

YEAR 1896-98

Copy for your information
and your sons.
(no need to return)

BRENTWOOD,
GOSFORTH,
CUMBERLAND.
18th. February 1956

Dear Chaps,

Two letters this morning with Year News which I am sure you will wish to have. The first is from Miss E.N. Thornton, one of his sisters who live with him, says that in a black-out Cob fell injuring his spine. He went into hospital for an X-ray which showed that he had cracked a bone in his spine and he was kept in hospital. After a few days on his back he was put into a steel jacket and was able to sit up but found it very painful. It will take three months to mend but he may not be able to remain in hospital all the time owing to lack of beds. His sister says it is very unfortunate as for the last three months he had been so well except for occasional black-outs.

Cob's address is, Ward 2, Barnet General Hospital, Barnet, Herts. If you do not hear further from me you may take it he is progressing satisfactorily or that I have not received further information.

The second letter from Mr. Riley, Gen. Sec. O.S.A. enclosing a copy of a monthly magazine of the Royal Army Educational Corps called Army Education which a present First Year student gave him containing an Obituary Notice of Aubrey-Smith's death which he says "will further increase your pride in the Year". As it contains much information which is quite new to me (and it may be to you) I am giving you a full copy of it as follows:

OBITUARY

COLONEL J. AUBREY-SMITH, C.B., C.M.G. (10th. September, 1955, aged 77). With the death of Colonel J. Aubrey-Smith there passes from the scene an outstanding figure. On the formation of the A.E.C. he was appointed to the War Office and succeeded Lord Gorell as Inspector, Army Educational Corps, an appointment which he held for seventeen years until he retired from the Army in October 1937. To him fell the difficult task of establishing education as a recognised and accepted part of the soldier's daily life and training. Undismayed by the heavy cuts made in the original establishment of the Corps as a result of the "Geddes axe" of 1922 and by a widely felt sense of frustration which resulted from promotion delays at all levels, Colonel Aubrey-Smith pressed resolutely forward to his main objective. By the time he retired he could justly claim that the Army had become "education-minded": commanding officers were more and more turning to the A.E.C. for help, and the rank and file were coming forward in increasing, and sometimes embarrassing, numbers to take advantage of the opportunities to continue their education beyond the end of the compulsory stage marked by the Second Class Certificate of Education. Although he had left the Army two years before the outbreak of war in 1939, it was undoubtedly due to the unremitting efforts of the Corps during the long years under his leadership that so many warrant officers and N.C.O.'s were educationally fitted to step up, and step up successfully, into positions of greatly increased responsibility in the Army's hour of need.

In addition to his official duties he took a great interest in Army sport and for a long time he was Chairman of the Army Boxing Board, and Boxing as an amateur sport in the Army owes much to his energies and enthusiasm.

Colonel Aubrey-Smith's early education was carried out privately, after which he went to Cheltenham Teachers' Training College, and thence to an active teaching career. During World War I he served from 1914 onwards and was twice Mentioned in Despatches and awarded the Legion of Honour, Croix de Guerre, Order of Agricultural Merit of France and, in 1919, was created C.M.G. Subsequent to his retirement he was associated with Brigadier Crichley in greyhound racing tracks.

A good administrator, an excellent judge of character and a very just man, he will long be remembered by all who knew him and worked with him.

Our deepest sympathy goes out to his widow and his son. It is good to know that Major Aubrey-Smith is carrying on the family association with the Army.

J.T.B.

I am sure we all feel very proud of the very high position Aubrey attained in the Army and the great work he accomplished.

All good wishes,