

## LESSONS IN MORSE

### (4) Precautions Against "Clipping"

THE following is a draft of the fourth lesson in Morse signalling broadcast for Air Force recruits by stations 2YC, 1ZM, and 3YL. This lesson was broadcast at 10 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, September 30, and October 1 and 2, respectively.

The talk which preceded the receiving practice dealt mainly with sending, and one very bad habit easily acquired by a beginner was illustrated. This habit is what is called "clipping."

The secret of good sending lies in the correct formation of letters and correct spacing. Poorly formed letters together with no sense of spacing make reception not only difficult, but exhausting to the receiving operator. The following four main points were stressed by the instructor.

- (1) A dot is made with one sharp movement of the key.
- (2) A dash is three times as long as a dot.
- (3) A space between each letter is the time normally occupied in sending a dot.
- (4) A space between each word is the time normally occupied in sending a dash.

#### "Hold Your Dashes"

"Clipping" is the shortening of dashes, particularly the final one of letters ending in a dash. In other words, the last dash is not given its full value. This is due to a desire to increase speed by getting to the next letter as quickly as possible. This can, in most cases, be traced to the beginner stages where the learner has tried to send at a much greater speed than he is capable of receiving with the result that the quality of his sending has suffered and bad habits have been acquired. One of these faults, known as clipping, results in such letters as "O" being sent as "G," "K" as "D," "W" as "R," "Y" as "C," etc.

A few illustrations were given by the instructor, and it was pointed out that the remedy for this fault was *hold your dashes*. When receiving from a clipping sender, an experienced operator can copy plain language by reading a word or two behind and thus following the sense of the message, but after a time this procedure becomes tiring. The receiving operator should be able to read the signals subconsciously. In code, however, the receiving operator has no chance whatever of copying correctly from a clipping sender. Should he endeavour to do so, the result will be errors, and this of course must be avoided.

The rest of the lesson was taken up in a preliminary practice for the test which will take place the following week, and in receiving practice in plain language.

## YOUR GARDEN AND MINE

By Ann Earncliff Brown (No. 47)

### TREE SURGERY

WHILE some amateur gardeners are able to call in experts to prune their orchard trees, some of us like to try our prentice hands on a few grafts, and September and October are the months when the sap is rising and grafting is most likely to succeed. I have already written in some detail of grafting, and fuller information can be obtained from official bulletins of the Horticultural Division of the Department of Agriculture. There are, however, many occasions when a little first aid can save a favourite tree or shrub which has met misfortune or even one which time has begun to undermine. Naturally where decay has seriously weakened a tree it is safer to cut the tree down. However, where there is a cavity but the tree trunk is still strong, the decay can be treated as successfully as your dentist treats a tooth and the procedure is much the same.

#### Clean Tools

First see that your surgery tools are clean, sharp, and sterilised. Weak formalin, or a carbolic solution will destroy any bacteria or spores which might possibly be carried from tree to tree. All

dead or rotted wood must be carefully removed. Scrape the sides of the cavity thoroughly and paint all the cut surface with creosote or tar. For a filling take clean river sand, 3 parts, to 1 part cement mix as for ordinary concrete, and press firmly and smoothly into the hole (being sure that your surface follows the contour of the tree and does not allow water to lodge). When this has set you may if you desire make a wash of cement and colour to match the tree, or paint carefully stippled to correspond with the natural bark could be used to camouflage the mend.

#### Broken Limbs

Where winds or animals have broken off branches of trees or large shrubs, it is wise to cut the damaged limb back neatly and paint the wound with some waterproof solution. If the wood is quite healthy ordinary white lead will suffice, but where diseased wood has been cut away coal tar or creosote is called for.

#### Ringbarked Trees

Fruit or ornamental trees which have been ringbarked by rabbits or other animals can be saved if you carry out a simple operation known as bridge-grafting. It is not difficult but requires care if the flow of sap is to be main-

tained by these bridges until the tree can heal its wound. The upper and lower barks are connected by strips (or bridges) of young wood which are inserted under the carefully raised bark above and below the damaged area. The scions for such grafting should be of the previous season's growth and each should be cut a little longer than the width of the gap. Trim these ends with a bevel to face outwards. They are then slipped into vertical cuts above and below the gaps. Naturally the number of bridges depends on the girth of your tree but about 3 to 4 inches apart is generally considered sufficient. They should then be tightly bound to keep in place and waxed over with grafting wax to keep out moisture. In time the bark should grow over and merge with the original bark.

To-day I had a more serious casualty when a motor vehicle broke the main stem of a young chestnut tree. It was so badly torn that I decided to cut it off cleanly, dress the wound and hope that time will heal the tree and my distress. I have set the broken top carefully in moist sandy leafmould and am hoping it will strike.

S. P. B. Mais says, "It is indeed much truer to say that we are a race of gardeners than that we are a nation of shopkeepers." If that is true of Englishmen then Hitler has indeed come up against something. As gardeners we have learnt to accept whatever comes to us out of the blue.

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