

## "THE OLD MAN"

(By O.A.G.)

### Up with the Bugle

IN every military camp you will hear frequent reference to "the old man." There will be nothing derogatory or disrespectful in this reference; nor will it refer to the bearded individual such words bring to mind.

Usually the expression carries with it a certain admiration; rarely criticism; sometimes a doubt. He may be a young man, though more often his beribboned tunic tells of experience in one or more campaigns. But, young or old, the Camp Commandant is always "the old man." It is an army tradition; no one knows why. Perhaps the original came from that gallery of peppery officers of the past who, no longer suited to rigorous campaigning abroad, were appointed to "arm-chair" jobs on the home front. "Dug-outs" we called some of them in the last war—fierce and lively old gentlemen who barked about base camps and depots and talked of a past they could not and would not forget. Until we learned that the fierce expression was merely a disguise we hastily disappeared, if that were possible, until "the old man" was out of sight. Even to-day fatigue parties become astonishingly active when he appears without warning in some cookhouse or unfrequented part of a camp.

### The Pattern has Changed

But the pattern has changed. Like the pattern of all other departments of military life. If a military camp were a business concern the Camp Commandant would be the managing director, with a finger on every department and a thorough knowledge of its conduct and results. But he would not be concerned with profits—unless military profit be judged by the efficiency of every individual and every department of the camp under his control. He is the enemy of wastage.

This is not to suggest that the Camp Commandant does all the work of administration, but he is the head and he must possess a full and ready knowledge of the army and its conduct; and that is why men of wide experience are now always selected for the job. Apart from organisation, he must know something of the planning and construction of a camp.

Briefly, then, "the old man" has complete supervision of the administration, as apart from the actual training of units, with a staff of officers to aid him in controlling the various departments. His day, like that of other officers in war time, is seemingly endless. A great deal of it is taken up with interviews on subjects whose solution would baffle the civilian. He must discuss a hundred problems as they crop up unexpectedly; there are difficulties he must smooth over, difficulties requiring tact and a certain amount of diplomacy. He must advise, guide, and plan for the better conduct and efficiency of the camp—his camp, his responsibility.

His day begins early, for the bugle which rouses the soldiers also rouses him. Long before any civilian of comparable status is sitting down to breakfast and the morning paper, the Camp Commandant has disposed of a considerable amount of routine work; otherwise he would never get it done except late at night, and that is often necessary.

Soon after breakfast people begin to arrive, requesting this and that, and



Spencer Digby photograph  
LIEUT.-COLONEL H. D. McHUGH,  
M.C. and Bar

only a Camp Commandant knows what strange requests people do make to the military authorities.

I was one of "the old man's" visitors last week, timed to call at 10 o'clock. Before that hour he had attended to the requests of 10 different people and conducted an orderly room, for he is concerned with the discipline of the camp staff (which at Trentham numbers over 400 officers and men) and he had just sat in judgment on a man who had overstayed his leave.

Every day the Camp Commandant is scheduled to make a tour of inspection of the camp—every corner of it. If his duties are too heavy he delegates one of his officers to this task, but not often. And no sleuth ever made more searching inquiry. He knows every building, having watched most of them rise from the foundations and studied them on blue prints in company with Public Works officials even before they began.

He must keep an eye on costs. At present "the old man" at Trentham is planning for next year by preparing to grow large quantities of vegetables. That will reduce food costs and provide vegetables straight from the soil.

Soldiers are not usually associated with beautifying schemes, but military life is full of surprises. One of them will be "the old man's" scheme which will transform Trentham into as gay and colourful a camp as possible. Already flower beds, each enclosed in a brick border and adorned with a stone bearing the name of a New Zealand engagement of the last war, have made their appearance down the main roadway. Areas between the hutments of the old camp are being cleared and levelled; lawns have been put down on available space and now, opposite the new headquarters mess, tennis courts will ultimately replace the present rubble and growth.

### Health First

One special concern is the health of the camp, hence the attention to cook-houses, drains, grease-traps, and bath-houses. No door is closed to the Camp Commandant. He pops into storerooms, larders, the butchery, messrooms; he looks over the vegetables, records a request for a spare part of the mincing machine; he interviews the Public Works overseer to see when new huts will be ready; he arranges for the redistribution of hutments for any new training group. He questions everyone; he suggests improvements, asks about the working plant; he sees to the allocation of the camp band, that the units may have their full advantage of its music.

If any official visitors arrive at the camp he must be there to meet them and conduct them on tours of inspection. He is concerned with the visits of concert parties. He keeps a sharp and experienced eye on the canteen and its conduct and working; all new buildings and alterations are done only after consultation with him.

### Inspections by Car

Once upon a time the Camp Commandant announced his coming as he charged about the camp on horseback. That time now belongs to the fairy-tale period of army life. To-day "the old man" gets round much more quickly by car; without it he could never finish his round of official duties.

After dinner, the only formal meal in camp, where he takes the head of the table, the Camp Commandant, more often than not, is back at his office, writing letters far into the night and attending to official memoranda.

He is, perhaps, the best known figure in a military camp. Is it any wonder, then, that he is familiarly known as "the old man," though never in his presence? That would be rank effrontery, for he is usually a lieutenant-colonel. If, by chance, you hear anyone refer to "the old man" at Trentham you will know that this familiar term describes Lieut.-Colonel H. McHugh, M.C. and bar, a soldier with a distinguished record in the last war.

## NATIONAL LEADERS: Sir Andrew Duncan

SIR ANDREW DUNCAN, President of the Board of Trade, is one of the many successful Scots in the Churchill Government. The son of a social worker, he worked first as a schoolmaster, but only so that he could use his salary to pay for his legal education. From law he progressed to industry and the first outward signs of a brilliant career.

His first "big" job was secretary to the Shipbuilding Employers' Federation, when it moved from Scotland to London during the last war. When he later became secretary of the Merchant Shipbuilding Advisory Committee and joint-secretary of the Admiralty Shipbuilding Council he attracted the attention of Lloyd George, Birkenhead, and Bonar Law. He has remained in the public eye ever since.

At the age of 35 he was appointed Coal Controller after the war and he had a difficult time switching the mines back from State to private control. While he did this immense work he also qualified for the Bar. After unsuccessfully standing for two Parliamentary seats, he gave up the idea and went to Canada on a Royal Commission to straighten out the coal industry there. The Canadians liked him, and asked him to stay on to settle more of their difficulties, which he did. On his return to England he became chairman of the Central Electricity Board and a director of the Bank of England—and one who asked questions.



When this war broke out Sir Andrew became chairman of the Munitions Board and then President of the Board of Trade, surviving the change of Government from Chamberlain to Churchill. His success is said to be due to his ability to pick the "right boys" and to bring about the mixing of all elements while remaining a burly, dour Scot. He and his wife and their two sons go to church regularly, and live very simply. Sir Andrew is 56, was knighted in 1921 and given the G.B.E. in 1938.