

9th. Sept. 1954

To:- Mr. Hobson,
48, Brighton Rd.,
Godalming, Surrey.

Dear Mr. Hobson,

Please excuse me for writing a personal letter such as this on a typewriter, but there is a lot that I wish to tell you concerning this School, and I am sure you will appreciate that it would take me far too long to write over a hundred letters in manuscript to the parents/guardians of boys entering the School.

To begin with you will be glad to hear that your son arrived here safely on 8th. Sept. and has been posted to this company where he will spend his first six months. His address is:-

23220334.
No. 23220334 A/T (Apprentice Tradesman) Hobson D.B.
Headquarter Company, Army Apprentices School,
Uniacke Barracks,
Harrogate, Yorks.

(/" need not be written in full on envelope).

Please always use this address when writing to him during his first term.

At present there are about 800 boys at the School and our main function is to train them in one of the following Army Trades:- Bricklayer, Carpenter, Clerk, Draughtsman, Electrician, Plumber and Pipefitter, Painter and Decorator, Quantity Surveyor's Assistant, Radio Mechanic or Operator, Surveyor (Royal Engineers) or Surveyor (Royal Artillery). Whichever trade is selected by your son he will be given the best possible training the Army can provide. His apprenticeship to the trade at which he qualifies is recognized, where appropriate, by the Trade Union concerned.

There is always strong competition for the trades of Surveyor Royal Engineers, Quantity Surveyors Assistant and Draughtsman (Architectural). The quota each term for these trades is smaller than for any other and in consequence only those boys with the best scholastic qualifications are accepted. Instances also occur when an apprentice is found to be unsuitable for the trade of his choice after a 3 weeks probationary period, in which case he is allotted to the trade to which he is best suited. It may therefore happen that your son will not be trained in the trade which he has selected, although every endeavour is made to train each boy in the trade of his choice.

It is realized fully that the years that your son spends here will be amongst the most impressionable and formative of his life, and accordingly considerable time and attention will be devoted to his general education and physical development. But perhaps the most important function of the School is the development of character, personality and general outlook in relation to an Army career in particular and the world as a whole; these are the subject of most careful and patient guidance. It is our ambition that when he leaves the School in three years' time he can take with him the knowledge and skill of his trade and, in addition, the qualities of loyalty, courage, self-reliance, tolerance and good sportsmanship that have been the hallmarks of the British soldier throughout history.

Now to revert to the more material aspect of life at this School. An A/T joins the School on 2/6 per day, after one year's service he gets 3/6 and after 2 years 4/- per day, at 17½ years of age 7/- per day. There are of course no boarding charges at the School and an A/T's pay is pocket money. In order to ensure that each boy has some

"credits" for his periods of leave, issues of pay are limited to 10/- and 5/- alternately each week. Cash stoppages are made each month for Haircutting (1/6) and Games subscriptions (1/-) plus an occasional Barrack Damage charge of about 2/- once every 3 months.

The School is well provided for in the field of Entertainments. We have our own Cinema, Library and Hobbies Clubs, and in addition, of course, all Apprentice Tradesmen are encouraged to take part in games such as Rugby and Association Football, Hockey, Cricket, Tennis, Boxing, Cross-Country Running and Athletics. There are three canteens in the School run by N.A.A.F.I., Y.M.C.A. and Salvation Army, where most indoor games can also be played.

Your Sm will live in a Barrack Room together with about seventeen of his term under the supervision of an Apprentice Tradesman NCO, who in turn is supervised by a Senior Regular NCO. These Barrack Rooms have central heating and all are connected by passage way to ablutions and lavatories where there is plenty of hot water. There is a resident School Medical Officer and "sick-parades" are held daily.

The food here is the best that I have seen in the Army - three solid meals a day plus a mid-morning snack and a light supper meal. First parade is at 8 o'clock and "lights-out" at 10 p.m. Leave is quite liberal, in fact, better than he is likely to experience for some time after he has left the School. He gets four weeks in the summer and a fortnight at Christmas and Easter. Free travel is accorded on these occasions. In addition, there are occasional long week-ends. Outside of these specified leave periods, no leave is granted without very exceptional or extenuating circumstances. Parents, Guardians or near relatives are always very welcome at the School, but our experience has been that an early visit during an A/T's first term frequently proves unsettling and we prefer such visits to take place after about two or three months. Discipline in the School is firm without being rigid. We insist upon a high standard of personal cleanliness at all times, and the necessity for looking after clothing and equipment is impressed on all newly-joined Apprentice Tradesmen. Losses and damage to these articles, once they have been issued, is the responsibility of the A/T concerned.

No Apprentice Tradesman is permitted to smoke until having attained 16 years of age; this is enforced strictly.

Breaches of discipline amongst boys will always occur, and summary awards of extra drills and fatigues or confinement to barracks generally have the desired effect, but there are a few occasions when a more drastic deterrent is necessary and is best met by administering (under supervision) corporal punishment. These instances are so few as to be very much the exception. I trust that you agree with this policy.

As your Sm's Company Commander for his first term, I am available every working day for confidential interviews if he gets into any sort of trouble, and he will be encouraged to unload any worries to me, or to the School Chaplain if he would rather see him. Religious instruction is a feature of an A/T's training here. Confirmation Classes are held every term and all religious denominations are catered for.

Finally, may I add that I appreciate that this may be the first time that your Sm has left home and that he may feel homesick for the first few weeks, it is natural that this should be so and I wish to assure you that everything will be done to assist him in settling down quickly and happily in the first stage of a career that has boundless opportunities for any lad with imagination and ambition.

Yours sincerely,

12 S.F. AB 100 0