

CITIZEN INTO SOLDIER

(3) Our New Place Of Residence

SOME of us have lately been moved.

From the door of our new place of residence, we can see the clock. This is very useful. We look at the clock at 6 a.m. to make sure that Reveille has not been early. If it is, we can argue with the Orderly Sergeant when he comes round to see that all feet are on the floor. The argument depends a good deal on the Orderly Sergeant. Some Sergeants argue. Others are Sergeants. We soon notice the difference, and it is useful to know the exact time.

In many other respects our home is very good indeed. For one thing it has a real floor. Not that tent camps do not offer floors, but the wooden floor of a tent is something that can be taken outside and scrubbed during Indoor Economy Parades, and that is a decided disadvantage in a floor, which ought to be fixed and immovable. Further, we have beds, on which it is possible to sit without touching canvas and so letting drips into the tent. In short, it is not a tent, but a hut.

True, there are twenty odd of us in it. And we make a great deal of noise. There are many arguments. There is the argument between experts who wish to decide some intricate point of drill

routine. Often it would seem that the fate of Homo Sapiens depended not on Mr. Wells, but on the selection of the foot on which the order for the turn in slow march time should be given.

And there is the argument between the simpletons, who debate at great length and with tremendous stupidity whether the O.C. said they should clean their brass twice a day or twice a week, or whether he put them in No. 2 squad in No. 1 platoon, or No. 1 squad in No. 2 platoon. And there is the argument between the expert and the simpleton, which usually ends in shouts and complete fog.

Songs

There are songs, never in proper unison, and seldom in good taste. And long readings of doubtful verse delved out of the depths of kit bags on murky, typewritten sheets. And the chaff against the bloke who made a date on the train and now wonders how he can get out of it. He came back from the 'phone the other night and said she said there was a dance to go to. He said I don't dance. And she said well come in to visit us at any rate. And he said he might be on duty. So she said they'd come out to visit him and what was the number of the hut? And he said they'd better not, as he didn't know the number of the hut, and couldn't direct them, and in any case he might be out on manoeuvres. And so on.

And there are limericks. And smutty jokes. And a tremendous amount of cursing and blasphemy, against which my main objection is that it is so seldom original.

Smut

And odd snatches of conversation: One says to another reading a weekly paper: Any rapes in this issue? And the answer: Only two small ones. Which proves, of course, that few people understand what words really mean. I wonder if they ever apply the ideas suggested by the main source of their conversation to their sisters or mothers. I suppose not.

It is very difficult to read, partly because of the continual noise, but mainly because of the clock. Minutes count. When we are not working we are eating or sleeping, or worst of all, cleaning brass, equipment, rifles, boots. Sometimes we have time to clean ourselves, but that is seldom.

Difficult to Think

It is difficult to think. The mind must be perpetually orientated into the next hour to make sure that proper preparations have been made in the way of having the correct uniform ready to wear, or the correct equipment in the proper order, and so on. To-night, for example, while I write, I am also thinking that for to-morrow morning my web gear is cleaned and polished, but that my buttons are still dull. I shall therefore have to polish those on my tunic between

shaving in the morning and breakfasting at 7 a.m., and the buttons on my great-coat between 7.20 a.m. and 7.30 a.m. Between 7.30 a.m. and 7.40 a.m. I shall run over my rifle, and between 7.40 and Parade at 7.50 I shall have to check over all the gear I have by that time tied round my complaining body — and probably end up by discovering, just as the inspecting officer approaches me, that one strap goes over another when it should go under.

Those are some of the disadvantages. They always seem to turn up. I can think or write nothing without reverting to the habit of grouch. Sometimes I even start believing that to be a soldier must be to be unnatural, there is so much to complain of. Perhaps, when Mr. Churchill has taken us into the Promised Land of 1945, philosophy will have undergone the necessary change.

A Discovery

But these small points about our change of residence are comparatively unimportant beside a discovery I have made. When we came here we came for a special course of instruction, and we were supposed to be handpicked. Most of those who were offered the chance refused to come. They were largely men who worked with their brains; business men, school teachers, and the like. They would not come. It meant more time in the army. They wanted to get back to their jobs.

Among those left in the draft only about 50 per cent. are intellectually fitted for the work they will have to do. The real material for an army requiring good material will be getting back to civilian life as fast as Mr. Semple lets it. And New Zealand will have to get along without it.

I should like to know why this is. I have my own theories. One I cannot very well state here, since it smells of politics. The other is that war is a bore. War always was a bore for the private soldier, and even for most ranks up to generals. Now, when it might seem that mechanisation is making it more interesting, it has become even more of a bore, because the men are being mechanised as much as their means of transport.

I think it is time the modern army began to think of brain power as well as of man power. At the moment my experience suggests that brains in this country are largely uninterested, and that the result for the rest of us is that war is going the same way as industry and the joint stock company.

I don't think we can afford that sort of thing. Someone had better anticipate the complaint.

A.M.P.'s Business Year

W. T. Ikin, Manager for New Zealand of the Australian Mutual Provident Society, has received advice from his head office in Sydney that the total new business for the year 1940 was £23,011,755 — Ordinary Department £16,927,963, Industrial Department, £6,083,792. Of this total, over £22,740,000 was written in Australia and New Zealand.

HEARTS ARE TRUMPS..
AND PEPSODENT'S "COME-CLOSER" SMILE
HOLDS ALL THE HONOURS



IT'S THE

IRIUM* IN
PEPSODENT
TOOTH PASTE

that gives teeth Dazzling Whiteness

Change today to Pepsodent. You'll find your smile will become miraculously brighter, your teeth miraculously whiter. Why?... Because Pepsodent contains Irium the most amazing cleansing agent yet known.

Because of Irium, Pepsodent contains no grit, soap or pumice. Because of Irium, Pepsodent can gently and safely brush away all those unsightly surface stains which mar the natural beauty of your teeth. Buy a tube now.

* Irium is Pepsodent's registered trade name for
PURIFIED ALKYL SULPHATE

AD446/23

PEPSODENT
TOOTH PASTE

Trial Size 6¹/₂ — Large Size 1¹/₃

Contains IRIUM*
For Greater Cleansing Power
BUY THE ECONOMY SIZE — 2-