

## PRELUDE TO "THE MEDICAL"

In New Zealand as well as in England there is a legend that only flawless physical specimens have any hope of admission to the Air Force. Would-be recruits will perhaps feel a little more confident after they have read this sketch from a recent issue of "The Aeroplane".

WHEN I announced my intention of joining the R.A.F. some time ago, I was treated to a display of grave disrespect. My friends called me fool both openly and behind my back, giving as reason for this slanderous statement that I could never hope to pass the medical examination.

I must admit that my friends had some justification for their remarks. I was underweight for my size; I drank more beer than was consistent with keeping fit; and certainly I was apt to get more out of breath than most after a sharp run or a long climb. Against this I did spend a great deal of my life rowing; trying both with and without success to get to the end of the Henley and other regatta courses quicker than other misguided people.

But although rowing does admittedly require a tremendous effort, it is apt to develop a certain set of muscles at the expense of all-round physical fitness. Nevertheless I decided to have a shot. But realising what I would be up against, I pestered my many Service friends for details of the tests, and then got a doctor to put me through a dress-rehearsal.

### Three Week's Training

I realised the dress-rehearsal was a mild affair compared with the third-degree methods of the C.M.B.; but, at any rate, together with my friends' remarks, it convinced me that anyone who was reasonably fit should pass all right. However, I wanted to be absolutely certain, so I went into training for some three weeks before I was due on the mat. Thanks to this training, I romped through those tests which were real tests of fitness, and thanks to my dress-rehearsal, I was on guard against those tests which are really pitfalls for the unwary.

The first thing, I decided, was to make sure of being reasonably fit all round, so I did a few simple jerks, including deep breathing, every morning on rising, following them with a cold bath. I did not bother to follow any strict training diet — that would have been overdoing it — but I chose my food with some care, keeping to the simpler things and avoiding overmuch fat and pastry. As for drink, observation of the heaviest drinkers when in training for rowing had shown me that the ravages of drink, if they have not yet extended to dipsomania or chronic

alcoholic poisoning, can be repaired in a very short time by sensible rationing.

### Rationing the Beer

I was excessively strict with myself, limiting myself to half a pint of beer a day, which I took at the time I felt I needed it most, after work in the evening. I think now that a pint a day would have been better; but that is an individual matter. It depends on how much exercise you take, and how much and when you normally drink. The important thing is to make a rule and stick to it. When I was thirsty at other times I drank water, and I drank nothing at all with my meals. This last is a golden rule to health, anyway.

In my spare time I practised the physical tests. I practised holding my breath until I could do so for well over 90 seconds. Holding the breath is largely a matter of will-power, and although deep-breathing exercises will do much to increase the actual lung capacity, constant practice will enable one to hold out longer against the ghastly sensations which are felt after 40 or 50 secs.

I could not practise supporting the column of mercury, because, of course, I had no instrument; but I had learnt that the most important part of the test is to keep the mercury steady at the 40 mm. mark, and forewarned was forearmed. Nor could I practise blowing the mercury up or blowing into a gas meter; but the deep-breathing exercises

could not but have helped to increase both the lung capacity and the pressure I was able to exert.

### Standing On One Leg

I could and did practise standing on one leg with my eyes shut. There is a knack in this, and once you've got it it is easy. You must focus your gaze on some mark or object straight ahead before you shut your eyes, and keep looking at it steadily while your eyes are shut. You can hold your balance like this for many minutes, but if you once let your eyes wander you are sunk.

Similarly with the revolving chair. I had no revolving chair, of course, so I just played the old game of walking round a stick and then walking in a straight line afterwards. I thought I was going to fail that one. Try as I would I could not walk that line without a mistake. I got better with practice, and I learned to focus my eyes on to the line with a jerk as soon as I stopped turning; but I never got 100 per cent. efficient.

But I need not have worried; I was setting myself a far higher standard than the Air Ministry demanded, and, when it came, the revolving-chair test turned out to be one of the easiest.

I have often since wondered whether it would be possible to fool the eye doctor. I have come to the conclusion that it is not. And a good thing, for everyone's sake. A colour-blind or myopic pilot would indeed be a menace. One might get a close look at the letters to make sure of distinguishing between C and G, N and M when later ordered to look at them from a distance; but that is about all. The test for colour-blindness seems absolutely fool-proof.

## STAFF CORPS OFFICERS For The Special Force

IN addition to the list already published, more officers of the New Zealand Staff Corps have been selected for service with the Special Force. Their positions and appointments will be gazetted later.

Lieut.-Colonel T. J. King, of the New Zealand Army Ordnance Corps, is a keen Rugby follower, and is a member of the Rugby Union Executive. He had three years in the ranks of the 5th Wellington Regiment, and received his commission early in the last war. Throughout the whole of his military service Colonel King has been attached to the Ordnance Corps. He joined the Staff Corps on his return from the 1914-18 campaign and has held various positions on the Headquarters Staff since then. He was gazetted Major in 1926 and Lieut.-Colonel in 1938.

Lieut.-Colonel G. B. Parkinson has always been attached to the artillery and is at present officer commanding the Royal New Zealand Artillery. He graduated from the Duntroon Military

College in Australia in 1916 and went overseas with the 27th Reinforcements, landing in France in August, 1917. Colonel Parkinson was adjutant of the 1st New Zealand Field Artillery Brigade until January 28, 1919. On his return from active service he continued with the New Zealand Staff Corps, holding various appointments throughout the Dominion. In 1920 he went to Fiji with a special force and in 1925 he attended a gunnery staff course in England. He was gazetted to his present rank this year.

Major F. L. Hunt, who is at present Camp Commandant at Trentham, was on Gallipoli with the Otago Regiment and was seriously wounded in the early days of the Peninsula Campaign. He was invalided to New Zealand and joined the Staff Corps. Until the outbreak of war, Major Hunt was area staff officer in Wellington.

Lieut. A. H. Andrews is attached to the Army Ordnance Corps and at the outbreak of war was an ordnance mechanical engineer at Trentham.

## Personal

Commodore H. E. Horan, D.S.C., R.N., will take command of the Royal New Zealand Naval Squadron on January 1, succeeding Commodore J. W. Rivett-Carnac, D.S.C., R.N., who is returning to England. Commodore Horan is First Naval Member of the Defence Council, and will still carry out the duties of that office.

Colonel L. M. Inglis, M.C., who served with the 2nd Battalion, N.Z.R.B., during the last war, has been appointed to command the 27th Machine Gun Battalion of the 2nd New Zealand Division. He is a solicitor and practised at Timaru.

Colonel A. B. Williams, D.S.O., R.N.Z.A., who has been on exchange with the Australian Military Forces for the past two years, has returned and is attached to Army Headquarters.

Commander Eric Rhodes, R.N., of Christchurch, now has an important post with the Admiralty and is stationed at Bombay.

Major H. D. McHugh, M.C., camp commandant at Papakura, has been appointed camp commandant at Trentham, succeeding Major F. L. Hunt. Lieut.-Colonel C. S. White, who served with the Auckland Regiment during the last war, will become camp commandant at Papakura.

Major W. Innes, N.Z.S.C., administrative commandant at Trentham, has been transferred to Army Headquarters.

Captain W. Erridge, Ordnance Officer at Trentham, is now attached to Army Headquarters in Wellington.

Lieut. M. P. Studholme, of Paihai, Bay of Islands, has gone into camp for training with the officers of the 2nd Echelon.

Staff Sgt.-Major Joe King, the well-known international Rugby referee, has received his commission, and is now with the Special Force at Burnham. Until recently he was attached to the Army School at Trentham.

Staff Sgt.-Major J. Cummings is in charge of the Army Pavilion at the Centennial Exhibition.

R. Kavanagh is on his way to New Zealand to test airplanes for the Government. He is one of England's best known test pilots.

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