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## Camp News

As this is not an official publication of Army Headquarters of the New Zealand Military Forces, all matters intended for publication should be addressed to The Editor and reach this office not later than 2 p.m. Mondays. Correspondence is invited on topical items of interest. Only business communications should be addressed to the Manager. Extra copies of "Camp News" may be obtained on application to the Manager, "Camp News," 3rd Floor, Whitaker's Buildings, 11 Manners Street, Wellington.

VOL. 3. NO. 139 Wellington, Friday, September 11, 1942

# When the Fight Starts the Rear Gunner Takes Over.

By E. H. CHRISTIAN in the "Daily Mirror."

In the life of every air gunner may come a brief few seconds when he jumps to the position of General of the Air.

Short though his command may be, those few seconds are packed with thrills and danger, with sudden death for the loser.

Now R.A.F. tactics give him his temporary promotion.

When a day bombing raid is made now, a rear gunner of the flight becomes the leading air gunner. He comes into his command when enemy fighters attack, not only as General, but as broadcaster and huntsman as well.

He takes command of all the planes in the flight. He gives them and his own pilot a commentary on the attack and directions to meet it. The jargon he uses is borrowed from the Navy and the hunting field, in an odd mixture.

"Tally-ho" he calls over the radio-telephone. "Tally-ho. Bandits 1,000 yards up on the red beam. Turning in now . . . 800 yards . . . 600 yards. Stand by to go to port . . . Go!"

In tight formation the planes wheel together, to turn on the attackers their maximum combined fire power. The guns start their harsh chatter, the bullets rip into the bodies of the enemy fighters.

"Breaking away to green beam," calls our leading air-gunner (red and green indicate, Navy fashion, port and starboard). "Breaking away . . . attach broken . . . over."

His pilot takes command again, and our general is an air-gunner once more in his transparent turret at the end of the plane.

The attack may have lasted less than a minute, but to meet it he underwent months of rigorous training, and he must be alert.

"Tail-end Charlie," as he is called

in the RAF, sees the air war backwards from his turret. He's a Jack-of-all-trades—little publicised — but doing a great job. He gets 8s. 3d. a day, a half-wing on the breast, and the most uncomfortable ride of all the plane's crew.

Every movement of the plane's nose is accentuated by the tail planes. While he's bumping up and down, he's also swinging from side to side in his rotating turret.

That powered turret is his great blessing. While on a flight he keeps it continually traversing, so that no fighter can creep up on his blind side.

The sight of that turret with its wicked looking guns has been enough to frighten off many an attack, without the gunner opening fire.

But he is tightly cramped in his egg-shaped cage, and suffers intensely from the cold. He cannot move from his post from start to finish of a flight, yet all those hours of alert expectancy may lead to no action at all. His one consolation then is the grandstand view he gets of the fireworks when the bombs scream down to the target.

"Tail-end Charlie" learns three trades—wireless operation, gunnery, and photography, with a smattering of hydraulic engineering for his turret. He may need all three on one trip—or none of them.

Searching the skies at night is not as easy a task as it sounds. Staring into blackness, the eyes are liable to fix-focus on one plane, missing anything beyond or in front of this range.

But in our new giant bombers the gunners are getting more action. Huge as these planes are, they are highly manoeuvrable, and in many a combat it is the enemy fighter who goes down in flames from the air gunner's fire. "Tail-end Charlie" is starting to notch up his "kills."

# Older Army Men have to be Tough

It isn't just the youngsters who are in khaki now. Their fathers are joining up—and they're finding that their age doesn't let them off stiff training.

The older you get, the tougher you have to be.

That is the present-day army—according to its new recruits.

In training depots of every corps and regiment throughout the Army, training has been stiffened up gradually during the past eighteen months.

And now the daily programme of men just recruited to the Army, is designed to make the average man of forty as tough as the youngster of twenty who was called up a couple of years ago.

Two sessions of P.T., two more of arms drill, a couple of lectures and two more periods of foot drill — "square bashing"—makes up the full and hectic day of the new recruit to Britain's older and tougher Army.

Even such staid and technical

branches of the Army as the Ordnance Corps and the Medical Corps, now have their cross-country running in full battle order, with practice in the transport of stores, equipment and "patients" over rough country, and across rivers.

Men of forty, many of them following eighteen-year-old sons into the Army, find the easy training conditions, about which their son told them two years or so ago, very drastically revised.

"My son had nothing like this to go through," is the plaintive cry of many a man now joining up, and going through the new style training.

But the older men do not crack up under the strain of their long and strenuous days—largely because their programme has been scientifically planned in collaboration with medical officers and civilian specialists.

It was anticipated that the percentage rate of sickness would grow in proportion to the increasing age of recruits to the Army, but this has not



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## WHAT ABOUT YOUR FUTURE?

Even though you are in Camp you can prepare for your return to civil life. Spare time study will qualify you for a good position. Write for particulars and mention the subject you wish to study. Here are a few of the 300 Courses:—

- |                            |                                       |
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| Carpentry                  | Diesel Engines                        |
| Draughtsman                | 1st, 2nd, 3rd Operators' Certificates |
| Radio Serviceman's Exam.   | Ground Engineer                       |
| Wiring License             | Motor Mechanic                        |
| Electrical Engineer        | Accountancy                           |
| Civil Engineer             | Welding                               |
| Navigation                 | Commercial Artist                     |
| Analytical Chemist         | 1st & 2nd Engine Drivers' Certificate |
| Mechanical Engineer        | Short Story Writing                   |
| Professional Examinations. |                                       |

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proved to be the case in actual practice.

"Tummies" and short-windedness soon disappear under the graduated system of P.T., now adopted by the Army Council as standard for all new recruits.

And men who have for years been living quiet and sedate lives, with the minimum of manual labour — are, within three or four months, as tough, if not tougher, than the lads who have led the comparatively easy lives of "old soldiers" for the past two years.