

PSYCHOLOGY

Morale Defense

Protection of America's Fighting Spirit Vital To Defense; Recognition of Individual Important

By MARJORIE VAN DE WATER

MORALE protection is a vital part of America's national defense.

Tanks and airplanes, guns and destroyers are important. But we need psychological armor. The quality of morale may determine whether democracy shall survive.

Morale protection cannot be produced in rushing factories, machine shops or foundries. Yet it is receiving the serious attention of defense officials.

Arming the minds of America for defense means protection against discouragement, suspicion, fatigue, anxiety, confusion and mental strain. Any such weakness in the armor of the spirits of the people would provide an opening through which the fifth-columnist, the propagandist, the terrorist might destroy democracy.

First line of defense in the protection of morale is in the physical well-being of the people.

The health of all Americans must be assured. Of greatest importance is the health of the armed forces and that great army of workers engaged in making America the arsenal of the democracies.

In this critical time all must have enough food. They must have the right kind of food.

Protection in Enriched Bread

Fortunately, just in time to be of the utmost service in our national defense, has come the discovery of how important the B vitamins are for morale. Protection against the "jitters," nervous apprehension, worry—even nervous breakdown—has been found contained in those food essentials which are natural parts of whole-grain bread. Restoring the vital food factors to our refined flour and bread has been an important stride in the defense of America's minds and spirits.

Other vitamins, less directly connected with mental health, contribute to morale by protecting the physical well-being without which mental well-being cannot be attained.

Other food elements, besides the vitamins, are important. We cannot be sure

of iron in the souls of Americans without iron in the diet. Iron is essential to good blood. "Red-blooded Americans" must be more than just a figure of speech.

We must get enough sleep. Next to food, sleep is essential to the defense of morale. Scientific experiments have shown that a night of broken sleep breaks down a person's feeling of well-being the next day. The "blues," depression, inability to work at regular efficiency—this is the price often paid for habitual loss of sleep or for interruptions in it. The worker who is sleep-hungry must make a greater effort to concentrate. Physical exertion is more difficult.

The Government's housing program for defense workers is an essential step toward insuring proper rest and sleep for those who need it most. Restful sleep is impossible where quarters are crowded and noisy, beds unclean, ventilation poor.

Relief From Pressure

Rest periods become of greater importance when work is carried on under pressure and strain. The worker in a munitions factory who must keep his attention constantly alert should be permitted to relax completely at fairly frequent intervals. The high-pressure executive and dollar-a-year man has just as much need to get away from his desk and let down for a few minutes some time during his long day.

Pressure for working space should not be permitted to crowd out rest rooms and recreation areas that provide for relaxation. Employees should not be given the feeling that rest is a waste of time when time is precious.

Instead, relaxation at intervals should be encouraged and even insisted upon. Little comforts for workers that may seem trivial should be provided—access to cold drinks on hot days or hot drinks on cold days, candy for those who need extra energy, showers, beauty parlors and barber shops in the neighborhood of offices and plants so that employees can secure those attentions to the person that bolster morale without undue sacrifice of their limited leisure.

Exercise is important, too. In the same

America that is seeing young boys leaving school and office desk to take up unaccustomed physical drill in the army, other boys and girls, men and women are leaving the farm and outdoor life to sit long hours at a desk or work bench.

It is inevitable that they feel "cooped up." And if their need for strenuous physical exertion is not satisfied, the result is likely to show up as restlessness, discontent, nervous irritability.

Eliminate Needless Worries

America's good spirits depend upon freedom from needless worries.

Next to physical health and well-being, it is of utmost importance to keep the mind free from a clutter of petty irritations and distracting concerns.

The soldier going off for his year of training must do so without having to wonder about what will happen to his car that is partly paid for. He shouldn't have to worry about his house, his job, his standing on retirement and other security plans. This has been very carefully planned for by those who drafted the selective service legislation.

These things are important, too, for the defense worker who must leave home to go into munitions plant, shipbuilding yard, or government office.

Local organizations and communities may have the responsibility for seeing that such worries are relieved for the defense worker.

News from home is important in keeping up the morale of both soldier and civilian. The saying, "No news is good news" does not apply here. There is something about the tense atmosphere of a warring world that sets the imagination to work. If you do not hear frequently from those who are important to you, you are likely to guess at the worst.

The civilian soldier may have some difficulty in adjusting to his new life in camp and may be irked by new experience with discipline, rules and numbers of strange and unpleasant duties. But the industrial and office worker in emergency times is likely to be confronted with many kinds of irritation that the soldier escapes.

Having to drive home at night at a snail's pace in a jam of heavy traffic! No place to park! Strap-hanging on crowded street cars and buses! Waiting in a long line for a ham on rye at a

cafeteria or drug store! Unexpected overtime when you have a heavy date! Frequent changes in jobs, in orders, in bosses!

Girls have their own minor troubles. Stores a long way from the office and closed every time you have a few hours off! Beauty parlors inaccessible!

Always crowding and waiting everywhere, for everything.

These are the irritations that "get on your nerves." They can be prevented to a large extent by community action and cooperative planning by workers, employers and business men.

They must be prevented, if America's vital defense work is to go on without the sabotage due to frayed nerves.

Vital to morale in a democracy is confidence in leadership. People must respect and have faith in the President and also in the generals and admirals, the boss in their factory, and the policeman on the corner.

In a free America, such confidence in those who lead and protect us is based on abundant information.

"In democracy there can be no hold-outs," as Paul V. McNutt, Federal Security Administrator, said recently in a talk on morale. "America can give its people the facts."

Newspapers Giving Facts

Newspapers in America, free from censorship or imposed distortion of facts, give this information to the people as it is given nowhere else in the world.

If the growing immensity of the defense program should clog existing facilities by which the newspapers and the people obtain their information, new facilities must be set up and made available.

Teachers, libraries and many other groups are cooperating in conducting public forums and in making available newspapers, books, motion pictures, and other means for giving the public the information they need for their peace of mind.

In time of emergency, a fear is likely to arise that free discussion of public issues, free criticism of government policies and officials will undermine public confidence.

But this danger is recognized to be not nearly so great as that of any attempt to bridle free discussion. As often as questions of government policy are raised, they should be patiently and clearly explained. It is not equally easy for every citizen to learn the meaning of what is being planned and done. But

such understanding is essential to public morale and confidence.

When the rapid changes in the swiftly shifting political scene make necessary changes in policy, the public should be carefully prepared for them. There must be no surprises. No lightning, overnight about-faces. The individual citizen must be able to anticipate new moves on the part of the nation. He must be mentally adjusted to them in advance, or he will be hopelessly confused. And confusion rapidly leads to loss of morale.

Broadcasting of information about national strength and weaknesses, encouragement of free discussion and expression of unfavorable as well as favorable opinion, and advance warning of national policies—all these are handicaps to a nation in a warring world from the military point of view.

But all are essential for the peace of mind, confidence, and morale of the people.

Balance Both Interests

The two interests must be carefully balanced so that neither is unnecessarily sacrificed for the other.

Defense of the spirit of America demands that each man, woman and child keep a feeling of importance as an individual.

War and military preparations have a tendency to drown out the individual in the urgency of looking after group interests. But individual plans and needs

must not be completely submerged. Individuality is important to morale.

It is partly for this reason that the Army in its classification is giving each selectee a long and careful interview. They do not want to disrupt personal plans and goals any more than necessary. They want to further a man's vocational career if they can. The selectee cannot pick the job he prefers in the army, but army officials are doing what they can toward placing men according to individual experience and skills.

The sacrifices of personal interest of civilians should also be softened as much as possible.

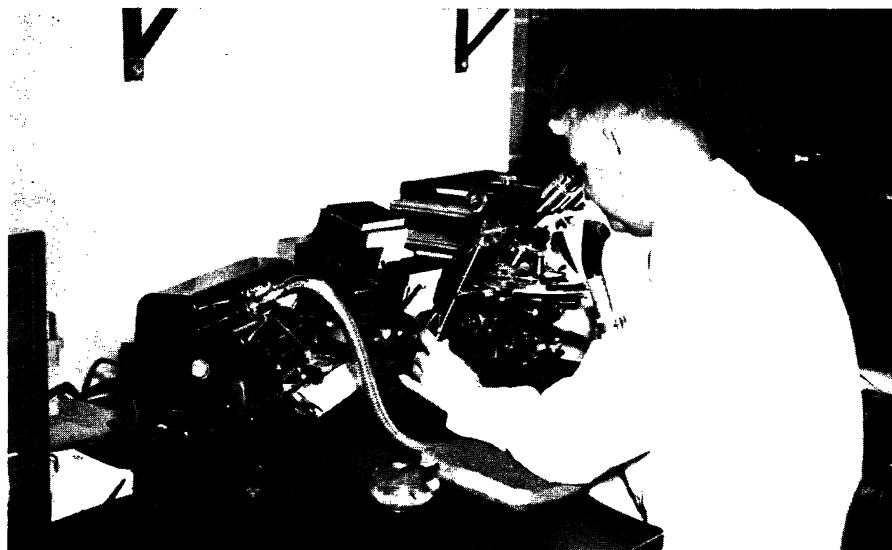
Efficiency Plus Satisfaction

Recognition of special abilities and talents is one way in which the individuality of the civilian contributing to defense can be respected and preserved. And it makes for efficiency as well as morale to place each man where he can contribute most to the nation's welfare.

In a democracy, the state exists to protect the rights and interests of the individual. Here, each person must be permitted and encouraged to be himself.

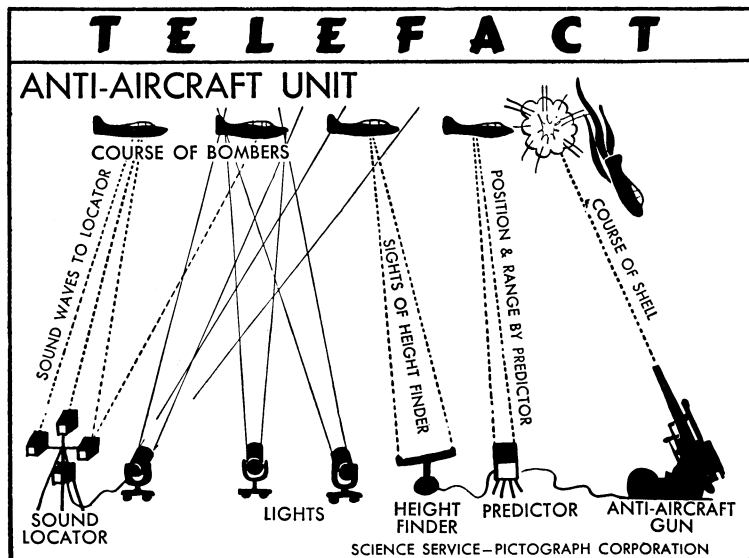
He is allowed the maximum of freedom to come and go as he pleases and as his employment and finances permit. He chooses his own associates, makes his own selection of ways to spend his leisure.

So far as possible he must be given his own choice of the possible types of



VOICE RECORD

A continuous record of prolonged microscopic observations is achieved with great ease by Dr. J. W. Miller of the National Institute of Health by this clever combination of apparatus. The mouth-piece of a voice recording machine is placed in front of Dr. Miller so that he may speak into it without moving his head or eyes. The elbow pads and hand position controls are conveniences for prolonged observation.



service he may render his community and his nation.

He must feel free of fear. There must be no spying of neighbor upon neighbor or of police or volunteer vigilante. Well-meaning citizens must be able to go about their personal affairs with a minimum of questioning.

And there should be individual recognition of personal achievement. When a man does an unusual service to the community or to the nation, when he has a useful idea, he should be given due honor. His own achievements should not be lost sight of in an organization.

The Army has long realized this human need for individual recognition. There are many honors, citations, badges, stripes and so on for various types of distinction.

Civilian life has all too little of this. Communities might well offer more in this way. Mention in local publications, city citations, honor rolls might be provided for the living as well as for those who have died in the nation's service.

We can't all be key men, dollar-a-year experts, generals, or defense executives. But even the John Does of America can be important by belonging to an organization which is important.

The boy who joins the Army or the Navy adds in this way to his feeling of importance. When he puts on the uniform of Uncle Sam, he becomes more than he was before—he is now a soldier or a sailor in the nation's service, and as such very important to the welfare of his country.

Civilians have this feeling of important service if the groups to which they belong receive general public recognition

as important and really valued agencies.

The member of a labor union, manufacturer's association, citizen's association, lodge, fraternity, Red Cross, church, volunteer fire department, Boy or Girl Scouts, or any other civic or community organization adds to his own self-respect through the respect accorded to his organization.

In a time of emergency it is important that every individual in the nation—man, woman and child—should be encouraged to belong to some organization that is playing an active and important part in the nation's defense.

As many as possible should be leaders in some sort of work. Local committees for the care of various defense duties, neighborhood committees, small groups for occupations or for certain age levels multiply the opportunities for leadership in important phases of work for the national welfare.

Students in colleges, high schools, and even grade schools can be given much broader opportunities to take an actual part in national and community service. This would be a much better preparation for citizenship in a democracy than can be obtained from any amount of reading in the most carefully selected textbooks.

It has been proposed that students take and then later give first-aid courses. Girl students might form organizations that would be responsible for the care of children of defense workers. College students, particularly graduate students, might devote some of their spare time to giving instruction in evening defense training courses. They can aid in adult education classes, Americanization

classes. Girl students might contribute lectures in the community on newer knowledge of nutrition, chemistry for the home, and so on.

Students of all ages can learn to contribute to community music and recreation programs.

Activity in the nation's service and personal contributions of time, work, and thought to build up America's defenses serves thus a double purpose. Not only does it make the whole fabric of democracy stronger, but it lifts the spirits of those taking part in this united endeavor.

Science News Letter, May 24, 1941

MEDICINE

Ask Trial of Tannic Acid Treatment for Poison Ivy

TRIAL, under medical supervision, of a tannic acid treatment for poison ivy is urged by the U. S. Public Health Service on the basis of experiments by its scientists reported in detail in Public Health Reports. (May 16.)

Tests on a limited number of persons at the close of last year's poison ivy season were most encouraging. Itching and discomfort stopped within one or two days after beginning of the treatment and all symptoms disappeared at the end of a week.

A 10% solution of tannic acid in water is used. This solution is applied to the inflamed area after previous cleansing with alcohol. The treatment should not be attempted by laymen, it is stated, because, among other reasons, it might do more harm than good if it were used on some skin inflammation that was not due to ivy poisoning. The treatment was developed by Dr. Louis Schwartz and Dr. Leon H. Warren.

To prevent ivy poisoning, these same scientists working at the National Institute of Health developed a vanishing cream containing 10% sodium perborate. The cream is to be rubbed into the skin before going into woods or fields where there may be poison ivy plants. Directions are to wash off the cream with soap and water and put on fresh cream every four hours if you are going to be in the fields or woods all day. The vanishing cream should be made up fresh every two weeks.

Both the protective vanishing cream and tannic acid treatment are effective against both poison ivy and poison sumac.

Science News Letter, May 24, 1941

In some parts of the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California average *snowfall* for a year totals 25 feet.