



(image added)

The 76th Division at Fort Meade learns the latest scientific methods of hand-to-hand slaughter and free-for-all street fighting that will soon be taught to every infantry outfit in the Army.

By A YANK STAFF CORRESPONDENT

FORT MEADE—It was the day after the great Commando raid at Dieppe and everyone in the train was extolling the virtues of the British Commandos and the American Rangers. Only the short, sandy-haired Canadian lieutenant colonel in the club car was silent. He listened to the newspapermen's enthusiastic chattering for a while. Then he said very simply, "You know, gentlemen, this may startle you—but there are no commandos any more."

The colonel introduced himself. "The name's Guildford F. Dudley. A Jerry bomb knocked me out a few weeks ago. That's why I'm here, instead of on the other side, commanding my battalion."

"But getting back to what I said about the commandos—the method we're using in Great Britain now is to put *every* fighting man through the same course of training formerly reserved for the commandos alone. They get Judo, hand-to-hand fighting, cross-country and landing problems. They go through combat courses where they're fired on with live ammunition. Bakelite land mines go off under them, and they have to wade through cattle blood and dummy corpses. Why last fall, 1,000,000 men went on commando maneuvers, covering 200 miles on foot in five days, without so much as an hour's sleep. That's why I say there are no commandos any more. In a manner of speaking, *every* British soldier is a commando."

Then, shy and half-apologetic: "I hope you don't mind my telling you this—but you see, it was *my* outfit, the Cameron Highlanders, that spearheaded the attack on Dieppe, just 24 hours ago."

That was last August, and Col. Dudley was speaking only of the British Army. Today, less than six months later, a good many G.I.'s are painfully conscious of the fact that the trend has spread to the United States Army as well. Here at Fort Meade, the Army has established a

Ranger and Combat School. No less than 1,000 officers from divisions in training all over the country have already been sent here to submit themselves to intensive combat courses. Now, bruised and battered, they have gone back to their respective outfits. And from this point on, every division still training in the United States will learn at first hand that "there are no comandos any more."

Already well-acquainted with this new Army dictum is the 76th (Liberty Bell) Division, stationed at Fort Meade. Principally because of its proximity to the mayhem laboratories of the Ranger and Combat School, the 76th—a typical triangular division activated last June—was chosen as the guinea pig outfit to test out the new methods of training.

First, a group of 212 specially-selected officers and non-coms was sent to the Ranger and Combat School. Those that emerged in one piece then went back to the division to give the same course to every man in the 76th—including cooks, clerks, bandsmen and everyone else. The results were nothing short of amazing. Medical corps Lt. Eugene W. Williams wrote in his report, "As the course progressed, the morale and aggressive spirit of the men became extremely high. They developed great pride in their own accidents and injuries, and in the 'toughness' of the course. They became confident in their own prowess, and other soldiers who had always been bullies became respectful and cautious of them." In short, an entire division had become tough. Six weeks of intensive training was enough to instill in it the basic concepts of the toughest kind of fighting.

The men of the 76th took the training for an hour a day, five days a week. The course simply replaced the old "cadence-exercise-to-be-done-in-the-following-manner" which is more or less out for the duration. At first the men were scared—but after a while they loved it. College professors became savage. Concert violinists became potential killers. They fought free-for-alls, battled in trees, sparred with naked bayonets, carried each other pic-a-back for half a mile or more, jumped from moving trucks. They learned Judo and dirty wrestling—and choice methods of flattening an opponent by noiselessly breaking his neck, or "kneeing" him. As the commander of the 76th Division, stocky, jeep-driving Maj. Gen. Emil P. Reinhardt, put it, "It's a rough game. But they might as well learn right here in the beginning that war itself is a rough game. When these boys join the men already in the front lines, I can tell you right now—there aren't going to be any weak-sister divisions."

The combat training course was originated by Maj. Francois D'Eliscu, head of the Ranger and Combat School. Maj. D'Eliscu, a slightly-built, greying man, looks and acts much less than his 57 years. Before the war, he was an instructor of physical education at both Columbia and New York Universities. Also, he was America's foremost exponent of Judo, the silent, murderous Japanese form of killing-wrestling. Because of him the Rangers (and eventually all American soldiers) actually know more about Judo than the average Japanese!

This reverses the usual story, and constitutes one of the most flagrant swipe-jobs we have ever pulled on the wily Japs.

It happened back in 1928, when Maj. D'Eliscu was manager of the champion American Olympic swimming team, captained by Johnny Weissmuller. The Japs invited D'Eliscu and his team to Tokyo for exhibitions—and then proceeded to photograph every stroke, which they subsequently adopted and used in the 1932 Olympics. They also invited D'Eliscu to demonstrate American wrestling at the famous Kazuma and Takashi Institutes. This he did—while the Jap cameras again clicked merrily away.

When he had finished his exhibition at Kazuma, D'Eliscu bowed to Hori Takima, head of the school. "I have heard so much about your own

form of wrestling," he said. "Would you honor me by demonstrating some of your more complicated holds in return?" The Japanese scowled. Then, when a quick glance assured him that D'Eliscu had no camera and no means whatever of recording what he saw, Takima smiled politely, and proceeded to put on an exhibition. At first Takima was reticent, but goaded on by D'Eliscu's flattery, he soon had unloaded his complete bag of tricks. When it was over, D'Eliscu thanked him, bowed to the assembled Japanese, and went out.

Fourteen years later, American soldiers were silently killing Japs with the same Kazuma holds.

Maj. D'Eliscu is one of the toughest men alive. He can kill with a flick of his elbow—maim with a pinch of his fingers. He imparts this toughness into the course he gave to the 76th Division instructors and to the Special Service officers from the other divisions. When the men slackened or got tired, he went into action and personally drove them on. A favorite subject for this treatment was Maj. Marr, a 6' 6" West Pointer. Others whom Maj. D'Eliscu took great pleasure in kicking around were football powerhouses like Pug Lund of Minnesota and Tod Goodwin of the New York Giants. An ambulance with three Medical Corps doctors was in attendance at all sessions, and during the six week course, there were both hospital cases and breakages. There is, in the Ft. Meade Station Hospital, a department officially labeled the "D'Eliscu Ward." In spite of all this, not a single one of the 212 76th Division men quit.

The first thing the major did was to order all his men into fatigue clothes stripped of all insignia of rank. Then he goaded them to get into a genuine free-for-all. This procedure continued the entire six weeks. Corporals walloped colonels, and vice versa. No one knew whom he was slugging.

In one case, a strapping sergeant named Davey Wilson took great delight in picking on one man throughout the course. The only reason he could offer was that the man had the type of face he didn't like, and that all his life he had enjoyed pushing in that particular type of face.

When the course was over, Sgt. Wilson came to Maj. D'Eliscu, trembling like a leaf. "I just found out," he croaked, "that this guy I've been slugging is a company commander in my own outfit."

Every day, Maj. D'Eliscu began the sessions with a two mile run, to warm the men up. This provoked a wave of nausea and vomiting at first, but the major mercilessly kept the men running. Another regular fixture was Maj. D'Eliscu's deluxe, 600 yard obstacle course, which reigns undisputed as the toughest in the world. It features a fifteen-foot-deep bear trap with smooth sides, from which the men have to clamber as best they can. "If they can't get out," said D'Eliscu, "Let 'em stay there. Sooner or later they find a way." One captain is reported to have been stuck in the bear trap for more than five hours.

The training opened with alertness drills, in which the men had to freeze into position on command, or hang from the limbs of trees.

Second came physical tests, like pull-ups, chins, etc.; then simple combatives—boxing, wrestling, tugs of war. After that the rule-book was tossed out the window.

The fourth stage of the training was dirty wrestling—with everything thrown in from the ripping off of ears, to the stuffing of fists down the throat.

Fifth was boxing without gloves. At this point the Medical Corps officers standing by were extremely busy attending to abrasions and missing teeth.

Sixth was rough and tumble games, 60 of which have now been collected by Maj. D'Eliscu and made into an official Army manual.

Seventh was disarming practice—in which the

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men learned murderous ways of relieving an opponent of a knife, pistol, rifle, bayonet, tommy gun and machete.

Eighth was specific Ranger problems—one of which involved carrying bound prisoners a mile or so through heavy undergrowth.

Ninth was elementary and advanced Judo. This taught the men every conceivable method of strangling and killing by applying pressure to the proper parts of the anatomy.

Tenth was tree and bush fighting. The men were required to stay in the limbs of trees for as much as ten hours at a time. This section of the course was emphasized more than any other. Very shortly, Jap tree snipers are suddenly going to find their skulls bashed in by camouflaged American G.I.'s sneaking down on them from above.

The eleventh and final phase was trench and fox-hole fighting—concentrating on tumbling away from an enemy's blows. Before getting his diploma from the Ranger and Combat School, each man was required to duel with naked bayonets.

When the course was over, some of the men went overseas, where they were subsequently heard from at Dieppe, New Guinea and Morocco. Others went back to put entire divisions through the exact same training.

That's why there are no commandos any more. That's how the 76th got tough.

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