

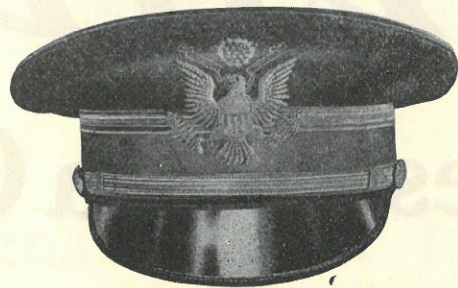
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THE NATIONAL GUARD MAGAZINE

Volume IX.

NOVEMBER, 1912

Number 11

A Word About Being Prepared

By W. RICHESON LOVE, Formerly Lieutenant of Infantry, N. G. S. Tenn.

THE expression, "In time of peace, prepare for war," is well nigh worn threadbare through constant repetition, but the idea, from the time of its conception to the end of time is the foundation of civil and military efficiency and success. For our particular benefit, the expression may be modified so as to read: "In time of winter, prepare for the summer encampment."

It is not well to put off until the last moment, anything that is worth doing at all. In the course of a few months the last moment will again be upon us, as regards an encampment, and if we take no steps toward preparing, it bids well to find us in the same state of unpreparedness in which many of us have been found before.

If an organization is to make a better showing than it did at the last encampment; if it is to keep ahead of the rival that pressed it so closely last year, it is now time to see that it, with each and all of its individual units, receive, and study carefully, some course of Field Service.

I have seen, in the several years of my service, many a company go to camp below the proper strength, with poor instruction, and composed largely of recruits, having not the remotest idea of military service; even with officers knowing little more than the recruits. This, to my mind, is the fault, largely, if not entirely, of the commanding officer of the organization. If the commander is a man of forethought; if he has the welfare of the company at heart enough to give the matter a little time and attention, only in extreme cases will the company take the field in poor condition.

The proper thing, then, to be done, is to begin, and that, NOW, to advance the standing of the company by careful attention to the conditions of field service, and to the present condition of the company.

In the beginning, let every officer familiarize himself with the field service regulations—with paper work—with the duties of his command—and not least, with the disposition of every man over whom he is in authority.

Begin now to recruit your company. Have a school for your non-commissioned officers.

Keep your armory perfectly clean.

Uniform your men to a fit. Do not tolerate an untidy soldier.

Instruct your men in map reading and in field messages.

Promote friendly rivalry in squad work and in rifle practice, and give a small reward to the winners.

Make your armory a comfortable home for the men, and have a class of men that will not cause you to be ashamed. Invite the ladies to see the drills—they will like it, if the men are gentlemen, and they will do almost as much for your company as you, yourself.

In this article I shall not enter deeply into general field service. What I have to say is for the benefit of the individual. This with your instruction in Field Service will make an improvement in your company.

It is my opinion that there are three items of great importance to the Guardsman participating in Maneuvers—proper eating, cleanliness, and care of the feet, and not least among these is the care of the feet.

Suppose that you ask almost any surgeon to name one of the chief ailments at an encampment. The chances are ten to one that he will say "sore feet." You yourself, know how familiar is the sight of a man hobbling about quarters and complaining of even the "light duty" marked up against him. There is little doubt that in almost every case the cause will be found in poorly shod feet, or feet improperly cared for.

Poorly shod does not necessarily mean old and broken shoes—it means just as much the brand new pair of shiny shoes, with stiff soles, high heels and dainty, pointed toes; that bind and heat the feet and bring scalds, blisters and grunts of pain to the wearer. These shoes cannot even pretend to be comfortable, or to have any claim on the Regulations.

To quote from the report of an Army officer concerning a certain organization (said report to be found in THE NATIONAL GUARD MAGAZINE, issue of November, 1909), we can easily find the view that is taken of such matters by the Army: "There was not even a semblance of uniformity regarding the National Guard uniform. Some men had no leggings; most of them wore the Oxford black shoe; some with exaggerated pointed toes and black bows."

The wearing of oxfords with leggings is detrimental to more than uniformity. The feet suffer greatly because of it. The ankle is exposed, and on the march, mud or dust will enter the top of the shoe, and the skin of the foot will become raw and very sore with the constant rubbing and grinding. In passing through saw grass or briars the ankle is likely to become very badly lacerated. In addition to these disadvantages the flesh is often caught up between the shoe and the bottom of the leggings—severe blisters are the

result of this pinching.

The wearing of black shoes is fatal to uniformity and good appearance. The cry may go up, "Do you think that we can afford to buy shoes just for an encampment?" Hardly. You have to wear shoes, though, do you not? Well, why not wear tan shoes for a while before the encampment, and for a good while afterward? Get them some time before the encampment and have them thoroughly broken in before marching in them. A poorly shod soldier, as far as marching goes, is no soldier at all.

It is well to keep this in mind and to act accordingly.

Another fact that you do not have to keep in mind—it will speak for itself—if you do not care for your feet you will suffer for it.

First of all, have shoes well broken in and have two pairs of them.

Second: Have your shoes properly and comfortably fitted. Avoid every extreme.

Third: Keep yourself supplied with clean dry socks.

Fourth: Take care of the feet by following a few simple observations set forth below.

Keep the feet as clean and dry as possible.

Bathe the feet every night in salt water, or in a rather strong solution of alum and water. A little borax added to this last will aid in toughening the feet without the hardening that alum alone is apt to cause.

A bit of felt glued into the shoe at any place where it may rub, is an excellent preventative of chafing and blistering.

To rub the feet with hard soap before going on a march is to insure greater ease in walking.

Prevent scalds between the toes by sprinkling inside the toes a good foot powder, a box of which may be purchased for ten or fifteen cents.

Open a blister by piercing the skin near the blister and running the needle to the water. Be sure to not remove the top of the blister. Rub the place with melted tallow of a candle and replace the sock at once.

Never go about for any length of time with wet feet, if it be possible to make a change. To do so is to invite colds and sore feet. In changing, bathe the feet in warm water and rub briskly until dry.

SANITATION AND HEALTH.

Keep clean.

If possible bathe every day and rub dry with a coarse towel.

See that your quarters are properly trenched and drained. It will mean work to you, but it is worth it.

THE NATIONAL GUARD MAGAZINE

Published by THE EDWARD T. MILLER COMPANY, 136-140 East Gay Street, Columbus, Ohio.

Dedicated to the patient and patriotic officers and enlisted men of the National Guard of all the States and devoted to the service they so nobly represent

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COL. EDWARD T. MILLER, Chief
Postmaster Ohio Division, Columbus.

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Bureau—30 Dearborn St.—Advertising, Herman; Circulation, W. C. Geleng.

Authors and correspondents are responsible for all opinions expressed in their articles and not editors.

Magazine is published on the 15th day of each month preceding month of issue. All contents and advertising copy should reach us 15th of the month preceding publication. Entered as Second-class Matter, March 22, 1905, at the Postoffice at Columbus, Ohio, under Postoffice No. 3, 179.

Subscriptions (in advance)—Single copy, 10 cents; Year, \$1.00; Two Years, \$1.50; Three Years, \$2.00; Five Years, \$3.00; Life, \$10.00. Extra charges for postage, the receipt of which number of the magazine with the expiration date properly indicated on the address label will be the only subscription receipt furnished.

Subscription rates furnished on application

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