

ARTILLERYMEN.

In the Making.

YOUTHFUL ENTHUSIASTS

At the end of June last, some hundreds of Cadets in the North Sydney area were drafted to the Citizen Forces. Yesterday, at Holdsworthy, these youngsters proved themselves efficient artillerymen. And they earned the praise of the Base Commandant, General Brand, who was a keen spectator right through the shooting.

These lads, forming the 7th Australian Field Artillery Brigade, artillery trainees from the Northern Suburbs, entered on a course of training on Saturday last. To-day they "break camp," and make way for the trainees from the Newcastle district. Some 300 lads, not over 19 years of age, in command of Lieut.-Col. Callaghan, entered camp, full of enthusiasm. They were keen to know how to handle the big guns, to know their mechanism, and to be able to shoot well. They comprised the 25th and 27th Batteries, and the 107th Howitzers, and they had four guns in each battery. Their general knowledge was gained only at the usual drills. Their practical knowledge began last Saturday, and they had their first "taste" of big gun firing yesterday. All their knowledge was gained by voluntary effort. The lads being keen and enthusiastic, gave a wonderful amount of attention to detail. They soon learned range finding, sighting, limbering up, dashing in and out of action, and the various explosive shells used.

The shooting yesterday was carried out under ideal conditions, though towards midday a strong wind was blowing across the ranges. General Brand, General Lloyd, Brigadier General Phillips, and a large number of the permanent staff officers were present. It was decided that the trainees, together with their officers and non-commissioned officers, should carry out the shooting, supervised only by a permanent officer at each gun to see that there was no possibility of accident. First the 25th and 27th batteries "dashed into action," finding the range at 3000 yards. They used high explosive and shrapnel shells, and their success at finding the targets was remarkable for beginners. General Brand was warm in his eulogy of the lads, and expressed the opinion that with three months of training the lads would be equal to seasoned artillerymen. The distances were varied, as well as the targets, but the boys still continued to shoot with success. Not one of the 60 shots fired could be described as bad; every one, had it been in actual warfare, would have wrought considerable havoc on an enemy. Then the boys limbered up and galloped away, to be replaced by the 107th howitzer battery. These boys were shooting at targets which to them were invisible, the direction being given by the officers. Though at first they were a little slow in finding the target, once they got it they kept it, and the hits recorded were very numerous. One of the lads on No. 3 gun met with a painful accident from the recoil of the gun, being smashed in the face. He was attended to by his comrades, and fortunately was not seriously injured. The shooting concluded before 3 p.m., and the lads returned to camp, extremely satisfied with their first efforts with the guns.

ARTILLERY FIRE.

Spectacular Night Action.

HOWITZERS AT GREEN HILLS.

Big guns spurted fire, howitzer shells whistled eerily and then c-r-r-rumped at Holdsworthy Camp on Monday night, when a battery of howitzers rushed into action to repulse the attack upon the outposts by an imaginary enemy.

Horses in the enemy's area, when they heard the scream of the shells, galloped towards the heavy timber, and the few cattle in the area followed madly, for night firing of artillery had not taken place at Liverpool since the war.

Throughout the week, the 7th (North Sydney) Brigade of Australian Field Artillery, commanded by Colonel J. C. Selmes, D.S.O., which is now undergoing its annual eight days' camp training at Holdsworthy, has been fighting an imaginary battle against an enemy which landed at Wollongong last week, and which since then had steadily advanced. On Monday evening about 8 o'clock this enemy launched an attack against an outpost situated five miles from Holdsworthy. Immediately, Lieutenant A. Browne, the officer in charge of the outpost, lit two S.O.S. Verey lights. A bugle at camp sounded the alarm, and in less than two minutes gunners were in position and the giant Haiml tractors were rushing into action at a speed of 20 miles per hour. Trainee officers worked out the range and elevation by a series of calculations and in a very few minutes high explosive shells, each weighing 35 pounds, were being hurled at the enemy four and five miles away.

The burst of flames from the howitzers and the explosion of the shells furnished an awe-inspiring spectacle, reminiscent of Flanders. The whole manoeuvre, according to Colonel Selmes, a veteran officer of the Boer War and the Great War, was performed in a most creditable manner by the trainees, who thoroughly enjoyed it. By 9.30 a.m. the enemy attack had been repulsed, and an hour later the trainees were in bed.

Yesterday morning it was found that the enemy had entrenched in the heavy timber near the Illawarra-road, some five miles away, and at the 'zero hour,' 9.30 o'clock, four batteries of 18-pounders moved to Green Hills, in a style worthy of veterans, unlimbered, hurried their horses out of sight of enemy aeroplanes, and commenced firing at the entrenched enemy.

The shooting was particularly accurate, although the target was 6000 yards distant, and little puffs of dust showed the enemy trenches were experiencing a bad time. After a time the batteries advanced 1200 yards and again pounded the already-battered trenches. During the afternoon the howitzers came into action again and further harassed the retreating enemy.

Brigadier-General T. H. Dodds, Base Commandant, who was accompanied by Colonel T. I. C. Williams and Colonel James, witnessed the shooting yesterday. General Dodds paid a tribute to the efficiency and discipline of the trainees. He said that they had shown

paid a tribute to the efficiency and discipline of the trainees. He said that they had shown marked improvement in their work, much of which they now performed with all the speed and accuracy of permanent force troops. The behaviour of the 300 troops in the brigade had also been exemplary.

The night shooting, it was explained by Colonel Selmes, had been carried out for the first time during citizen force training in this State, and its object was to give the trainees experience under real service conditions.

GUNNERS' SKILL.

Work at Holdsworthy.

ARTILLERY MANOEUVRES.

The culminating manoeuvre of a year's intensive training of field artillerymen was staged at Holdsworthy on Saturday, when two 18-pounder batteries and a howitzer battery concentrated their fire on an enemy stronghold.

The manoeuvre was made under conditions of warfare, and the objective, which was almost three miles from the batteries, was completely hidden from the gun crews by intervening ridges and bushland.

SHELL-PROOF "O-PIP" USED.

The battery commanders took up positions in a specially constructed, shell-proof "o-pip," or observation post, 2000 yards in advance of the guns, and commanding a clear view of the "enemy territory." The order to carry out the bombardment, given by Lieut.-Colonel E. J. Pope, commanding officer of the 7th Field Brigade of the 1st Division Artillery, was conveyed to the battery commanders. It was a brief command to concentrate the fire of the 25th and 27th 18-pounder batteries and the 107th 4.5-inch howitzer battery on a position indicated.

Battery commanders and the officers responsible for laying the guns had previously agreed on a "zero line," and as soon as the order was received the former calculated the position of the objective, supposed, of course, to be an enemy stronghold, in relation to the "zero line," and passed this intelligence on to the gun crews, two miles away, by means of radio telephony. For this purpose, the co-operation of the 1st Divisional Signallers, who were also in camp, was enlisted, and they installed two mobile R.T. units, one at the observation post, and the other near the batteries.

DESTRUCTIVE BOMBARDMENT.

Before the concentrated bombardment could proceed it was necessary for each battery to "shoot in for line." The result of each shot was checked by the battery commanders at the observation post, and the necessary adjustments to range were wirelessed through and made on the guns—until they had been trained on to the objective. This operation was quickly carried out at the cost of only a few shells from each gun, and the way was clear for the concentrated bombardment to begin. When the order was given the guns blazed away, and had there been any enemy troops in the area concentrated upon, they would have had a very bad time, for the place was battered to pieces.

The whole shoot was under the direct supervision of Colonel E. J. Selmes, commanding officer of the 1st Division Artillery, who later expressed great satisfaction with the work of the men. The shooting, he said, was excellent, and in that respect was typical of the camp which had just been concluded. The behaviour of the men had been splendid, and the enthusiasm of remarkably high order. Major A. M. Forbes, Staff Corps Instructor of Gunnery, also witnessed the shooting, and said the direction of the officers and the gun drill of the men left nothing to be desired.

WILLOUGHBY DRILL HALL.

Most Efficient in the
Commonwealth.

The 7th Brigade, Royal Australian Field Artillery paraded on Empire Day at Willoughby for the official opening of their new headquarters. Well set-up, well-drilled, and smartly turned-out in every respect, the men were a credit not only to "The Regiment," but also to their country.

Colonel Selmes, D.S.O., V.D., the divisional commander, performed the opening ceremony. "In every country," he said, "the people are generally conceded to have an intense patriotism, and that love is best shown in the service each and all can give to the land which enables them to enjoy life, free and untrammelled. Service here to-day is typified in the voluntary training which the lads are freely and gladly giving, and, parents and citizens, I do earnestly ask for your co-operation in making the service of those boys free and acceptable an honour to you, as well as to themselves in the doing.

It was a military function, pure and simple. There was no cheering. The men were turned about, the 18-pounder guns fired a salute, the trumpets sounded, the men again turned, saluted, and were dismissed to join groups of parents and friends and proudly show them round.

The drill hall is said to be the finest establishment of the kind in the Commonwealth, and in case of necessity could accommodate the three batteries comprising the brigade, including personnel and horses, for an indefinite period. The property and material are worth over £200,000. Stabling accommodation is provided for from 20 to 30 horses, for training purposes.