

Sua Sponte: The Forging of a Modern American Ranger

Dick Couch

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Sua Sponte Latin for “Of Their Own Accord”

The MOTTO OF THE 75TH RANGER REGIMENT

The 75th Ranger Regiment is a unique and distinct culture among the American military establishment. They stand alone, even among our other Special Operations forces, as the most active brigade-sized force in the current Global War on Terrorism. Since 9/11, The Regiment is the only continuously-engaged unit in the Army, and has had forty percent of its number deployed in harm's way for the last decade. Their mission is unique. Rangers do not patrol, they don't train allied forces, nor do they engage in routine counterinsurgency duties. They have a single-mission focus; they seek out the enemy and they capture or kill them. It sets Rangers apart as pure, direct-action warriors.

Army Rangers are not born. They are made. The modern 75th Ranger Regiment represents the culmination of 250 years of American soldiering. As the nation's oldest standing military unit, The Regiment traces its origins to Richard Rogers' Rangers during the pre-revolutionary French and Indian War, through the likes of Francis Marion and John Mosby, to the five active Ranger battalions of the Second World War, and finally, to the four battalions of the current Ranger regiment engaged in modern combat. Over that period, a standard of professional excellence and the forging of that excellence is distilled in the selection, assessment, and training of today's Rangers.

Granted unprecedented access to the training of this highly-restricted component of America's Special Operations Forces in a time of war, retired Navy Captain Dick Couch tells the personal story of the young men who begin this difficult and dangerous journey to become a Ranger. Many will try but only a select few will survive to serve in the 75th ranger regiment. *Sua Sponte* follows a group of these aspiring young warriors through the crucible that is ranger training and their preparation for direct-action missions in Afghanistan against the Taliban.

Sua Sponte: The Forging of a Modern American Ranger Details

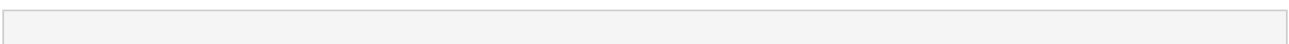
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From Reader Review Sua Sponte: The Forging of a Modern American Ranger for online ebook

Ginny says

I listened to the audio book, well-narrated. Inspiring and enlightening. There is so much that the average civilian doesn't know or understand about our special forces. They are all amazing!

Keith Johnson says

The 1st half of the book is interesting. The 2nd half gets repetitive and boring.

Matthew says

Awesome inside look at what the men of the 75th Ranger Regiment have to go through just to call themselves Rangers. These men volunteer for the Army, then they volunteer for Airborne school, and finally, they volunteer for Ranger duty. Have a completely new level of respect for these gentlemen.

Tharkûn says

I found this the driest Dick Couch book I've read. I don't mean that as a criticism of the author, as much as a comment on the subject matter.

This book begins with a compact history and overview of the 75th Ranger Regiment, then proceeds to follow both low ranking enlisted (RASP 1) and NCO/Officer (RASP 2) classes through their selection and training courses. The final chapters follow a class through the Regiments pre-ranger course, then a unit through it's pre-deployment work up, concluding with the authors reflections of his experience and speculations on the future of the regiment.

The dryness of the writing is due to the long, technical accounts of the training these men undergo. I felt that the author had less enthusiasm for this unit compared to his accounts of Navy Seal(a unit that he was a part of) and Special Forces (a unit whose 'by, with, and through' mission he seemed to love) training, due to the essentially direct action nature of the Rangers. And direct-action training is just not that interesting to read about.

What is best in this book is the accounts of individuals in the selection process. The people involved in RASP 1 were often far older than I expected they would be, given the unit's reputation. This may just reflect the economic downturn and the changing nature of the Army given budget cuts and the Millennial generation, but even so it was interesting to see Privates frequently with ten year age gaps between them.

Some things of interest: The book mentions a push current at the time of writing, to reduce the number of contracted recruits and instead fill incoming classes with top scoring volunteers from whatever the initial

training for whatever MOS is currently needed for the Regiment. This seems like a good idea to me, and obviously is necessary for any potential recruit to know. I also found the examples of physical training often backed up my opinion that the military is way behind the latest in exercise science. The only time the recruits were asked to stop doing thousands of push ups and sit ups and lift weights involved a test for reps of the bench press (at 185 lbs. IIRC) and deadlift (at 205, again, IIRC) which just seems absurd and useless, as well as potentially dangerous. But any flaws are relatively small and correctable, and, for an 8-week course, I was surprised at how much they managed to cram in, especially relative to the many months Special Forces and SEAL candidates have to go through.

Recommendation: Obviously this book is mandatory reading for anyone planning on entering the regiment, and is the most current explanation of Ranger training for anyone interested in the subject. For those just interested in the unit and their role in the WOT, there are better titles I'm sure.

Kevin Hart says

Clear,concise,and riveting

I really enjoy Mr.Couch's style of writing. He doesn't confuse you with fancy, needless adjectives and he doesn't bore you with dry, technical writing. It's lucid and exciting writing and also inspiring and educational.

Robert Chapman says

I read this book as I enjoy learning about the detailed efforts which go into the making of elite soldiers. The training these soldiers undertake represent peak performance in the extreme.

The author does an excellent job of chronicling Ranger training from RASP 1 Phase 1 all the way through to pre-deployment workup.

Charity U says

So I'm an Army girlfriend, and my man is going into the Army Rangers. Finding information about the Rangers can be a little difficult, even with the internet. They're a very elite Special Ops team. So when someone recommended this book to me, I bought it immediately.

To my utter delight, the book is highly informative and easy to read. It walks through RASP training day-by-day, week-by-week. The section on Ranger School is much shorter, but RASP 1 is particularly in-depth, and there is a nice section on RASP 2 as well, for those who have someone going that route. In addition, this book includes very helpful information on deployment, the Ranger battalions (1/75, 2/75, and 3/75), and what to expect as someone at home. And finally, one of the early chapters is history of the Rangers. If your soldier is going the Ranger path, you'll probably want to skip to Chapter 3, with all the information about RASP. But the history is very interesting and enlightening as well.

I highly recommend this for anyone with a soldier entering the Rangers. Knowledge is power. Rangers lead the way!

Robert Garcia says

Dick Couch is an incredible writer. Excellent well researched and written book that showcases the Rangers like no other person could do. Mr Couch due to his background and understanding the SpecOp community. For a Navy Seal who shines the light how other operators in the very small and elite community work, train, and live.

For in his other book, Chosen Soldier, he wrote an excellent tome of the US Army Special Forces groups and now in Sua Sponte: The Forging of a Modern American Ranger is another incredible tome about the Rangers.

Highly recommended to anyone who likes to read about our wonderful highly trained Armed Forces by a writer who came from those same Men and Women who serve proudly our great nation.

Charles Jones says

I happened on this book when looking for research material for my son . He has recently reported to Fort Benning and is slated for the Ranger Regiment assuming successful completion of all the training. I am retired Army and am familiar with the Regiment. What I was not prepared for was the realization of what that unit and those incredible soldiers have lived for the past 11 years. Mr. Couch deserves a star in heaven for showing us all the snap shot of the 75th Rangers and their service.

I have two son's. Both serve. One is a Navy Chaplin the other I have mentioned. I keep them both in my prayers. Now I have added an entire Regiment.

Dan says

(Disclaimer: this book was read for research on a writing project. The author of the review has no personal experience with military service, and does not intend to validate the veracity of the specifics accounted in the book)

Ultimately, a useful and readable account of RASP and Ranger training after selection. A few minor negatives: the transcription of dialogue feels stilted and 'unnatural' - it is difficult to imagine anyone communicating in the way Mr. Couch suggests they do. Additionally, Mr. Couch occasionally editorializes on issues such as his views on the Millennial generation, which was beside the point and off-putting. I would only dock a half star if Goodreads allowed that rating.

Jim Hill says

In depth look at Ranger selection and then Ranger training.

I enjoyed how involved the author was in going through the training and interacting with the candidates and

then the Ranges in training.

Darren Sapp says

No one tells the stories of how men become Seals, Rangers, Green Berets, and Force Recon better than Dick Couch. This is a reader, not some stuffy list of training requirements.

Nick Christopher says

Sua Sponte is all about the 75th Ranger Regiment in the United States Army. It is an assault/raiding force that is very high speed, low drag. I'm very interested in the Regiment because of my wanting to be there once I get into the Army. Reading Sua Sponte gave me a head to toe view of RASP and the Regiment itself. I found it extremely informative and also found myself not being able to put it down. I loved this book and encourage anyone who wants to learn more about the Regiment or join it in the future to read this book.

Brandon says

The book content itself was good, understandably general due to OPSEC concerns. The biggest negative that stands out, is that it reads as though it was written for non-military types or people new to the conventions of military jargon and operations. It definitely has the air of recruiting propaganda. The dialogue, particularly the training staff, is very unrealistic. It's almost comical to hear his quoting of drill instructors sounding like nice, caring school teachers. When in reality, they are yelling and swearing, pushing trainees to their limits.

The narrator, as is quite usual in most books, is unfamiliar with military training and lingo. Some mispronunciations and his character voices only further the unrealistic effect of the instructors. He speaks like the cliché propaganda video narrator from the 50's.

All in all, it was a good overview of the process and training involved in becoming a US Army Ranger. It would have been better if Couch had included more specifics of the training and skills, but like I said in first sentence, understandable.

Nadir says

Couch does an excellent job of describing the extraordinary effort required to become a Ranger, from assessment and selection (RASP) to retention of senior NCOs and officers (all of whom must earn a Ranger school tab), to the daily training when preparing to deploy overseas. After reading this, there is no doubt that the 75th Ranger Regiment is indeed America's finest light infantry force. I got tired just reading about their training! ;)

The one area the book does not explore is actual combat operations, clearly in order not to risk divulging important tactics, techniques, and procedures.

