

- ⁵¹ 'Inconsistent Antis', *Northern Miner*, 27 October 1916, p. 3.
- ⁵² 'Anti-Conscription Meeting' (advertisement), *Northern Miner*, 27 October 1916, p. 2.
- ⁵³ 'Recruiting Meeting' *Northern Miner*, 20 July 1915, p. 7.
- ⁵⁴ 'No Sympathy for Slackers,' *Northern Miner*, 25 April 1918, p. 3.
- ⁵⁵ 'Pushing the Germans Back', *Northern Miner*, 25 April 1918, p. 3.
- ⁵⁶ 'Australian Casualties', *Northern Miner*, 25 April 1918, p. 3.
- ⁵⁷ Ashley Ekins, 'Battle of Fromelles,' *Wartime* 44 (2008), pp. 18-23.
- ⁵⁸ Brumby, 'The World' and the Great World War, pp. 146,148.
- ⁵⁹ 'Chamber of Commerce', *Evening Telegraph* (Charters Towers), 27 October 1916, p. 3.
- ⁶⁰ 'Chamber of Commerce', *Evening Telegraph*, 27 October 1916, p. 3.
- ⁶¹ Henry Lawson, 'The Local Spirit', in Leonard Cronin (ed.), *A Fantasy of Man: Henry Lawson Complete Works 1901-1922* (Sydney: Lansdowne, 1984), p. 606.

“Under Active Service Conditions”: Queensland School Cadet Camps in the Second World War

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In July 1942, Brisbane's *Telegraph* newspaper published a statement issued by Australia's Department of Defence proudly declaring:

Within the next few weeks hundreds of cadets would enter camp under active service conditions and would be trained in advanced infantry work, tactical exercises, field ambulance, artillery, and instructed in specialised subjects.¹

Twenty-eight Queensland secondary schools maintained cadet detachments between 1939 and 1945, preparing their pupils to, as the *Telegraph* went on to describe, “answer the nation's call, if needed, when they had passed into manhood”.² The camps which the Department of Defence promoted as being so valuable to their training were conducted primarily during school holidays. Varying widely in nature, these camps lasted anywhere between a single weekend and a whole month, and were conducted either on the initiative of individual schools or as inter-school affairs coordinated by the Australian Army. However, all were unified by their intensely martial nature that offered a brief, immersive experience of army life for the adolescent boys who participated in them.

For the “lads” themselves, these camps were often highly desired but made unattainable by the financial demands it placed upon the school.³ “Really I believe a camp would help us on our way,” a cadet from The Southport School wrote in 1945,

But what's the use, I say to you,
Of agitating so?
For to a camp I really fear
We never more will go.⁴

When a camp was organised, however, it “aroused interest amongst all ranks,” as C.D. Mansfield of Brisbane's Church of England Grammar School (CEGS, or 'Churchie') declared in 1943. Just as cadets' desire

to participate in a camp was widely shared, so their experiences of camps as described in school magazines followed similar patterns. Some events such as mock battles and weapons demonstrations were described as memorably exiting, while other aspects such as the military discipline and routine were regularly bemoaned for their tedium and discomfort.

Cadet training in Queensland dates back to the late 19th century, and the number and size of cadet detachments dramatically expanded under the system of mandatory training introduced by the *Defence Act* of 1909, with cadets becoming the first stage of eligible Australians' training in the Citizen Military Forces.⁶ However, this expansion was reversed during the demilitarisation of the interwar period, and during the Second World War only detachments that were attached to secondary schools remained in operation, often with severely curtailed material support and oversight owing to the demands of Australia's armed forces at home and overseas. This article examines the central components of youths' descriptions of cadet camps and argues that their experiences were influenced as much by non-martial and unauthorised events as they were by the authorised training that formed the basis of the camps as intended by adults.

While many elements of camps caused displeasure in cadets, their experiences of both the authorised and unauthorised aspects of camp training left them with overall positive impressions, producing glowing reports of their experiences to be published in schools' magazines. This will be demonstrated using accounts written by cadets from five South East Queensland schools. From Brisbane Boys' College, 'A Parody on 'The Charge of the Light Brigade'' written by Gerald Moore in 1945, and three anonymous accounts of Brisbane Boys' College cadet camps in 1944 and 1945 published in the College's *Portal* magazine. These will be complemented by two accounts of a 1943 Michaelmas camp written by C.D. Mansfield and N.E. Parker of Brisbane's Church of England Grammar School. Additionally, an account of a Non-Commissioned Officers' camp at Enoggera in December 1939, written by Sergeant Roe of Christian Brothers' College, Gregory Terrace, and a description of a reconnaissance patrol on the same camp by an anonymous cadet of the college, will be drawn upon. Finally, a recollection of 'A Day on the Range' written by an anonymous cadet of The Southport School (TSS) will be used.

Extracts from each of these sources are used to examine the thematic components of a cadet camp as experienced by the youths it was designed to train. These components have been grouped into three

categories – a camp's environment, with its military discipline, equipment, personnel, weather and food; a camp's syllabus, consisting of lectures, mock battles and practical training; and the recreational aspects of a camp, including revelling in the failures and upsets of the syllabus and outbursts of youthful rebellion during both downtime and instruction.

The Cadet Camp environment

For many Queensland cadets entering a cadet camp, either for the first time or as a veteran of many such camps, its distinctly martial environment was the most memorable aspect of their experience. The strict routine and martial discipline of a camp, the proximity of military personnel and equipment, and the weather and food all left lasting impressions on cadets, shaping the experiences of cadets and prominently featuring in their recollections.

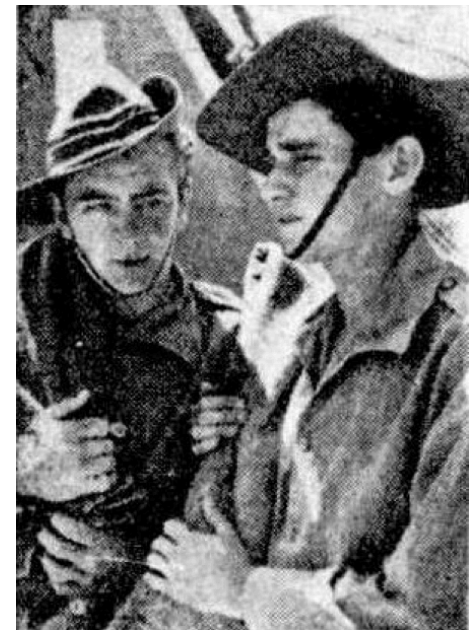


Figure 1: W.L. Wood of Scots College, Warwick, and F. X. McKinley of St Joseph's College, Gregory Terrace "exchanging impressions of their first day in camp at Chermside", December 1940 (*Telegraph*, 17 December 1940, p. 5).

Military routine and discipline were core components of any cadet camp environment, and the sudden immersion upon entering camp often had a strongly disorienting effect upon those cadets who had not experienced it before. Sergeant Roe of Christian Brothers College Gregory Terrace described himself and his fellow cadets as “excellent examples of ‘fish out of water’” when they arrived at their first cadet NCO training camp at Enoggera.⁷ “The military precision and alertness by which we were surrounded was very new to us,” Roe recalled in an article he wrote on his experiences for the College’s *Terrace* magazine.⁸ The discomfort came from many places, but Roe specifically noted that they “were not even used to the ‘feel’ of khaki,” had “never done rifle drill before, and were not at all conversant with the rules and regulations.”⁹ However, “the friendliness of the officers and cadets from other schools soon made us feel less uneasy, and we tried to adjust ourselves to the routine.”¹⁰ This adjustment was a necessarily sudden one, for their immersion in the martial environment began on the first day of the camp which “was spent in drilling and obtaining the necessary equipment from the ordnance store,” a process which left them “rather tired” from their sudden and intense introduction to army life.¹¹

Even experienced cadets noted the overwhelmingly martial nature of the camp environment and their immediate immersion into it. C.D. Mansfield of Brisbane’s Church of England Grammar School recalled that at the school’s 1943 Michaelmas camp that “all our movements and camp routine were commanded by the bugle.”¹² N.E. Parker concurred, and reflected that “every part of the camp reminded me that it was controlled by the military, and having it true army fashion made me feel that I was not there for a holiday, but to be trained by the army.”¹³ This atmosphere was present from the outset, when they “marched as a battalion along the esplanade to the camp area,” whereupon they “passed the army cooks bustling over the mid-day meal, and then came out on to the parade ground,” passing as they did so “rows of tents, all regular, all in line, everything the same about them.”¹⁴

However, the excitement at the immersion in this martial environment often wore off under the strict routine that followed. One Brisbane Boys’ College cadet recalled the universal discomfort at reveille when “the sleepy cadets opened one eye and then the other and heard Sgt-Major Podmore bellowing out ‘get up.’”¹⁵ Sergeant Roe similarly bemoaned the injustice of the routine at the 1940 NCO camp, particularly when the cadets realised that “the CO’s had ‘rooked’ us of half-an-hour” of sleep by “changing the ‘reveille’ from

5 am to 4:30 am and changing the drill hours correspondingly.”¹⁶

The sense of sudden immersion in a martial environment was often compounded by the presence of military personnel and equipment, often in unexpected circumstances. One Brisbane Boys’ College cadet recounted how “cricket balls would come down from above” during a Christmas cadet camp at Tweed Heads in 1944, “due to the RAAF boys practicing ... so we decided to play cricket against them, and succeeded in winning.”¹⁷ The feat was repeated the following year, when the College cadets “had the opportunity of playing cricket against members of the Services ... in which we were successful against the Royal Navy, but we were beaten by the ex-Prisoners of War from the Burleigh Convalescent Camp.”¹⁸ Another noteworthy event of the 1944 camp for those cadets attending was the Sunday church service, made “very interesting” by the fact that it was “conducted by an American sailor, Pastor Aitken.”¹⁹ Military equipment also held a strong fascination for many cadets, and at the 1944 camp the BBC cadets’ commanding officer arrived in a jeep “which was,” according to the anonymous cadet responsible for writing the account in the College’s *Portal* magazine, “more interesting to us” than the food it also contained.²⁰



Figure 2: Camp Cable, 1942
(St Laurence’s College Archives, Brisbane).

For most cadets, however, the weather had the strongest influence on the atmosphere of a camp and left the strongest impression on their memories of the event. The 1944 camp in which Brisbane Boys' College played cricket against members of the RAAF and wondered at the arrival of a jeep in their midst began with a struggle to erect tents while "the wind was blowing a gale and when a tent was half up the wind would take the tent and the cadets erecting it about twenty yards away from their site."²¹ However, this was still considered a favourable alternative to the previous year, when "things were a lot harder due to heavy rain and lack of proper equipment."²² The weather left a similarly strong impression upon the same cadets the following year, at what Gerald Moore described in passing as "bitterly cold Camp Cable," a US Army camp near Mount Tambourine (see Figure 2).²³ The weather of a camp significantly impacted upon its attendees' enjoyment of it, to such an extent that CD Mansfield recalled that when "it was raining heavily" the night before a planned camp was due to commence, "all hoped to be awakened by the sun in the morning. We were."²⁴

The sun brought its own problems, however, and cadet camps conducted during the summer holidays in Queensland left many cadets with lasting negative experiences of cadet training. "It was impossible to sleep at night because of the heat and the row made by our beds when we moved," Sergeant Roe recalled of his experience at Enoggera during the summer of 1939 into 1940.²⁵ "To top it all, the mess hut was of galvanised iron, and the sight of 'gallons' of perspiration pouring off the poor 'diggers' who were labouring over a hot meal would have been amusing had I not been in the same predicament myself."²⁶ This suffering nevertheless led to cadets taking greater pleasure in the few reprieves they could get from the heat, and Roe recalled one of the highlights of the Enoggera camp was the "very hot day (remember that 109 degrees?)" when he and his fellow cadets "made a bee-line for the cool depths at Young's Crossing" for a swim.²⁷ CD Mansfield of CEGS also fondly described the swim parades at the school's 1943 Michaelmas camp, when "a brisk half-mile march took us to the swimming pool, bath and centre of aquatic amusement," where the cadets received a "very welcome" reprieve from the heat.²⁸

Catering, both good and bad, was also a recurring theme of cadets' experiences of camps. C.D. Mansfield recalled that "the food was excellent" during Brisbane Church of England Grammar School's 1943 Michaelmas camp, and also noted that the canteen was "well patronised by the cadets."²⁹ An anonymous Brisbane Boys' College

cadet recalled a similar phenomenon during the College's 1945 camp, when "a full quota of canteen supplies arrived, and trade boomed amongst the Cadets, particularly in chocolates and sweets."³⁰ Similar praise was heaped upon the mess at Enoggera in December 1939 by Sergeant Roe of Christian Brothers College Gregory Terrace, who recalled that:

Mess was served in a large room by white-coated orderlies. Did we feel some class! Owing to the skill of the cooks there were no complaints and, when we left the mess-hall we had a different outlook on life. Indeed, here I might allow myself to say that every meal was excellent.³¹

Not every culinary experience was recalled favourably by cadets, however, and Roe closed his lengthy praise with a caveat that "every meal was excellent – except one – at which something which tasted like kerosene and looked as bad was served."³² The event was not devoid of joy, however, for "the expressions 'after the first bite' were very amusing."³³ A cadet of Brisbane Boys' College also recalled his mixed emotions upon eating "a good breakfast of what cadets called 'grilled' steak (some thought it rather black) and some weet-bix and coffee to get rid of the taste."³⁴ Roe was less sanguine, however, when "one night we found a rag in the bottom of the urn" from which coffee was poured each night after lectures, and "in spite of the cook's protest, it was rumoured that it was a dish-cloth!"³⁵

Despite the widely-varying nature of cadet camp environments, with its strict martial discipline and routines, access to military personnel and equipment, hot and cold weather, and good and bad catering, the majority of cadets emerged with a favourable impression of the environment, with the aforementioned aspects forming the basis for their desire to return. A Duncan of Brisbane Boys' College eulogised the camp environment with all of its hardships and joys, declaring to the readers of the College's *Portal* magazine:

I must go down to the camp again in the hot sun and the heat,
And all I ask is my .303 and cadet boots on my feet,
And rolled up sleeves, an open shirt, and a pair of khaki shorts,
And bathing togs and polishers, all packed up in my ports.

I must go down to the camp again for the bugle call is clear,
It's a shrill call and a luring call that I cannot fail to hear,
And all I ask is my great-coat with chevrons showing,
And a sunny week and warm days with soft winds blowing.

I must go down to the camp again to my palliasse filled with straw,
To the tent life and army strife and the Sgt.-Major's roar,
And all I ask is a slouch hat and a dose of No. Nines,
And some good swims, and hearty meals all tinned by Mr. Heinz.³⁶

Cadet Camp training

The syllabus of cadet camps, although often skimmed over or diminished in importance in cadets' written recollections, nevertheless played a significant role in forming attendees' impressions of their training, its purpose and its value to their potential future military service. This instruction ranged from theoretical to practical, as exemplified by C.D. Mansfield's outline of the training at Brisbane Church of England Grammar School's 1943 Michaelmas camp, when he and his fellow cadets "participated in mock battles, and on some occasions we watched demonstrations such as the firing of light automatic weapons."³⁷



Figure 3: Brisbane cadets observe a Vickers machine gun demonstration near Somerset Dam, 31 January 1944 (AWM: 063866).

Lectures and demonstrations of military equipment formed the basis of day-to-day camp training. The primary impression that N.E. Parker took away of this instruction during CEGS's Michaelmas camp was that "Army life must be very interesting, if our camp was a

sample of it."³⁸ This sample included being "shown over a tactical school for engineering, camouflage, barbed wiring, and for setting traps for the enemy," followed by a competitive "practice in personal camouflage," which Parker described as "quite interesting and enjoyable."³⁹ Mansfield also recalled that these lectures included such topics as "the trench mortar, and another on how sound carries at night, with demonstrations."⁴⁰ This diurnal syllabus was supplemented by nighttime training on topics "such as night stalking or artificial lighting of ground."⁴¹ However, for Parker, the most memorable event, "was the firing of a Bren gun and an Owen gun on the miniature range near the camp."⁴² Demonstrations and lectures were supplemented by films at Brisbane Boys' College 1945 camp, and some were on technical subjects "such as map-reading, and patrol work." Most, however, offered ideological instruction to the cadets, and the anonymous cadet noted with pride the rapacious rate at which such films were consumed, as "each night we saw one complete chapter" of the 'Why We Fight' series of newsreel propaganda films.⁴³

Instructional training was regularly supplemented by practice, with cadets enthusiastically recounting their participation in mock battles and tactical exercises. These were often made more exciting by the issuing of blank ammunition, such as during a "company manoeuvre" at Brisbane Boys' College's 1945 camp at Camp Cable, when "the crackling of rifle fire, coupled with the rattling of machine guns, and the bursting of Aldershot grenades, added a realistic effect" to the proceedings.⁴⁴ Gerald Moore described the excitement of the same mock attack on Boyce Hill in a parody of Alfred Tennyson's 'The Charge of the Light Brigade,' with

Aldershot grenades to the right of them,
A Vickers gun to the left of them
Blanks in front of them
Volleyed and thundered.⁴⁵

The excitement of a mock battle was only outdone by a night manoeuvre, one of which Parker opined "was by far the most interesting and impressive part of the training."⁴⁶ Although the objective was simply to extinguish a lantern belonging to the opposing team and "prevent your own from being touched," the event was highly charged with emotion.⁴⁷ Parker described how

every boy has a spirit of adventure, and this spirit was awakened in me when I neared the opponents' light, with everything so quiet

and the only visible thing being the glow from the lantern surrounded by darkness.⁴⁸

Mansfield also dedicated a substantial proportion of his account of the same camp to the nocturnal exercise, giving an immersive description of his emotions on the moonless, quiet night rife with mosquitoes as he and his companions crawled towards their opponents' lantern.⁴⁹ Mansfield conveyed the tension he felt as he neared the enemy defenders while

Verey-light flares lit up the whole area continually and every time I had to cover my face and arms and 'freeze.' We met enemy patrols, fought "hand-to-hand" battles and pushed on. As I neared the lantern defended by our enemies, I heard the latter killing off our men. Verey light and ground flares kept us in agony. Taking advantage of the 'dark moments,' I turned about on my stomach and began to edge my way cautiously backwards. I had got to the edge of the circle defenders when a red Verey flare told us the battle was won; our lantern had been extinguished.⁵⁰

Although the exercise ended in an anticlimax for Mansfield, his highlighting of this event nevertheless reflected its special elevated place among "all that [he] did and saw" on the camp as the event that "appealed to [him] the most."⁵¹ The immersive and emotionally-provocative nature of mock battles such as this made them memorable, placing cadets in situations where, as Parker said of his momentary proximity to the enemy lantern, "I will always remember how I felt then."⁵²

Tactical exercises could also be memorable as uncomfortable, painful experiences, with cadets frequently recalling these unfavourable aspects alongside or instead of the exciting moments. Moore's poem eulogising Brisbane Boys' College cadet detachment's mock assault on Boyce Hill as 'The Charge of the Light Brigade' not only referenced the exciting use of blank ammunition but also described the attackers, "the noble one hundred," as "covered in dirt and seat [soot?]" as they charged "five hundred yards, five hundred yards, five hundred yards further," and returned to camp "scratched at by thorns of plants, covered with dust and smoke."⁵³ Much like an entire camp, the weather played a significant role in a pupils' positive or negative experience of a tactical exercise. One of the Sergeants from Christian Brothers' College Gregory Terrace's cadet detachment sarcastically recalled how "on the hottest afternoon of the hottest day of the hottest part of the year the heart of everyone was gladdened by

the overpowering news – "We were to spend the afternoon on a reconnaissance patrol."⁵⁴ The author's discouragement was evidently heightened by his impression that "the object," of the exercise, "a hill about five miles from camp, and situated in very broken country," was unjustly conceived "by the staff as they sat sipping their beer."⁵⁵

Tactical exercises could also be painful experiences for cadets. These incidents were frequently downplayed or ignored, as was the case for the 1944 camp held by Brisbane Boys' College when they "had a manoeuvre which was good fun, but unfortunately Peter Smith fell over and broke his nose and sprained his wrist."⁵⁶ However, these events did not necessarily reduce the pleasure cadets gained from them. The anonymous Sergeant from Gregory Terrace recalled with some levity how during the "reconnaissance patrol," "thick scrub and lantana... inflicted heavy casualties in the way of scratches," and "one of the chaps from CEGS became entangled on a barbed wire fence and tore his trousers."⁵⁷ Their misfortunes continued, as the cadets "chose an ants' nest from which to take our observation. Our hasty movements drew the enemy's fire again," a dangerous event as the enemy, or more specifically "Captain Cantor and the staff ... used Ballamite cartridges."⁵⁸



Figure 4: A cadet undergoing anti-gas training in a decontamination suit, 1941 (*Courier-Mail*, 10 January 1941).

Many of the other subjects of practical training cadets were subjected to also contained a significant aspect of danger and discomfort. Sergeant Roe recalled the memorable moment when “one day during gas mask drill we entered the gas chamber and took off our masks,” receiving the full force of what “happened to be tear gas,” “and in tears we rushed for the door, which seemed to be moving.”⁵⁹ Despite the danger and discomfort, anti-gas training was lauded as a useful component of cadets’ camp training, as it was by the *Courier-Mail* in 1941 when the newspaper proudly published a photograph (see Figure 4) of a Queensland cadet “in his decontamination suit testing for gas with a piece of sensitised paper fixed to the bayonet point” attached to his Lee-Enfield rifle.⁶⁰ Roe also recalled the pain experienced during target shooting with such a rifle, and declared that afterwards there was a common complaint among cadets of sore shoulders, even if “of course nobody admitted it.”⁶¹ One anonymous cadet from The Southport School repeated the claim and described how, to prevent this, “some of the smaller boys pack football jerseys and all manner of things to ease the so-called kick of the rifle.”⁶²

Shooting also came with many frustrations, as despite enduring the pain of the recoil, “a few of the guns shoot in all directions and heights,” and the author remembered one rifle “with its sights on three hundred yards at the two hundred yards range, and it was still firing low.”⁶³ Indeed, many cadets described their experiences shooting as a series of frustrating incidents, beginning with selecting a rifle and pulling it through to “clean all the oil and some of the nickel from the barrel ... about 50 times until to our rage we find it will be no use at all,” and ending with, as Roe, recalled, “boiling water down the barrel of my rifle to clean it,” and forgetting “the hole at the other end, with the result that my foot took it.”⁶⁴ Despite the dangers and frustrations it posed to cadets inconveniences, practical training was frequently framed by cadets in a positive light with the value of hindsight. As the anonymous Southport School cadet said in his concluding sentence of his account of ‘A Day on the Range,’ “although some of us may have sore shoulders, it is well worth it.”⁶⁵

Mixed Experiences of Cadet Camps

The syllabus was not the entirety of a cadet camp, however, and as Brisbane Boys’ High School acknowledged in its ‘Cadet Notes’ article in its *Portal* magazine of 1946, camps were “partly a holiday for the cadets.”⁶⁶ Indeed, the unsanctioned and unintended aspects of a cadet camp frequently held more interest for cadets than the official martial training components, and the previous year’s account of the College

cadet detachment’s camp at Tweed Heads began with the author openly acknowledging that he would “dwell more on the happenings which were not on the syllabus” as they “made the camp more interesting.”⁶⁷

For many cadets, breakdowns in a cadet camp’s training syllabus became the most memorable aspects of their experiences. These moments, when order and productivity were replaced with chaos and pointlessness, offered cadets opportunities to add bursts of excitement and wry humour their recollections and relieve the otherwise rigid discipline of a cadet camp. Gerald Moore’s ‘Charge of the Light Brigade’ eulogy of Brisbane Boys’ College’s assault on Boyce Hill, for example, culminated not in the triumphant completion of the exercise but rather in the anticlimactic failure of the exercise, as “there wasn’t a man with blanks,” after “nobody had brought them along,” declaring that “it was the instructors’ fault, for the ‘ammo’ part was last.”⁶⁸

A similar sense of pointlessness was expressed by the anonymous author of the *Terrace* description of ‘A Reconnaissance Patrol’ conducted during the 1939 NCO training camp at Enoggera. After enduring injuries from barbed wire and plants on “the hottest day of the year,” the group sent their “getaway man ... back to headquarters with information that we had collected,” which they were subsequently informed “was all very useless.”⁶⁹ These events often produced a sense of injustice in cadets, and the author concluded his story by describing how he and his companions “went on to the hill-top and had our faults pointed out, and then the staff officers drove back to headquarters in a car. We marched.”⁷⁰ NE Parker had a similar response upon arriving at Staghorn in 1943, when, after marching from the train station he and his fellow cadets “passed a few smiling NCOs who had arrived by army truck and so had avoided the route march to the camp.”⁷¹

An anonymous Southport School cadet felt equally incensed by the injustice of meals during ‘A Day at the Range,’ when “everyone makes a bolt for dinner after they finish shooting. If you are not so fortunate as some of the others, in that you shoot around last, you may be lucky enough to pick up a few crumbs.”⁷² However unjust its distribution may have been, the food was at least edible, which could not be said of Brisbane Boys’ College cadets’ unsuccessful efforts during their 1945 Christmas camp at Tweed Heads, when “Sgt Jost and Cdt Beauchamp tried the traditional ‘boy scouts’ method of cooking a fourteen pound roast,” which produced “raw meat.”⁷³ Despite the passing references to injustice and failure, cadets regularly

took these less-favourable aspects of their camp experience in their stride, and many shared the opinion of the Brisbane Boys' College author in summarising his 1945 camp experience that "in spite of our diet and doings we survived."⁷⁴

However, the failures of cadet camp training were often due not to the ineptitude of those organising it, or the flaws in the structure under which it was conducted, but instead due to the deliberate usurpation of the cadets it was intended to educate. The same anonymous sergeant who railed against the fruitlessness and injustice of the "reconnaissance patrol" at Enoggera in 1939 also admitted his group's lukewarm attempts to seriously participate in the exercise. Highlights of the exercise for the Sergeant included the moment when they "had a look at our map and then a second look, but it was not much use, so we put it away tossed up, and chose the first street on the left."⁷⁵ The remainder of the exercise was devoted to stealing food, with the patrol largely following their stomachs. This began from the moment when "we climbed a fence and found ourselves in someone's fowl yard ... and took some mangoes for the inconvenience we had been caused," following which "our route ... ran through a large corn field," and "here a halt was called while we tried the young corn," before finally "we landed in a Chinaman's garden, and everyone went on to a vegetable diet, until our patrol leader found a tomato patch about a quarter-mile further on."⁷⁶

A similar disregard for discipline was fondly included by N.E. Parker in his account of the CEGS 1943 Michaelmas camp, when he described the excited illicit conversations between sleepless cadets after 'lights out' on their first night under canvas. Parker recalled how

Towards 3 o'clock in the morning, I awoke with a start, due to the noise in the surrounding tents. I tried to go to sleep again, but could not. All the others in the tent were awake, but none dared start conversation. It was very comical. One boy coughed a few times, then another; a third yawned, and another said to keep quiet. However, conversation ensued, and it did not stop until morning.⁷⁷

These incidents of irreverence were usually short-lived, with Parker acknowledging that "every night after that we were so tired that our light was out before the 'lights out' bugle."⁷⁸ However, their inclusion in many accounts of cadet camps reveals their significance in the minds of cadets when recalling their experiences, with these incidents of usurpation and rebellion frequently appearing while aspects of the authorised training were left out.

These incidents of unruliness were often prompted by a need to combat boredom by cadets during moments of downtime. Mansfield recalled that the Michaelmas camp began with "two and a quarter hours" on the train transiting between Brisbane's Roma Street Station and Southport, during which "quite a lot of noise was the result of being devoid of time-taking amusement."⁷⁹ Usually, however, these time-fillers were more relaxed. One night at Brisbane Boys' College's 1944 Tweed Heads camp, for example, "the whole camp was found in Sgt Len Jones' hut. Sgt Jones told us the story of the 'Hunchback of Benchley' taking the parts himself."⁸⁰ At other times, the adults responsible for the training at these camps encouraged and participated in their pupils' irreverent activities. Sergeant Roe described how the lantern slide projector used for lectures at Enoggera "often projected things other than instruments of warfare," and that "once Captain Cantor placed a compass in the instrument. The projection was excellent, but from that day onward the compass went 'ga-ga!'"⁸¹

Other cadets took to outdoor activities to pass the time, and before gathering in Len Jones' hut to witness his storytelling, "Cpl 'Butch' Slaughter, WO Blair Allan, Cpl 'Pierre' Goadby and others" spent the afternoon "trying to shoot sharks."⁸² Indeed, fishing was a popular pastime for many on the College's 1944 camp, as

It was not uncommon to see the whole camp out helping the local fishermen with their nets. This made life more interesting and provided a change in diet. Another attraction for cadets was skating, the best (at making a bad job) were 'Daddy' Davenport, Len Jones and 'Honk' Holland.⁸³

The College's cadets continued these traditions at the following year's camp, when, one afternoon, "some cadets painting themselves red with lipstick, which Anderson won in a stall at a nearby 'Fun Fair.'"⁸⁴ Not all fun was as harmless, however, and an "annual trip up the Tweed River to the 'lakes'" included an awkward incident when "'Pete,' at all times a keen photographer, gave a rather chubby cadet an accidentally-on-purpose-kind-of-push making Geoff Hogarth an excellent subject or perhaps rather unhappy 'object.'"⁸⁵ These events were merely the tip of an iceberg, as indicated by the Brisbane Boys' College author when he noted that "although several 'incidents' occurred while the cadets were 'in town,' no harm was done and everyone had an enjoyable time."⁸⁶ However, the inclusion of some of these events in cadets' accounts of camps indicates that they saw them

as an integral part of the camp experience, and reveals that the ostensibly disciplined and intense image of a camp environment was not necessarily always the case, with cadets frequently exercising their limited freedom to direct their activities and enforce an irreverent tone on the proceedings.



Figure 5: Queensland cadets pack up their tents at the end of a camp at Chermside, January 1941 (*Telegraph*, 13 January 1941).

Conclusion

The outcomes of cadets' camp experiences were as widely varied as the experiences themselves. According to an anonymous contributor to the College's *Terrace* magazine, the Sergeants from Christian Brothers' College Gregory Terrace who felt like "fish-out-of-water" at their first NCO camp at Enoggera in 1939, "returned to school full-blown Sergeants – stripes, sticks, voices, and all."⁸⁷ Sergeant Steve Gowan received particular attention, being praised as "a strong rival to Sergeant-Major McKee" and was later "personally recommended by members of the Cadet Corps to try a well known brand of throaties for that parade ground voice."⁸⁸ Many of the cadets, however, felt an overwhelming sense of exhaustion and joy at the camp's end. Gerald Moore recalled in his 'Charge of the Light Brigade' parody,

While their feet ached and were sore,
What did they care; for to-morrow
Back from the bush they would go,

Back from the fringe of Hell,
Back to civilisation,
For all the noble one hundred.⁸⁹

C.D. Mansfield echoed this sentiment by recalling how "sorry as we were to leave the army life, I think that we all appreciated a soft bed and – 'Lights out.'"⁹⁰ Despite their weariness, almost all described their experiences as positive, and "left for home ... resolved to 'come again.'"⁹¹ "Although some of us may have sore shoulders, it is well worth it," the anonymous Southport School cadet declared after his 'Day on the Range,' and N.E. Parker declared that upon leaving the Brisbane Church of England Grammar School Michaelmas camp he "felt very sorry, and only wished that it had lasted longer than it did."⁹² Sergeant Roe concurred, and recalled that despite the initial unease, unbearable heat and chaotic "reconnaissance patrol," when "we finally broke camp," it was "much to our regret – because the holidays were over."⁹³ After the exposure to military equipment and the sporting interaction with military personnel, and despite the unspeakable "incidents" in Southport, the *Portal* article declared that "all cadets who attended will for long years cherish very happy memories of the 1945 Christmas Camp."⁹⁴

Parker's experiences and emotions upon leaving cadet camp in 1943 are perhaps close to definitive. His initial impression that he was there "to be trained by the army" included being greeted by "NCOs who ... had avoided the route march," followed by "noise in the surrounding tents" that "did not stop until morning." He then witnessed "a sight never to be forgotten" in the "firing of a Bren gun and an Owen gun," and a night exercise that "was by far the most interesting an impressive part of the training." Parker declared that "in later years I will always remember the wonderful time I had at the Michaelmas Cadet Camp in 1943."⁹⁵

Notes

¹'Thousands of Schoolboys for Cadet Corps,' *Telegraph*, 31 July 1942, p. 5.

² Ibid. These schools, as listed in 'History of the Australian Cadet Corps During the War 1939-1945,' AWM54 147/2/1 (Australian War Memorial, Canberra), were: All Souls School, Charters Towers; Brisbane Boys' College (BBC); Church of England Grammar School (Brisbane, CEGS); Brisbane Grammar School; Brisbane State High School; Christian Brothers' College, Rockhampton; Christian Brothers' College, Gregory Terrace; Christian Brothers' College, Ipswich; Christian Brothers' College, Warwick; Christian

Brothers' High School, Townsville; Downlands College, Toowoomba; Ipswich Grammar School; Marist Brothers' College, Rosalie; Maryborough Grammar School; Mount Carmel College, Charters Towers; Rockhampton Grammar School; Scots College, Warwick; Slade School, Warwick; St Brendan's College, Yeppoon; St Columban's College, Brisbane; St Laurence's College, Brisbane; St Mary's College, Toowoomba; St Patrick's College, Mackay; The Southport School (TSS); Thornburgh College, Charters Towers; Toowoomba Grammar School; Townsville Grammar School; and Warwick State High School.

³ 'Thousands of Schoolboys for Cadet Corps,' *Telegraph*, 31 July 1942, p. 5.

⁴ 'The Cadets,' *Southportian*, June 1945, p. 46.

⁵ C.D. Mansfield, 'The 1943 Cadet Camp,' *Viking*, November 1943, p. 19.

⁶ *Defence Act 1909* (Cth), s 125.

⁷ Sgt. Roe, 'With Our Sergeants at Camp' *Terrace*, 24 June 1940, p. 5.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Mansfield, 'The 1943 Cadet Camp,' p. 20.

¹³ N.E. Parker, 'The Michaelmas Cadet Camp,' *Viking*, November 1943, p. 21.

¹⁴ Mansfield, 'The 1943 Cadet Camp,' p. 20; Parker, 'The Michaelmas Cadet Camp,' p. 21.

¹⁵ 'Cadet Notes,' *Portal*, December 1945, p. 34.

¹⁶ Roe, 'With Our Sergeants At Camp,' p. 5.

¹⁷ 'Cadet Notes,' *Portal*, December 1945, p. 35.

¹⁸ 'Cadet Notes,' *Portal*, December 1946, p. 30.

¹⁹ 'Cadet Notes,' *Portal*, December 1945, p. 35.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

²¹ 'Cadet Notes,' *Portal*, December 1945, p. 34.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Gerald Moore, 'A Parody on "The Charge of the Light Brigade,"' *Portal*, December 1945, p. 47.

²⁴ Mansfield, 'The 1943 Cadet Camp,' p. 19.

²⁵ Roe, 'With Our Sergeants at Camp,' p. 6.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁸ Mansfield, 'The 1943 Cadet Camp,' p. 20.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ 'Cadet Notes,' *Portal*, December 1945, p. 36.

³¹ Roe, 'With Our Sergeants At Camp,' p. 5.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ 'Cadet Notes,' *Portal*, December 1945, p. 34.

³⁵ Roe, 'With Our Sergeants At Camp,' p. 6.

³⁶ A Duncan, "'Cadetfluenza,'" *Portal*, December 1944, p. 47.

³⁷ Mansfield, 'The 1943 Cadet Camp,' p. 20.

³⁸ Parker, 'The Michaelmas Cadet Camp,' p. 21.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁴¹ Mansfield, 'The 1943 Cadet Camp,' p. 20.

⁴² Parker, 'The Michaelmas Cadet Camp,' p. 21.

⁴³ 'Cadet Notes,' *Portal*, December 1945, p. 36.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Moore, 'A Parody on "The Charge of the Light Brigade"', p. 47.

⁴⁶ Parker, 'The Michaelmas Cadet Camp,' p. 22.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Mansfield, 'The 1943 Cadet Camp,' p. 20.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Parker, 'The Michaelmas Cadet Camp,' p. 22.

⁵³ Moore, 'A Parody on "The Charge of the Light Brigade"', p. 47.

⁵⁴ 'A Reconnaissance Patrol,' *Terrace*, 24 June 1940, p. 6.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ 'Cadet Notes,' *Portal*, December 1945, p. 34-35.

⁵⁷ 'A Reconnaissance Patrol,' *Terrace*, 24 June 1940, p. 6.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Roe, 'With Our Sergeants At Camp,' p. 6.

⁶⁰ 'Guns and Bayonets Displace Cadets' School Books,' *Courier-Mail*, 10 January 1941, p. 3.

⁶¹ Roe, 'With Our Sergeants At Camp,' p. 6.

⁶² 'A Day on the Range,' *Southportian*, June 1940, p. 57.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*; Roe, 'With Our Sergeants At Camp,' p. 6.

⁶⁵ 'A Day on the Range,' *Southportian*, June 1940, p. 57.

⁶⁶ 'Cadet Notes,' *Portal*, December 1946, p. 30.

⁶⁷ 'Cadet Notes,' *Portal*, December 1945, p. 34.

⁶⁸ Moore, 'A Parody on "The Charge of the Light Brigade"', p. 47.

⁶⁹ 'A Reconnaissance Patrol,' *Terrace*, 24 June 1940, p. 6.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Parker, 'The Michaelmas Cadet Camp,' p. 21.

⁷² 'A Day on the Range,' *Southportian*, June 1940, p. 57.

⁷³ 'Cadet Notes,' *Portal*, December 1946, p. 30.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ 'A Reconnaissance Patrol,' *Terrace*, 24 June 1940, p. 6.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Parker, 'The Michaelmas Cadet Camp,' p. 21.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁷⁹ Mansfield, 'The 1943 Cadet Camp,' p. 20.

⁸⁰ 'Cadet Notes,' *Portal*, December 1945, p. 35.

⁸¹ Roe, 'With Our Sergeants At Camp,' p. 5.

⁸² 'Cadet Notes,' *Portal*, December 1945, p. 35.

⁸³ Ibid, p. 35.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 35.

⁸⁵ 'Cadet Notes,' *Portal*, December 1946, p. 30.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p. 30.

⁸⁷ 'G.T. Corps Jottings,' *Terrace*, 24 June 1940, p. 5.

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 5; 'The Senior Chanticleer,' 'What the Classes are Saying: Achievement in Loads,' *Terrace*, 24 June 1940, pp. 7-8.

⁸⁹ Moore, 'A Parody on "The Charge of the Light Brigade",' p. 47.

⁹⁰ Mansfield, 'The 1943 Cadet Camp,' p. 20.

⁹¹ 'Cadet Notes,' *Portal*, December 1945, p. 35.

⁹² 'A Day on the Range,' *Southportian*, June 1940, p. 57; Parker, 'The Michaelmas Cadet Camp,' p. 22.

⁹³ Roe, 'With Our Sergeants At Camp,' p. 6.

⁹⁴ 'Cadet Notes,' *Portal*, December 1946, p. 30.

⁹⁵ Parker, 'The Michaelmas Cadet Camp,' pp. 21-2.

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