

NOTE

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Directorate of History  
National Defence Headquarters  
Ottawa, Canada  
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**CANCELLED**

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Closing Exercises, Canadian Junior  
War Staff Course

**DECLASSIFIED**  
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Canadian Military Headquarters,  
2 Cockspur Street, S. E. 1,  
London, ENGLAND.

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

1. A further report is submitted. This deals with the closing exercises of the Canadian Junior War Staff Course, held at FORD MANOR on 12 Apr 41. I attended these by previous arrangement with Lt.-Col. SIMONDS, the Commandant.
2. On the Canadian Junior War Staff Course, please see my previous Report No. 14.

ADDRESS BY THE COMMANDANT

3. I arrived at FORD MANOR by car about 0840 hrs on 12 April, and was in time for the final address by the Commandant to the students of the course, which took place at 0900 hrs. The official visitors did not arrive until later in the morning.
4. Lt.-Col. SIMONDS began by cautioning the students against a complacent attitude. The mere fact that we come from Canada, he said, does not make us first-line soldiers; a Canadian does not become an excellent soldier by the mere process of putting on uniform. The Canadian troops of the last war learned their business by very hard experience; and Lt.-Col. SIMONDS remarked that throughout the war the senior staff officers of Canadian formations were loaned by the British army. He recalled the remark of an American observer (not named) to the effect that in the beginning the Canadian troops in that war were vulnerable through lack of discipline, but that when they acquired discipline they became first-rate troops.
5. In this matter of Discipline, the Commandant observed that there has recently been a tendency to cry discipline down. The

argument has been used that the modern soldier is more intelligent, and that strict discipline is therefore less necessary. Lt.-Col. Simonds, however, said that discipline has little to do with intelligence. Discipline is related to the human instinct of self-preservation and the human tendency to take the line of least resistance. It is well to beware of novel methods, and to remember that the British have been saved time and time again by the discipline of their troops: DUNKIRK, 1940, supplies a recent example. The rigid discipline of the Guards has been derided - but in this campaign the Guards did not flinch when others went to pieces, and observers remarked that every guardsman brought his rifle back with him from Dunkirk.

6. A code is necessary; and the officer must enforce it and stick to it himself. Everything depends on him.

7. Our discipline to-day, Lt.-Col. Simonds said, is by no means what it should be. Honest Canadians were most concerned about this matter. The behaviour of our troops had sometimes been such that there was actual danger of our "wearing out our welcome" in this country.

8. Soldiers, the Commandant went on, do not object to strict discipline as long as it is fair. The average man does not like to see an offender go unpunished.

9. Passing on to the question of Training, he recalled that there had been a great deal of grumbling recently about lack of action. But we must recognize the fact that this gives us "a God-sent opportunity" to ensure efficiency when action finally comes. Imagination and inspiration are needed, and opportunities must be used to the full. Lt.-Col. Simonds mentioned the example of a village where Canadians are billeted which would supply excellent possibilities for demonstrations and training in village defence - but the troops stationed there are not exploiting these possibilities.

10. These matters of discipline and training, said the Commandant, should be the concern of every officer.

11. Lt.-Col. Simonds then went on to speak of Tactics. Here he remarked that the standard of training of the troops involved must always affect the problem. The troops available will not always be well trained, and if the standard of training is low less can be expected.

12. To many problems there is no set answer. The solution must be determined by the conditions existing at the moment.

13. Speaking of Surprise, the Commandant said that the achievement of surprise involves taking risks; and the important thing is to take them with your eyes wide open. An officer must have the military knowledge which enables him to judge the extent of the risk. Sometimes big administrative risks are involved, as in the recent campaign in Libya. The enemy can usually see the sound safe course which is open to you: to surprise him, it may be necessary to do something which is "a little unsound".

14. The Commandant then spoke of the work of a Staff Officer. He advised the students in somewhat the following terms. Study your commander: learn to understand him: "get into his mind". Learn how to approach him from the point of view of personality and moods, so as to seize the psychological moment.

15. Loyalty is an important quality in a staff officer; but this doesn't mean being a "yes-man". In appreciating a situation, be sure to place all the facts before your commander; let there be no "special pleading"; don't conceal a fact that does not support your own argument. And remember that the commander has to take the ultimate responsibility; whatever his decision, it must be loyally enforced.

16. Should you find yourself out of sympathy with your commander, resign your appointment. If the disagreement is in principle, this is the only honest thing to do.

17. A staff officer, the Commandant observed, has to work very hard; he cannot be a five-days-a-week soldier. But on account of this it is all the more important for him to take his leave when



his turn comes. A lazy commander, if he is brilliant, may succeed; but a lazy staff officer is a menace.

18. Lt.-Col. Simonds mentioned the desirability of getting out and visiting the formations to which orders are sent.

19. Discretion is an essential quality. Don't talk shop outside the office. At the present time there is a leakage of information which there shouldn't be.

20. When taking up an appointment at a new Headquarters, "tread carefully at first". "Don't be a new broom" - feel your way - and when you begin your improvements, make them as unobtrusive as possible.

21. Battle-drills must be your servants, not your masters. If the Headquarters you go to has an adequate one, don't disturb it. But it must have one.

22. A staff officer must be punctual. Have a good watch and keep it right.

23. On the matter of Study, the Commandant remarked that every successful soldier has been a student of war. He recalled a remark of Sir William ROBERTSON when Commandant of the Staff College: "Read a little and think a lot". Merely dashing through a great many books was of little value.

24. It must be remembered that talking is not doing. Every individual must act in a spirit of responsibility. He must do his utmost, in his own sphere, to see that things are done - and done right.

25. In conclusion, the Commandant said something of the reactions of the students to the course. He had already complained that their comments showed too great a belief in spoon-feeding. He reminded them that the course had only scratched the surface; there was still a great deal to learn. Incidentally, he advised them to burn most of the papers which they had left over from the course, and not to attempt to use the exercises over again. A

new exercise, worked out to suit different circumstances, would always be more valuable to the troops involved.

#### FORMAL CLOSING EXERCISES

26. The formal closing exercises of the course took place at 1100 hrs.

27. Lt.-Col. Simonds introduced Colonel M.B. DOWSE, G.S.O. 1, STAFF COLLEGE, CAMBERLEY, who spoke for a few minutes. He mentioned the co-operation which had existed between Camberley and the C.J.W.S.C., and remarked that Camberley was sorry that the Canadian course was moving to Canada, but that arrangements had already been made for continued close liaison, through an exchange of schemes and precis and a monthly letter. Briefly sketching the Camberley course, he observed that the methods of teaching were essentially the same used at the C.J.W.S.C. He wished the latter the best of good fortune and looked forward to a continuance of pleasant relations.

28. Brigadier G.R. TURNER, B.G.S. (Cdn), Cdn Corps, then spoke as the representative of Lieutenant-General McNAUGHTON, who was still kept indoors by a cold. He read a message from the General in which he expressed his regret at not being present. This message spoke warmly of the help the course had received from Camberley, and thanked the War Office also for the loan of instructors. The General proceeded to speak of his satisfaction with the manner in which the course had been conducted, and observed that the students went out from it much better equipped than when they came in. He offered every good wish for their success.

29. Brigadier Turner then presented to the students for their confidential information brief oral surveys of the present situation with respect to (a) the nature of the Canadian forces now being raised and equipped for service in this country, and (b) the state of production in Canada and the present prospect in the matter of equipment coming from the Dominion.

30. Brigadier Turner then made some observations on staff employment from his own experience. He has very kindly given me the notes of these remarks, and a copy is attached as Appendix "A". These notes comprehend practically everything in his talk, which was quite brief and followed them closely. Only one addition seems necessary. In connection with para. 5 of these notes, Brigadier Turner mentioned that the personal contacts built up between British and Canadian staff officers at the Staff College and the Imperial Defence College have been of great advantage in the present war. Senior Canadian staff officers have rarely visited the headquarters of British formations without meeting at least one British officer whose acquaintance they had made at one of these institutions, and this has greatly facilitated understanding and liaison.

#### MISCELLANEOUS

31. In the course of conversation with me, Lt.-Col. SIMONDS showed me, confidentially, the draft of his report on the work of the course. This report will presumably be available, in due time, for historical purposes. It makes, among other points, the observation that the standard of tactical training among the candidates was in many cases not equal to that expected of a staff officer.

C.P.S.

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

NOTES OF ADDRESS BY BRIGADIER TURNER, FORD  
MANOR, 12 APRIL, 1941.

(COPY)

CONFIDENTIAL

Headquarters,  
Canadian Corps.  
12 Apr 41

Dear Stacey

Herewith the notes I promised you for  
what they are worth.

Yours sincerely,

(signed)

G.R. Turner

Major C.P. Stacey  
Historical Officer  
Canadian Military HQ  
London.



1. Thanks to Colonel Dowse.
2. Messages from General McNaughton and General Collins.
3. As one intimately associated with this institution since its beginning I wish to add my own thanks to all who have assisted in making it such a success which the War Office have recognized by agreeing to the use of the letters "S.C." after the names of successful graduates. Question of transfer to Canada. Various factors given full consideration. Officers from Field Formations will be sent back to courses there.
4. With the concurrence of General McNaughton, I wish to say a few words to you regarding staff employment which are based on my experience in various branches of staff work.
5. Value of course -- not only the knowledge acquired but the personal contacts made. You will find this to be of great benefit; it is always easier to reach mutual agreement with others whom you know intimately than with complete strangers.
6. Characteristics required in a Staff Officer:
  - General Military Knowledge.
  - Personal characteristics such as ability, reliability, initiative, energy, capacity for work, loyalty, personality, physical fitness, etc.Also General Odium's remarks that all officers must have character, intelligence and spirit.
7. Must always be ready to advise your Commander or Senior Staff Officer but once decision is given, even if you disagree, carry it out loyally. LOYALTY most important virtue, loyalty to your Commander, your senior staff officer

and your fellow staff officers. Don't try to advance yourself by running down the other fellow.

8. Co-operation with other branches of the staff.

All branches are important so don't think you are a notch above your opposite number just because he is in another branch.

9. Co-operation with the troops. Staff is there to serve them within the limits of prescribed policy. Get out with them, find out what they want, and let them see that you take an interest in them. Be human.

10. Orders. When preparing them put yourself in the position of the recipient, and ask yourself if essentials are included and non-essentials eliminated.

11. Keep fit. Only by so doing can you maintain the alert mind so necessary in a staff officer. Take your leave when your turn comes if operational circumstances permit and don't get stale.

12. Whether you go to a staff appointment immediately or subsequently after a period of regimental employment remember that if you are determined to profit from your period at Ford Manor you are certain to make a worthy contribution to the great cause in which we are all engaged, particularly as one of the things you have been taught is that a staff officer must keep up-to-date in military thought and practice if he is to be efficient. A staff appointment demands hard work, initiative and ready acceptance of responsibility; these, however, are features which make any job worth while.

13. I wish you all, both staff and students, every success in the future.