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The Noncommissioned Officer: Images of an Army in Action.

United States Army Corps of Engineers

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AN ORDERED AND DISCIPLINED CAMP
Virginia, 1781

During the Revolutionary War, quartermaster sergeants prepared camp for General George Washington's army at the end of the day's march. The technical proficiency of these NCOs contributed directly to the speed with which Washington could move his regiments. This specialty, for example, enabled the continentals to march 350 miles so rapidly that

they surprised the British at Yorktown in the battle that decided American independence. Here the quartermaster sergeant directs a private on the duty detail setting up tents, preparing fires, and otherwise readying a new bivouac for the night.



TO RANGE THE WOODS
New York, 1760

During the colonial wars before the Revolution, Ranger patrols, often led by sergeants, performed valuable scouting missions for the British regulars trying to capture Canada from the French. Such military operations in heavily forested North America differed from Old World linear tactics. As opposed to their European NCO counterparts, who

were used primarily to prevent straggling and maintain fire discipline, American NCOs had the opportunity to demonstrate small-unit leadership skills and independent judgment. Here Rangers, including an American sergeant about to set off on a raiding mission into French territory, discuss their mission with a regular sergeant of the British Army.