



Book Review

By 3301

"Gunner Inglorious" by J. H. Henderson; Harry H. Tombs, Ltd., Wellington; 10/6 net.

THE SOLDIER is not overwhelmed with admiration for the spate of war books cascading from the printing presses; he does not bother with them much at all. If in his reading he comes across details of tactical disposition and movement he is apt to reflect that not even an Eighth Army General has a clear picture of what happened to any brigade between the Libyan border and Tobruk; when he has sufficient interest to read through a war correspondent's book he is likely to find little there to enlist his sympathy, for the correspondent has not been on patrol between Sidi Rezegh and Bel Hamed nor watched the approach of a Mark 4 tank over the sights of a 25-pounder gun.

But in "Gunner Inglorious" the soldier will find on each of the two hundred pages a picture he will recognize and a sentiment he has known. The experience and reactions of the author, J. H. Henderson, are typical, as far as the experiences and reactions of an individual can be typical of a

group, of hundreds of New-Zealanders who fought, were wounded, and captured in the second Libyan campaign. Henderson has, with the exception of a few stories which themselves are acceptable as typical, narrowly confined himself to what he felt and saw; his memory is accurate and vivid; his expression is the exact idiom of the Second New Zealand Division; his outlook is the circumscribed one of the gunner, the private, the sapper, the trooper—his book is a record of war as those men know it.

How vivid is his memory is revealed in many unstudied details. One quotation will show it: The crew of Henderson's gun has already suffered heavily from German mortars and machine guns when Webbo has his face smashed in by a shell splinter:—

Toppie and I lift Webbo aside. His mouth is half-open and I see bits of green where he's been careless at cleaning his teeth . . .

We've thrown Webbo aside. He's not in the way now.

The precision of that memory and its matter-of-fact comment will stir the recollections of many a man who has noticed similar details without emotion when his cobber fell beside him.

Henderson has written without sentimentality; but as he has written truthfully, and as he is a New-Zealander, his story reflects the emotion and irrational sentiment which the New

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that from the personal aspect he is of the type who may be expected to operate his own business successfully, his eligibility for a loan hinges upon his service qualifications and/or hardship or loss of

opportunity as mentioned above. It must be understood that without more detailed information, particularly as regards service, this question must be answered very generally, and it is difficult to judge what view the Rehabilitation Board would take of the application.