

ADVICE TO DRAFTS UPON ARRIVAL AT THE FRONT TO JOIN THE 24th CANADIAN BATTALION VICTORIA RIFLES OF CANADA.

DISCIPLINE.

MOST of you have already heard what I am about to tell you, but, either from ignorance or slackness, certain offences are continually being committed by men who have absolutely no intention of actually doing wrong. You are all intelligent, thinking Canadians; remember, then, by your conduct and actions at the Front, you will uphold the honour, or cast a slur on, as the case may be, yourself, the Empire, and what is to us dearest of all—CANADA.

You have a great reputation to maintain; and remember, every time your name appears on the Offence Report, it goes all the way to the Base, and brings discredit on yourself and Canada.

Discipline is the all-important essential for a soldier. Without discipline, Germany would not do what she is doing, and the British Army could not have made the magnificent fight it made at Mons.

The truest form of discipline is self-discipline. By that I mean, do not wait to be "checked" for an irregularity by someone in authority over you, but "check" yourself before committing it.

Offences which in civil life or in peace times are considered of no consequence, are very serious over here. When I tell you that men have been shot for certain offences, it is not a fairy tale, but a reality.

If you "play the game," you will find your Officers, N.C.O.'s, and comrades will "play the game" with you, and the result will be you will help to keep your Battalion second to none.

ORDERS.

Orders should be obeyed both in the spirit and the letter. This does not mean that an order has to be obeyed because it is an order, and the consequences of not obeying it are likely to be unpleasant. It means that, although it is often very difficult to understand why we are given certain orders, it is "up to" us to obey them in every sense of the word, just as if they were exactly what we had wanted to do.

Orders are given with a definite necessary object, and the whole-hearted obedience of them will, in all probability, spell the difference between success and failure.

Never argue, discuss, or quibble over orders—obey them.

It is just as necessary to obey orders given by N.C.O.'s as those given by Officers. An N.C.O. is an Officer. The title "Non-commissioned Officer" means an Officer who does not hold a commission from the King.

Neglecting to obey an order may be forgetfulness or carelessness. Remember, though you have no intention of disobeying an order, to forget to carry it out may have very serious results.

Disobeying an order is a very serious offence.

Refusing to obey an order is one of the most serious offences a soldier can commit. If you are given an order which you do not think is fair or right, obey it just the same. After you have obeyed it, you can parade about it. I will tell you the proper way to do this in a few minutes.

SLACKNESS.

One of the main things to avoid here, especially in the trenches, is the feeling of slackness—the "To-hell-with-it" sort of feeling.

It is a very easy feeling to get, one which we all feel at times, and nothing can succeed while it lasts.

Therefore, if you are getting like that, pull yourself together at once. If you do not, apart from the fact that you will probably find yourself in trouble, your difficulties will seem very much larger than they really are.

Numbers of men come out here and think that all the things they had to do in Barracks are things of the past. This is absolutely wrong. Those things were given you with the idea of making discipline second nature to you, and to keep you from getting slack.

Saluting, saying "Sir" to an Officer, standing to attention when speaking to one, steadiness on parade, keeping your arms, equipment, and in billets your uniform and buttons, clean, shaving every morning, keeping your hair cut, and many other things, are absolutely necessary and must be carried out.

Your trench or your billet should be kept as clean and as much like a barrack-room as possible. This is all-important, and will save you many a sore heart.

"GROUSING."

Another thing I want to warn you against is "grouching." It undermines discipline, and will be severely dealt with.

I do not consider that a man is grouching when he makes derogatory remarks about being "a — pack-mule," and then cheerfully carries another load, or the man who says his trench is a "damned awful hole" (it probably is), and then cheerfully and optimistically tries to improve it. That is not real grouching.

But the sort of groucher who will not be tolerated is the man who finds fault and "kicks" without doing his share to improve things, or the sort of man who writes home "kicking" about things. That sort of man is not a man, but a child, and this is no place for children. What we need here, and what we must have, are workers. It is the extra bit done each day which counts.

ABSENCE WITHOUT LEAVE.

Being absent without leave on Active Service is a very serious offence. If you are absent without leave when your unit goes into the trenches, you can be tried for Desertion, and the penalty for that is death. Normally, and under ordinary circumstances, it is always possible to obtain a pass to leave billets. So that there is no object in taking the law into your own hands.

Leaving a post without permission.—Never, under any circumstances whatsoever, leave your post without being properly relieved by an Officer or N.C.O., or without the permission of an Officer or an N.C.O.—usually the one who posted you. By leaving your post without permission you might endanger the lives of all your comrades. A man who commits this offence is liable to be shot.

Falling out without permission.—It does not matter how tired or "all in" you may feel, never fall out, either on parade or on the march, without obtaining some Officer's or N.C.O.'s permission. Ask the nearest N.C.O., and he will ask your Company Officer for the required permission.