per day or you'll run out.
 - As of now you are allowed to bring unlimited amounts of gum, and it is definitely something to bring a lot of. You want to have a variety as well. Don't bring too much when you first report because you can't chew it during RAP week and you can restock on your Darby pass, so you only need to bring enough for two weeks initially. There is no restriction on gum as of now, and it is essential to have throughout the phases. Everyone who thought they could muscle through without an excess of gum ended up having to bum it from other guys. Additionally, a lot of your ranger buddies won't bring enough gum, and being able to help them out is always a good look.
 - **Phone card and a list of several numbers** to call for rides on your Darby pass and pre-graduation passes. Take extra numbers, because you never know who might not answer their phone. You can also create a Pennytalk account, which I think was an easier way to use the payphones.
- **Unauthorized bag.** This is for a cell phone, car keys, or any other valuable unauthorized stuff you may have. It will be locked away and returned to you at graduation. I recommend *not* driving yourself or taking a cell phone. Vehicles tend to get damaged in the 4th RTB lot, and you aren't allowed to drive as a Ranger student anyway. Cell phones are more of a hassle than they're worth, especially when you can get kicked out for looking at it wrong when they're returned prior to graduation. If you want a phone to call family during your Darby pass, the best idea is to give it to the buddy who's pre-planned to pick you up.
 - **Organize small items in Ziploc bags** according to the order they're listed on the packing list. The more organized your stuff is on the layout, the easier it will be for you. For example, put your blank adapter, alcohol markers, batteries, reflective belt, electrical tape, combo locks, first aid dressings, earplugs, bootlaces, and nail clippers in one Ziploc. Then move on down the list for the next bag. The order of the packing list is the same order they'll read off items for the layout, and this way you won't have any trouble finding things in a timely manner. Also keep your t-shirts and socks in Ziplocs, so they stay dry, out of the sand, and don't end up all over the place. As I would go through my prechecks, I packed almost all of my items in zip locks as it made sense with the packing list. There is a chance that the RIs make you dump every zip lock, but having that extra organization helps ensure you don't accidentally leave something out and can find things in a faster manner when doing the layout. You can bring as many zip locks as you want, so take advantage of the ability to organize.
 - **Do not take a Ranger Handbook.** They will throw away any RHB you bring with you, regardless of whether it's written in or not, and issue you a new one. Guys make that mistake all the time. A buddy of mine laminated and ring-punched every single page of the RHB ahead of time, and just threw it away on Day 0.
 - **DO NOT even try to take anything on the contraband list.** They'll drop you on the spot.

- **Bring a Bible.** It is not on the packing list, but you are allowed to have it. The chaplain will have them for you at the chaplain services if you need one too, but I kept one in my shoulder pocket throughout the course, it was by far the best thing I brought.

RAP WEEK

- RAP week is the entry exam for Ranger school. Throughout the week, you will be tested on your physical fitness, technical competence, and ability to embrace a little bit of suck, relatively. If you don't want to be there, it will likely be exposed during these 4 days. There will also be A LOT of standing around. Go into this week with an aggressive mindset. Wake up every day and think about what events can get you kicked out of the school, and attack that event relentlessly. The RIs will periodically smoke your company throughout the week. The smoke-sessions along with the events themselves target your legs, in an attempt to tire you out for the final event—the 12-mile ruck. Don't overexert yourself on any one event, as the 12-mile is significantly harder than you would think (due to a rather hilly course and the fatigue from the week). Don't be afraid of RAP week. You will see buddies get dropped for a variety of reasons. Just keep your head down and push through each event.
- **Have someone drop you off on Day 0.** It's a lot easier than dealing with the 4th RTB parking lot. You can't drive at all as a Ranger student, so there's no need for a vehicle anyway.
- **Take some food to eat when you report on Day 0.** You'll be waiting around for things to start up for a couple hours, and you won't get to eat again for a while. Just be sure to have any leftovers, wrappers, etc. thrown away when they form everyone up.
- **Stand together in a big mass with your buddies when they divvy everyone out into three companies.** This way you're sure to end up with at least a few friends. If you really want to be with a particular person, your best bet is to stand directly behind him. They generally send a column at a time to each company. RIs know guys try to war-game this though, so they'll mix it up every once in a while.
- **If you aren't confident on the Ranger Creed, don't volunteer at the chow hall.** Every time you eat in a chow hall, they'll call for volunteers to lead the company reciting the Creed. If you don't know it, don't volunteer. There should be plenty of Batboys jumping up for it anyway.
- **RPFT: Be sure that you're towards the front of the line for pushups, and act as fanatically Rangerific as possible throughout the entire test.** The RPFT is the morning of Day 1, and the order is pushups (49 reps), situps (58 reps), run (40 minutes), pullups (6 reps). When you first start out, they'll call everybody up to a platform to give you the test brief and demonstrate the exercises. Guys tend to crowd to the front of that mass thinking they'll then be at the front of the line for pushups. However, after the demonstration, they tell everyone to turn around and lineup at 15 or so markers *behind* that mass. I made sure I was at the very back during the demonstration, so I could run to the front of the line for the actual RPFT.
 - **Pushups: This is your first test at Ranger, and the single event most guys fail.** They tend to pass more guys on the pushups early on, then get more and more strict to trim numbers toward the end. So you *definitely* want to be toward the front of the line! When you run to your grader and get set for the exercise, move like a fanatic. Seriously – all out sprint everywhere, throw down your camelback, tear off your warmups, and dive onto the ground like you can't *wait* to do pushups for this guy. That little extra motivation might fire him up just enough to be more inclined to pass

you. Remember, almost all Ranger students can do 49 good pushups. The graders don't care about that so much as the other characteristics for success at Ranger School: mental toughness, confidence, enthusiasm, resiliency, looking like a leader, etc. Almost all RIs won't count a number of your reps, no matter how perfect, just to see how you react. I did my 48th pushup about 10 times before collapsing at the end of time, only to have my grader say "Get up Ranger, you're good to go." You'll hear stories about nazi RIs who fail guys for no reason on pushups, and unfortunately a lot of them are true. The best way to prepare for this is to ensure you can do 2 sets of about 60 *perfect* pushups within 10 minutes. If an angry RI screws you, you'll go to the retest pit (where they generally grade a bit more fairly) to try again after a 10 minute rest. What gets most guys is that they've completely spent themselves on the initial test, and have nothing left for the retest. Train for the worst-case scenario, ensuring you can do it twice in a short time span if necessary, and hopefully you won't have to.

- **Situps:** These are generally easier to pass, but don't let your guard down. Maintain that enthusiasm, and make every movement as deliberate as possible. Train for 2 sets of 70 within 10 minutes to ensure you can pass even on a retest.
- **Run:** The run cutoff is 40 minutes, and a major plus is either 32 or 33 minutes (I've heard of both times for different classes). Don't overextend yourself for the major plus if you're on the cusp; remember that you still have pullups to do, and the rest of RAP week to survive. **Success at Ranger School isn't about being a stud at any one event, but surviving the whole 9-week (or more) marathon. I cannot recall a single person actually receiving a major plus for anything in RAP week despite what the RIs will tell you (i.e. 5 points in land nav)—not meant to discourage anyone, but be careful about overextending on any one event.**
- **Pullups:** If you've made it this far, chances are you'll pass. Ranger pullups are done with palms facing you. You will perform each repetition at the command of the RI, going up when he says up, and down when he says down. They count slow. Pull your chin over the bar and fully extend your arms at the bottom as forcefully and deliberately as possible. Again, train for 2 sets of 10 *strict* reps within that 10 minute retest timeframe.
- **The CWST will be no problem if you can swim and aren't afraid of heights.** It might even be the most fun you have during Ranger School. It will be *really* cold if it's winter though. Try to get to the front of the line, because lines of waiting Rangers draw unwanted attention from haze-crazy RIs. Plus it's less time standing in the wet cold.
- **Combatives is really just a haze fest, so run around like crazy screaming your head off and you'll be fine.** There will be one major combatives event during RAP week, usually the night of the first day. Smoke sessions at Ranger are more a matter of *looking* smoked than actually pushing to muscle failure. As long as you look like you're in pain, the RIs will be satisfied. Don't let them see you trying to conserve energy though, or they'll be all over you. (They took Combatives out of the POI because too many people got hurt, they now have a knifefighting session, other than that the principles he mentioned still hold true though)
- **Land nav: You need to be adaptable and use a variety of strategies to succeed.** Behind the RPFT, land nav is the second biggest RAP week killer. It's a bit easier in the winter because there's less vegetation, but either way it's a tough course. 4/5 points in 4 hours is a GO, and 5/5 is a major plus. If you have any doubt *at all* about that 5th point, DO NOT go

for it. It's not worth it. I know of several guys who ended up failing the first day because they went for the major plus. You *really* don't want to retest, cause you'll get about 3 hours less sleep than everyone else that night, and will be smoked for the 12-mile ruck later that day after putting in 10 or so extra miles breaking brush. Try to get as many points as possible at night, because the points have chemlights on them and are actually easier to spot from a distance. Identifying the points themselves wasn't that hard, it was the distance between the points, the swamp cutting across the middle of everything, and the random, unpredictable roads/trails that made the course difficult. Use a variety of strategies: dead-reckoning, attack points, trails, hand-railing roads, etc. The course itself is very big, so move fast. If you're not pace-counting (such as moving to a trail intersection or to hit a road), you should be running. And beware the huge swamp cutting across the middle of the course. It's almost always better to go the extra distance around the swamp using a road instead of trying to cut through it, and then use an attack point to get your next point. That swamp is so nasty you'll probably get stuck or lost or hit impassible terrain, and it's best to just avoid it.

- **Ranger Stakes: Ensure you are proficient at disassembling and reassembling a 240B and 249, firing and clearing a malfunction in a 240B and 249, setting and retrieving a claymore, and setting up a PRC-119 radio and sending a proper radio transmission.** None of these are hard, but it's easy to get a major or minor minus if you haven't practiced the skills recently. There's no instructional or practice portion, they just test you on it. If you get all of them the first time, it's a major plus. For each one you fail twice, it's a minor minus. Three minor minuses is a major minus. Just a few hours going over this stuff will make a huge difference, especially on the radio. It's not hard, but easy to fail if you haven't seen it before. As of a couple classes ago this is now a drop event so make sure and take preparing for them seriously. This is a droppable event now, and it killed the IBOLC crowd. Try to get reps while at 2-11 before you report.
- **The Buddy Run: Finish at the front of the company, and Malvesti will be a lot easier.** The buddy run is supposed to be 2 miles, but it's actually about 2 1/3 miles. 16:00 is a major plus, which is almost impossible to get. Even if you're a fast runner your buddy probably won't be, and you guys have to run and finish it together. However, it does pay to finish at the front of the company, because you'll run straight through the Malvesti obstacle course without having to wait in line for the obstacles. Again, those lines of waiting Rangers are where most of the smoking takes place. Your partner for this event is whoever is next to you based off roster numbers. It is unfortunate because running over 20:00 is a major minus, but there isn't much you can do for your partner other than just encourage them if they are slow. Making it under 16:00 is rare from what I saw, but most guys were able to make the 20:00.
- **The Malvesti obstacle course: Ensure you are proficient at rope climbing.** The Malvesti isn't as bad as it's made out to be. It's more of a right of passage than anything. Again though, the further back you finish in the Buddy Run, the longer you'll have to wait between obstacles and be hazed. Plus, the earlier you finish the longer you have to shower and clean up afterward. If you're in good enough shape to pass the RPFT, you'll be fine on all the obstacle courses at Ranger School. You *must* know how to climb a rope with ease though. It's not hard, so if you don't know get someone to teach you. Every obstacle you cannot complete is a minor minus. Pretty much the only obstacles anyone failed were the ropes, and it was only because they didn't know how to climb them. The rope gets muddy pretty fast and becomes almost like climbing a slick pole. The guys that were successful were the ones

that jumped up and got a good foot lock because you can't hold on with just your hands. The monkey bar event also gave guys some trouble, so just take your time when getting up to mount them and try to keep momentum once on them.

- **The ruck: Ensure you can ruck 50-60 pounds with a rifle for 12-miles in well under 3 hours.** Depending on the size of your class, you'll either do a 12-mile timed ruck (3 hour limit) or a 16-mile ruck as a group out to Camp Darby. If it's a big class, they'll do the 12-miler, because more guys tend to fail with the time limit. There isn't really any trick to the ruck, but pay particular attention to the packing list. They are *incredibly* strict on it, and if you're missing any little thing, you're done (a buddy of mine was dropped for not having ear plugs inside the ear plug case attached to his FLC). I found it helpful to get off to fast start and get out in front of a majority of the group. The majority of guys will finish between 2:53 and 2:57, so if you can be at a pace a little ahead of that you should be good.
- **If you are prone to blisters, tape your feet preemptively before the rucks.** Just some 100 MPH tape in key spots does the job for most guys. Once blisters form, it's too late and you'll be fighting them all through Ranger School.
- **Before Darby, separate your duffels into one with stuff you'll actually use, and one you won't.** When you get to Camp Darby, your company will cram all their duffels into the "Chicken Coop," (a conex) and you'll only have periodic access to them. The bag you don't use much will inevitably end up at the bottom of the pile and you'll never get to it. Everything you need on a regular basis, keep in your ruck and assault pack (we used our assault packs for all our sleeping and shower gear, so we could get to it quickly every night).
- **Take sewing materials, nametapes, and cateyes to CIF.** There will be A LOT of waiting in line there without much RI supervision, so use the time to sew your nametapes and cateyes on your ruck, assault pack, and FLC. If you are coming from IBOLC/ABOLC get your name and cat eyes sewn on your Ruck, Assault Pack, FLC, and Camelbak prior to reporting. Commandos can take care of all them. You don't want to have to try and do it by hand if you don't have to.
- **Enjoy your MRE's now.** You will get 3 meals during RAP, lunch is an MRE. Breakfast and Dinner are in the mess hall, they suck though because they give you so little food. You will only get two MRE's during Darby and you will be told exactly when to eat them. You won't believe how much you will love MRE's. Food is the currency of Ranger school. In the field money is meaningless.

DARBY

- Darby is another test of basic competence. It will be the first look at patrolling for most people in your squad. Because of this, there will likely be a lot of growing pains, but that is normal. At all times, be ready to step up into leadership, and kill it. Don't get discouraged if the first looks (for yourself or your squad) don't go well. Getting GOs isn't really something you can force. Just stick to what you know, follow the steps they teach you, and complete the mission.
- **Darby Queen O-Course: Drink lots of water beforehand, be sure you are good at rope climbing, and be super motivated.** The first thing you'll do at Darby is the Queen. It's not overly difficult, but is long. They only have one water point in the middle of the course, so if you go through in the summer months, be sure to drink LOTS of water before hand. Plenty of guys are heat casualties on the Darby Queen because of dehydration. Again, the only technical skill you need to worry about is rope climbing, same as the Malvesti. Also, if you

act super hooah motivated when you cross the finish line, you might just get a minor plus. The RIs love that kind of stuff.

- **Pay close attention and stay awake in the classes during techniques training.** Take detailed notes IN your Ranger Handbook, which you will have on you and can reference throughout the course. These are the skills that will get you GOs on your patrols. The classes will overwhelm you with the level of detail, but don't worry. That's part of the purpose, and everyone feels the same way. Just pay attention, take good notes in your Ranger Handbook, and you'll be fine.
- **Volunteer for leadership positions during practical exercises.** The PEs are a free chance to practice patrolling with RI guidance and feedback before it actually counts. You aren't going to want to volunteer, but it really will increase your chances for success on graded patrols.
- **Eat your two daily MREs at once so you have more time to sleep.** After each day of patrols when you're finally sent back to your bays to recover/sleep, you'll often be given two MREs and told to have them both eaten by a certain time the next morning (for instance, you might be cut loose at 0230 and have to be ready to go at 0530). This is known as the "Darby double-stack." Eating both at once will save you a few minutes in the morning. Some nights when you only get an hour, an extra 15 minutes of sleep is a big deal. (I have never heard of this, they closely monitor when you eat and will SOR you if you eat outside of when they tell you)
- **Be a squared away, supportive squadmember and informal leader when not in a graded leadership position.** This is true for all of Ranger School. If you work hard for your buddy, he'll work hard for you. Your success as a leader is not so much dependent on your personal performance, but on the performance of your subordinates. You'll have *way* too much to do when you're in leadership, so there's no choice but to rely on your buddies. And the RIs will take note of how you work when you're just a squadmember - whether you volunteer as Team Leader or pointman, help out with the OPORD, check equipment, etc. - and the reputation you build will reflect in your leadership grade. Bottom line: you live and die as a squad/platoon at Ranger School, so never quit giving it your all.
- **DO NOT hoard, hide, stash, or steal food.** You will be caught, and will be dropped on the spot, no questions asked. It's not worth it.
- **You can get away with wearing silky long underwear bottoms.** If you're in a winter class, the RIs will more than likely tell you no snivel gear for patrolling, which sucks. They can tell if you're wearing any on top, but nobody ever checked for bottoms. I'm not saying do the wrong thing, but if you're absolutely dying in the cold, you can probably get away with wearing ninja bottoms. Just do it cautiously, and have a good explanation ready (plead stupidity) incase an RI asks. The RIs sometimes made guys drop their pants to inspect, I wouldn't risk it.
- **If you are RTO, take it seriously.** It's not a graded position, but the RIs are still assessing you. They typically choose squared away guys for RTO to help out the weaker leaders. Do a good job supporting them, and you might just get a major plus.
- **It all starts with Route Planning.** During Darby you will have to give a coordination's brief after receiving the OPORD. This is done in the PLT planning shed during Day 1 of both FTX's with the other SL's, but then is done over the radio or to your RI directly when you are out on the FTX. The purpose of the brief is to make sure that your route, fires, etc.. do not

conflict with another squad. This is also a time you will get critical information to disseminate during your OPORD. You don't have a lot of time between the issuing of the WARNO and then having to go and coordinate with the other squads. For the coordination's brief you will need to have a primary and alternate route planned, your fires overlay completed (TTLODAC), and then your requested CCP/HLZ locations. They will all go on the same overlay. Some RIs want different things, but that is generally what they want. I believe the most important piece in setting yourself up for success in the planning stage is the getting the route done quickly because a lot of the other things come from that. We utilized an acronym called KDDTMK during each phase when route planning. It is just a chart that explains each checkpoint along the routes starting grid, distance in meters, direction in mils, method of movement, time, and then the ending grid. Once the KDDTMK is done for the primary and alternate routes, it is easy to see where fires should go and where CCP/HLZ should be planned. This also allows those working on the terrain model to put down the route in plenty of time. This will all make more sense when you do it during cadre led patrols. You can ask a recycle to explain exactly how coordination's will go, but this will hopefully give you a baseline. The big thing is just have someone competent and quick plan the route and it will make everything else run smoother.

- **Follow the Terrain Model Checklist in the Ranger Handbook.** Once complete with the Terrain Model, make sure that it hits all the items included in the Ranger Handbook. Spend 10 extra minutes making the terrain model look neat and even adding little things like twigs to represent trees or moss to represent swamp. This can be the difference for the ATL getting a go or no go depending on the RI.
- **If you're an Infantry LT, expect to have at least one squad leader position.** Other officers will probably have one squad leader position, and everyone else is pretty much random. E-5 and below will usually be team leaders, but they will also get a few random squad leader positions. During Darby, IN LTs are almost always either the SL or the Alpha TL. The Alpha TL is being graded primarily on the terrain model during the planning phase and then primarily on movement and land nav during the actions on portion.
- **When you pitch an OPORD, be as detailed as possible.** Literally, there is no limit to the amount of detail you should go into. If you're taking too long because of too much detail, that's a good thing, and the RI will more than likely tell you to move on to the next section. That's a sign of success. My OPORD brief took 2 hours. After hitting the basic checklist items, the RIs care primarily about the actions on portion. You will always have people helping you write your OPORD, but make sure you have a grasp of what the action portion will look like. They will tell you to walk them through what your mission will look like. Also make sure you know the takeaways from whatever your weather, terrain, and enemy analysis was for that mission. I saw a lot of OPORDs, in all phases, where the SL (PL in mountain and florida) would just regurgitate all the information others had written on notecards, but failed to take the next step of providing mission specific analysis. It is perfectly fine to have others write out your OPORD, but just make sure that you have given it at least some critical thought and can brief the detail to show your analysis. Also make sure you can read the handwriting of whoever wrote your notes before you try and brief it.

- **Write out detailed, step-by-step actions on the objective for an ambush and recon in your down time during classes or OPORD briefs.** That way if you're pulled for planning squad leader, you can just fill in names for the specific jobs in the execution of the mission, then read it verbatim. Seriously, write it so you can just read it straight off. Again, the more detailed the better. The key is putting in a specific squadmember's name for every task to be performed throughout the mission. RIs love that specificity. You must write it out beforehand though, because you won't have time after you're called for leadership. When you're done with it, erase the names and pass it on to your buddy for his OPORD, and on down the line. Actions on is where you make your money in an OPORD brief, and if you nail this you'll probably get a GO for the whole thing.
- **Consider allowing the Bravo TL brief Paragraph 4.** The SL (the PL during mountains and Florida) is always responsible for every portion of the of the OPORD or FRAGO, but a lot of times the RI wanted the BTL (PSG during mountains and Florida) to brief paragraph 4.
- **Laminate lume tape on the cover of your Ranger Handbook.** Bum some lume tape off one of the guys in your squad at Darby (there should be plenty floating around), stick that to the inside and out of the front and back cover of your RHB, then seal it in with lamination paper and 100 MPH tape around the edges. That way you can write stuff on there with map marker, charge up the lume tape with your headlamp, and read it at night. It will come in handy if you're squad leader for a linkup at Darby, where you have to recite a bunch of questions over the radio, and when you're in patrol bases at Mountains and Florida and RIs are constantly asking for your current location, black and gold plan, alternative patrol base location, etc.
- **A negligent discharge is an automatic recycle at Ranger School.** To avoid this, carry the M240B or M249 with a 'ghost round'. Close the feed tray cover so it will hold the first round right next to the chamber, but not in it. That way it looks like you're carrying it locked and loaded with the starter belt hanging out, but you can't accidentally set off a round. When you take contact or hit the objective, it only takes a second to slide that first round into the chamber and cut loose. I had a buddy who recycled Darby *for the second time* because of an ND on the 240B. He spent like 8 months at Ranger School. Don't be that guy. **Be careful because it is a major minus if the RIs catch you doing this.** I would suggest just being smart with when you carry it with a 'ghost round' and when you have it locked and loaded. If you are about to make a long movement at night there is no reason to be locked and loaded but if you are moving out to an objective then it makes more sense to have it ready. **At the end of the day just always be as alert as possible and practice good weapon control.**
- **Take react to indirect fire seriously.** It's the easiest piece of a Squad Leader position, but it's one that most guys fail because they don't take it seriously and execute it by the book. Keep good spacing and formation, and run your guys *over* 300 meters before going into a security halt to consolidate and reorganize. The RIs have a GPS, and they *will* track how far you ran. **Additionally, 9 times out of 10 the RIs will immediately map-check you directly after you take IDF, so make sure that you (and your subordinate leaders) are tracking how far you move.**
- **Bravo Team Leader for Recon execution is the easiest leadership position you can have at Darby.** If you get it, thank your lucky stars, then do *exactly* what they told you during techniques week: at the ORP, adjust the security perimeter, consolidate and redistribute ammo, set out the claymores, make a squad sector sketch, and have the 240 draw up a range

card. You'll get a GO. DO NOT wait to do the stuff on the checklist. I saw more than one guy fail this look because he did not manage his time well.

- **Don't assume everyone has similar levels of training, motivation, or capability.** If you're coming out of IBOLC, remember that you're not working with a bunch of 2LTs anymore. My squadmates ranged from PFC batboys to a CPT who was the Brigade Surgeon at the 173rd, and just about everything in between. As a Squad or Team Leader during Darby, before you get to know your squadmates well, you need to micromanage to ensure orders are followed and the job gets done. If you're a Squad Leader you won't have time to micromanage everyone, so enlist the help of one or two buddies you trust. That's how you get through Ranger School. "Don't expect anything you don't inspect" You will hear that a million times and then guys are surprised when the claymore doesn't get set out at the patrol base—pay attention to this one.
- **Help out the Squad Leader during his OPORD brief.** Have one guy designated to sit in the front row and follow along in the Ranger Handbook to be sure the SL doesn't forget anything. If he does, that guy will discretely hold up a note card with the forgotten subject on it (i.e. WEATHER!!! or CASEVAC PLAN!!!). The RIs usually sit way in the back and hardly pay attention. Even if they do notice they probably won't say anything – the fact that you're working as a team is the main point.
- **Designate a trustworthy pointman and compassman.** If those guys screw up, you fail.
- **Don't fall in to the conspiracy theory trap over peers.** For the most part, peers are a fair assessment. Unless you're selfish, suck as a leader, constantly whine, or have a really screwed up squad, you shouldn't have an issue. You'll hear horror stories of batboys ganging up on 2LTs and vice-versa, but I never saw any of that. Just be a team player, help your buddy out, work hard, don't complain, and don't suck too bad when you get tired and hungry. If you're *really* concerned about it, make a pact with a buddy to peer each other #1 no matter what, and that should keep you in the clear.
- **This is an important one: Use peers to get rid of the bad apples, and make your squad a better team.** Ranger School grades each leader not so much on their individual performance, but according to how well their squad or platoon works to accomplish the mission. The faster you trim your squad down to the competent and motivated team players, the better chance you'll have to graduate. Don't just assume everyone will take peers seriously either. Talk this over with the guys you want to stick around to be sure you're all on the same page.
- **DO NOT eat yourself stupid at the dog-ex.** Lots of guys will, and they'll feel horrible afterward. Definitely fill up, because it will be your only lunch/dinner chow, but don't stuff yourself. Make sure you have about \$10-15 handy for this (depending on how gluttonous you expect to be). For us there was a \$20 dollar option (8 hot dogs, 2 bags of chips, 2 candy bars, 2 sodas), then a \$10 option that is half of all of that. They will try and peer pressure you into getting the \$20 dollar option by pushing everyone not doing the \$20 option to the back of the line, but if I could go back I would have just gone through the line with a buddy and gotten the \$20 option and then split everything. At the end you can go back up and get candy bars for a \$1. There will be left over hot dogs from the guys that got the \$20 option if you are still hungry. At this point, you are close to going back to Camp Rogers and within a day of your 8 hour pass where you eat a lot. Don't stress too much about overeating or not getting a bunch of food. You just finished Darby (whether you passed or not). Get the extra hot dog. Did I grossly overeat myself and regret it for the next 4 hours? Yes. Was it the most glorious 30 minutes in Darby phase? Also, yes. Would I go back and do it again? Hell yes.

- **Pre-stage a ride for the 8-hour pass at the end of Darby.** Plan on about a 1300 pickup from Camp Rogers at 4th RTB. We were released at 1000 and had to be back by 1800. There will be whole welcoming party waiting with donuts, pizza, ranger goo, etc.. There will be multiple people willing to give rides or allow you to use their phone to coordinate one. There will be a ton of food and people waiting at the gates of Rogers to greet all the guys coming out. Ranger Goo is an absolute must. But don't fill up right away. You can't eat *all* day. People will actually try to do this and end up miserably full. Plan out a timeline of what is important that you do during your 8 hours. The time on the pass flies by—it will be the fastest 8 hours of the entire school.
- **Pre-stage replacement packing list items.** Examples include: laundry soap, toothbrush, Write-in-the-Rain notebooks, alcohol markers, wet wipes, foot powder, hand sanitizer, deodorant, 70 PIECES OF GUM!!!, soap, pens and pencils, batteries, lip balm, and any other items you might deplete over the course of Darby. Otherwise you'll waste your whole pass running errands. I would recommend having a pre-staged box/container that has all this stuff in it. Ensure to put a bunch of extra things that you will consume/break/lose. Additionally, plan a trip to Commandos/Ranger Joes—you will inadvertently need something from there.
- **You *will* have a layout inspection after the 8-hour pass.** Don't even try to sneak anything in. Don't drink on your pass either – they dropped a guy in my company for smelling like alcohol. Even if nobody has any contraband, this layout always turns in to a smoke session. It's kind of a 'last night of Darby' sendoff.
- **Crawl, Walk, Run method applies to the phases.** In Florida you will have the most freedom to conduct your mission how you like, in Darby you will get a NO GO if you don't execute your patrol by the book. Darby will make you frustrated because it is so inflexible. Darby is the gayest of the phases for this reason. You'll have a bad taste in your mouth about it, but it gets better.

MOUNTAINS

- A lot of people say that Ranger School starts the day you arrive in Dahlonga, GA, and there is some truth to that. Mountains will be your first chance to patrol as a platoon, and is very different from Darby patrolling. The phase itself is pretty brutal, with respect to physical demands, but I thought it was the easiest phase to get a GO. For the most part, the RIs are really assessing you as a leader who can handle adversity, while maintaining the Principles of Patrolling. Try not to "finger fuck" things as much as you can, although there will naturally be certain things that need to be done notionally. Showing your confidence and competence as a leader, along with not violating any of the 5 PoPs is huge. Additionally, the grading in Mountains is much more outcome-based than Darby. Listen to your recycles. They have been there, and know "how things work" and can be a very valuable source of information.
- **The packing list layout is not nearly as serious as Darby.** The Mountains RIs just want to be sure you have the packing list items for the FTXs and no contraband. If you are missing TA-50 for whatever reason, try to identify what you're missing beforehand. You can sign for pretty much any missing TA-50 from the Merrill CIF and return it at the end of the phase.
- **If you're a winter Ranger, have a good pair of gloves for Mountains, preferably Gore-Tex.** Take them with you from the 8-hour pass at Darby, or if you're worried about the Darby RIs stealing them, have someone ship them to you at Mountains and label the box 'TA-50'. If they don't label it like that, you won't get it until the end of the phase with the

care packages. There is a reason winter ranger has the reputation that it has—being wet and cold (especially in Mountains) is brutal. Having a good pair of gloves that has some type of insulate (and waterproofing agent if possible) is a must. Somehow, February is the wettest month of the year in Dahlonega, GA (Mountains phase), and it will rain/freezing rain quite a bit. It must've rained around 25 out of 28 days in the month.

- **Be first or last into the chow hall.** You won't have much control over it, but you get more time to eat this way. You eat as a battalion at Mountains, and the guys in the middle tend to have the least time. You get lots of food in the Mountains chow hall, but very little time to eat it. Eat ALL of your food FAST, you will need every calorie before/after the FTX. And if you don't finish your food for whatever reason, don't throw it out—just give it to a buddy who is still eating or leave it on the chow table.
- **Enjoy the mountaineering training.** You get decent sleep, three meals a day, and it's the most fun you'll have at Ranger School.
- **Don't worry about the knots test.** First, it's not hard; second, you will practice the knots until you want to puke; third, the RIs pretty much *will not* let you fail. There are 8 knots, and you must tie 6 out of 8 to pass. 2 of the knots are special and can't be missed. If you get all 8 knots on your first try, you can get a major plus (DISCLAIMER: there were several guys who got all the knots and never got the plus for whatever reason).
- **The ruck up Mt. Yona isn't as bad as they make it out to be.** Try to be at the front of your element, to minimize the slinky effect and so you aren't eating dust the whole way up.
- **Go to the chaplain's service!** This is true for all of Ranger School, but especially at Mountains. Even if you're not religious, it's a good morale boost, a chance to sit and rest for a bit, and there's always a little perk at the end. Up on Mt. Yona, you get a big hunk of bread and a little juice for communion. At the service between FTXs, *everyone* sleeps through the message, and then you get 10-15 minutes of 'prayer time' at the end, where everyone just racks out on the floor.
- **Volunteer for leadership on the practical exercises.** This is even more important at Mountains than Darby, because now you're running platoon-sized missions and patrol bases. You'll want to just chill as an MOS during the PEs, but seriously, take advantage of the practice. It very well could be the difference between a GO and a NOGO. And if you aren't comfortable with leadership, ask to be FO, RTO, or Medic. They have no responsibility on the PEs, but are right alongside the leadership the whole time.
- **Take the PEs seriously,** even when you're just a team leader or squadmember. The RIs are already assessing you, and this is where you start to build your reputation.
- **Day 1 planning PL or PSG is the 'golden ticket'.** It's more work than the other days and expectations are higher, but you also have the most control over your success or failure. Plus there's a lot less variables to worry about than in field planning (i.e. patrol base security, weather, a bad FRAGO, etc.), and the rest of the platoon should be energetic and motivated to work hard.
- **WARNOs need to be very brief and to the point.** They aren't a mini-OPORD like at Darby; just give the necessary information guys need to get the ball rolling. For Mountains, your Platoon will pitch 2 OPORDs in total—one before each of the 2 FTXs. Every other mission will be a FRAGO. A FRAGO is seriously just a VERY dumbed down OPORD. Generally, it's just the ENY analysis and Scheme of Maneuver, everything else will typically just be the same as the OPORD.

- **If you're a planning PL, designate one trustworthy guy to be your secretary.** There will be lots of people helping with different pieces of the OPORD, including yourself, so having one man strictly to make sure everything is getting done and organize all the note cards as they come in is clutch. You'll be too busy writing paragraph 3, proofing other paragraphs, and rehearsing to deal effectively with those details.
- **More people working on the OPORD is NOT always the best solution.** For the 2 OPORDs, everyone will likely want to help as much as possible. As great as this is... too many people in the planning bay can just result in mass confusion. As the PL, your first task should be to look at everything that you need to get done and breaking it up to people who know what they are doing. Usually this means giving the majority of the OPORD to the officers (tap into any MCCC CPTs if you got them), Paragraph 4 to one of your NCOs, and the terrain model to the other people remaining. When you assign a group of people to work on something, try to appoint ONE person to be in charge—holding your direct subordinates accountable is like 40% of Ranger school.
- **Be sure volunteers are good at their jobs.** If guys aren't good at writing pieces of the OPORD they volunteer to help with, you'll end up doing it yourself or making it up off the cuff. Guys often have more willingness to help than skill in writing orders.
- **Match specific tasks with specific names in OPORDs and FRAGOs.** The RIs love the specificity.
- **Write out a detailed point-by-point narrative of actions on for a raid,** just like for ambush and recon in Darby. Leave blanks for matching names with specific tasks. That way if you're planning PL, you already have the hardest part done. Pass those notes around for each new planning PL, changing small details and writing in new names for each mission.
- **Trust you've got it all together and that you'll pitch your OPORD or FRAGO smoothly and confidently.** There are so many little pieces from different guys, in the end you just have to trust and go for it. Whatever you do, don't be late for the brief. Right when the new RIs walk in to your patrol base in the morning, you should be ready to pitch. They'll be impressed, and that will set the tone for the whole day. An 80% solution on time is a GO, while a 100% solution late might get you a NOGO. Trust yourself, you'll be able to spit out the details off the cuff.
- **Brief like you would for a real mission with a real platoon in Afghanistan or Iraq.** The RIs at Mountains still want to see you following the RHB OPORD and FRAGO shells, but they don't want you to recite a laundry list like at Darby. At Mountains they are much more common sense and mission-oriented. They don't want to hear you go on and on about hand and arm signals and how to walk in a squad column, fire team wedge. Get to the point. Don't brief that "Darby Bullshit", such as the spacing intervals between rangers. You have made it to Mountains at that point—the RIs are aware that you are aware of basic soldiering tasks/skills. The cliché phrase you'll hear all too often is "treat it like its real". The RIs absolutely hate when you "finger fuck" things (i.e. notionally doing things or treating the patrol as a training exercise). Little shit, like high-crawling into your SBF position or treating a react-to-contact as if there were real bullets coming at you will hype the RIs up—they love that stuff.
- **Mountains is all about making effective SOPs and sticking to them.** This is probably the single most important facet of Mountains phase. In Darby, you will NOT use SOPs. Every time you do anything, you will need to specifically state what you are doing, how you are doing it, and why. This is not the case for Mountains. The RIs want you to function like a real

platoon, and in order to do that, you NEED to have SOPs that everyone knows. A common thing we heard all the time was: “If the dumbest, lowest, most uninformed soldier in your platoon doesn’t know what an SOP is, then it is NOT an SOP”. If you make an SOP, make sure you communicate that with the rest of the platoon, and get other people’s input. There are so many people with many different backgrounds that bring different perspective into scenarios. If you get everyone’s input before you implement an SOP, you will inherently get a lot more buy-in from your dudes. Everything from how you occupy an ORP to how much time everyone gets to eat an MRE can be figured out with SOPs. At the same time, don’t get stupid with SOPs. You cannot plan for every scenario, so just make sure your SOPs are simple and flexible.

- **Make a common terrain model kit for the platoon.** Figure out who is the best terrain model guy, have him carry the kit, and make him responsible for the terrain model on every single mission. It’s a tough job, but critical. A good or bad looking terrain model is the first impression the RI has of the order. When the terrain model guru gets burned out, have him pass off the kit to someone else. Just be sure he’s good at it and OK with making the terrain model everyday. This is a good way to stay awake and involved every day. It helps pass the time and a good terrain model can set the leadership up for success. I would suggest always being willing to help in this area.
- **Always carry both canteens.** At Mountains you carry your NODs in an empty canteen pouch on your FLC. Be sure to pack that extra canteen in your ruck on the FTXs though, even if the packing list only says one canteen. An entire squad in my platoon was almost SOR’ed for not packing that second canteen, even though the packing list only said one. I carried mine for the first FTX after reading this, but regretted it. Just find out whatever your platoon is doing and go with that. I did not carry the second one, nor know anyone who did.
- **During rehearsals, always run actions on the objective first.** And always do rehearsals if you have time! Every squad can do (and benefit) from rehearsals. What is the point of rehearsal? The major reason for doing rehearsals is to identify friction points. Friction points (and how you deal with them) will likely be the difference between a GO/NO GO, and if you can identify as many as possible before your patrol, you are setting yourself up for success.
- **Terrain association is your main tool for land navigation.** The maps show trails, but most of them are unreliable at best. USE THE MOUNTAINS TO TERRAIN ASSOCIATE. This SHOULD go without saying, however, getting lost happens all the time. Don’t let someone who isn’t competent/confident with land nav be your pointman if you are the lead squad. Pointman gets lost □ Miss your OBJ hit time □ NO GO city. That said, land nav in Mountains is too easy. The RIs will likely only map-check you on top of Mountains or VERY prominent terrain features.
- **In Mountains and Florida especially, RIs want to see you assess the situation and think through a commonsense decision, not just go by the book.** For example, if you hit an LDA while you’re running from indirect fire, *blow through it!* In that situation, speed is the best security. If you’re far enough from the indirect that you think you can slow down but still don’t want to go into a security halt for a full LDA crossing, scroll the road. If they ask you why you did something, don’t assume you are wrong. More than likely they’re just looking for a good explanation, and if you have one you’re good to go. When the RIs are grading you, they will likely be constantly asking you what you are doing. Don’t let that get to your head—they likely just want to know what you are thinking. Make good decisions and be confident with them. That is what they are looking for.

- **If you get a GO your first patrol, keep working hard and don't quit on your buddies!** Aside from incompetence, this is probably the main reason guys get peered at Mountains or Florida. Help with FRAGOs, volunteer as team leader or pointman, carry the SAW, etc.
- **Make sure your squad gets to be ASLT 1 or 2 when you're not in leadership.** At Mountains and Florida, the same squads often get stuck with the same tasks for each mission. Each new PL tends to default to this, because it's an easy answer when they're pressed for time. However, if your squad is always security or support by fire, you're losing out on valuable training. If you're not involved in actions on the objective, you'll have a hard time knowing how to brief it in planning, or to lead the assaulting elements on execution. The only way around this is to straight up tell the new planning PL to make your squad ASLT 1 or 2. It's an easy change, but he probably won't do it unless you tell him to. The RIs assigned which guys are in leadership and what specific squad they are in charge of. We didn't have to worry about switching up squad roles—they did it for us.
- **You will be blown out of a patrol base.** It should happen on one of the last days of the first FTX. Just be prepared if you're PL, so you don't lose all your planning/briefing materials in the chaos. I say that because it happened. (I have never heard of anyone getting blown out of their PB during Ranger at night, although it was threatened a lot. We believed it was because of all the equipment that could have been lost had we bailed out. But they will hit you with IDF in the morning if your PB security sucks) The worst they would do was blow us out to the road and then we would just have to reestablish in the exact same PB spot. We were blown out of one PB and it was on the first night of the first FTX. Don't think that they won't do it, so always be ready to roll. Dudes lost A LOT of shit the night we were blown out of the PB.
- **Make sure the security squad Alpha TL is good at land nav.** They are the point man, and though it isn't graded, it's a tough and *critical* position. If they fail, the security SL and PL will probably fail too. Don't let anyone take it if they aren't confident in their land nav skills, including yourself. **And just because someone is confident in land nav (or literally any other skill throughout Ranger school) that does NOT equate to competence—remember this.
- **Any time you lay down, elevate your feet.** This is true all of Ranger School, but especially in Mountains. Take the extra 30 seconds to prop them up on your ruck or whatever. This will let your swollen feet drain after being up on them all day, and help prevent major foot problems.
- **Wear gloves at all times and take care of your hands.** This is particularly true at Mountains. Your fingers *will* crack to some extent, just don't let them get infected. Carry a little bottle of hand sanitizer on you at all times, and ask the medics for iodine scrubs at foot checks. They may or may not give you one.
- **Always know your current location on a map, even during mounted movements.** On the 2nd FTX, you'll have one mission with a really long truck movement. About halfway through, the trucks will stop and act like you've arrived. *It's a trick!!!* The RIs want to see that you're following along and know where you're at on the map. Tell them you're not there yet and show them approximately where you're at on the map, and they'll load back up and keep going like nothing happened. If you de-truck cause you assume you've arrived, you're a NOGO. I don't remember this being a mission, however, it is a very good point. Occasionally, the RIs may ask a rifleman their current location and if you know it, you are hooking up your SL/PL (on the same note, as a PL/SL do your best to constantly point out where you are on the map to your subordinates). You can even use your chokepoints as a

means to inform subordinates (we would have whoever wasn't in leadership—typically the Medic—hold a map and point to the location as each Ranger walked by). If you are in a leadership position, don't rack out on the truck movements. It'll be very tempting but losing track of where you are could be an instant NO GO.

- **Treat everything like it's real.** This is true all of Ranger School, but especially at Mountains and Florida. Unlike Darby, if you call in a 9-line MEDEVAC, more than likely a real helicopter will come to haul your guy out. **That only happened once to us, but the principle still stands to always treat it like it is real.**
- **Mentally prepare to walk all night at least once.** You'll probably have two 'walk-to-dawn' movements at Mountains, where the RIs mess with your mind by continually saying it's only 800m or so to the patrol base, and you keep marching pretty much all night. The tip off for this is when they let you eat your dinner MRE way earlier than normal, like 1900 or 2000, because you won't have time to eat it later that night. **With our class, 03-17, they started doing almost all of the movements in this fashion. You wouldn't walk until dawn, but it was pretty close some nights. We always ate our MRE after the actions on of the day mission and then would ruck for 5-6 hours normally. They want to keep you moving during the night to keep you warm. This may change if you are not going through during the winter though. Mentally prepare to walk all night every night. Although this probably won't actually happen, depending on which platoon/company you are in, it can get pretty damn close to it.**
- **The dog-ex at Mountains sucks.** Be sure you have \$10 for it though, because it's still food. It's a bag with two cold, dry hot dogs (some of them didn't even have buns), a candy bar, and a pop. You can buy up to two bags. Unlike Darby though, you get an MRE for the meal also.
- **Enjoy your care package goodies, but don't eat yourself stupid.** You'll have 45 – 60 minutes to eat as much as possible the last Friday of Mountains. Even if you don't have someone sending you goodies, take heart; there will be more than enough food going around to stuff yourself full. Don't overdo it though. Most guys gorge themselves on sugar, and feel horribly sick afterward. If you have a care package coming, ask them to send only enough food to eat in about an hour. TONS of food will be wasted, and you'll feel terrible about it. Ask them to send something at least semi-healthy too, to balance out all the crap you're sure to eat. And have them throw in a Gatorade or something to drink, because all the sugar and salt will make you super thirsty. **Within the last year they banned care packages so just let your loved ones know not to send anything other than packing list items or gum. I watched the RIs take my peanut butter, Nutella, tortillas, ect.. they did let me keep the gum and batteries however.**
- **You get a few minutes to call home the evening of the last Friday at Mountains.** Let your family know, so they can expect your call
- **Keep MRE trash.** The RIs made us take out all of our MRE packages on the last day of the 2nd FTX. They went through and made sure that everyone had two unopened ones and six opened ones. I don't know if they were checking for grazing or making sure guys were not dumping their trash, but they almost dropped the guys that didn't have the correct count of opened or unopened MREs. They also almost dropped a guy that had cut into his MRE when they told us to take them out because he anticipated we were eating them. Just always wait until you get the word to open them and eat and you will be fine. I would also suggest writing your last name and roster number on them when you get them and then after eating them get your MRE trash as small as possible, taping it off, and then putting them all in the same spot

to keep accountability of them. You are not allowed to field strip, so just leave the unopened ones as they are. The RIs will be extremely specific about any type of food. They will tell you EXACTLY when to eat an MRE. I would not recommend even testing the waters here. When it comes to MREs, getting caught eating at the wrong time is SOR-type stuff. If you do decide to graze, which isn't allowed but happens a lot, be very careful.

- **If you're a hungry Ranger volunteer for chow detail.** For breakfast you will have a huge amount of food but students are the ones who serve the food (with the supervision of the mess hall ladies)... I routinely saw guys 'hooking up' their buddies by giving an extra scoop of eggs or gravy. Usually the mess hall ladies let you nibble on bread in the morning while you're preparing the mess hall for the rest of the students. The mess hall ladies will also give out large portions at the end rather than wasting even more food, so the servers usually eat a little more than everyone else. Often times they let the detail eat before serving everyone else, the big thing here is you get a little more time to eat which is really nice during mountains. Don't cheat a buddy out of being on chow detail, just know it is not a bad thing if you get put on it.
- **Take a knee rather than racking out.** It is inevitable that you'll fall asleep on security, the RI's know this. So rather than just racking out and screwing over your squad leader, take a knee to stay awake. RI's will see this and know you're at least trying to stay awake. I heard one say they'd rather you take a knee and get shot in the face, than rack out and let your buddies inside the wire get shot. Another option is to always strongpoint at positions and stay awake by talking to each other.
- **In winter you'll water will freeze at night.** It usually falls below freezing at night in the mountains, so in order to prevent yourself from waking up without being able to drink any water there are a couple techniques I used: put a canteen in your bivy sack while you sleep or put your canteen upside-down in your canteen tin. By flipping it it prevents all of the water from freezing and you usually have something to drink. Also, after you take a sip out of your camelback, blow air into your hose so that all the water is pushed out of the hose. The hose will freeze alarmingly quick when the temperature is below freezing, and if it does freeze, you cannot use any of the water in your camelback.
- **Cover all your stuff in winter.** I left my boots out before I went to bed, and I woke up with them frozen and covered in snow. Your feet will usually already hurt so trying to force them into frozen boots in the morning was painful. Basically, every night (during the winter) you will wake up and everything will have frost on it, and it sucks for things you need to wear. Anything you plan on wearing, throw in your sleeping bag/bivy before you rack. This will make a huge difference.
- **Snivel gear is your greatest friend and greatest enemy.** Don't put any on until told to do so (at night you can get away with putting as much on as you want though) if you are found with any on during movement you will get SOR'ed. Don't bother with the double beanie cap, I saw a kid get dropped for that. It's not worth staying warm for the first couple hundred meters of the movement, although it sucks changing out of it in the morning. Very very solid advice. The only thing the RIs are MORE stringent about (other than MREs) is snivel gear. Be very careful should you choose to not obey what the RIs put out. During techniques week, one of the guys in my squad forgot to pack his wet weather top in his ruck. Thinking he could just substitute wet weather gear for cold weather gear, he put on his Goretex top (when we were instructed to put on the wwt). It took about 4 minutes for the RIs to light him up for this... and give him 2 major minuses.

- **During techniques week listen to the guidance on gum, knives, and lighters.** You aren't allowed to have these when you train during techniques and they are grounds for either a major minus or an SOR. The RI's are sneaky about it too: one RI asked my friend if he could borrow his knife (not knowing he had one) my buddy pulled it out and gave it to him, the RI smiled and handed him a major minus.
- **Don't get too buddy-buddy with the RI's.** They have no vested interest in you passing, they do however care about upholding the standard. They can quickly turn on you and crush you. In one instance one RI and my buddy got along well, but he forgot he was chewing gum during techniques. In an instant the RI nearly SOR'ed him, so if you're like me and can sometimes let his guard down – be weary of getting too close to RI's. You have NOTHING to gain by trying to “bro-out” or ask the RIs personal questions, but a lot to lose by attempting so. Even if you think “you're cool” with an RI, they will not hesitate to turn around and fuck you down if you screw something up or make a mistake. Be the gray man.
- **Be a student of the RI Roulette.** Like everything else there's a bell curve to the quality of RI's. Assess them immediately. One guy took notes during techniques as to what RI was big on so when we saw them again during the FTX he knew what to hit on. He could also gauge who was tough and who was chill extremely well. I was planning PSG for one mission and used nearly the exact same mass call plan as the guy before me. His RI told him that was the best one he'd ever seen, but my RI told me I should have used more detail. Some have higher standards than others, some are looking for specific things. The same RI who I thought NO GO'd me for that OPORD actually gave me a GO because “I was motivated the rest of the mission and didn't let my OPORD bring my motivation level down.” Whatever works I guess, a GO is a GO... Don't EVER give up on a mission. Even if you are positive you failed: A.) you never know until the AAR what the RI is actually going to decide to do and B.) Even if you fail, you can help get your boys some GOs, and that is probably the next best thing to getting a GO yourself and C.) If an RI sees you give up, he won't forget, and all the RIs talk.
- **Spartan rules.** So this may be a little unwritten rule...I saw some shady stuff occur that was chalked up to the old ‘spartan rules’ mindset, that is do whatever you need to to survive but without messing over your buddy directly i.e. dumpster diving for food, recycling stashing food behind the barracks, grabbing an extra cheerios box at breakfast, or swiping an extra MRE box from the RI shed at night. Some of these may be rumors, others I saw. I can only say this: don't let your decrepit physical condition influence your integrity in making decisions. It is easier said than done, trust me I know. But usually when things benefit the whole group, shady things are accepted. Case in point: we had a guy request and extra MRE for the platoon before the FTX – the RI's didn't realize it and so as a group we all decided to eat the MRE one night before we inevitably got dumped and found out. This surprisingly worked well and no one got caught. I saw guys sell their extra MRE instead, the highest I saw was 80 bucks for a Chicken and Dumplings. Never lose your integrity. Not going 100% on pushups when the RI is not looking when you are getting smoked in the middle of the night on a FTX in mountains is one thing, but never do anything to jeopardize your character. At the end of the day, Ranger school is still not as important as your integrity. A lot of times your actions will catch up to you too, so just operate in a fashion above reproach and you won't have to worry about a thing. Ranger school has a funny way of making sure things catch up with you. Whether its karma or whatever you choose to believe, what comes around goes around. You will absolutely see this occur.

FLORIDA

- Florida phase will start, and you will be expecting to get right into the mix immediately. This phase is definitely the most fast-paced (there is a reason they call it the sprint-phase). We got the least amount of sleep, by far, in Florida. The Florida RIs really don't mess around. They are as much "no bullshit" officers/NCOs as you will see the entire time at Ranger. They will expect you to know ALL your stuff upon getting there. They are very aware that they are the last line of defense against guys getting tabbed and have a very high standard for performance. There are no "gimmick looks" like you'll occasionally see in Mountains and Darby. They expect competent, confident, and hard-charging Ranger-leaders.
- **Save snacks from your MREs.** During techniques week when you get three meals a day, store up snacks for the FTX (when you only get two MREs a day and are working way harder). During the FTX in Florida you 'graze' on MREs, meaning you're given 3 or 4 days worth of MREs at a time, and allowed to eat them pretty much however you want. This also means there aren't really any rules on storing up food. You'll want to eat all your food during techniques, but trust me, you'll be thankful for that extra bit when you're sucking on the FTX! (We were not allowed to 'graze' ever during Ranger school. We had to eat the entire MRE when we were given it. I have heard of some companies allowing it near the end of the FTX however. Getting caught is an SOR.) Do not do this unless given direct permission from your RIs! I had a buddy get kicked out of Ranger school after making it straight through to Florida for this exact thing.
- **The packing list layout is even less serious in Florida than Mountains.** All they care about is the major items for the FTX and contraband. Watch out for the RIs slipping a can of dip in your bag as a practical joke. They scared a few guys in my platoon pretty good with that one. After moving through the swamps don't throw away your ACU's, they threatened to drop us if we had, thinking we did it to drop weight when really you just don't want those cruddy things back in your ruck. Although the RIs don't really care about what packing list items you do/don't have, DO NOT forget about any MRE trash. During the bus ride that you take from Mountains to FLA, you will get 2 MREs. Ensure that you consolidate ALL of that trash and throw it out either on the bus (into a trash bag if there is one) or immediately when you get off the bus. I had a buddy get a major minus during the layout because he had forgotten an MRE heater in one of his bags.
- **The Florida chow hall is awesome!** Enjoy it, and take advantage of it as much as you can. Breakfast is the best. You are given time to eat in Florida which is nice change after how rushed meals are at mountains.
- **The Florida recycle rate is about the same as Mountains.** There's a bad rumor that the GO rate in Florida is like 98%, and that once you get there you're pretty much graduated. NOT TRUE! What is true is that approximately 90% of guys who make it to Florida will eventually graduate. Although Mountains is the most physically demanding phase, the missions, leadership positions, and overall stress are more difficult in Florida. As usual, teamwork and your cohesion as a platoon are the most important factors for success. In my company (Alpha), the class before mine recycled 20/50 guys for patrols in Florida. According to the RIs, they were a bad platoon that didn't work well together. This had us all freaked at first, but don't worry about the past. My platoon, with the same RIs, only recycled 5. It all depends on you and your teamwork as a platoon.

- **Ask the Florida recycles to guide your SOP development.** They've already done it all, and have seen what works and what doesn't. You need to use the recycles in Florida more than any other phase. Remember though, most of them were recycled for a reason (though some just had bad luck). There seemed to be friction between the recycles and those coming from mountains. By the time a platoon is getting to Florida they have made it through two phases together and have a good idea of what works for them, however the recycles know what the Florida RIs are looking for. The important thing is that both parties come together and work together. Teamwork is by far the most important thing in this phase.
- **Use the free time during techniques week for SOP development and rehearsals.** First of all, you need the practice. Work out the kinks early so things run smooth on the FTX, and guys will get their GOs. Second, it gives a good impression and starts your platoon off on the right foot with the RIs. If you're doing the right thing, preparing even when you aren't forced to, they'll already give you props for teamwork and you'll start the FTX on their good side. This is very true. You will have a lot of "free" time during techniques week and the RIs expect you to be working on your SOPs during these times. If the RIs see your platoon constantly working on SOPs, it shows that your platoon actually cares about preparing yourselves and succeeding in the FTX.
- **Leadership positions are real-world rank dependent.** This is true in Florida more than any other phase. If you're an IN LT, especially if you haven't recycled yet, expect to be PL or PSG for a hard mission toward the end of the FTX. I'm sorry, but that's why a lot of the Florida recycles are IN LTs. LTs from other branches are a bit of a wildcard, and can find themselves anywhere. They often get SL positions though. The NCOs will probably have an earlier, somewhat easier leadership position, usually SL or PSG. Batboys are usually SLs too, and often later in the FTX like IN LTs. Both Batboys and IN LTs are pretty much *required* to go to Ranger School, so they get tested a bit harder. Florida recycles usually get easier missions at the beginning of the FTX, and are often SLs. The senior-most officer and NCO are usually the bay-planning PL and PSG, and often get their GO before the FTX even starts. This was the case in ALL phases. However, in Mountains, the RIs threw several different PFCs into PL spots with IN LTs as PSGs, so you never really know.
- **Look forward to the 'chow birds'.** When you air assault into a mission, the aircrew will usually bring pizza, pop, trail mix, and other snacks. Eat it as fast as possible. Even with your mouth stuffed full, be sure to give the crew a satisfied grunt or sign of gratitude when you stumble off the bird. (We didn't get 'chow birds' we didn't get helicopters at all during Florida actually, thanks to budget cuts.) The chow birds are still there! Chow birds are still a thing—most glorious 6 minute flight of your life (assuming you are NOT ABN qualified).
- **Take care of your health.** If you haven't already been sick, Florida is where you'll get it. You can get cellulitis and other junk *anytime* at Ranger School, even if you haven't had any other major health issues. A buddy of mine got cellulitis in his shin the last day of Ranger. It wasn't a major issue, but could have been. The majority of guys will have some kind of nasty sore throat, sinus issues, cough, etc. by Florida. Take advantage of the down time in the mornings before the FTX, and go to sick call if you need to. The medics will give you ibuprofen, Tylenol, cough drops, or whatever else you need. Just ask when they come around for foot checks and they are happy to help you out. If you go in a winter class, you can just about guarantee that you will come down with some type of respiratory ailment. Try to get medicine BEFORE the FTX begins, as once you're in the field, it is significantly more difficult to get.

- **Go to the chapel service.** The chaplain in our Florida class was awesome, and gave us some great encouragement. He was a Ranger, former Delta operator, etc., so really knows what you need to hear. Absolutely. The Catholic Priest was a former guitar player and a total bro. He also gave out chocolate and candy in the post-FTX mass and followed it with a “mini concert” where he just shredded songs that people requested. Hands down, my favorite hour of FLA phase.
- **Volunteer for leadership positions during techniques training!** I can’t emphasize this enough. In my company at Florida the leadership for PEs was all volunteer based, so ask for it! Very true. The RIs will likely nitpick you really hard during the PEs, but it will likely result in you NOT making the same mistake when you’re actually patrolling... which is huge.
- **Anxiety over your leadership position will be the worst in Florida.** You have to just let it go, and trust your abilities and your buddies. You can’t control the rest of it, so don’t worry about it. For some reason it seemed like Florida was the hardest mentally for everyone. Just try and stay focused, positive, and don’t get too caught up in counting down the days. Absolutely. The FLA RIs were incredibly strict on everyone’s first look (the first 5 days of the FTX), so much so that after 5 days I think we had maybe 10 GOs out of 45 people. They do this on purpose to make sure people aren’t giving up halfway through the FTX. Stay focused and be prepared at any time to take the reins of the platoon and lead the patrol. Another reason that I believe FLA was so much more mentally demanding than the other phases was due to the lack of sleep in FLA compared to other phases. We averaged approximately 45 minutes of sleep a night, and when you do that on top of patrolling (and the food deprivation + stress) it makes a huge difference. You will work overtime just to get make sure your dudes are doing what they are supposed to.
- **Expect to take a lot of casualties on the missions.** Unless the patrol goes awesome, you’ll have masscals pretty much every mission. Don’t worry about trying to execute the masscal plan perfectly, because that never happens. As a leader, the point is just to control the chaos. Additionally, a lot of time one of the things the PL/PSG are graded on is their ability to execute a CASEVAC plan/ call in a MEDEVAC. Because of this, often it doesn’t matter how good your patrol goes, and they will just make casualties to see how you react.
- **Be wary of chow thieves.** Because you’re supplied with 6 or so MREs at a time and can graze in Florida, the opportunity for thievery is much greater. Some guys slept with their MREs in their bivy, some locked them up in sustainment pouches, and some just kept them buried in their ruck so it would be easy to spot a raccoon digging for goodies. Every platoon is different, but keep positive control of your food. Again, do not graze, you are not allowed to. I also never felt threatened that someone would steal my MREs. However, do make sure to keep accountability of them. In Florida you will be able to send out trash when you get resupplied in the mornings, so they typically won’t count your MRE trash, but make sure you have accountability of however many unopened or opened MREs you are supposed to have. At no point, did I feel worried or concerned that one of my platoon mates would still an MRE. That said, you will have MREs in the barracks (where other platoons/companies will be), and you never know what will happen with people you’re not “in the trenches with”. Also, when it came time for us to eat our very last MRE on night 10 of the FTX, we all pulled out our MREs and one of my squad mates could not find his. Because our rucks got transpo’d back from Santa Rosa Island, we theorized that the MRE must have fallen out of his ruck when they were getting moved around. Luckily, the RI in charge did not check if

everyone had their MRE, but if they had it would've likely resulted in an SOR on the spot. On a side note, lookout for your fellow guys. When that guy did not have an MRE, he didn't eat, right? WRONG. Every squad mate of ours pitched in to give him something (voluntarily) and the guy ended up with a near full MRE. A situation like the one previously stated could happen to anyone, and just imagine if that was you without any food.

- **The Florida missions are movement to contact, clearing named areas of interest (which usually turn into movement to contact), ambush, and raid.** Yes, you've done most of these before, but they are all more complicated in Florida and you almost always have to deal with a masscal at the end. The movements are longer, and a few of your patrol bases *will* be attacked by OPFOR. Absolutely. As a SL, my squad took contact in the PB and we had to react-to-contact. Eventually, that mission was totally botched (the PL got lost and because of a "lightning lockdown" we did not even conduct a raid on the OBJ). Every single member of the CoC (SLs, PL, PSG) EXCEPT for myself got a NO GO. The RI who graded me (who also graded all the other SLs) specifically stated that because of my squad's PB activities and the way we reacted-to-contact he gave me a GO. The FLA PB activities are absolutely critical and are graded extremely strict.
- **"Treat it like it's real."** Almost every time I asked an RI in Florida how to get a GO on my patrol, this was their response. This is just as true in Darby and Mountains, but they're particularly keen on it in Florida. Forget you're in Ranger School shooting blanks, and treat the mission like you would a patrol in Afghanistan or Iraq. Do that every step of the way, and chances are you'll do the right thing and be successful. The second the RIs see you cutting corners and just going through the motions, they'll write you off as a NO GO. They take it personal, and it pisses them off. More than a few times, especially after a crappy mission, the RIs asked how many of us would be deploying immediately after Ranger School. Probably half the platoon raised their hands. They responded, "Alright, so this is your pre-deployment train up. The next time you run a raid, it will be for keeps. The next time you do a 3-second buddy rush, it will be with rounds snapping overhead. Do you really want your dress rehearsal for war to go like *that*?" And they're right. After one of these conversations following a particularly messy masscal, an RI described how just such carelessness recently got his younger brother killed in Afghanistan. This is so true. The RIs in FLA realize that they are the only thing between you and getting your tab. A lot of times this results in people thinking there are "tab protectors" in FLA. Although some heinous stories are true, most of this rumor mill stems from the RIs actually holding everyone to a really high standard that they want to see out of soldiers preparing to go to war.
- **The RIs want to see measured aggression in you leadership.** Sometimes you'll have to step out of your normal personality and comfort zone to give them what they want and accomplish the mission. Even if it feels strange, you must understand that Ranger School is a very abnormal environment that's probably unlike anything you've ever experienced. The type of leadership you're used to getting the job done in the real world probably won't here when your platoon is droning, starved, possibly hallucinating, and just wants to curl into a ball and die. Even if you feel uncomfortable doing it, get aggressive. Speaking from someone who had a day 10 PSG look, I can relate to this on multiple levels. Whether you like to or not, you will need to be constantly checking your guys, and consistently putting "boot to ass". In general, as the PSG that is one of the largest things you are graded on. For the most part, everyone understands that you're out there trying to get you and your peers GOs and respond appropriately.

- **Florida is the most challenging mentally.** The RIs play more mind games with you there, like throw out a FRAGO for a 15 km movement when you thought you were 100m from your patrol base, then FRAGO right back to the original plan after 15 minutes of madness.
- **Do everything possible to cross the swamps in daylight.** There are two swamp missions at Florida, 'The Boiling' and 'The Weaver.' Whoever is planning PL for these missions needs to make speed a high priority, because crossing them in daylight will make the missions infinitely easier and less painful. Chances are you'll have to do at least one of them at night regardless though. This surprised me. When I thought of Florida I thought we would be spending a lot more time in the swamps. In a lot of ways Florida's terrain is a lot like Darby, just flatter. You will cross a creek or two on some days, but Day 6 and Day 8 are the only swamp movements. The Boiler is on day 6 and the Weaver is on day 8. The Boiler has more of a sandy bottom while the Weaver has more of a muddy bottom. We went through the Weaver at night and it still only took around 4 hours. It is not the best 4 hours of your life, but it's only 4 hours. Just follow the guy in front of you and look forward to getting on solid ground. While it is unfortunate to be in leadership on either of these days, just continue to operate like you know how. My buddy got his only go in Florida being weaver PL, so it does happen. Crossing during the daylight was not really an option for us. We crossed the Boiler on the way to our OBJ before sunset, and it was not too bad. However, we exfilled from the OBJ using the same route, and crossed the Boiler for the 2nd time at night and capped it off with a one-rope bridge across the river we infilled on. Long story short, we got really wet, and because it was nighttime, it was really cold. Prepare for a really sucky night when the swamp missions come, but like everything else in the school, it is finite and will end. Buck up, put one foot in front of the other and finish the mission—it's that simple.
- **Talk to the RIs.** When you're not in leadership, ask them real-world Army questions and stuff. The RIs in Florida are the most mentoring of any of the phases, and they want to teach you. Plus, it's just human nature for them to be more inclined to pass a guy they have a personal connection with. Did not experience this level of connection/mentorship in any phase consistently. There will absolutely be certain RIs in all phases that want to know who you are and will treat you with respect. One of the RIs in Mountains actually addressed me as "Sir" throughout the entire AAR after one of my missions when finding out I was an IN LT. However, that is not the norm. Do not let your guard down around the RIs because if you do, and mess something up, they are unlikely to give you a mulligan.
- **Coordinate with adjacent units** (especially your sister platoon). This isn't really an issue in Darby or Mountains, but it will be in Florida. Call them on the radio and ask for their movement plan and ORP and OBJ grid locations. Otherwise you might just walk right through their leader's recon or actions on the OBJ. Yes, it happened. Be aware of where your adjacent units are operating and control fires accordingly. In FLA and Mountains, you will likely do all your coordinations via commo, and (especially during FLA) the RIs will be very hands-off. This can be good. This can also be very bad. If you don't do the coordinations properly, and you don't deconflict routes and fires you can run into another platoon, literally (i.e. NO GO city).
- **Don't worry about leading your platoon through the swamp.** It's real-world dangerous enough that the RIs pretty much have to control it, and even the PL will end up just following the guy in front of him and sucking his way through. The RIs led our platoon through the swamps. Although this did not require the leadership to physically navigate through the swamps, the leadership did get map-checked immediately following the movement.

Additionally, the RIs set a very fast pace for our platoon, which almost created breaks in contact. Typically, a break in contact results in an auto NO GO for whichever leader is in charge of the element that breaks contact. However, in the swamps, a break in contact can result in an SOR for the individual that breaks contact. Although the pace will likely be fast, and it will be very hard to move fast because the swamps will be like walking in quicksand, you need to make sure that you are keeping up.

- **Be sure to have good, strong guys carrying the automatic weapons through the swamps.** It's a tough, painful job that is critical for the success of the mission. If you don't keep them clean they won't fire, and both the WSL and the PL will fail. Additionally, double and triple check the tiedowns for all the heavy weapons. During one of the movements, one of the guys in our platoon who had the 240B noticed that the tiedown for the bipod was loose/ripped off. He said that he told the RI right before the movement and the RI just shrugged and said that there was nothing he could do about it now. During the movement, the bipod came loose, and fell off in the swamp. The guy ended up getting a major minus and statement of charges for the bipod. Just because you tell one RI of a specific situation it does not mean that you will get immunity from any negative repercussions of something bad that happens during a mission.
- **Clean, smooth firing automatic weapons are a critical for success** in all phases of Ranger School. Ranger is all about violence of action, so if the 240s go down or the SAWs are jamming up, their squad leader and possibly the PL will probably get a NOGO. Violence of action will make/break the entire leaderships' look in every phase.
- **Have \$30 available for the dog-ex and pie-ex.** The dog-ex is pretty lame, \$5 for a bag with two hot dogs, chips, candy bar, and pop. At least the dogs are hot in Florida. The pie-ex is in the Gator Lounge, where you can buy as much pizza, ice-cream pie, and pop as you want. I didn't spend any money, and had plenty to eat off the massive quantities of food everyone else bought. Once again, do yourself a favor and indulge in moderation. Don't eat yourself stupid. Starting now, your body is in recovery mode. If you binge on junk, you're going to feel horrible and get fat. I saw it happen to plenty of guys.
- **Ask for more food in your care package for Florida.** You'll have a lot more time to eat it, and you can take it all with you on the bus ride back to Benning the next day. (I wasn't allowed to take mine on the bus, and they may be banishing care packages from Ranger school altogether because there is such a big problem with guys keeping it as contraband. There are no longer care packages at any phase.) At the end of our phase on the last night, they gave out all the mail that got there for the entire phase. Anyone who had a care package was allowed to eat whatever was in there. The whole care package issue I know is constantly changing. I would recommend pre-staging a care package or getting family/friends to send you one. Spend \$20 or so on food that you want. Enough so that you can get some good post-FTX food, but not so much that in the case they decide to throw away your package you are really bummed.
- **Don't do anything stupid!** The RIs will tell you horror stories about guys getting recycled immediately before graduation because they tried to sneak a cell phone call or something. They're true, so don't jeopardize your tab for something stupid! Just continue to put up with the Ranger School crap for another few days and graduate.
- **CIF turn in is not very strict at all.** Just be sure you don't have any water in your canteens, and your e-tool is spray painted nice and black. Those are the two main things they check. Plenty of guys didn't even wash their stuff and CIF still took it all. To be safe though, go to

the Laundromat on main post, throw *everything* in one of the big TA-50 washers (ruck frame and all), then split it up into a few dryers to dry faster. Be sure you dry everything thoroughly, because wetness is the one thing CIF won't tolerate. The whole Laundromat process shouldn't take more than 1 – 1.5 hours, and will only cost a few dollars. If you're coming from IBOLC, you will keep all your TA-50 and turn it in through 2/11 when you clear Benning. (CIF is actually terribly brutal now because they don't issue TA-50 gear specific for Ranger school, so it must meet the standard that anyone outprocessing from Benning must meet. Many guys were turned away and had to go back on graduation day.) During my class they made guys stay the weekend after graduation at Camp Rogers if their CIF didn't pass, so if you are not IBOLC or ABOLC make sure to take the time at Florida to clean your TA-50. Being IBOLC/ABOLC is super clutch during the last week. We got released at around noon on the Wednesday and Thursday before graduation, so that we got like a 10 hour pass both days. However, if you are not IBOLC/ABOLC...prepare yourself. They are absolutely brutal with the CIF stuff, and WILL make guys stay after graduation if you don't get everything turned in.

- **You'll have an 8 hour pass and a 6 hour pass the two days before graduation.** Be sure you have a calling card to let family know when and where (4th RTB, Camp Rogers) to pick you up. Plan on around 1300 for the 8 hour pass, and about 1500 for the 6 hour. Whenever they tell you to be back, *do not be late!!!* You won't graduate otherwise.
- **If you're coming from IBOLC, your next report time will be 0900 Tuesday on Taylor Field** (unless it's a holiday weekend or you're told otherwise). Enjoy the long weekend reveling in your Ranger glory! (Actually they give you a 4 day weekend right after Ranger and you must show up at 0545 for PT at 2-11 HQ) As of now it is 0900 the following Wednesday back at 2-11.
- **It is about the ability to endure.** After completing the course, I can tell you that the tab to me means more about sucking it up and pushing through than anything else. It will suck because it's so long, but endure through it and like anything else it will come to an end. Temporary suffering is easily forgettable. And remember they only have time on you. The guy dropping me off went a few years before me and on the way told me "More good than bad will come from Ranger School." I thought about that sometimes out there. Best of luck!
- **Ranger School is a marathon.** This is one of the best pieces of advice that I got before reporting. Keep this in mind from the day you show up. A lot of guys will treat ranger as a sprint, especially during RAP week and will go HAM for certain events trying to get a major plus (specifically the ruck, the 5-mile run, and land nav). Don't worry about getting a major plus while still in RAP week. I don't know of a single person that actually received a major plus for anything during RAP week, despite people going for the 5th point, getting under 32 minutes on their 5-mile, etc. Obviously, it will be a personal decision when it comes down to it, but from my experience, I saw more people fail land nav because they went for a 5th point and busted time than people who were happy they went above and beyond.