

ARMY COMPANIONS

THE daily ration for the men consisted of a pound of bread and three-quarters of a pound of meat, plus a meagre cash allowance. The bread, after being tossed from hand to hand, was kept none too sweetly in barrack-room cupboards; the meat was dealt with—cooked would be a misnomer—in out-of-date cookhouses by men who were cooks only in name. This forbidding nourishment was consumed in the barrack-room or, not infrequently thrown out of the barrack-room window."

It is difficult to believe that the above description refers to the feeding of British soldiers only about 50 years ago. To-day what a difference—menus which equal those of a good home; food excellently cooked by trained cooks; meals served in proper mess rooms; kitchens equipped with giant ovens, sinks, cool stores and even frigidaires in which to keep meat and milk.

As with food, so with every other department of the modern army. In the days when the British were fighting in Egypt and the Sudan, the following comment on barrack life and training was made by an officer of the 2nd Life Guards: "Commanding officers leant too largely on the adjutant. Troop and company officers left all details of administration to their non-commissioned officers. They scarcely knew their men by name and knew nothing of their character or capabilities. They got through their work as quickly as possible and went off to enjoy themselves."

Personal Responsibility

Compare that with the position of officers to-day. Woe betide the lieutenant or the captain who does not know every

man under him, for he must be father and mother, sister and brother to soldiers under his command. More than that, the whole welfare of the men is his personal responsibility, hence the careful attention in selecting men for commissioned rank. To-day the officer does not dispose of his duty quickly. Long after parade, the officers are at work, consulting together and planning the million and one details which are the sole concern of those in charge of the men.

This is what Sir George Arthur, himself a former officer in a Guards Regiment, said of the officers when he fought in Egypt: "Professional zeal was at a discount. Military history had been for the most part a closed book. Any question as to strategy or tactics in the mess-room was liable to a fine, and a junior officer might frankly admit that any intimate knowledge of Waterloo was confined to one of London's railway stations bearing that name."

Keen Study of Military History

Again what a difference. Professional zeal is the keynote to-day, and military history a keen subject. Officers and men alike are encouraged to study, with the result that the standard is high—higher than it has ever been. The mechanisation of the army to-day demands a high standard of education; the war of 1914-18 saw the last of the officer who was in the army simply because it was a job. To-day many of our army leaders have risen from the ranks, and every encouragement to do so is given to the men.

General Sir Garnet Wolseley was the man who began to set England's military house in order. Before he took command education in the army was at a deplorably low ebb, and one senior officer is reported to have said: "I would much prefer to lead into action a company of

men who can't read or write." Wolseley insisted that education must permeate all ranks and he set out to stimulate mental alertness and a thirst for knowledge. He also encouraged rivalry between regiments. Soldiering in Wolseley's day took on a new form.

Libraries in Barracks

To-day every barracks in England has its well-stocked library, just as libraries have been installed in the camps in New Zealand, and every encouragement is given to the men who wish to study.

Before the South African war a commission in the British Army, particularly in the Guards and Household Cavalry Regiments, was a costly business. A cavalry officer had to spend over £600 on uniforms and provide himself with two chargers, costing anything from £150 to £500 each. The uniforms were so elaborate that even Wolseley himself, when he received his Field Marshal's baton from Queen Victoria, was so tightly laced and uncomfortably clad

INFANTRY ORGANISATION

SECTION—Six privates, one lance-corporal, one corporal. All men are armed with rifles except one, who carries the Bren gun. Commander is the corporal, second-in-command is the 1/cpl.



PLATOON—Three sections comprise a platoon, commanded by a sergeant or second lieutenant. In mechanised regiments there is a truck to carry the equipment of each platoon.

COMPANY—Four platoons make up a company, commanded by a captain and three lieutenants. Highest ranking N.C.O. is the Company Sergeant Major, followed by the Quartermaster Sergeant, who is the company's housewife and responsible for its provisions, equipment, clothing.



that he wrote to his wife: "I experienced all the sensations a cat must feel when shod with walnut shells."

Merit Alone

It was Wolseley, too, who insisted that merit, and merit alone, should secure military advancement. To-day that spirit permeates the whole of the British Army, witness of which is the promotion of young men to take commanding positions in the forces now in the field. Lord Gort, for example, was promoted over the heads of about thirty senior officers.

Lord Kitchener carried on the traditions of Lord Wolseley and forged the great volunteer army which finally emerged from the last war. Even then, however, tradition died hard, and it was not until the beginning of the present war that the War Office announced that regiments would be officered by men from the ranks who possessed the qualities of leadership.

BRITAIN'S SUBMARINES

LITTLE is revealed of the activities of Britain's submarines in this war, but they are on the job, just as they were during the last conflict. Through the months of the present war submarines have been the most silent arm of the silent service. They are no doubt blocking enemy harbours and lying in wait for enemy vessels in the most unexpected places.

The difference between the undercraft of this and the last war is as great as that between our modern aircraft and the matchwood 'planes of 1914-18. British submarines are tremendous things, requiring crews of great skill and courage. Some of them belong to the mine-laying class; others are designed for long sea voyages—across the Atlantic and round the Horn if necessary. On the surface they travel at 14 knots; underwater their speed is very slow. Of necessity their capacity and performances must remain a mystery,

but some of Britain's submarines range from 1,311 tons to 1,850 tons. Many of the vessels can stay under water for 48 hours, but when submerged they depend entirely on their electric current. Travelling at 10 miles an hour would exhaust that electric power in one hour, hence the reason for coming to the surface for air and to re-charge the great batteries.

Delicate Balance

The balance of a submarine is so delicate that it may be upset by one man walking from one end of the vessel to another. After being submerged for twenty-four hours the air is so full of carbon dioxide that a match will immediately go out after being struck. This means that all movement is avoided to conserve air.

In 1916 a submarine could descend only 150 feet; to-day that depth has been greatly increased, so much so that

at its greatest depth the pressure is so terrific that a steel ladder fixed at each end of the vessel can be seen bulging in a curve. If a submarine is forced below a certain level the weight of the water bursts it like a paper bag.

On one man alone depends the safety of the submarine and the lives of its crew. He is the commander. Under him there are on an average five officers and 50 men. In times of danger the commander spends hours at the periscope, standing cramped and firm at that wonderful eye of the ship. He alone sees the enemy; everyone else must obey implicitly. Sometimes he stands there for two hours at a stretch, never moving, and on a trip he never has more than a four-hour break for sleep and rest.

Special Food

Because of the dangerous life, the submarine crews are treated to special food such as bottled fruits and tinned chicken. Cooking can be done only when the ship is above water.

Officers and men mess and work together in the most confined space. Their clothing on duty is a comfortable white sweater. Fresh food is carried in refrigerators, but often the whole crew lives on iron rations, to eke out the two tons of food carried for a voyage.

When a submarine submerges, frequently in split seconds if the occasion is dangerous, she goes down at an angle of one in four at twelve miles an hour. But careful judgment is required. If she goes down too fast she may stick in the sand and mud; if too much water is "trimmed" into the tanks she might be overlaid and unable to return; if the speed is too slow, the "fins" would not grip the water.

Eighty per cent. of the submarine's torpedoes find their mark; at a quarter of a mile, once the enemy is sighted, a hit is practically guaranteed.

Submarine commanders are specially chosen and trained. All the men are under 30 and are selected for their special qualities of steadiness and courage.