

# RESUME OF SERVICE CAREER

OF

**Cornelius James Rinker, Colonel**

**DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH:** 17 Dec 1908, Easton, PA

**YEARS OF COMMISSIONED SERVICE:** 34 YEARS

**DATE OF RETIREMENT:** 29 Feb 64

## **MILITARY SCHOOLS ATTENDED**

Transportation Office Advance Course

US Marine Corps Amphibious Warfare School

Command and General Staff College

Air War College

Senior Officer Aviation Logistics School

Institute on Foreign Transportation and Port Operations Course

## **CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF DUTY ASSIGNMENTS (last 10 years)**

### **FROM TO ASSIGNMENT**

Aug 62	Feb 64	CO, USA CDC, Trans Agency, Ft Eustis, VA
Jun 62	Jul 62	CO 4 <sup>th</sup> Logistics Cmd (Prov), Ft Eustis, VA
Jul 61	Jun 62	A/Commandant, HQ, USATSCH, Ft Eustis, VA

Jul 58	Jun 61	TO, HQ, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Army, Ft McPherson, GA
Jul 57	Jul 58	COS, USATTCP, Ft Mason, CA
Sep 55	Jun 57	Terminal Commander, 7278 <sup>th</sup> GU TTC (NEAC)
Jan 55	Aug 55	Dep/Terminal C), 7278 <sup>th</sup> GU TTC, (NEAC)
Aug 54	Jan 55	Dep Port CO, 373 <sup>rd</sup> TPC C, (NEAC)

**PROMOTION DATE OF APPOINTMENT**

2LT	NG	3 Jun 30
1LT	NG	4 Jan 38
CPT	NG	14 Sep 40
MAJ	AUS	21 Jul 42
LTC	AUS	7 Aug 44
CPT	RA	5 Jul 46
MAJ	RA	15 Jul 48
LTC	RA	14 May 51
COL	AUS	16 Jun 53
COL	RA	12 Feb 58

**US DECORATIONS AND BADGES**

World War II Victory Medal

Occupation of Germany Medal

Bronze Star

UN Service Medal

Korean Service Medal

Legion of Merit

### **INTERVIEW ABSTRACT**

Interview with **Colonel (Ret) Cornelius James Rinker**

This interview took place with COL Cornelius Rinker on 29 February 1988 at the Transportation School Library.

CPT Dennis Wolcott, CPT A. Keith Shields and LT D. Keith Street interviewed **COL RINKER** regarding his participation in Arctic operations conducted in Greenland/North Canada area.

**COL RINKER** detailed the initial deployment of forces to the Arctic region and the implementation of Logistics Over-the-Shore (LOTS) operations. He also discussed the coordination necessary for the Army, Navy and Air Force to operate successfully in the region.

**COL RINKER** reviewed the problems encountered and some of the aggressive and innovative solutions implemented to solve those problems. He discussed the vessels involved in this operation, the day-to-day challenges, and the individual aspects of the execution. He also addressed the impact of communications, training and adverse weather.

**COL RINKER** concluded with comments on morale, the joint coordination necessary between the Army and Air Force, and his personal thoughts regarding his command.

As part of the Transportation School Oral History program, CPT Dennis Wolcott, CPT Keith Shields and ILT Keith Street interviewed Colonel Cornelius Rinker (Ret). The interview occurred on 29 February 1988 at 1530 hours in the Transportation School Library. The interview lasted two hours.

**LT STREET:** Who initiated Arctic operations in the Greenland/North Canada area?

**COL RINKER:** The Transportation Corps became involved as the result of an agreement between the Air Force and the Army. The area itself was under the

Northeast Air Command [NEAC], a three-star Air Force billet. This command was composed of Air Force personnel under LTG Barkus. The Transportation Corps provided terminal support to Air Force operations handling Air Force cargo. This terminal support was in the form of a Logistics Center-the-Shore [LOTS] operation which provided all logistical support for NEAC. NEAC was responsible for the defense of North America. The Canadian Air Force was also involved in the operations.

**LT STREET:** Was any doctrine published to assist you in the planning and execution of Arctic operations?

**COL RINKER:** Not really. The Army manual existing at the time dealt solely with tactics of fighting and extreme cold weather survival. Nothing existed which detailed Arctic LOTS operations.

**CPT WOLCOTT:** Was the terminal command concept new at that stage?

**COL RINKER:** Yes, it was. It was the first organization to have a terminal command. It was just evolving at that time. To be able to prove that the concept was feasible somewhere other than the field, we had to break it in during an actual operation. Before that, they had port companies, boat companies, and port headquarters. The 373rd was one initially. I helped develop the new Tables of Organization and Equipment [TOE] for these units while I was still at the Transportation School. I think it was a good concept, and I believe it was used during the Vietnam period also.

**CPT WOLCOTT:** What was the primary reason for the development of the terminal concept as opposed to the old system?

**COL RINKER:** In dispersed port operations, we supported one particular unit and provided a service to that unit, under one command. That's how it got started -- unifying commands over a distance by providing a service. My policy was to have one or two of my officers making rounds at the serviced units to make sure efficient service was being provided. Maximum support was the goal and they had to keep me informed -- good, bad indifferent. That way we could correct the problems quickly, not wait two or three days. That's the only way you can operate. I also implemented a standard for keeping track of tonnage in each unit by developing a chart that all units used. It made it a lot easier to see exactly where the tonnage was. I had to do that right away to set the standard for the whole unit.

**LT STREET:** Were the companies already organized or were TOE adjustments made prior to deployment?

**COL RINKER:** Terminal companies were taken as organized. Some tailoring was done to the units. Extraneous personnel were not taken. Some augmentation of units occurred. For instance, we increased the documentation sections while reducing forklift assets. However, the basic unit infrastructure remained intact.

**LT STREET:** Where were the companies that participated in the operation trained?

**COL RINKER:** At Fort Eustis. They received their AIT [Advanced Individual Training] training there.

**LT STREET:** How did the companies deploy?

**COL RINKER:** We used Landing Ship Docks [LSD]. We loaded six companies on each LSD, with about 200 soldiers per company.

**LT STREET:** Where did the Terminal Companies live when they arrived?

**COL RINKER:** On the LSD. This allowed the units to be deployed to differing LOTS sites as needed. Cargo density governed the need for the Terminal Service companies at particular sites. The ship's itinerary was created based on the sites it would call on. Cargo was loaded in a similar manner.

**LT STREET:** Did the terminal companies have their own lighterage assets, or were boat units also deployed?

**COL RINKER:** The boats were drawn from units at Fort Eustis and assigned to the terminal service companies under command of the terminal service company commander.

**LT STREET:** The terminal service company commander exercised command and control over the boats?

**COL RINKER:** Yes, to allow the terminal service company commander to accomplish his mission. He was responsible for the discharge of the Cargo. The concept was to allow this commander to control all assets in the LOTS Operation. This included boats, trucks, Material Handling Equipment [MHE] and ancillary assets. Command was centralized.

**CPT WOLCOTT:** Why did you have a major as a commander?

**COL RINKER:** We found that the rank of major as company commander is more suitable in this type of operation. It places him on par with his opposite number. We always drove for that. That was one of the principles in command at that time.

**LT STREET:** How many people were assigned to the Transportation Terminal Command?

**COL RINKER:** It varied from year to year, but I think we had approximately 2,000 there the first year-. After we got organized and knew what we were doing, We didn't need that many.

**LT STREET:** So you're saying there were about two battalion's worth of people?

**COL RINKER:** Yes, it was about that. But then it went down to about 900 personnel, all from Fort Eustis.

**LT STREET:** Where were you headquartered?

**COL RINKER:** First we were at Argentia, and then we moved to St. Johns. At Argentia, the Navy took over the air base and that's when we left.

**CPT WOLCOTT:** What was your chain of command?

**COL RINKER:** I was under the command of LTG Barkus, USAF [United States Air Force]. NEAC was a joint command. I attended conferences and represented the Air Force [NEAC].

**LT STREET:** So you feel that you had a lot of support and unity within your command?

**COL RINKER:** Definitely. General Barkus told me to take complete control of the Army operations, that he had enough problems as it was. He told the Navy commander the same thing.

**LT STREET:** How many different ports were there?

**COL RINKER:** Roughly 15 or 16.

**LT STREET:** That's really spread out. Did you have problems with command and control?

**COL RINKER:** Not at all. What I did was go in early every morning to review all messages received that previous night. That gave me an idea of what was going on with my people as well as with the Navy and the Air Force. Then I made a point of having a meeting to keep my leaders informed. It also allowed me to get their input on any problems, and to see how they resolved them. Sometimes they would have to go TDY [Temporary Duty] that same day to get things worked out.

**LT STREET:** Did you have the time to go from port to port? Did you have that much time from month to month?

**COL RINKER:** Before the operation started, I spent a lot of time visiting each site, sometimes spending a week or so there. This was to make sure that everything was in place and that everyone knew what they were supposed to be doing. When I served there, I was the king of the roost. I was supported 100 percent from this post,

Washington, the Navy, the Air Force and right on down the line. So we didn't get into problems like that.

**LT STREET:** What communication problems did you experience?

**COL RINKER:** The companies did not have enough radios to equip every boat and also maintain a shore command post.

**LT STREET:** Did you ever use telephonic communications?

**COL RINKER:** None. We wrote everything out as a message and then transmitted it by radio.

**LT STREET:** What sort of radio security did you have?

**COL RINKER:** Most of the communications were administrative so we did not use a secure mode. If we had a message that needed to be encrypted, we had to go through the Air Force because we didn't have that capability.

**CPT WOLCOTT:** What did you mean when you said, "Rinker Says"? You stated that everyone who might have ranked you or was in a different service knew and understood that you were the prime mover in this operation. How is this tied in?

**COL RINKER:** I originated that because we had forces dispersed so widely. There were times I received messages that may have been from another commander, or may have been from a staff member just interpreting the commander's directives. So I developed a system to eliminate the ambiguity. I let everybody know that when I sent a message, it would read "Rinker says." That way they knew it was from me and not one of my staff. Eventually, the commanders I worked closely with began to respond in the same way.

**LT STREET:** What type of MHE [Materials Handling Equipment] was used?

**COL RINKER:** Certain MHE was tracked, mainly the cranes. Boats used included Landing Craft Mechanized [LCM], Landing Craft Utility [LCUI and Barges, Amphibious Re-supply Cargo [BARC].

**LT STREET:** How did the BARCs perform in adverse weather?

**COL RINKER:** The BARCs had never been used in major operations before. Their usefulness was doubted by many Transportation Corps personnel. The BARCs were referred to as "Besson's folly" by many. General Yount wanted me to use the BARCS to test their capabilities. I complied but stressed the need for comprehensive maintenance support. He agreed. We brought the BARCs to Frobisher Bay on Landing Ships, Tank [LST]. This area had 30 foot tides. Petroleum, oil and lubricant [POL] delivery was by 55 gallon drums. The LSTs would place cargo on the BARCS which would then deliver the drums to the beach. The drums would be transhipped onto trucks which would bring the

cargo to the POL dump. At Saglak, the BARCs negotiated a narrow fjord and rocky road leading to a mountaintop site. We used the BARCs to deliver a few tons of cargo to test their capabilities. They accomplished this mission while snow was falling. To enhance command and command and control, I had LCMs converted to command vessels. These vessels and radios, life saving equipment and a fully equipped jeep. The concept was to allow the commander the flexibility of movement on land and water, without drawing assets from the LOTS operation. This allowed commanders quick access to trouble spots and decreased their travel time. This proved especially useful during times of heavy fog. The LCM served as a pilot boat for the BARC, guiding it to the beach. At that time the jeep on the LCM would disembark and guide the BARC to the unloading point. This process would be reversed when guiding the BARC back to the LST. This allowed us to continue 24 hour operations. At this point, we decided that the BARCS should be equipped with radios.

**LT STREET:** Were all operations LOTS operations?

**COL RINKER:** Yes, except for the major established ports, such as Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Harmon. Thule had a DeLong pier. Narsassarack and

Sonderstom also had wharves.

**LT STREET:** How was cargo transferred at the DeLong Pier?

**COL RINKER:** Directly from the LST to the pier. There was no need for lighterage. The LSD was used as a ability ship as in a Marine amphibious operation.

**LT STREET:** Were there over-the-shore operations going on at St. John's at that time?

**COL RINKER:** No, they had a port.

**LT STREET:** So most of the operations were North of there?

**COL RINKER:** Yes, all along the Northern Area.

**LT STREET:** Were your operations strictly discharge oriented?

**COL RINKER:** No. We had some backhaul operations.

**LT STREET:** How were cargo vessels controlled in the NEAC?

**COL RINKER:** They would arrive piecemeal and then be formed into convoys. these convoys, under command of a Canadian Commodore, would proceed north past the Distant Early Warning [DEW] system line.

**LT STREET:** What items were backhauled?

**COL RINKER:** Not many. 55 gallon drums were converted for on-site use. The main backhaul cargo was Air Force equipment, such as trucks.

**LT STREET:** How did you store the POL?

**COL RINKER:** 55 gallon drums of POL were stored in the open. Later in the operation, Containers-Express [CONEX] were used to battle pilferage at the New York port. When they arrived at the NEAC sites, they served several purposes.

They were used as storage sites during the winter. We would bring them back to CONUS the following spring.

**LT STREET:** Were your operations mainly breakbulk, meaning cargo that is non-containerized?

**COL RINKER:** Yes.

**LT STREET:** Could containers be used in Arctic operations?

**COL RINKER:** Only if they could fit in LCMS. Then a prime mover and suitable road net would also have to be in place. Remember, most of these radar sites were on high cliffs situated 100 to 200 feet above the beach. The roads were cut into the cliff sides.

**LT STREET:** Where did most cargo originate?

**COL RINKER:** Mainly the port of New York, with some from Hampton Roads.

**LT STREET:** What was the composition of the cargo?

**COL RINKER:** Cargoes were many and varied. Specific items included POL, subsistence items, food and other items needed to guarantee the site's survival until the next shipping season.

**LT STREET:** When your vessels left, there was no re-supply until you returned?

**COL RINKER:** Correct, although the ice composition at some sites allowed Air Force aircraft to land during the winter.

**LT STREET:** So you had to adhere to a strict schedule to assure sites were supplied?

**COL RINKER:** Yes, ice would close many ports later in the season, blocking access.

**LT STREET:** What impact did the weather have on your operations?

**COL RINKER:** Once we arrived at a site, we continued to work there. Only on rare occasions did we move an operation already in progress. Weather considerations included sea state, wind effect and the presence of fragments of ice from icebergs. These fragments would collect on the shoreline, congesting a beach area. These would be destroyed by dynamiting. An-area allowing the vessel access to the beach was created and operations resumed. Wave action also drove rocks of all sizes ashore in great amounts. Underwater Demolition Teams would dynamite large rocks, destroying them or moving them from the operation area. Movement of operations was difficult. We were basically limited to areas with developed roads. Any operational movement would have to be to another beach with developed roads leading to the site.

**LT STREET:** What were the seasonal constraints on your operation?

**COL RINKER:** Operational discharge time varied from to site to site, dependent on the ice-free periods. Some areas only had 45 to 60 ice-free days a year.

**LT STREET:** What did these sites contain?

**COL RINKER:** All were radar sites for the Distant Early Warning [DEW] system. Some had airfields.

**LT STREET:** Did you ever have problems with damage from icebergs?

**COL RINKER:** Yes, and we had to take damaged vessels to Goose Bay for repairs. Initially, I established a boat maintenance facility at Argentia where there was a joint Army/Navy small boat repair facility. That kept us from sending boats to Fort Eustis for repairs. Eventually, the tonnage was reduced and we had to shut that facility down. We just didn't have the volume to support it. We didn't need as many boats as before.

**LT STREET:** How did you support the LSDs as far as maintenance went. Did they come pre-stocked?

**COL RINKER:** Yes, to an extent. If they didn't, like the BARC, we would have parts flown in.

**LT STREET:** Did you have any type of heavy-lift crane to lift boats out of the water?

**COL RINKER:** Yes, we had a 100-ton crane at Goose Bay.

**LT STREET:** What was the road network like?

**COL RINKER:** In the second year- we were there, we had a conference with the builders and constructors of the newer facilities. So I asked them how they were hauling their materials around and they said they were using "Stoneboats". These were large sleds that were pulled around with supplies on them, even items as large as 55 gallon drums. So, I obtained some plans from them and had my boatmen get a contract and build three of them. These sleds were pulled around by the D-8 tractors we had there. Eventually, because we didn't have many trucks nor the maintenance to support them, we had sleds made in New York and Hampton Roads. Once made, the sleds were stowed on the hatch covers and shipped back to us. At the site, the LCU or LCM would drop the stoneboats, discharge cargo onto them, and have the tractors haul the cargo off. From that point on, we only used a 3/4-ton truck or a 2-1/2 ton truck. Now they're using trucks on the built up roadways.

**CPT WOLCOTT:** You said that you had 90 rounds of .30 caliber ammunition issued per person. Were you comfortable with that or did you want more?

**COL RINKER:** I had more. Personally, I feel a soldier is not a soldier without his personal firearm and ammunition by his side.

**CPT WOLCOTT:** Was the ammunition carried by each individual?

**COL RINKER:** No, it was at a storage point but all my soldiers knew they had small arms inspections, that sort of thing.

**CPT WOLCOTT:** Were all of your terminal commanders issued live ammunition on their individual boats?

**COL RINKER:** Yes, that was the way I felt about it. We were in an environmentally hostile area and that was my policy.

**CPT WOLCOTT:** How did the influx of new troops affect your training? Did the new troops need the most refresher training?

**COL RINKER:** No, because we had a program known as summer augmentation. These were not the permanent party guys that were up there all the time. These augmenting soldiers needed the most training. After the permanent party guys were there for a while, a month or so, they were oriented to their jobs. Equipment is very important in the Army. All of my troops attended survival school and knew to have their survival gear ready at all times. I think you appreciate equipment more in that type of climate because it is so difficult to replace or repair. Fire was a major threat for us at first, but we implemented programs to get that under control and did very quickly. We couldn't afford to lose any equipment that way.

**CPT SHIELDS:** What about troop morale?

**COL RINKER:** I always make a point of talking to every Permanent party individual assigned. I always stressed the dangers of alcohol abuse, the pitfalls of gambling, and the benefits of having a hobby. Also, I liked for my troops to keep busy. There were no women around so I didn't have to worry about that.

**CPT SHIELDS:** What was morale like?

**COL RINKER:** I had my commanders to implement several programs and to improvise programs for keeping the troops entertained. For instance, we spent one Sunday digging clams and brought them back to the mess hall to be steamed. Some soldiers had never eaten steamed clam before. We also coordinated with the Air Force to shoot skeet on their range. Some of the troops were pretty good. And we had a leather shop where the troops learned how to make leather goods from seal skins.

**LT STREET:** Was there a basic award system up there?

**COL RINKER:** Yes. Some of my people got awards from me, but the Air Force also gave awards to personnel who did an outstanding job for them.

**CPT SHIELDS:** What was your biggest challenge as a commander?

**COL RINKER:** Staff relationships with joint staffs. And to know the other guy's job, like Quartermaster functions or whatever. Knowing what his problems were made it easier to plan with him. This also made him more likely to help you in return. It promoted better relationships, and that was one of my biggest challenges. Also, I had to pay close attention to who was giving me support. I had great support while there and I had to be on my toes to recognize those people who were deserving.

**CPT WOLCOTT:** What about planning?

**COL RINKER:** Ninety percent of the changes were affected by the cargo. We had no control over if the vessel didn't get into Hampton Roads in time to load out, or if the cargo got sent somewhere else. And the air Forces projections were usually way off. Even so, I would always shoot for the projected tonnage. Sometimes, they would predict overages.

**LT STREET:** Do you see yourself as the "Father of Arctic Operations"?

**COL RINKER:** No, I'm not an Arctic expert. At least, I don't classify myself as one.

**LT STREET:** But this was the first continuous arctic operation, wasn't it?

**COL RINKER:** Yes, it was.

**CPT SHIELDS:** Is there anything you would change about the operation if you could, or did it go smoothly?

**COL RINKER:** Well, I think having better trained personnel would have helped. If I could do anything, I would spend more time in training the troops. For example, inclement weather training was often cancelled. I think the troops should have trained during bad weather especially, since that was the norm where we were located. There was one incident where an Army boat unit was unable to take a boat out during a thunderstorm at Fort Eustis and the Navy people had to take it out. Once it was out in the water, the Army guys were OK. But the whole thing really embarrassed me. That goes back to training. Another thing was the officer's perspective of the weather. The weather should have been better understood and used on a day-to-day basis, especially for planning. Some officers couldn't tell if it was going to rain or not, and really didn't use the weather factor in setting up operations for the following days. Another thing is terrain appreciation. A lot of people don't understand the terrain. I would want better trained personnel and more widely trained personnel, in more detail. Also, the officers should know and understand the Air Force forms and paperwork better to be able to work closer with the Air Force.

**CPT SHIELDS:** Any final comments, sir?

**COL RINKER:** Yes, it was a challenge every minute of the day. We worked very closely with the Air Force. I would have to say that was the best command I ever had, that logistic command.

**CPT SHIELDS:** Thank you very much for your time, sir.