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Date: 24 JUL 1986

Closing Exercises, Second Course,
Canadian O.C.T.U.
Training of Junior Officers.

Canadian Military Headquarters,
2 Cockspur Street, S.W. 1,
London, ENGLAND.

The Director,
Historical Section,
General Staff,
National Defence Headquarters,
Ottawa, CANADA.

1. A further report is presented. This report deals with the closing exercises of the second regular course of the Canadian Officer Cadet Training Unit in this country, and also collects some salient facts relating to the history and working of the O.C.T.U. system.

O.C.T.U. CLOSING EXERCISES

2. The closing exercises of the second regular course of the Canadian O.C.T.U. took place at ST. LUCIA BARRACKS, BORDON, on 5 Apr 41. I attended them in company with Major J.E. GANONG (G.S.O. 2 (M.T.), C.M.H.Q.), who had made the arrangements for the occasion.

3. In the absence of Lt.-Gen. McNAUGHTON, who was still kept indoors by a cold, Major-General ODLUM acted as Inspecting Officer. Major-Generals PEARKES and MONTAGUE, and Brigadiers TURNER, PAGE and MURCHIE, were also present.

4. 41 cadets were on parade, under the command of Major W.W. MATHERS (THE ROYAL CANADIAN REGIMENT), who is Chief Instructor and Acting O.C. of the O.C.T.U. Lt.-Col. C.W. DEVEY (LORD STRATHCONA'S HORSE), the Commandant of the Canadian Training School, of which the O.C.T.U. is a wing, was also present.

5. The cadets received General ODLUM with a general salute, and he then inspected the parade at some length, speaking to many of the cadets. After the inspection, the officers of the O.C.T.U. fell out, and cadet officers took charge of the parade. The parade marched past in column, advanced in review order, and finally marched past in threes and off the ground.

6. A band was on parade for this ceremony. A group of bands is being organized officially in the Canadian Holding Units, and this was the first of them (that of No. 3 Infantry Holding Unit) reinforced by personnel from others in course of organization. It played extremely well.

7. The cadets made a very fine appearance, were admirably steady on parade and marched smartly. I gather that considerable pains are taken with drill and appearance in the early stages of the O.C.T.U. course.

8. The occasion was recorded in official photographs taken by the staff of the Public Relations Officer, C.M.H.Q. (film series 173 and 174).

ADDRESS BY GENERAL ODLUM

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9. After the parade, General Odlum addressed the graduating cadets in a lecture-room nearby. He complimented them on their steadiness on parade, but said that he would not congratulate them on becoming officers: the time for congratulation would come later. They were entering upon new privileges and new responsibilities - and they might be surprised to discover how much greater was the increase in the latter than in the former.
10. General Odlum spoke at length of the responsibilities of a junior officer towards his men. The "other ranks" of the Army, he said, had been deprived of nearly all powers of looking after themselves; this was on the assumption that their officers would look after them. The officer was assumed to be better equipped, in education, intelligence, and character, than the men in the ranks, and he must show himself cognizant of the responsibility imposed by this situation. General Odlum urged the new officers to "gather their men around them" and make efforts to understand their problems. Unless a man went to his officer with his problems before he went to the padre, the officer had failed.
11. Loyalty, General Odlum said, is like an electric current: it is essentially and always a two-directional affair. If an officer was loyal to his men, he would inspire in them a reciprocal loyalty to himself. An officer's loyalties should be three in number: to those above him, to the associates of his own rank about him, and to those below him.
12. In choosing an officer, the general said, he looked for three things: Character; Intelligence; and Spirit; None of these, he remarked, was the product of training; but all, including at least a moderate amount of intelligence, were essential to success as an officer.
13. He gave the cadets an example, from an event in a recent exercise, of the failure of an officer in essential qualities. While en route to a conference, he had passed a point where the road was almost wholly blocked by two ditched lorries on one side and a convoy halted on the other, the result being that traffic could barely trickle through. Returning to the same point an hour later, General Odlum had been astonished to find the situation unchanged. The officer in charge of the convoy was sitting in his lorry. He might have moved part of his convoy on and cleared that particular part of the road, or he might have moved the convoy off the main road altogether during the period when he was obliged to wait; he had, however, done nothing, because, he said, "he had no orders". Such a man was unfit to be an officer.
14. An officer, General Odlum remarked further, must keep himself in sound condition, both in mind and body; and keeping fit was often a task requiring hard work. On the intellectual side, avoiding thought was much easier than thinking; people went to sleep in church because it was an effort even to listen to another man thinking; but thought was one of the duties of an officer.
15. General Odlum said that, of this group of cadets, not more than two were likely to rise to military distinction; not more than one, perhaps, to a really high position. But every one of them had been sent to the O.C.T.U. on the recommendation of a man who believed in him; and he must not let that man down. Every one of the cadets must do his utmost to show himself worthy of the Canadian Corps and of the trust which the Government of Canada was reposing in him in commissioning him as an officer.

16. Finally, remarking that he was assuming that all these cadets were going to be officers of fighting units, the general said that he hoped that when the time came they would not shrink from the responsibility of giving orders which meant that men would die. It was always necessary to choose between the deaths of a few men and the deaths of a great many.

17. General Odlum then presented the certificates of qualification to the cadets individually, noting in each case the unit to which the man belonged, and frequently making some remark. In all, sixteen units were represented, all being infantry or machine-gun regiments except that there were four cadets from the Canadian Provost Corps and one from the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps.

THE O.C.T.U. SYSTEM

18. This is a convenient opportunity to present some facts relating to the history of the Canadian O.C.T.U. and the working of the present system of selecting and training junior officers for the Canadian Army Overseas, so far as this is carried out in the United Kingdom.

19.. The Canadian Officer Cadet Training Unit has existed since August, 1940. The following facts relating to its organization are extracted from C.M.H.Q. file 2/Trg. School/1 (Organisation - Canadian Training School).

20. The question of training of Canadian personnel in the United Kingdom, and in particular the training of officer reinforcements, was discussed during the visit of the late Minister of National Defence (the Hon. NORMAN McL. ROGERS) to England in the spring of 1940. These matters were discussed at a conference held by the Minister at C.M.H.Q. on 2 May 40. It was agreed at or about this time that approximately 25% of the required officer reinforcements for the troops in Britain should be provided from personnel serving in the ranks of the units. In a memorandum addressed to the Senior Officer, C.M.H.Q., on 23 Jun 40, the G.S.O. 1, 1 Cdn Div (Colonel, now Brigadier, TURNER) recalled this fact and pointed out that some of the Warrant Officers Class III who were now to be replaced by sub-alterns sent from Canada were officer material and that it was desirable to provide for training them; he urged on behalf of the G.O.C. 1 Cdn Div that prompt steps should be taken to organize the required establishment.

21. The necessary measures were taken by Canadian Military Headquarters in consultation with 1 Cdn Div. As there was urgent need for training facilities for other ranks as well, especially for the provision of regimental instructors (the vacancies available at British schools being inadequate to the situation), it was decided that the officer-training unit would form one wing of a Canadian Training School. The establishment of this school was approved in principle by N.D.H.Q. on 12 Jul 40 (Cable GS. 862) and the immediate formation of the officer-cadet portion was authorized at the same time. Major J.H. CHRISTIE, M.C., E.D., (TORONTO SCOTTISH) was appointed to command this (No. 3) wing of the Training School, with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel; and Captain MATHERS (see above, para. 4) was appointed to command the "Cadet School" of this wing, with the rank of Major. The cadets for the first course reported on 5 Aug 40.

22. The Canadian O.C.T.U. is primarily for the training of Infantry and Machine-Gun officers; no provision has been made for Canadian units in the technical arms. The governing principle is described in a memorandum of 4 Jul 40 in the above-mentioned file:

G.O.C. 1 Cdn.Div. is strongly of opinion that all officer cadets for infantry and M.G. battalions should be trained in Canadian schools... the training of cadets for technical arms is not practical now as there would not be enough candidates. The G.O.C., however, wants all Canadian cadets to receive some instruction in Canadian schools, then to finish off their instruction at (a) British O.C.T.U.

This system is being pursued, the general policy being that all candidates for commissions in the Canadian Army shall take the "basic" portion of the course at the Canadian O.C.T.U. This portion of the course is common to all arms. Having taken it, the candidates for the technical arms normally pass on to a British O.C.T.U. for specialized training. The ordinary minimum requirement for a Canadian commission is this "basic O.C.T.U." course, which now lasts five weeks; and only in very exceptional cases is a man commissioned without it. For example, two men employed in the Judge-Advocate-General's Branch, at C.M.H.Q., whom the A.J.A.G. wished to commission, had to take this course; one, an insurance adjuster in civil life, has now been commissioned, but the other, a lawyer, failed to win the recommendation of the O.C.T.U. authorities and must remain in the ranks.

23. A limited amount of technical training has been done under Canadian auspices; a special Engineer O.C.T.U. course, lasting six weeks, has been conducted at the Engineer Holding Unit.

24. In addition to conducting its regular courses, which including the basic portion have so far lasted sixteen weeks but will presumably now be extended to seventeen by a recent extension of the basic portion from four to five weeks, the Canadian O.C.T.U. conducts special basic courses for candidates from units other than infantry and machine-guns. One such course, for Signals, Ordnance and Postal candidates, began on 17 Mar 41. Another begins on 28 April; this is to accommodate 100 cadets.

25. The first regular course, terminating 23 Nov 40, "graduated" 38 cadets; the second, as already noted, 41. This latter figure does not include the group who dropped out at the end of the basic portion to proceed to British O.C.T.U.'s. The third is to begin early in June, 1941, by which time it is hoped that the O.C.T.U. will be accommodated in HAVANTAH BARRACKS, BORDON; this is to take 200 cadets, all of whom will take the full regular course.

26. The O.C.T.U. syllabus is a stiff one. For the last month of the regular course it includes the following activities: Drill; Mechanical Transport; Physical Training; Military Law; Signalling; Map Reading; Organization and Administration; Special Lectures; Anti-Gas; Field Engineering; Tactics; Schemes. I gather that the influence of General McNaughton's Headquarters has in general been directed towards reducing the amount of time spent on such matters as drill and weapon-training, and increasing that devoted to organization and administration and kindred subjects; the idea being that the business of an O.C.T.U. is not to turn out M.C.O. instructors, but subalterns well instructed in the duties of officers, and equipped with the knowledge that an officer requires.

27. The material in paras. 23-26 inclusive will be found in C.M.H.Q. file 2/O.C.T.U./1 ("Training - O.C.T.U.").

SELECTION OF O.C.T.U. CANDIDATES

28. The procedure for selection of candidates and their posting for training to Officer Cadet Training Units is laid down in Pamphlet C.M.H.Q./1940/A.G./3: Officer Training - Men Serving in the Ranks (Appendix to Routine Order No. 397, 1940, C.A.S.F. Overseas). This pamphlet is largely the work of MAJOR D.K. TOW (TORONTO SCOTTISH), (A.G.3, C.M.H.Q.). Major Tow tells me that this pamphlet is fundamentally based on the British regulations, modified for Canadian purposes after a series of discussions between C.M.H.Q. and Corps Headquarters.

29. As this pamphlet will be available for historical purposes, only a few points need be extracted from it here. It is laid down that the selection of candidates is the responsibility of each Commanding Officer, and that Officers Commanding all units will prepare and keep up to date nominal rolls of all personnel serving in their units who are recommended for O.C.T.U. training. Before being reported to a Division or equivalent formation as recommended, a prospective candidate must be interviewed and accepted by a Brigade or equivalent commander (in practice, Major Tow tells me, he is also interviewed by his Divisional commander before his name goes further); and before final selection he must "appear before and be approved by a Committee of Officers, to be set up by the Senior Combatant Officer of the Canadian Militia (now Canadian Army) in the United Kingdom". It is provided that personnel recommended should "normally" have completed six months' service in a field formation or unit.

30. This Committee of Officers or "Selection Board" was not in existence at the time of the first course; the pamphlet above referred to was published with Routine Orders dated 4 Nov 40, at which date this course was nearly over. As constituted for the purpose of making selections for the second regular course, the Board included representatives from H.Q. Canadian Corps, Corps Troops, 1st Canadian Division, 2nd Canadian Division, H.Q. Canadian Base Units and C.M.H.Q., as follows:

H.Q. Cdn. Corps	Colonel J.E. GENET, M.C., (C.S.O.) (President).
Corps Troops	Lieut-Col. E.C. PLOW, R.C.A. (8th Army Field Regt.)
1st Cdn. Div.	Lieut-Col. C. VOKES, R.C.E. (A.A. & Q.M.G.).
2nd Cdn. Div.	Major W.M. BOSTOCK, R.C.E. (D.A.A.G.)
H.Q., C.B.U.	Lieut-Col. J.R.S. LOUGH, D.S.O., M.C., V.D., (Seaforth Highlanders of Canada)
C.M.H.Q.	Major D.K. TOW (Toronto Scottish) (Secretary)

In addition, a British officer, COLONEL H.B. KENNEDY, C.M.G., D.S.O., President of the Eastern Command Interviewing Board (British O.C.T.U.'s) sat with this first Board and gave it the benefit of his experience.

31. The selections for the third regular course are now being made. The Board on this occasion does not include an officer of H.Q. Cdn. Corps. The President is Colonel A.W. BEAMENT, V.D., (O.C. "B" Group, Holding Units), representing Canadian Base Units; Lieut-Col. A.S. PEARSON (Essex Scottish) now represents 2nd Cdn. Division; Lieut-Cols. Plow and Vokes, and Major Tow, are still members, Major Tow still being Secretary.

32. Colonel Beament told me on 19 April that a very large proportion of the men sent up by certain units were being rejected by the Selection Board; some C.O.'s, he suggested, were deficient in judgment concerning the qualities required to make a successful officer. He mentioned that in many instances a man clearly ~~was~~ was or was not officer material, and such men were speedily disposed of by the Board; but when a "borderline case" arose there was usually a fairly protracted interview.

33. This report has been read in draft by Major Tow, who in this way has kindly given me the opportunity of making several corrections and additions, and by Major Ganong.

34. Since writing paras. 9-16 above, I have received from General Odium's A.D.C. the text of the General's address, which is attached hereto as Appendix "A". The General spoke without notes, and this is not a verbatim transcript of what he actually said. My own summary is based on notes written on the day of the address, though not while it was actually being made.

(Sgd.) C.P. Stacey

(C.P. Stacey) Major,
Historical Officer, C.M.H.Q.

(Copied in Historical Section, Jul 43.)

TEXT OF SPEECH DELIVERED BY MAJOR-GENERAL V.W. ODLUM

AT CANADIAN O.C.T.U. GRADUATION.

5th April 1941.

I am not here to congratulate you on the upward step you are about to take in the Canadian Army, but rather to warn you of the heavy responsibility you are to assume.

Those of you who rise to commissioned rank will have done well in your course. You must have done well or you could not rank as having passed.

But merely passing examinations is not enough to make you a worthy officer. It only opens the gate to greater tests that are to come. Do not forget that not more than 5 per-cent of all commissioned officers rise above a dead level. If this percentage holds in your case only two of you will make an outstanding name in the army.

As non-commissioned officers, you have had certain responsibilities and certain privileges. As commissioned officers, both responsibilities and privileges will increase. But you will find, if you do your duty and succeed in your work, that the new responsibilities far outweigh the new privileges.

It is no light matter to take charge of 30 or 40 men - or more - and to be responsible for their health, comfort, care, food and quarters; and finally to lead them in battle where the price of error, or bad judgment, is death.

In anything I do, I keep my eye fixed on one man, the man at the furthest forward point - the man in the advanced shell hole. He is so far away from the rear H.Q.'s that he is easily overlooked. It makes me smile a grim smile when I get orders to pull another man, another officer, away from a fighting unit and send him to a higher formation because some one there has to go on leave.

The fighting troops are the army. Everything above (and again I smile at that word) is a servant class.

You go to join the fighting troops - or at least I hope you do - and to take leadership there.

If you are not really a leader, you should not take commissioned rank at all. Search your hearts, and find out. You know best. The rest of us will learn in time, but it may then be too late. Boys whose lives are just as important as yours and mine may be dead by that time, through your incapacity.

The course you have taken may be good but it cannot change your natures. Either you have or you have not the qualities of a leader. If you have not, no course can give you them. If you have, the course will only teach you the technique by which you can get the best results from the use of your inborn qualities.

We need leaders - God, how we need leaders. Not at the top - there they are away above the average. But right down to the junior officer and the junior n.c.o., leadership is not natural to more than 2 per-cent of men. Others - practically all men - dream of being leaders. As a simple matter of psychological fact, frequently the most inapt man has the most grandiose dreams. Don't forget your Hooples.

On a certain exercise not long ago, when many thousands of vehicles were being moved over wet, narrow roads, I came to a point where there seemed to be a jam. On investigation I found two lorries in a ditch on one side of the road, and a solid stationary convoy of cars on the other, leaving but a narrow lane between through which hundreds of cars, moving in both directions, were trying to make their way.

I had to push on to a conference. An hour later I returned and to my amazement I found the two lorries still in the ditch, and the solid convoy nose to tail still standing there. I hunted for the officer in charge and asked him if he knew the situation. He said he did. Then I asked him, "Why are you standing here?" - Because I have no orders" was his reply.

I nearly exploded. That fool had no more right to his commission than his dumbest private would have had. I pointed out to him: 1st, that if his vehicles were properly spaced, other traffic could work its way by; 2nd, that if he moved the whole convoy only a hundred yards forward he could clear the ditched lorries and so open the bottle neck; 3rd, that if he took his convoy off the main road on to a side road and parked it out of the way of heavy traffic, he would at least be showing some judgment; and, finally, that instead of sitting there like a bump on a log, he ought to be taking positive and vigorous steps to get into touch with his seniors and get his orders.

Though that man had a commission, he was no leader. He never will be. He would be a poor private.

It is not always easy to determine the right thing to do. But at least you can do something.

From the rank and file, practically all authority and responsibility have been taken away - so as to reduce confusion to a minimum and ensure co-ordinated simultaneous effort. What has been taken from the man has been given to the officer - for the same reason. It is done on the assumption that:-

- (a) The officer average will be above the man average in education, intelligence, character and training.
- (b) The officer will look after the man, since the man has been left few facilities with which to look after himself.

It is commonplace in the army to say that the officer is responsible for the care and comfort of his men; that no matter how weary he may be, he must see that they are fed and given every available comfort before he looks after himself. The words come tripping too easily - but there is a deadly serious meaning behind them.

You will have it in your hands to cause men to live or to die; and the risk they take, and the obedience they give you, is the price they pay in return for the care you are to give them. You can not live too close to your man. Know them, know their families, know their troubles. You will have won only when they come to you if things are wrong before they go to their padres. You will have lost if they do not.

Don't get it into your head for a moment that "barking" out orders is a necessary part of your command. It isn't. If you have the confidence of your men, you will never have to bark.

And that confidence is the easiest thing in the world to get. All you need is to be a man yourself. If you are not a man at heart, your men will soon know, and once they know they are lost to you forever.

Don't be afraid to put your arm around a man's shoulder when he is in trouble. Don't hesitate to spend time - and a lot of time - in sitting down and explaining things to him. If you want to win men, don't stand them at stiff attention, in a row. Gather them around you and do not talk the drill book language then. Talk your own language - and theirs. You will find that men seldom react against discipline. The only thing they object to is, unfair, uneven, discipline. Have a price for every army misdemeanor, and stick to that price. Don't go wandering up and down the scale simply because you like or dislike a man. Never dislike men. The blue eyed man pays the same price for butter in a store as does the green eyed man. If the store varied prices to its customers there would soon be a riot. It is not severe discipline against which men revolt, it is against any suggestion that you are playing favorites.

Because you have so big an obligation to your men, you must take care of yourselves. You must keep fit. Don't get the notion that you are doing intellectual work, and so you can let up on physical effort. No man can be at his best mentally unless he is fit physically. Some day a boy will live or die because of the way your mind reacts. You dare not let it get below par. You must be at your best, mentally and physically, to meet the crisis when it comes. And neither one is easy. Physical fitness comes only with hard work. The hardest part is making up your mind to do the work. And mental effort is very hard for everyone. A lot of people go through the motions of thinking, but can't think at all. In church, they go to sleep - because their minds cannot stand even the strain of watching some one else think.

Do not forget that your liberties are going to be curtailed. There are many things you might like to do that you will have to decide not to do - because they are not compatible with leadership and with the example you must set your men. Canada is giving you a great trust in the power she is putting in your hands. You must not betray that trust in word or in act. As you go up the scale of rank (as I hope you will) you will find the restrictions, you will have to place on yourselves, growing greater and greater. As a "one pipper" I used to have a grand time. Today I shake my head in sorrow as I realize that I must not do now as I once did - even though I still have the urge.

Above everything else, be loyal. That is the key note of everything I say to officers and men alike. Loyalty is the cement that holds the army in a band of brothership - the thing that lets men do the impossible. The greatest glories of the army come from the finest manifestations of loyalty. In the Canadian Corps, loyalty leads up to our Corps Commander on this side of the Atlantic and to the people of Canada on the other side.

Don't forget that there is no such thing as a one way loyalty. Loyalty is like an electric current - it either works both ways, or the line goes dead. You can never get loyalty unless you give it. And you must be loyal in 3 directions - up - down - and sideways. Be loyal to your seniors. Be loyal to the fellow officers of your own rank. And above all, be loyal to your men.

This is the army side of it. But there is something even above that. Be loyal to Canada - in your conduct, in your words, in your bearing, in your dress - try with might and main to be a worthy Canadian gentlemen.

Do not forget that you are one of a selected group. Someone picked you out, or you would not be here. Never let that person down. Be determined that you will do even more than is expected of you - that you will prove that you are worthy to have the lives of men entrusted to you.

When I seek officers, the last thing I look for is training. Instead, I ask for character first, then intelligence, then spirit, and in that order. Having these three things, training, can easily be added to you. Without them, even the most brilliant performance under training matters little. It is what you are that counts - not what you have been taught. As you go out of here, look into your hearts and make sure of what you are. If you are not what I have tried to describe, don't take a commission.

But if you do take it, remember that you go out with our confidence. I speak for the Corps Commander when I say that the whole Corps is proud of our Canadian O.C.T.U. We know that the instructing personnel is efficient, and we are fully aware that great care is taken in the selection of candidates. So we have a general confidence which will be changed into a personal one as soon as we commence to know you better in your new role. We will try not to fail you. We want you not to fail us; and together we must die before we fail the men who are given to our charge.

(Copied in Historical Section, Jul 43.)