

Teaching Resource: Guerrilla Surgeon

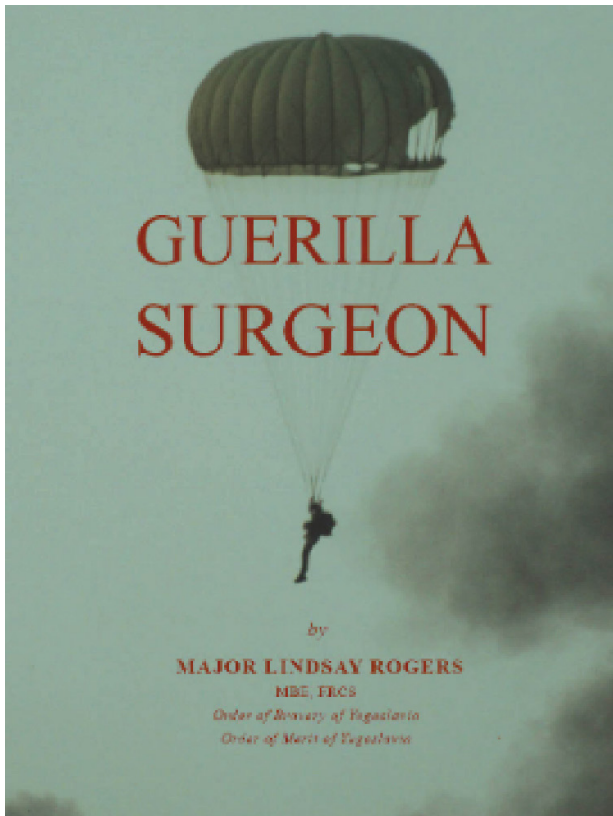
Author: Lindsay Rogers

Publisher: John Douglas Publishing Ltd

Curriculum Level

Years 11–13 (NCEA Levels 1–3)

Social Sciences, English, History, Health



Overview

Guerrilla Surgeon is the memoir of Lindsay Rogers, a New Zealand doctor who served with the Yugoslav partisans during World War II. His account offers a vivid depiction of the brutality of guerrilla warfare, the resilience of medical personnel, and the challenges of providing care in extreme conditions. It provides rich material for exploring themes of war, humanitarianism, resistance, and the ethics of medical practice.

This resource is designed to support teaching of Guerrilla Surgeon at the senior secondary level in subjects such as English, History, and Health.

Key Themes

Humanitarianism in War: The ethics and practice of medicine in conflict zones

Resistance and Occupation: Life under occupation and the role of partisan movements

Courage and Resilience: Personal endurance under extreme physical and psychological stress

Cultural Encounters: A New Zealander embedded in a foreign resistance movement

Medical Ethics and Innovation: Improvisation in surgery and triage in combat zones

Curriculum Links

English: Analysing memoir and biography, examining narrative voice, and evaluating authorial purpose and bias

History: World War II resistance movements, New Zealand's wartime role, and medical services in war

Health: Trauma, mental health in conflict, ethical decision-making in extreme contexts

Learning Objectives

Students will:

Analyse the narrative structure and style of *Guerrilla Surgeon*

Evaluate the reliability and perspective of a memoir in historical context

Understand the humanitarian and ethical dimensions of wartime medicine

Connect the memoir to broader WWII history and New Zealand's contributions

Suggested Activities

Pre-Reading

Context Wall: Build background knowledge of Yugoslavia in WWII, partisan resistance, and New Zealand's overseas service

Medical Ethics Scenarios: Present students with wartime medical dilemmas for discussion

During Reading

Character Mapping: Track Rogers' development and relationships

Geographical Tracking: Map Rogers' movements through Yugoslavia

Quote Analysis: Annotate key excerpts reflecting hardship, ethics, and resilience

Post-Reading

Comparative Study: Compare *Guerrilla Surgeon* to other war memoirs like *Vietnam ANZAC* or *The Silent Division*

Creative Response: Write a letter home from the perspective of Rogers or a local partisan

Debate: "Was Lindsay Rogers a soldier, a doctor, or both?"

Assessment Ideas

Essay: Analyse how Rogers' role as a surgeon shapes his perspective on war

Research Presentation: Investigate another New Zealand medical officer or partisan movement and compare to Rogers

Critical Review: Evaluate *Guerrilla Surgeon* as a historical source

Health Report: Create a profile of medical conditions and treatments used in guerrilla warfare

Discussion Questions

How does Rogers portray his Yugoslav comrades, and what does this reveal about cross-cultural relationships in wartime?

What ethical decisions does he face, and how does he justify them?

In what ways is *Guerrilla Surgeon* both a personal and political document?

How does the setting affect the role and limits of medical practice?

Classroom Integration Strategies

Visual Analysis: Have students examine photographs and discuss what they reveal about Dr. Rogers and the Yugoslav partisans, considering environment, emotions, and interactions

Comparative Study: Compare images with excerpts from *Guerrilla Surgeon* to analyse how visual and textual narratives complement each other in conveying historical events

Creative Writing: Use photographs as prompts for diary entries or letters from the perspective of individuals depicted, fostering empathy and deeper understanding

Historical Contextualisation: Integrate images into timelines or maps to provide spatial and temporal context to events described in the memoir

*This resource provides a comprehensive approach to teaching *Guerrilla Surgeon*, integrating ethical, historical, and literary analysis while encouraging cross-cultural and humanitarian perspectives.*