

CITIZEN INTO SOLDIER

(1) First Days In Camp

I MET an acquaintance here to-day. "How do you like it?" he said; or perhaps, since it was right after mess, he asked if I were full. Of course I said "No!"

There had been some disorganisation in the commissariat department, and the cooks, trained to peel potatoes, with an occasional spell on onions, had not risen to the occasion. Later, they were replaced, and meals improved. We were grateful to officers who seemed to care about our stomachs almost as much as we ourselves did.

Well, my friend managed to get from stew to Tom Wintringham, and we sympathised with each other about spending our first days doing monotonous hours of foot drill and rifle drill. What we wanted was training at making flame-throwers out of beer bottles and grenades out of jam jars. And what we received was period after period of turning left, right, and about; standing at ease and at attention, falling in and falling out, sloping arms and ordering arms.

I have a fancy we needed it. As an army of any sort we were no great shakes. But it is very necessary to grumble. A private soldier really cannot exist without a moan or two. They are more than an outlet for his feelings. They are an expression of the unconquerable desire of the least of us to remain men and not numbers.

It was hard, indeed, to be marched, left-righted, even into mess—to sit shoulder hard against shoulder—to clamour for a share or go without—to eat bread tested by many other fingers for its quality—to drink tea ladled from the dixie by many mugs of varying cleanliness—to see the dust from the mess tent floor gritty on your plates and filming even the surface of the soup.

It was worse to find yourself a slave to brass and drill from Reveille to Lights Out—to have no time to read, write, think, or converse intelligently—to be cut off entirely from the world on the other side of the Main Gate Guard—to be living in only one section of the hexagon six men make of a Bell tent—to want your mirror when it was at the bottom of your kit bag, and to hide your personal secrets when they floated miraculously to the top.

We Learn Wisdom

All these things are hard. Our submission to them, and to many others, must be bought by the wisdom which you who read this will apply to the use of whatever results we achieve.

Of course we make the best of it. We are like children, laughing at simple things, afraid a little of the schoolmaster, resentful of control or childishly anxious to impress. There are laughs at night in the tent. I am relieved that in mine they come from good humour and some small wit. In others, even if they come from the common New Zealand mixture of bombast and talk that is 50 or 75 per cent. sex, sanitation, or blasphemy—they still come.

I should think the only really unhappy men in camp to-day were the delinquent

caught fence-hopping and myself, who let the Major pass without turning out the guard at the main gate.

However, my disgust with life was short-lived. Five minutes later I saw a crowned shoulder through a motor-car windshield at 20 yards, presented arms in time, and called out the guard—which failed to respond in time, leaving me with a satisfactory sense that the derision was all to my credit.

Possibly I was wrong when I said we were the only two unhappy. Many of us feel deeply about this complete reorientation of our living. Many of us are sensible enough to put it down to what made Hitler, and leave it at that. All of us hope in some degree that we may have a hand in altering the conditions which made this mess you read about in the papers they print in what we have already come to regard as the outside world.

But for others this somewhat optimistic contemplation of things to come

scarcely mitigates what must be sheer misery. There are managers of big firms taking their turn with the rest of us in places that would amaze Chic Sale. At P.T. they must bend their knees with younger men whose joints are looser. Their space in the tent is no larger. And the area of their brass is just as great. However, as far as I can see them they are going through with it.

For others, there are different regrets—girls, picture-shows, "hops" in that order.

One Justifiable Complaint

The one really justifiable complaint is brass.

I should like to count all the separate pieces, but I am too lazy. It is 7.30 p.m. In 45 minutes I go once again on guard duty. At 7 a.m. I stood on picket duty for an hour, then bolted breakfast and paraded at 8.30 a.m. Drilled till mid-day and then paraded for guard duty. It is two hours on and two off. In the two off

we must go over all our brass, clean the dust off our rifles, brush our boots, and take turns at leaving one by one for the latrines about 500 yards away.

A day of ordinary parades leaves no more free time, and sometimes less. In the two hours we are off duty it is brass—brass—brass—bloody brass. If it's not brass it is personal hygiene, and if it's not that it's letter writing, and if it's not that it's sleeping.

It is impossible to get more than seven hours a night. To get more something must be neglected. And it's all because of this brass. Who said there was a shortage of metal?

There's none—we have it all here in camp. The only shortage is in tempers. At the moment mine has gone far enough to inspire me to count buttons and brass on web gear. Hitler must wait for 15 minutes.

The Colonel has just gone out and we hope he stays until the Book of Words says we do not have to turn out for him.

NGAIO MARSH TO READ HER NEW THRILLER AT 2YA

IT was King John who died of a surfeit of lampreys. But listeners may be assured that in her new novel "Surfeit of Lampreys," Ngaio Marsh does not write about what J. R. Green describes as a "gluttonous debauch" of one of the worst of English Kings. The Lampreys in her new detective story, which the National Broadcasting Service will begin broadcasting on Wednesday, February 12, are an aristocratic family who come to New Zealand to farm sheep, fail in that, as they fail in pretty well everything except charm, and go back to England.

Before the Lampreys leave they make a close friend of a New Zealand girl, and when she is orphaned she goes to England and stays with them. Then the crime is committed, and enter our old friend Chief-Inspector Alleyn, of Scotland Yard, accompanied by his trusty assistant Fox. Who killed —? Alleyn of course finds out, but only after much labour for himself and much excitement for the reader. The waters he explores are deep and dark.

Detective fans will enjoy "Surfeit of Lampreys," which is published in America under the title of "Death of a Peer." It is Ngaio Marsh at her best, and her best is very good—so good that a London paper says of her that "for many people she is now to be numbered with Agatha Christie and Dorothy Sayers"—acknowledged masters of their craft. America has acclaimed her as well as Britain. Her books have been translated into four foreign languages—Dutch, Swedish, Italian, and Polish.

"Surfeit of Lampreys" ("Death of a



NGAIO MARSH

Translated into four foreign languages

Peer") is Ngaio Marsh's ninth novel, and bids fair to surpass all the others in popularity. She has had advice from the United States of its immediate success on publication towards the end of 1940. London publication was fixed for January.

The NBS has obtained the rights for "Surfeit of Lampreys" and will begin broadcasting it at 2YA on Wednesday evening, February 12. This is one of the most ambitious and most novel of NBS enterprises. For not only will this detective novel be broadcast simultaneously with publication, but the author herself will be the broadcaster. Ngaio Marsh

is to tell her own story over the air, and no one who heard her radio account of the meeting of the Detection Club that she attended in London, will want any more persuasion.

The first broadcast of "Surfeit of Lampreys" will be heard on Wednesday evening, February 12, from 2YA, and it will be continued twice a week on Mondays and Wednesdays.

FEAST FOR MUSIC LOVERS

STATION 2YA will be giving music lovers full measure during the week commencing February 9.

There will be several orchestral programmes from the studio and two recitals by Heddle Nash.

The week opens with a presentation of the opera "La Tosca" on Sunday, from 8 p.m. until 10.30 with a break for the news. On the following night the Chamber Music Hour features songs by Heddle Nash and Chopin music by Greta Ostova, Czechoslovakian 'cellist.

On Tuesday, February 11, there will be a programme by the combined NBS String Orchestra and 2YA Concert Orchestra, together with the Apollo Singers and Molly Atkinson (contralto). This was to have been the Sunday night concert (of the new series), but it was transferred to make room for "Tosca." The second of Wednesday night concerts by the two orchestras will be heard the following night with Owen Bonifant as soloist.

On Thursday the NBS String Orchestra will present a 35 minute programme, and on Friday Heddle Nash, accompanied by the NBS Strings, will present the "Wenlock Edge" cycle of Vaughan Williams songs.