

**MSG (1/SGT) William B. Rogers**

**By**

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**L579 History of the Non Commissioned Officer**

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I Before the Army 1911- 1929

- A. 12 APR 11, Born in Franklinton NC
- B. Joined the Army National Guard at the age of 17 in 1929

II Enlisted in the Army 1930-1962

A. before WWII 1930-1944

1. From 1930-35 co D 12<sup>th</sup> IR at Ft Meade and Arlington cantonment
2. 1935-41 Ft Howard/ Arlington
3. Jun 41 to Ft Dix
4. Oct 41 to Ft Benning, Harmony church
5. Dec 41 to Camp Gordon
6. Jan 43 to Ft Dix
7. Sep 43 to Camp Gordon and Johnston FL
8. Dec 43 to Ft Jackson
9. Jan 44 to Camp Kilmer NJ
10. 15 Jan 44 embarked to England

B. WWII 1944-1945

6 Jun 44 –Utah Beach

C. After WWII 1945-1962

1. Atlantic City /US Army exhibition
2. 45-51 Cumberland MD (2551<sup>st</sup> ASU MD ORC INST Group)
3. 52-55 Frankfurt Germany Family
4. 55-57 Ft Bragg
5. 57-57 Ft Polk

6. 57-62 Ft Bragg
7. 28 FEB 62 retired

D. Awards

E. Comparison of NCOs today

1. Uniforms
2. Rank/Promotions
3. Transformation

### III Retirement 1962-1975

- A. Settled down Bethania, NC
- B. Worked at Wake Forest
- C. Sudden illness

## **MSG (1/SGT) William B. Rogers**

What is NCO history? If you are an NCO with over five years in the U.S. Army, you are part of NCO history. All NCOs that are attending the Sergeants Major Academy are NCO history, whether they believe it or not. These Noncommissioned Officers have left their mark on the soldiers they led, the Army they are in and the country they served. We must not forget our history. The following history was compiled from MSG Rogers's official military records and interviews with his wife M. Shirley Rogers and daughter Sherilyn B. Weis (Rogers).

### **Before the Army 1911- 1929 -12 APR 11**

William B. Rogers was born in Franklinton, North Carolina on 12 April 1911 to Tobacco Farmers. He was one of nine children. He did not want to live on a tobacco farm all his life. He joined the Army National Guard at the age of 17. He did not complete High School. When he retired, his highest education level was a General Education Development (GED) certificate.

### **Before WWII 1929-1944**

He enlisted in the North Carolina Army National Guard in 1929 as an Artilleryman in the 113<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery. He was in the National Guard for 22 months before joining the Regular Army on 6 May 1930. Unlike today's Soldier, he stayed in one unit most of his career. His first regular Army unit that could found was Company D, 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment at Ft Meade and Arlington cantonment area. He served there from 1930-1935.

In 1935, his unit became part of the Washington Provisional BDE. He started his career as an artilleryman and moved to Infantry later. He was part of the horse draw caissons during this time. The unit was the "The Presidents Own". His unit was part of the nations

Honor Guard in Arlington. His unit was located at Fort Howard and Arlington between 1935 and 1941. In 1933, he changed branches and became an Infantry Soldier.

The next couple of years were turbulent moving up and down the east coast preparing for combat in Europe. These were unit moves. This means that the whole unit moved up and down the coast not just individual Soldiers. In June 1941, the 12<sup>th</sup> IR moved to Fort Dix to train and receive soldiers to get to full strength. At this time, the Army started to fill their support units assigned to the division. The Army started changing the way they were fighting and decided to make the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment a motorized infantry regiment. The 12<sup>th</sup> IR(motorized ) moved to Fort Benning in October 1941. The unit occupied the Harmony Church area. At this time they did not have all the vehicles and equipment for the motorize transition. A support truck company was assigned to the 12<sup>th</sup> for training until they received their vehicles. They did not even have the cannons for their artillery units.

The attack on Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941, forced the unit to move again, this time to Camp Gordon. The 12<sup>th</sup> IR completed the move by the end of December 1941. At Camp Gordon, they trained and received the rest of their motorized equipment and weaponry. After receiving all their equipment, the 12<sup>th</sup> moved again to Fort Dix to train on ranges and the use of their weapons. The move concluded in January 1943. At this time, he was assigned to the Anti-tank company.

The Army ordered the 12<sup>th</sup> IR (motorized) back to Camp Gordon in September 1943. When they arrived at Camp Gordon, they were demotorized. They became straight legs infantry once again. Once they were at Camp Gordon, they were sent to Johnston FL for Amphibious. In December 1943, the 12<sup>th</sup> completed amphibious training and ordered to Fort Jackson. They were drilling daily preparing to deploy.

Early January 1944, the 12<sup>th</sup> IR was ordered to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. There they waited orders to sail to England. The 12<sup>th</sup> IR received their travel orders on 15 January 1944. They embarked to England as shipment number 1589-6. While in England, they were spread out along the Exe River. This was near the town of Exemouth.

#### WWII 1944-1945

On 6 June 1944, the 12<sup>th</sup> IR landed on Utah beach. This was the southern edge of the Normandy invasion. Their mission was to secure the beachhead. Their next mission was to swing around and take the port town of Cherbourg. The 12<sup>th</sup> IR then moved on to Paris. After the seizure of Paris, the 12<sup>th</sup> IR moved to the Belgium border and regrouped. The 12<sup>th</sup> IR attached its Anti Tank Company to a unit engaged in the Hurtgen Forrest. The unit they were supporting received heavy casualties along with the AT company. The 12<sup>th</sup> IR relieved that unit with the AT company remaining in place. The AT Company remained in the forest twice as long as any other 12<sup>th</sup> element. This was in November of 1944. The 12<sup>th</sup> s pulled back later and was involved in the Battle of the Bulge. After the Battle of the Bulge, the 12<sup>th</sup> moved through Germany. Notably, the 12<sup>th</sup> is credited for taking the historical walled city of Rothenberg without firing a shot. The 12<sup>th</sup> IR ended up in southeastern Germany when all was said and done. On 12 July 1945, the 12<sup>th</sup> headed home. The 12<sup>th</sup> IR was inactivated at Camp Butner, North Carolina in February 1946.

#### After WWII 1945-1962

After 1<sup>st</sup>/SGT William Rogers returned from Europe he participated in the U.S. Army exhibition in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The exhibit lasted all summer of 1946. After the exhibit was over, he went to Cumberland Maryland where he trained U.S. Army reserves until

1951. The official unit title pulled from his DA 24 (service record) was the 2551<sup>st</sup> ASU MD ORC Inst Group.

In 1952 1<sup>st</sup>/SGT Rogers PCS'd to Frankfurt Germany. His family joined him there. His family had to take an old troop ship to get there. He stayed in Germany until 1955. When he returned to the states, he was stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina in Headquarters Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> LOG CMD. His unit moved to Fort Polk, Louisiana in January 1957. He moved back to Fort Bragg, North Carolina in November of 1957 and assigned to United States Army Garrison (USAG), Fort Bragg. While stationed at Fort Bragg he moved to the 1<sup>st</sup> LOG CMD and back to USAG, Fort Bragg prior to retiring. On 28 February 1962, MSG William B. Rogers retired from the U.S. Army with over 30 years of service.

#### Awards and Decorations

MSG (1<sup>st</sup>/SGT) William B. Rogers awards and decorations include: the Bronze Star, awarded 2 MAY 1945 for actions in World War II; the Army Accommodation Medal, for 30 years of service; the Army Good Conduct Medal, 5<sup>th</sup> Award for fidelity and honorable service; the American Defense Service Medal, for serving in the defense of the U.S.A.; the American Campaign Medal, for defending the U.S.A.; the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with Arrowhead and 2 bronze campaign stars, for service in Europe during WWII and arrowhead for D-Day; the World War II Victory Medal, for the victory of WWII; the Army Occupation Medal with Germany clasp, for serving as an occupation force in Germany after WWII; the Belgium Croix de Guerre, from the Belgium Government; the Belgium Fouragere of the Order of Leopold and the Distinguished Unit Service Badge, while serving with the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division during World War II. The Combat Infantry Badge was awarded on 18 AUG 1944.

### Comparison of NCOs today

The Army is in the midst change. This is not a new idea. The Army has been changing through out its history. The following is a discussion of change during MSG Rogers's career compared to today.

The uniforms- during his service the uniforms changed numerous times. From denim pants and shirts to denim overalls, to olive drab to wool uniforms, to Ike jackets, to leggings than no leggings, from the brown boot to the black boot and the list continues. We thought we have uniformity problems. The modern Army has only gone through changes in BDU uniforms tailoring not pattern. The beret, the Improved Army Physical Fitness Uniform and Army Combat Uniform are the only changes that most of the force has seen in decades.

The rank- Our current rank structure has been around for decades. MSG Rogers went through three different changes in rank. Not to mention the complete reversal of the grade system in 1951 where MSG became an E7 and private became an E1. In 1930, he was a private and in 1940, he was a corporal. His date of rank to Master Sergeant is 2 SEP 42. In 1951, with the switch of grades he became a MSG (Perm) E-7 and 1958 an MSG (Temp) E8.

Transformation is not a new idea. It is just a new idea for cold war soldiers. The Army of the 30's and 40's were transforming almost daily. If it was not building a better weapon, it was redesigning what a maneuver unit looks like. The Army has historically changed through out the years.

### Retirement 1962-1975

MSG Rogers settled in small town above Winston Salem called Bethania. He worked at Wake Forest in their print plant. He was actively involved in his church. He died on 16 May 1975, following a sudden and serious illness.