

How to have fun in the armed forces



Weir's View

By Ian Weir
Thomson News Service

Naturally, it's distressing to read that the Canadian Armed Forces is having trouble meeting personnel targets.

But it's reassuring to learn that a top-ranking officer has a solution to the problem. According to Major-General Jack Dangerfield, the forces must try to attract new recruits by making soldiering "more fun."

We pause, briefly, to admire the sheer novelty of this idea.

As far as I'm aware, comparatively few military leaders over the course of history have tried to stress the fun side of soldiering. It is not recorded, for instance, that Wellington tried to emphasize this angle on the morning of Waterloo.

"Gentlemen, I'll be blunt. We're badly outnumbered. We're up against the greatest military strategist of the century. In short, it's going to be a rather difficult day. But, hey - afterwards, we'll all go to McDonalds!"

Granted, history does speak of assorted leaders who found personal enjoyment in soldiering. But it's hard to believe their enthusiasm was widely shared.

"Hey, guys - guess who's coming to loot and pillage us this weekend? Ol' Attila the Hun!"

"Oh, wow - neat-o!"

The problem is simple. Soldiering may indeed seem fun for awhile, but only until some jerk spoils things by starting a war.

After that, the laughs are few and far between. You get to meet lots of new people, but the problem is that they're all trying to shoot you.

As such, you have to wonder just how the Armed Forces hope to make the business of soldiering seem like fun.

Do you send peace-keeping troops to Disneyland? Or perhaps invade the West Edmonton Mall?

Still, Major-General Dangerfield has a point. Recruitment is down.

Arts program

The Halton Board of Education is asking people to register now for the summer school performing arts program.

The performing arts classes will run from July 3 to July 21 and classes will concentrate on developing acting, dancing, singing and technical theatre skills.

The program is open for students from Kindergarten to Grade 13.

The Halton Board of Education's "Spotlight '89" summer School of Performing Arts is a part of the continuing education program in the Region.

To register call the continuing education office at 333-3499 or 878-1240 or call Cate Roberts at 632-5151.

And if the only solution is to make soldiering more fun, then so be it.

It's still a little difficult to imagine how this could be done without undermining the whole point of soldiering in the first place. But perhaps if we close our eyes tight, and try our hardest to imagine the scenario...

"Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to basic training. I'm Drill-Sergeant Rock, your social convener.

"First off, let's get one thing straight. You're stuck with me for the next six weeks - and by the end of that time, you're going to hate the sound of my voice. This is because I tell really, really bad jokes.

"But you're going to put up with it because this is the army, and you're here to learn discipline. So when I say 'Attention,' you say 'Sir!' When I say 'Jump,' you say 'How high?' And when I say 'Knock-knock,' you darned well say 'Who's there?'"

"Right. Basic training. You've heard about the course we have here at Camp Med. You've heard it's tough. Well, you heard right - this course is a killer.

"The second hole is a 470-yard parfour with a vicious dog-leg left, and the third green is completely surrounded by sandtraps. But you're soldiers, and it's time you got used to bunkers.

"And it's going to get worse, because after three weeks it's time for Survival Training. We're sending you into brutal and dangerous territory, and leaving you to survive by your wits.

"You arrive in New York on a Friday evening. Saturday afternoon, you go to see the Yankees play the Blue Jays. While you're at the game, I'll be sneaking into your hotel rooms and stealing your travellers' cheques. And then we'll see what you're made of.

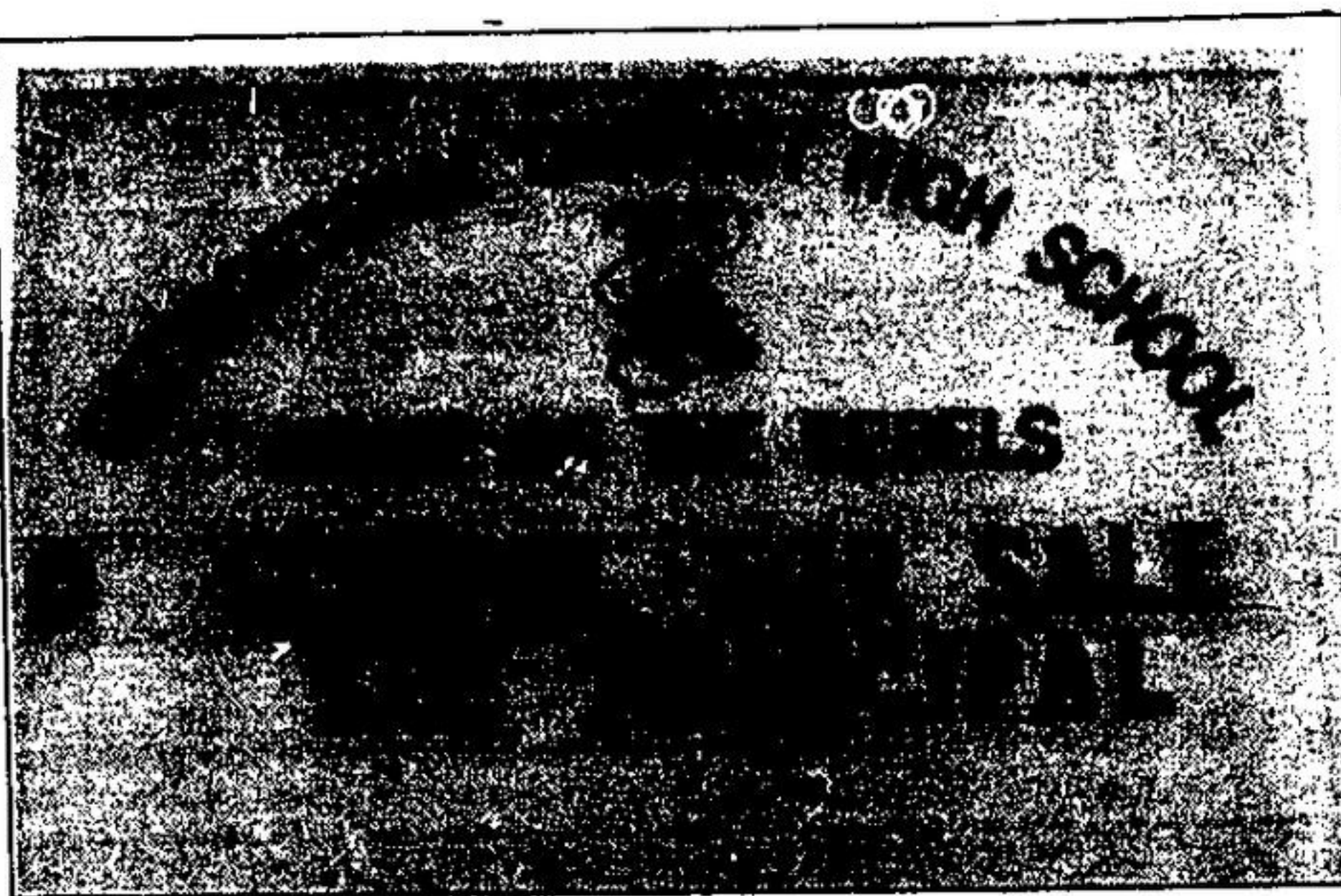
"And if you survive the full six weeks... well, then hang onto your hats, campers, because you're going to see action. All of you.

"You're going to see pitched battles, and all-out war. Bombs dropping, and entire regiments being blown to bits.

"And after the movie, we'll all go for pizza.

"Any questions? Right. You're in the army, now - and you know what that means, don't you?"

"That's right. It means the last one into the pool is a rotten egg."



How much?

Recently, anyone passing Georgetown District High School have been a bit confused about the "School for Sale" sign on the billboard. Principal Barb Singleton feels that "humor is needed to relieve stress for the students and teachers." Some of the public have been taken the sign literally. "Our last offer was \$69.34," Mrs. Singleton said.

UCW meet in Georgetown

Following dessert and coffee, Helen Thompson of Halton Women's Place, was the guest speaker for the U.C.W. Spring Thankoffering for St. John's United Church of Georgetown and Glen Williams. The meeting was held in the Georgetown hall Monday evening, April 17. Ms. Thompson told how the women (and sometimes with children) came to the centre and of the relief they found when there were others to share their trials. The women are generally there from three to six weeks until they can find new accommodations, no one is ever forced out. A course is being set up to train volunteer helpers for the home.

The congregation is busy preparing for the Weston Silver Band who will be performing in the Georgetown sanctuary on the evening of Sunday, April 30 at 7:30. This band has travelled extensively, won many prizes and will provide a musical treat for all band lovers.

Also coming up May 7, at 9:30 a.m. is the 153rd anniversary of the Glen Williams worship. Rev.

Walter Ridley, a former pastor will take the service and the Kerr family of Ballinacra will provide music. There will be a coffee hour following the service.

On Saturday, May 6 starting at 9 a.m., St. John's is holding a yard sale and silent auction at the Georgetown Church on Guelph Street. There will be a bake sale at 11 a.m. and lunch will be available. The Mission, Service and Outreach Committee are in charge.

St. John's has always been a supporter of "The Bridge," an inter-denominational outreach to prisoners in the local correctional facilities, and to their families in our community. A six-week training program arranged by Daisy Dunlop has been in progress during the month of April to help share in this "community building."

St. John's U.C.W. is saving Miracle Mart cash register tapes which can be turned in by a non-profit organization for cash. The members are using this means to help with their effort to help refurbish the kitchen.

Road will be closed

The Canadian National Railroad company has proposed construction on the John Street underpass that will close that section of the road for a month.

The Town of Halton Hills is recommending closure of the road after speaking with the CNR. The rail company says they would like to begin work on the structure April 25. The completion date should be June 23, say town engineers.

The bridge is located north of Mill Street in Georgetown.

Although the town has not received written request from the CNR, they believe the rail company will soon ask written permission. When the town approves the closure for construction, detour signs and road closed signs on-site will be paid for by the CNR.

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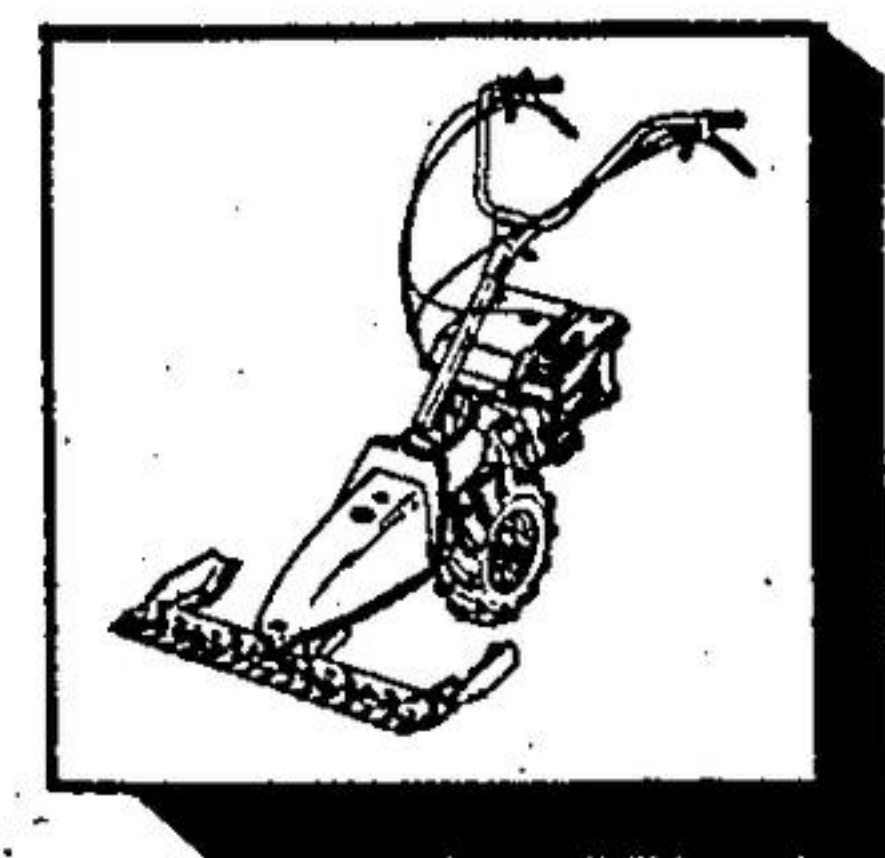
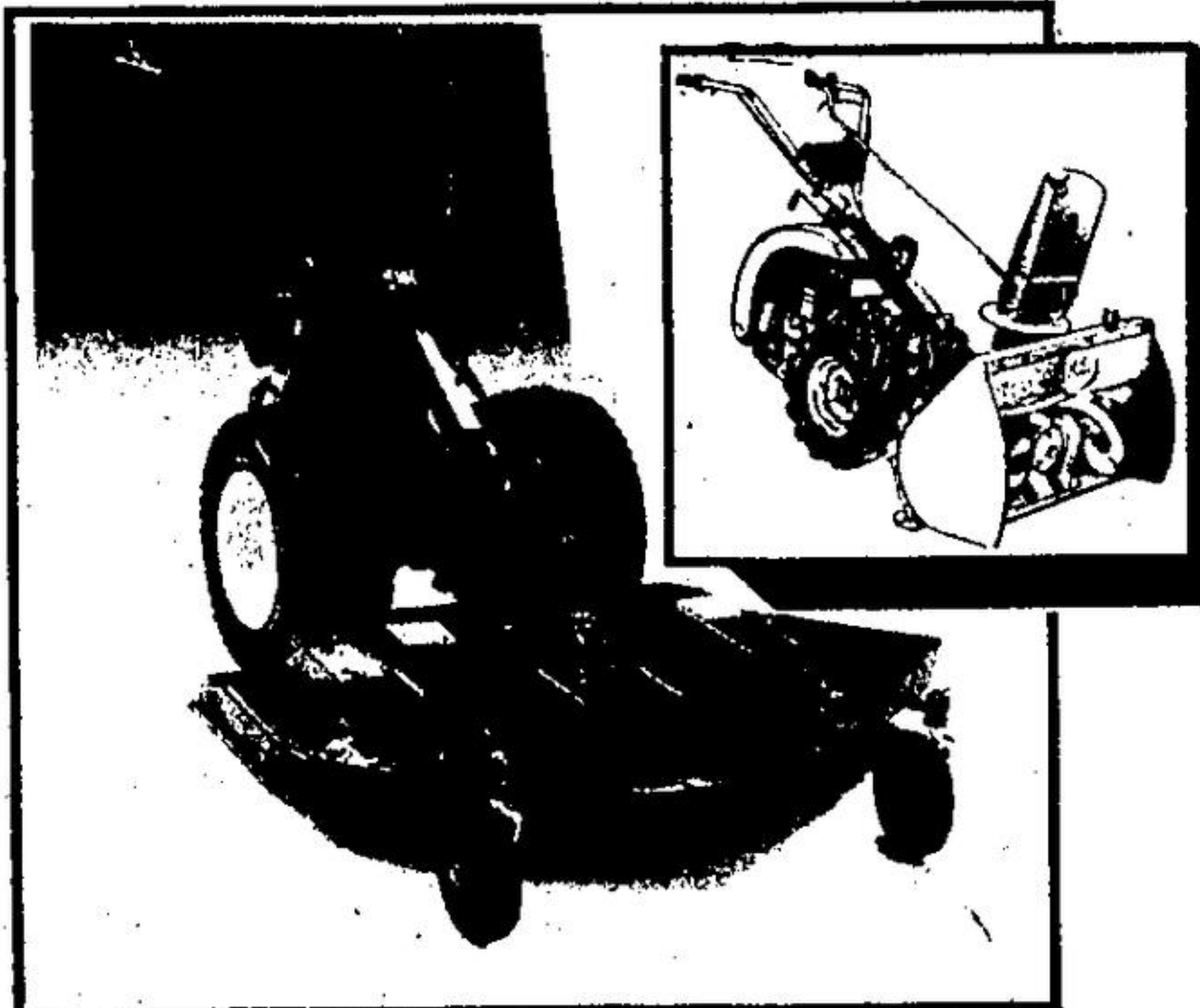
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