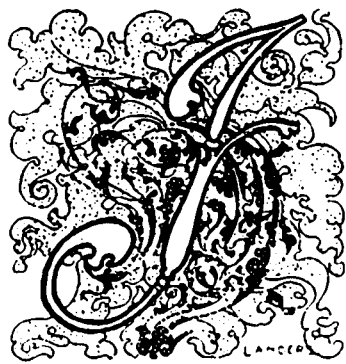


FALL CAMPS.

BY A COMMANDING OFFICER.



In the military news column, Mail and Empire, July 25, a correspondent under the nom de plume of "Rojaur Dum," ventures to assert that the answers given by the D.A.G.'s to the request of the General commanding, asking their opinion as to the advisability of holding fall camps, will all without exception report favorably (I hope they will), and goes on to show that in giving such reports they are one and all studying their own individual wishes and gains regardless of the interests of the militia. Now, Mr. Editor, I hold this assertion to be not only a gross libel upon our D.A.G.'s, but upon our militia at large. While not considering a defence necessary (our D.A.G.'s being all well known as gentlemen of honor), I hold that such statements should not go unchallenged. Having the pleasure of an acquaintance with quite a number of the members of the district staffs, I can confidently speak of the great interest they take in the militia apart from any mercenary motives and ideas as suggested, more especially in No. 1 district, of which I have a better acquaintance. One of our correspondent's objections to a fall camp is that the battalions would not muster full strength, therefore their percentage in the efficiency competition would be reduced. Now I, with many others, look upon the efficiency competition as a big farce as heretofore carried out, every inspecting officer having a standard of his own, therefore unfair to the militia at large. He also says that in his county a corporal's guard per company could not be got to turn out in September. Of course, that may be, but there must be something very

exceptional in the commanding officer and company officers. They must belong to that class which, I am sorry to say, we have a few of, who take no interest in their corps from one camp to another, and are willing to let it run itself (though I admit there is very little encouragement for one doing anything else).

But, supposing only a corporal's guard could be got out, if you have sufficient men for drill purposes, the most important adjuncts of a regiment—the officers and section commanders—would be drilled. In the case of trouble, men could be got and knocked into shape in a short time, but not so officers and section commanders.

I have been in many camps both in June and September, and while admitting June is the best month, my experience of September camps has been very satisfactory, and I believe that the reports of commanding officers generally will be in favor of camp this fall, the harvest being early and everything favorable, and more especially when their commands have not been mustered since June 1893. I have no fear of turning out a good battalion, a credit to its country and up to the establishment.

The drilling of a rural battalion at company headquarters, performing their drill in the evenings, advocated by our correspondent, is impracticable on account of the men being scattered over a radius of many miles; besides the same discipline is not maintained as in brigade camps. It simply means that if we have no camps this fall commanding officers may as well revert to the sedentary or reserve militia and their corps be disbanded.

The camps should be fixed for some certain periods, even if it is only once every 4, 5, or 6 years.

At a meeting of the Montreal Amalgamated Rifle Association it was decided to hold their annual prize meeting on September 19th.

Photograph of Shoeburyness Team

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