



Army Rules and Procedures

(For Moff, Silver Star (US), Don Cameron DCM, MM, Bomber Harris DFC, Don Parsons and Barry Caligari who once upon a time stood by their beds for inspection before they too became mentors.)

It is sometimes said that madness is evident in the army
Put another way, many of those who took the oath became balmy
Given habits of beloved mates, I can't argue with such suggestions
Cos soldiering from days gone by raises many questions

Countless room inspections, so essential for neatness and pride
Gear carefully folded and a neatly made bed which you stood beside
Then minders flung our items here and there creating a terrible mess
"Do it all again" they screamed, spitting saliva and clearly in stress

When on parade, the Sergeant gave the command to rest
It simply meant you were about to be given another test
Stretch, yawn or shuffle your feet could mean terrible strife
Dare scratch your nose and military law would disrupt your life

Soldiers not on time were confronted with punishment and scorn
Yet officers arriving late were greeted with salutes, night and morn
For weeks we were taught the difficult drill to march so very slow
Once mastered, quickly was the order "Marching at double time, go"

When an officer on parade said he wanted to hear soldiers' views
If someone offered one, a sergeant screamed "Horrible soldier you"
At meal time, the orderly officer asked if there were any complaints
Anyone who did was confined to barracks and white rocks to paint

Only recruits cheered at the news "We'll stop and camp very soon"
Odds were you'd be marching at midnight without light from a moon
"There's been a change of plans" was news which spelt woe
More walking, no meal, hurry up and wait; who knows where to go?

"Tighten your belts, there's no rations coming our way"
Yet forbidden to eat your emergency ration then or any other day
"What are you doing?" was a question sergeants would often ask
If you fell for the trap and pleaded "Nothing" you were given a task

Wash, starch and carefully iron a uniform again and again
Then be told you look horrible when on parade in the pouring rain
In war games when firing blank at pretended enemy, I swear it's true
A corporal did yell, "Ya missed him, it's extra training for you"

When an officer on patrol said "This map is out of date"
You knew you were lost and only God knew your fate
A new officer would promise routine would be as before
That very night by "Lights out" there were new rules and more

Oh, how many times did we hear "March the guilty bastard in"
Before any evidence had been presented of a military sin
Screams and threats by NCOs for trespassing on the parade ground
A terrible sin not to stand fast as our beloved flag came down

Old soldiers fondly reflect on such things
Cos they realise the discipline, purpose and pride it did bring
That helped rally them together and survive in terrible strife
Rules, routine and madness which were always part of military life

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