

[Page 74 - Dawn Fraser, Writer Selections](#)ISSUE : [Issue 45](#)

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My Tutor, the Professor of Stabbing In the year 1916 the Government became interested in my education and gave me a free course in the art of bayonet fighting. Previous to this I had en? listed in the army for what I understood was re? lief work and when I told the recruiting officer that being a nurse and pharmacist I felt that I would qualify as a stretcher bearer, ambulance man or in a dispensary--he was as usual enthusiastic and quite agreed with me. Now understand, please, I was not applying for a commission or soft snap. In my ignorance at that time I imagined that to be an officer one must really be a veteran of the Boer War, the Egyptian War or some other war, and that he must have at least a dozen notches on his rifle indicating that he was indeed a hard dog, and in his day had dis? posed of the lives of at least a dozen ordinary men. But regardless of promises or arrangements with the recruiting officer when I arrived in Can? ada, I was placed in the Infantry and when I pro? tested, I was told that this was merely a tempor? ary arrangement and that a little later the govern? ment would build me a drug store in No Man's Land. They even assured me that my store would be so con? spicuously placed that it would be patronized by all the Allies and the Germans as well. But my am? bitions were never realized and we were finally taken for training to Willows Camp, Victoria, B. C. Here they gave me a number as indeed one other gov? ernment did on a previous occasion, they finally offered me a Lance-Corporal stripe, but I was not interested in stripes, in fact I was suspicious of them, the other Government referred to had given me quite a number of stripes. They also hung a lot of advertising matter on me, such as 260 Batt, Inf., etc., etc. Our elementary training was hur? ried through and I was finally turned over to my tutor. Meet Sergeant English, professor of bayonet fight? ing, and imagine the field of his activities. A level plain devoid of grass or vegetation, what ball players and athletics refer to as a skin dia? mond. At one end of this area a series of upright posts with bars running along the entire top, and suspended from these bars a lot of swinging dum? mies made of sticks and rushes tied tight? er, the general dimensions of these dummies being about the same as a man's body. These inoffensive objects you are told by the professor are supposed to represent Germans and your business there is to practice sticking a bayonet in them. In a prelimin? ary lecture, the professor assures you that you cannot be too dirty in bayonet fighting, your busi? ness is to get your man any way that you can. Now he would cry, "At his throat"; "Long Point. Damn it, put some pep in it; now again, I want you to grunt this time. Fraser, get that silly grin off your face, look fierce, look serious, look murder? ous, curse, swear; damn it, make it snappy. Charge together. High Port, come back here, you are like a lot of old women. Ah I wish the Royal Guards could see you. If the Kings Awn could see you, they would laugh, they would laugh, and you're Kanidians, Kanidians." Then the professor would grab a rifle from one of us and show us how the Kings Awn would do it, and I must admit he was a real athlete and was good at it. He would stab that poor old bundle of sticks as gracefully as a society matron would carve a chicken. But that was the only thing he could do, he was of less than



average intelligence, thought that an expert bayonet fighter was the finest thing in the world and that he was the most expert bayonet fighter in the world. He would click his heels together and pose in front of us and he could not understand why we refused to get enthusiastic over his example. Most of his scorn was directed at me as I was doubtless the least graceful of the bunch and certainly the least interested. On one occasion when I made a particularly feeble thrust at the imaginary German and returned to my "sr/v" Ashby Nurseries "*****" 564-8162

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