

THE CANADIAN SERVICES COLLEGES

Educating for War and Peace

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THE rude, illiterate soldier is a type in our literature from the time of Shakespeare to that of Shaw. The misconception that all soldiers conform to this pattern is taking an unconscionable time to follow the lead of the old soldier of the song and fade away. Starting from the initial premise that war and civilization are fundamentally incompatible it is assumed that soldiers are uneducated or ineducatable and that, carrying the idea to extremes, the most successful soldiers are those who are nearest to primitive brutishness. Too much education, so the argument goes, develops squeamishness, indecision, caution, hesitation, individualism, and a host of "scholarly" characteristics unsuitable for war. The fate of past civilizations, which fell to the onslaught of untutored barbarians, suggests that military prowess declines with the growth of culture; and it is thought that an inverse relationship between education and soldiering is natural and is applicable to individuals as well as societies.

Yet there is a wealth of evidence to show that there is a direct and positive relationship between education and success in war. It is obvious that at the lower end of the military hierarchy, a basic knowledge of the tools of culture, the three Rs, is essential for the operation of modern war. One reason why the Red Army is superior to the old Czarist army is that its recruits are all literate. In the higher ranks various degrees of basic education are necessary if an army is to operate efficiently. The capacity of its individual members to communicate efficiently with each other is quite as important in a military organization as in a civil society. The development of that capacity is a form of education.

The training of the military mind is achieved by the same processes as the training of a civilian mind. Although there are some who hold that the best education for the strategist and tactician is to be found in war itself it is undoubtedly true that this is not enough. Wars are, for this purpose, too short and too infrequent; and they provide too little variety of examples for training purposes. Even when supplemented by problems exercises and schemes they cannot give that wealth of experience

which alone can teach. Hence war and mock-war must be supplemented by the study of past campaigns. The soldier-student must turn to the vast store of knowledge and experience to be found in books. It is not surprising, therefore, that the "Great Captains" of history have invariably been men who had educated themselves by wide reading. And a surprising number have been capable of clear exposition and narrative.

In our own generation the advance of technology has made more clear the relation between the training of the soldier and the ordinary educational process. In peace and war we depend to an ever greater extent on our scientists and technicians. Thus, even in face of the urgent need for man power at the peak of the war crisis, service "trades" continued to demand high educational standards. The equivalent of the educational standard for entry to a university was the minimum requirement for entry to the lowest ranks in many "trades." After the war, in the Canadian Army, a university degree or its equivalent was required of almost all applicants for commissions, even in non-technical corps. A modern army, like society as a whole, is dependent on an efficient educational service for the technical services without which it cannot exist.

To some extent a growing dependence on science and technology has operated to retard the reliance of the armed forces on some aspects of a general education. The same tendency of science faculties to squeeze out the traditional cultures is evident also in the universities. "Practical values" tend to become the criterion of selection of subjects of study in a world which is increasingly conscious of being materialistic. The more remote, more intangible, yet still real, value of a general education carries less weight.

Much in the same way the growth of the necessity for "professional training" threatens to check the recourse of military, as well as civilian, students to a general education. During the nineteenth century the chief subjects studied at the British Army Staff College were languages, drawing and history. While all value for mind-training as in civilian educational institutions; and they also had "cultural" qualities. The rise of German military might, however, (itself largely a product of the *Kriegs-academie*, an institution comparable in academic standing to the professional schools of a university) led to a renewed emphasis on professional military training and to the complete re-organization of Staff training. The more leisurely general and academic course of the nineteenth century gave way to one

which was thoroughly professional. This means, however, that modern armies must now rely to an even greater extent than before on an efficient national educational system at all levels to provide the necessary basic education. It means also that armies must take care not to make their educational content too narrowly professional lest they choke that intellectual development and interest which has in the past, largely by a process of self-education, produced the great captains of history.

Doubt about the connection between education and military training is voiced by some soldiers and by some scholars. The soldier's contempt for long-haired and unmartial intellectuals often makes him fail to appreciate the value that education has for his training. This suspicion of "education" is still strong in the armed forces. Some soldiers rise to high rank because they have developed that invaluable intellectual asset, a trained mind, without having undergone a long formal process of education. For most men, however, mind-training can most easily be achieved by the methods tried and tested through centuries of experience in our universities and colleges. And it must be remembered that modern war is as complex as modern life and needs our best-trained minds to direct it.

From within the university cloister, on the other hand, the military profession often appears barren in its social contribution. Even when aggression threatens to overthrow civilization the scholar finds war grossly wasteful. Hence he tends to have doubts about the intellectual capacities needed by the soldier. The scholar's suspicion of the nature and standards of education in military services would have been dispelled by a closer examination of the facts. To the outside world the cadet college, the heart of the army's educational system, appears only as a place of glamour, parades, spit-and-polish, pageantry, and somewhat hollow traditions. The basic academic education goes unnoticed. Yet the lecture and examination rooms have more importance for the cadet's career than the parade-square. At West Point, for instance, academic standing decides success or failure and fixes the graduate's seniority in the army. It was this emphasis on academics which caused the recent lamentable breach of the traditional "honour" system. At Sandhurst, the order of merit is based on academic standing qualified by an assessment of character. If soundly administered (and character estimations are difficult) this combination is reasonable in a military college. It is clear, however, that in both institutions the cadet's academic qualities are more important

for his future prospects than is usually realized.

Furthermore, military colleges have maintained good academic standings. Relative standards are difficult to assess but it is good evidence of West Point's standards that those graduates who have left the army to take up a civilian career have invariably done very well. And the great contribution of the relatively small number of graduates of the Royal Military College of Canada to their country's civil development is a story which still needs its narrator. It is likely that the rise and fall of military academic standards during the nineteenth century would compare not unfavourably with similar standards in the universities if those standards could be measured. One example may be given to show that those standards were subject to the same influences as in the universities. The history of the study and teaching of military history in the British Army Staff College during the nineteenth century is marked by periodic revivals. And, exactly as in the universities, these revivals can be associated with the appearance of great teaching-scholars. Men like Sir Edward Hamley, Col. Chesney, Col. Henderson, and Sir Frederick B. Maurice, some of whom are preeminent in the historical world, brought sound scholarship and pedagogy to benefit the training of British Army officers in the nineteenth century. Despite the unsound practice of allowing commissions to be purchased, and the traditional aristocratic caste system of the army, and despite the fact that attendance at Staff College was not popular and not eagerly sought after, men like these used the college to exercise a strong and valuable influence over the British Army.

In another way, military colleges were a powerful influence academically. They were among the pioneer engineering colleges. The Royal Military Academy founded at Woolwich in 1741, the United States Military Academy founded at West Point in 1802, and the Royal Military College of Canada at Kingston founded in 1876, all served their country by producing some of the engineers and engineering services on which modern greatness is built.

Military colleges pioneered in another way. They were inclined to incorporate more courses in the humanities into their engineering courses. At West Point, for instance, as much as thirty per cent of the cadet's class-time over the whole course is occupied by humanities and social sciences. At Annapolis the percentage is nearly as high.

The stress placed on the humanities in military colleges is

worth examining further. Too many people, perhaps confusing humanism with humanitarianism, are inclined to think that an education in the humanities is unsuitable for military training; but there is little evidence that those scholars or literary men who seem unsuitable for a military career are so because of their education. Innate qualities are just as likely to be responsible. On the other side of the ledger it is noteworthy that many scholars and thinkers have, in time of war, become zealous soldiers. Warrior-poets are innumerable; and Lawrence of Arabia is an outstanding example of a scholar who was successful as a military leader.

It is sometimes suggested that scholarship begets skepticism; that the student sees both sides of a question too readily and is therefore plagued with indecision; that he dislikes automatic obedience and resents the traditional discipline and routine of military life. These things, along with the physical softness brought on by his sedentary existence are alleged to render the humanistic scholar poor military material. More serious still is the charge that the scholar shrinks from violence.

On the other hand it may be argued that many of these characteristics are qualities found in many other men who are not scholarly, and are therefore not the direct result of scholarship. Furthermore, there are certain contributions which humanist scholarship can bring to the soldier which can be developed in no other way. Language, the means of communication, is a necessity in military organization which has been mentioned already. History is an essential gateway to strategy. The social sciences throw light on the world in which the soldier carries on his trade and illuminates the people and the institutions with which he has to deal. And all these studies develop, more readily than other forms of education, awareness of the nature and complexity of problems and a robust flexibility of mind. War depends, Mr. Winston Churchill has written, "on an instructed and fortunate judgment of the proportions of an ever-changing scene." That judgment cannot be developed by military exercises alone. It cannot be developed in the natural sciences laboratory. It can only be developed in the world of experience supplemented by that wider world of experience to be found in books.

Most important of all, morale, the key to victory, can only be based on a real understanding of the culture which the soldier is being trained to defend. That understanding must be nurtured by a scholarly appreciation of the values of that culture.

It must be developed by a deliberate fostering of the soldier's understanding of the social and political problems which vex society. If such a process of "indoctrination" were to neglect scholarly qualities, as it did in Nazi Germany and as it does in Soviet Russia, then it would become arid and sterile. If it is based on true scholarship, and on soldiers, sailors and airmen who are educated to the extent of their capacity and their need for education, then it will become vigorous and powerful.

The new curriculum of the Canadian Service Colleges, when considered in the light of the foregoing discussion, shows how the Canadian forces are endeavouring to apply the lessons which can be drawn from a study of the relation between education and the training of soldiers. It is based on the premise that the armed forces require officers with educational attainments as high as those of other professional groups.

A portion of the officer-intake with the required academic standing can be supplied from the training units at the universities; but the university cadet is not obliged to maintain his connection with the services after graduation. The university training scheme thus furnishes a valuable pool of potential officer material; but although a proportion of the output of graduates from the scheme finds its way into both active and reserve forces, there is no guarantee that the supply will be maintained. The cadets of the Canadian Services Colleges, however, are required to join either the active or reserve forces on graduation and it is expected that four years of life in a service institution will attract a large percentage to join the active force. Nearly seventy per cent of the first graduating class have chosen to do so this year and it is probable that the percentage will be higher still in future years.

A second difference between the university training scheme and the Services Colleges is that the products of the latter, having lived for the four years at a formative stage of their life in a military atmosphere will be more completely indoctrinated with the customs and traditions of service life. They are thus expected to form a nucleus for the services of the future much as the regular or permanent soldiers formed a stiffening in the great citizen armies recruited in two world wars.

In all other respects, however, the officers produced by the two schemes will be equal. For the sake of harmonious and homogeneous defence forces, there are obvious advantages to be gained from giving the graduates of the services an education reasonably equal to that of the officers who have come from the

universities. For this reason, it is imperative that university standards be maintained in the Colleges. Hence the majority of the members of the teaching staff of the Colleges have been drawn from a variety of universities.

What is more, conditions for the faculty for teaching and research are comparable with the universities. It is believed that military prowess, like success in other fields of activity, can be achieved most effectively by men who have been trained to think effectively. The great service of Oxford and Cambridge in producing practical administration for the soundest and most efficient civil services in history is too little known in North America. Yet the lesson is clear; and it has obvious applications to military as well as other forms of training. The cadets, therefore, work in contact with professors who are actively engaged in scientific enquiry, in research in the humanities, and in literary effort. Exactly as in the university the dissemination of knowledge is undertaken in connection with the advancement of learning and is nurtured by it. The mental discipline of the university is successfully blended with the military discipline of the military college.

From late September to the end of April, eighty-five per cent of the cadet's time is spent in academic study. Much of this, of course, may have some military application. But in essence and in method it is always comparable with university studies. Only the remaining fifteen per cent of the cadet's time is taken up with purely military studies, service-drill, and physical training. The Colleges train men for all three services alike; and the cadet gets most of his army, navy, or air force training during the summer along with the cadets from the university training divisions of the various services.

Because it is believed that the officer of the future must, of necessity, be a man with an all-round or "balanced" education as well as with a well-trained mind, the courses are broader than is frequently the case in the universities. It is for this reason, and not because of a large content of military training, that the Canadian Services Colleges General Course, starting from the Upper School examination, takes four years instead of the three years of the "pass arts" course of the university, and that the engineering course takes four years to cover work which has the status of three years of an honours engineering course at a university. The first two years for all cadets include both natural and applied sciences, and also a relatively large amount of French, English, History and Economics. In the third and

fourth years the cadet may choose between proceeding with the General or the Engineering course. The General Course is very similar to "pass arts" courses in universities; and those students who have obtained a required academic standing in their first two years are given the opportunity to specialize in either a Commerce or International Relations group of subjects. On the Engineering side short courses in English (or French) History and Politics are carried on into the third and fourth year.

The course at the Royal Military College is thus both old and new, traditional and conservative. Like other military colleges, especially on this continent, R.M.C. has always placed a greater emphasis than was customary, for instance in British cadet colleges, on a "general" academic education. What is new in the new curriculum is that the later years of the General Course now provide ample time in free periods for wide reading and for the writing of essays. Even here the course is not unique. The French Ecole Speciale Militaire Inter-Armes at Coetquidan also allows free periods for study.

Since the war, the emphasis on the research interests of the faculty has been increased; but here again there are precedents elsewhere. Professors at the United States Naval Academy are specifically encouraged to undertake scholarly work and have included outstanding scientists like A. A. Michelson who was midshipman at Annapolis and did his early research on light while an instructor there. The research activities of British military and naval teachers of history like Colonel Henderson in the nineteenth century, and Professor Michael Lewis presently at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, are well known. Perhaps better known still is Michael Faraday, who lectured at the Woolwich Academy from 1829 to 1853.

Finally, the courses at the Canadian Services Colleges are designed to prepare men not only for war, but also for peace; this is more than an application of the current doctrine that one must build for peace by preparing to be strong in war. The cadets are given an education which fits them for either military or civil careers. There are several reasons peculiar to Canada's position and history which make this imperative. In the past, it has been traditional that Canada's defence in time of emergency will rest largely on the militia or reserve force. From its beginning in 1876 the Royal Military College was directed primarily towards producing in addition to regular officers, a stiffening of soundly trained reserve officers who could be called on in emergency. Those officers had, therefore, to be trained for

civil life as well as in military duties. As long as Canada's army includes large militia units these are good arguments for maintaining this policy if it is practicable. Secondly, a large fraction of service officers must have a technical training which is similar to that of civilian technicians. The basic education for a career in the technical military services is virtually identical with that for a civil career. And finally, perhaps most important of all, in a modern democracy it is essential that military men must have an education similar to that of their fellows lest they become a class apart, or cease to appreciate and understand the nature of the society in which they live and the cause in which they fight. An army can only function efficiently in a democracy if its leaders understand the relation between the military and civil power. Young officers must be both good soldiers, sailors and airmen, and, at the same time, good citizens. The Canadian Services Colleges are designed to produce them.
