

Armie of Parliament

First Army *for* England

Preface to Armie of Parliament Officers Handbook

About 46 years ago His Majesty King George VI, who, so far as I can remember, reposed great confidence in my courage, diligence and loyalty, sent me his commission as Second Lieutenant in the old 16th Foot (which by that time had become the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Regiment). Soon afterwards we-rather optimistically you may say- declared war on Nazi Germany, and I set off to France expecting within about a fortnight to lead No 7 Platoon of A Company, 2nd Battalion, against the Teuton Hordes

That's not quite how things turned out, but it did fall to my lot during most of the period 1939-1945, to train soldiers for war and to take them into action. If you go to enough battles, you are bound, I suppose, to learn something. Well, what do I think I learnt?

1. An officer must know his trade. If he doesn't understand minor tactics and the use of weapons and ground he will be a pretty useless commander. This demands hard work and midnight oil
2. You must look after the men. Know them individually, their problems, their good points and their bad. Treat them all the same, no favourites. Advance their interests when they deserve it. In addition the cavalry must look after their horses- before themselves
3. Leadership is done from the front! One can lecture for hours on leadership, but it is pretty straight forward really. They can't follow you if you are lurking in the rear
4. Discipline is what binds a unit together. Esprit de Corps is a wonderful thing, but without drill, discipline and dress of a high standard, it is a brittle asset.
5. Demand a high standard of your men- do not pamper them. Build up their morale by the sense of achievement, which comes from obstacles surmounted and battles won

These maxims are not easy to live up to, but history shows that this country even in the worst times has never lacked for bold, skilful and diligent commanders. It is for you to live up to the tradition

Last point. Never soldier with miserable gloomy b.....s if you can possibly help it. Don't be SAD, take things as they come.

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This was written as a preface to the second edition of the Sealed Knot officers Handbook 1983