

14th BATTALION COMMAND.

General Elliott's Criticism.

In the course of the debate on the Defence Bill in the Senate yesterday Senator (Brigadier - General) Elliott complained that wrong methods had been adopted regarding the appointment of commanding officers of battalions in the Australian Imperial Force. On one occasion, he said, the 14th Battalion was given a Polish Jew as commanding officer, and he was placed above Captain Jacka, V.C., and other officers. He could not even speak English, and never learnt how to spell Captain Jacka's name. He did not know where this Jew had come from, but he never went into the line with the battalion.

Senator (Brigadier-General) Drake Brockman regretted that such statements had been made. The officer referred to was Colonel Margolin, who was born in Russia, and came to Western Australia more than 20 years ago. He went away with the 16th Battalion as a subaltern, and rose to the rank of major. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order at Gallipoli. "He was my second-in-command," said Senator Drake-Brockman, "in France until he was promoted to the command of the 14th Bat-

promoted to the command of the 14th Battalion. I have never served with a more gallant gentleman than this same Jew. The man was a hero. It is true that his method of speech was not quite orthodox, but he spoke good English with a certain foreign accent. This 'illiterate' Jew could not only speak English very well, but he spoke French, German, Russian, his own Yiddish, and the 'Gyppo' language fluently."

This officer, continued Senator Drake-Brockman, was not understood, perhaps, by the 14th Battalion. He had peculiarities that were not familiar to them, but he tried to go into battle with them at Messines. Anybody who had been to Messines Ridge knew that almost every inch of it had been marked by shells. Colonel Margolin fell into one of the holes and sprained his knee, which was swollen three or four times its ordinary size. He was taken to hospital and subsequently invalided from the A.I.F. Senator Elliott had not deliberately misinformed the Senate, but he did not know the fact about this "illiterate" Jew, who was so very highly educated and such a very gallant, loyal, and conscientious man. When he was sufficiently recovered from his injury he was given the command of a Jewish battalion raised in England, and he commanded a battalion of the Royal Fusiliers during the last year of the war. When last he heard from him he was military governor of Jerusalem. "This was the

W HEN THE GOVERNOR OF JERUSALEM. "This was the 'illiterate' Jew," added Senator Drake-Brockman. "He was a loyal officer of Australia, and loyal to me. I have the greatest admiration for him, and would consider myself contemptible if I did not stand up for him."

Senator Henderson (W.A.) said that he hoped that Senator Elliott would choose a different subject for his remarks in future. He knew the officer, and could produce papers to show what he had done.

Senator Elliott replied that he did not know the officer, but it was most unfortunate that a foreigner should be asked to take command of a battalion from a man of Captain Jacka's stamp. In view of what had been said, it seemed that he had been misled, and he was sorry that he had fallen into the error.
