

“Thou shalt not”

HUNDRED HINTS TO
NEWLY COMMISSIONED
OFFICERS

"THOU SHALT NOT"

Price Sixpence (net)
(Per Post 7d.)

“THOU SHALT NOT”

100 HINTS TO
NEWLY COMMISSIONED
OFFICERS

Aldershot

GALE & POLDEN LIMITED

Printed in Great Britain by
GALE & POLDEN LIMITED
ALDERSHOT
1943

Contents

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	7
YOUR DUTY TOWARDS OTHERS ...	9
YOUR PERSONAL EFFICIENCY ...	13
YOUR UNIFORM	15
HOW TO USE YOUR AUTHORITY ...	17
YOUR BEHAVIOUR AND PERSONAL EXAMPLE TO OTHERS	21
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OFFICERS AND RANK AND FILE	26
SALUTING	30
DISPOSAL OF OFFENDERS	33
YOUR CORRECT CONDUCT IN PRI- VATE AFFAIRS	36

Introduction

In the preface to The King's Regulations for the Army and the Royal Air Force, officers are commanded to obey the regulations contained therein.

Those for the Army number nearly 2,000, and those for the Royal Air Force 4,000.

Additional essential instructions for the guidance of officers are contained in the eight or nine hundred pages of the Manuals of Military and Air Force Law.

There are, of course, Standing Orders, Daily Routine Orders, Battalion Orders, Corps Orders, and Local Orders, not to mention Army Orders, Command Orders, and many others issued by higher formations.

Actually there are tens of thousands of regulations in existence.

An efficient officer is acquainted with all of these. This takes time.

In the meantime, however, a few hints may be useful to those newly commissioned, until such time as they are familiar with the official regulations.

This unofficial advice is given in a spirit of helpfulness ; it has been compiled after long experience in the Army and Royal Air Force.

With the intention of impressing the advice upon the minds of young officers, each separate hint has been couched in terms of "Thou shalt not," and if those who are inexperienced in such matters take heed of the warnings given, it may save them from considerable trouble, increase their efficiency and accelerate their promotion.

Your duty towards others

1 *DON'T* neglect the comfort and general welfare of your subordinates. This is your first duty.

2 *DON'T* go to your own meals unless you are satisfied in your mind that those you are responsible for are being properly fed.

3 *DON'T* say "Hi, you," or refer to those in the ranks as "What's-your-name." Learn the names of your subordinates; it can be done rapidly with practice. They appreciate being addressed by their proper names.

4 *DON'T* neglect to investigate any complaint submitted, but don't be imposed upon.

5 *DON'T* show favouritism. If your subordinates think you are unjust and partial, things will soon go wrong.

6 *DON'T* overwork your staff. There is a difference between overworking and working hard.

7 *DON'T* hesitate to keep the "backward" ones at work. The good ones will look after themselves.

8 *DON'T* curb your subordinates' initiative; direct it into proper channels.

9 *DON'T* permit N.C.Os. to be aggressive or overbearing towards the rank and file; insist on the same kind of attitude which you set for yourself.

10 *DON'T* forget to study your subordinates. Learn their idiosyncrasies.

Mark the weak ones and those on whom you can implicitly rely to do their job efficiently.

It is equally important to study the idiosyncrasies of your superiors. The higher their rank the more important it is that you should keep a watchful eye for their "hobbies." It may be "toothbrushes," "cubic air space" or "flying regulations"; whatever it is, if you wish to succeed, you will require to use your ingenuity and tact in the matter of idiosyncrasies.

11 *DON'T* allow the sick to remain on duty; order them to "report sick."

12 *DON'T* forget to supervise by occasional checks the duties you have delegated to subordinates.

13 *DON'T* desert your subordinates the moment the day's work is done.

Take an interest in their entertainment, and " off-duty " amusements. Help organize them; it is part of your duty.

14 *DON'T* make recommendations for promotion unless you are certain the person concerned is competent. You have a duty to the State, the Service and your unit.

15 *DON'T* forget that a house divided against itself will come to grief. Be loyal to your C.O. in thought, word and deed.

Your personal efficiency

16 *DON'T* scorn knowledge of Service matters. It is better to know a thing and not want the knowledge, than to want it and not know it.

17 *DON'T* lack initiative; we are not all born with it, but it can be cultivated.

18 *DON'T* be afraid to make up your mind quickly and rightfully. This is termed " character." Take charge.

19 *DON'T* forget to cultivate tact; you will want it all day long. Some people are always at the beginning, middle or end of a row which could have been easily avoided.

20 *DON'T* forget confidence is begotten of experience and knowledge.

The latter must be acquired by your own efforts. Experience comes to you.

21 *DON'T* use civilian terms for Service matters. The Service vocabulary is your professional language. It is essential that you should understand Service expressions.

22 *DON'T*, when given an order, explain all the difficulties you will have in carrying it out. Overcome them and give effect to the order as speedily as possible. In other words, "Don't put off until to-morrow what you can do to-day." Do it now!

Your uniform

23 *DON'T* slip a fiver in your pocket from your "Outfit Allowance." The War Office and Air Ministry are not philanthropic institutions and you may be sure the allowance is only just enough.

24 *DON'T* obtain your uniform from "any old tailor." Be correctly dressed by one familiar with the precise details appertaining to your Service. There is such a thing as a "Sealed Pattern," and there are also "Dress Regulations," which are exacting in their demands for uniformity. Ask for advice rather than have to replace what you have purchased.

25 *DON'T* omit, when in uniform out

of doors, to be correct in all essentials of your dress. There are such things as gloves, and gas masks, without which you are improperly dressed and "letting your Service down" in the eyes of those whose judgment matters.

26 *DON'T* smoke a pipe in uniform when in public places such as streets of a town, etc.; it isn't done.

27 *DON'T* neglect your personal appearance. Be smart. Your subordinates will soon spot whether your boots and buttons are as clean as theirs. Yours should be cleaner, even in war time.

28 *DON'T* lounge about. Cultivate an erect carriage and always move about smartly.

29 *DON'T* omit to wear your head-dress on all occasions out of doors. It is slovenly not to do so.

How to use your authority

30 *DON'T* be sarcastic with subordinates or hold them up to ridicule. Learn to "tell off" those deserving it, quietly, strongly and to the point. Fools must be suffered gladly sometimes.

31 *DON'T* ever lose your temper. It will only result in ridicule and indignity.

32 *DON'T* be pompous, adopt a bullying attitude or shout when there is no occasion to do so. Orders can equally well be given in a quiet but firm manner.

33 *DON'T* curse subordinates. It is cowardly. They cannot curse back. This includes mess servants, as they cannot stand up for themselves without

danger of dismissal. Make your complaint to the Mess Secretary, who will take proper steps to deal with it.

34 *DON'T* be guilty of "nagging." Cultivate the art of a short, sharp reproof should the occasion demand it.

35 *DON'T* find fault unnecessarily, or omit to find fault when the occasion demands it.

36 *DON'T* reprimand a non-commissioned officer in the presence or hearing of those in the ranks. You will undermine his authority if you do.

37 *DON'T* fail to correct your subordinates if you hear them speaking disrespectfully of superior officers, but do it tactfully.

38 *DON'T* interfere unnecessarily with subordinates in the street or other

public places. The golden rule is: if your authority as an officer is necessary for disciplinary reasons, and is likely to carry weight, use it; if not, pass on.

39 *DON'T* exclude common sense when interpreting the regulations.

40 *DON'T* give slovenly orders. They must be clear and lucid, both oral and written. Say what you mean, and mean what you say. The power of clear, unambiguous expression is not such a common gift as is usually imagined. Try to acquire it.

41 *DON'T* leave drunken Service personnel to their own devices if they are behaving in such a manner as to bring discredit on the Service, injury to themselves or others. If no N.C.O., Service police or civil police are handy,

find a telephone and ring up the nearest Service unit; failing that, a police station. Give your name and request that the offender be taken into custody. Don't go near the offender yourself on any account, you may cause him, unwittingly, to commit a more serious offence.

42 *DON'T* forget that all your orders must be "lawful" orders—i.e., the disobedience of which would tend to delay or prevent some military or air force proceedings.

Your behaviour and personal example to others

43 *DON'T* criticize superior officers (whatever your private opinion may be of individuals), particularly in the presence of juniors.

44 *DON'T* live beyond your income, get into debt or borrow money.

45 *DON'T* push yourself forward at the expense of others, especially your seniors.

46 *DON'T* be unpunctual. The Services are run to the exact minute; synchronize your watch daily with the official time.

47 *DON'T* quarrel; it dissipates energy needlessly.

48 *DON'T* walk arm in arm in public. The relationship doesn't matter; don't do it.

49 *DON'T* waste time and breath grumbling. Have this text in a visible place to cure you of this habit:—

“ Lord, teach me not to whimper.”

50 *DON'T* carry informality too far in the informal conditions you will find in Mess.

51 *DON'T* fail to show respect for senior officers at all times, but avoid a servile or fawning manner as you would the plague.

52 *DON'T* allow your personal dislike of an individual to impair your good manners.

53 *DON'T* remain seated if your C.O. or an officer of his rank enters the room you are in. Stand up.

54 *DON'T* bore people with your own doings, however interesting they may be. They want you to listen to their experiences. Be quiet and retiring; you have no idea how popular a “ good listener ” can become.

55 *DON'T* open a conversation with very senior officers; leave it to them. In other words, don't thrust yourself forward uninvited; you might meet with an unexpected reception.

56 *DON'T* “ stand drinks ” to members of your Mess. It is forbidden.

57 *DON'T* be afraid to refuse a drink at any time if you don't want it. Only a “ boor ” would press drinks upon a guest unnecessarily.

58 *DON'T* acquire the aperitif or cocktail habit in war time. Both sometimes

affect the moral as well as the physical fibre.

59 *DON'T* forget that ladies—even if they are serving as officers—are only allowed into that part of the Mess set apart for their use. They are *not* allowed in the officers' ante-room.

60 *DON'T* introduce religious or political subjects into conversation in an Officers' Mess.

61 *DON'T* seek popularity with other ranks by assuming a contempt for authority and strict discipline. You will lose their respect and gain nothing.

62 *DON'T* strike fancy attitudes of your own, or move about when giving a word of command on parade. Stand to attention.

63 *DON'T* apply for leave the first day

you arrive at your new station. You will create a bad impression.

64 *DON'T* try to evade your responsibilities. You are not paid to "pass the baby" to others.

Relationship between officers and rank and file

65 *DON'T* be familiar with those in the ranks. They like you to keep your proper place.

66 *DON'T* be familiar with your N.C.Os., however efficient they may be. Young officers need great care when handling experienced N.C.Os. Keep your dignity. Common sense and understanding on both sides will simplify matters.

67 *DON'T* enter a Sergeants' Mess unless invited by a general invitation to officers.

68 *DON'T* stay for more than one hour at any dance to which you (in common

with other officers) have been invited by the Sergeants, Corporals or rank and file.

69 *DON'T* attempt to buy N.C.Os. a drink at any such entertainment; remember they are collectively your "Host" and it really isn't done.

70 *DON'T* try to create an impression by consuming a large number of drinks. You will lose your subordinates' respect (if nothing worse happens).

71 *DON'T* enter or remain in the "bar" of a hotel if rank and file are present. The "lounge" is more suitable for officers.

72 *DON'T*, because the "ranker" happens to be your father or brother, drink with him in a public bar. Find somewhere private. He is sufficiently

proud of you not to want you to behave in a manner unbecoming to your rank.

73 *DON'T* take an N.C.O., or any of the rank or file into the Officers' Mess.

74 *DON'T* inquire into the private domestic affairs of those in the ranks who are married; leave this to senior officers. If they want your help in any such matters they will ask for it.

75 *DON'T* attempt to know the "married families" socially, that is, by visiting their homes or forming any other social liaison. To do so is to invite accusations of partiality and favouritism, which are difficult to refute, bad for your reputation amongst seniors and juniors, and detrimental to Service discipline.

76 *DON'T* allow the attractiveness of your "lady driver" to make you forget, even temporarily, that the dividing line between officers and rank and file must be maintained.

Saluting

77 *DON'T* shirk saluting officers of and above "field rank" at all times, whether "on" or "off duty." There is nothing servile or derogatory to yourself in this. It is an ancient Service custom with hundreds of years of tradition behind it.

Irrespective of rank, you must salute your superiors in rank before addressing them, or being addressed by them, on duty or parade.

78 *DON'T* fail to return every compliment paid to you by rank and file, and acknowledge it with a proper full salute; never touch your cap like a taximan acknowledging a tip. There is only

one kind of salute, and it is the same for officers as for those in the ranks.

79 *DON'T* forget to salute when you enter and leave an office occupied by a brother officer of *equal* or senior rank. It is courteous and has now become an established custom of the Service.

80 *DON'T* forget that when two or more officers are standing together and compliments are paid, only the senior present salutes; if he doesn't, do it for him, and tactfully explain you are acknowledging a salute for him, rather than commit the unpardonable offence of "cutting" a salute given by an "other rank."

81 *DON'T* forget to salute a bier, uncased Colours or when the National Anthem is played. Officers of the

A.T.S. or W.A.A.F. do not salute when the National Anthem is played in a church.

82 *DON'T* salute or return compliments if you are without your head-dress.

Disposal of offenders

83 *DON'T* find an alleged offender "guilty" if any reasonable doubt still remains as to his guilt. He must be allowed the benefit of the doubt.

84 *DON'T* prejudice an alleged offender's case by looking at his conduct sheet before investigating the charge against him. A "clean" sheet or a "black" one only influences the scale of punishment if he is found guilty of the offence. Therefore, do not look at his conduct sheet until you have arrived at a decision regarding his guilt or innocence of the charge.

85 *DON'T* punish a first offender for a minor offence.

86 *DON'T* fail to keep an alphabetical roll of first offenders you have "let off with a caution," so that swift and suitable punishment follows a further offence. Every offence cannot be treated as a first offence, or it becomes a habit.

87 *DON'T* forget to inform an offender whom you have decided to punish that you are doing so for three reasons :—

- (i) Because he deserves it ;
- (ii) To deter him from committing that offence again ;
- (iii) To deter others from committing a similar offence.

88 *DON'T* restrict privileges which the regulations permit; allow all to enjoy them to the full, but immediately withdraw them for a suitable period from those who abuse them.

89 *DON'T* place an offender in arrest, either "close" or "open," for a trivial offence ; it is not necessary. You can prefer a charge against him without placing him in arrest.

90 *DON'T* use your position to inflict any punishment which could be termed "malicious."

91 *DON'T* forget that the careers of your subordinates can be seriously damaged by a mistake on your part. Be correct in all your dealings with offenders, and above all be just.

Your correct conduct in private affairs

92 *DON'T* discuss official Service matters in private correspondence.

93 *DON'T* indulge in adverse criticism of junior or senior officers in private correspondence. It is grossly unjust: they cannot defend themselves.

94 *DON'T* discuss official Service matters with *anyone*, unless it is a matter which their official position demands that they should know.

95 *DON'T*, when permitted to wear "mufti," wear any old clothes. Remember that you are still an officer. If someone recognizes you in "loud" or any clothing unfitted to a commissioned

officer, you bring discredit not only upon yourself, but the status of officers generally.

96 *DON'T* discuss Service matters at home. Your family will undoubtedly be curious, and you may wish to impress them with the importance of your position, but careless talk even amongst those you trust most, may sacrifice valuable lives. Do not by mere foolishness become an unpaid agent of the enemy.

97 *DON'T* use Service rank titles when addressing chaplains. It is the Rev. Smith or Brown, not Squadron Leader or Captain Brown, and chaplains are only given relative rank for uniform and pay purposes. The majority prefer the more friendly term of "Padré."

98 *DON'T* fail to address officers correctly even in informal invitations (*i.e.*, officers of the Army holding the rank of Captain or above and those of the R.A.F. who are Flight Lieutenants or more senior are addressed by their rank. Officers below these ranks in both Services are addressed as "Mr.>"). Also give them their correct decorations on the addressed envelope, but not qualifications such as *p.s.c.* or *p.s.a.*

99 *DON'T* introduce officers who have not attained the rank of Captain or Flight Lieutenant to ladies or others as Lieutenant or Flying Officer Brown. If you would be correct it should be "Mr." Brown. In other cases use the full rank for the purpose of an introduction; never abbreviate it.

100 *DON'T* attempt to gain a personal advantage by writing a private letter on an official matter to a friend or relative who may hold high rank or be in a position of authority. Not only is it "bad form," but there is a regulation which expressly forbids you to do this.

