PSYCHOLOGY

Jobs for Returning G.I.'s

Servicemen are aided in selecting the best civilian job. Skill, aptitude and interest three most important considerations when choosing a permanent occupation.

By MARJORIE VAN DE WATER

➤ WHEN the serviceman has completed his share of the fighting and comes home, like the proverbial postman on a holiday his first thought is to get work to do. Even before he goes shopping for neckties and sportswear he begins to look around for a good job.

If he has been a year, or two years or more in service, he may have the disadvantage of not being in touch with people in industry or business. Jobs, industrial processes, and raw materials may have changed greatly during his long absence. If he left straight from high school, he may never have had the experience of finding and holding a job of any kind.

But he has many other advantages to outweigh these handicaps. He is free to choose the particular kind of job he would like and is fitted for—if he can find it. He is not tied down by habit or loyalty to a particular concern, or even, perhaps, to any particular town. He has had experience in service that may be of tremendous value to him in a new occupation. Chief of these advantages is very likely the freedom to choose.

Help in choosing wisely the special kind of work that will give him lasting happiness and satisfaction and a chance to grow on the job is given the returning serviceman by a group of psychologists and job experts in a new book just prepared by a committee of the National Research Council and published by the Infantry Journal-Penguin, *Psychology for the Returning Serviceman.*

Needs to Know Himself

In addition to the facts that a man looking for a job needs to know about business conditions, job opportunities, the reputation of employers, there are many things he needs to know about himself in order to pick the right kind of occupation.

There are, the specialists tell the returning serviceman, three things about any man that are especially important in matching him up with the kind of job that he would fit into well:

(1) Skill: What kinds of jobs do you already know how to handle?

(2) Aptitude: What other kinds of jobs will you master fastest and best if you take time to get some special training?

(3) Interest: Out of the jobs you are already fitted for, or which you can readily learn, which job are you most likely to find satisfying?

On all of these points, the answer lies within you. It depends on your abilities, your experiences, your personality.

The experience of experts in job analysis of hundreds of occupations in military service and in civilian industry is ready to assist the man who wants to make use of his former civilian skills or the specialties he has learned in service. How it can help is explained in the book:

Occupations are compared with each other on the basis of five kinds of facts about each one:

(1) The operations to be performed in doing the work.

(2) Tools, machines and other aids used.

(3) Materials with which the work is carried out.

(4) Traits or special abilities required of the worker.

(5) Special hazards or working conditions.

When jobs are analyzed in this way—and many thousands of them have been—the amount of similarity in skill between one job and another begins to appear. Then it is possible to gather jobs into "families" of closely similar skills. For each family of civilian jobs there may be a specialized military job or group of them that calls for much the same kind of man with the same kind of skills.

When you yourself went into the Service, it was decided what kind of job you could best do there. You were examined for this purpose, perhaps more than once, and your special skills were put down on your record. There may not have been any need, at the time you went in, for your special abilities, and there may have been a great need for infantrymen, artillerymen, and others for whom there are no corresponding workers in civilian life. But any time the need may have come up for your special skill—it would come

POSTWAR ABILITY—Seamen will find a use for their ability to make seafaring splices when it comes time to find a permanent job back home.

Do You Know?

Calcium phosphate added to table salt prevents caking.

The odor of *celery* seed is apparently due to derivatives of sedanolic acid.

Copper from Canadian mines is being imported into the United States at a rate of about 10,000 tons a month.

Rainwater collected in towns contains considerably more ammonia than that which falls in the country.

Oxyhydrogen, not oxyacetylene, welding torches are used for under-water cutting and welding on sunken ships and other objects.

Sprouting tests with over 300 *soybean* seed stocks showed that less than 10% produced sprouts suitable for human consumption.

Three promising *insecticides,* developed to replace or supplement the supply of rotenone and pyrethrum, are DDT, ground Mexican sabadilla seed with lime as an activator, and an abstract from Ryania, a South American shrub.

A deadly disease of the American elm known as *phloem necrosis,* not related to the Dutch elm disease, is destroying tens of thousands of trees in the Midwest; how it spreads, and how it may be controlled, have not been discovered.

From Page 298

up for hundreds of thousands of men—it was right there on your record and your Service would have found you and changed you to a new job. The knowledge of what job family each man had worked in as a civilian was a useful guide.

Now this process can work in reverse. Many men have acquired new skills in the Army and Navy. Each of these specialized skills has been analyzed in relation to the job families of civilian life. As a result, any man who has had a specialized military job can find out what kinds of civilian work he is now partly or fully trained to do.

Here are some examples:

(1) The *demolition specialist* in the Engineers. His work in the Army consists of demolishing obstacles built by the enemy, roads, bridges, bunkers, dugouts and buildings. It may not seem as though there would be much use for such skills back home after the war, when we will be busy at the work of building roads and bridges instead of blowing them up. But a careful look at just how he goes about his mission of destruction shows that he does these things: he determines the size, type and methods of placing charges of explosives; assists in drilling the necessary drill holes; attaches fuses or electric wires to the charges; and finally explodes them from a position of safety.

By looking in the lists of civilian job families, we find that a man who has learned all this is set, with very little additional training, to become a slate shooter in a bituminous coal mine. The slate shooter drills holes into the slate roof of haulage ways and charges and sets off explosives there. Or he could become a blaster in such industries as construction, logging, or wood distillation and charcoal. There his job would be to break up or loosen hard or packed materials, or to remove obstructions by blasting.

(2) The *heavy machine gunner* in the infantry. The soldier with this job doesn't merely load, aim and fire a heavy machine gun; he also learns how to strip it and how to replace worn or damaged parts. Back home in the firearms industry there is an assembler who performs essentially the same job. There won't be many assemblers of machine guns needed after the war? Maybe not. But there are a lot of jobs that call for a skill just a little different from what the heavy machine gunner has acquired. With only brief training right on the job he might readily learn to assemble—or repair—such civilian articles as typewriters, washing machines, or even amusement park devices and pinball games.

(3) The *Fire-Control Man.* Chief and First Class, analyzes and repairs a wide variety of electrically controlled instruments used in the Navy. In addition he must be able to calibrate rangefinders. With additional training in the specific types of electrical instruments involved, he can become an electrical instrument repairman who repairs and calibrates thermostats, recording gages, and relays. As an office-machine repairman, he can learn to do inspection, repair and adjustment of adding, calculating and bookkeeping machines. These office machines are the same kind of mathematical wizards, on a smaller scale perhaps, as the "calculators" in battleships.

Occupational Training

The G. I. Bill of Rights makes it possible for a returning soldier or sailor to obtain the training he needs to fit him for an occupation for which he has related skills. It also makes it possible for him to select an entirely new occupation or profession and develop skills he has never previously had. In case he decides to take advantage of the latter possibility, it is then important that he have the necessary aptitude to profit from the training and the necessary interest to make him persist in the long, difficult period of study.

There are tests that can be used to help a man discover his own talents and aptitudes. Usually, these must be given and interpreted by experts, but experts are available in the local offices of USES or in Veteran Counseling Centers in various parts of the country.

There are tests of interests, too, but the best clue to your interests is the knowledge of the kinds of work that have held your interest previously. If you have always liked to work with other people, you don't want to go into a job where you will be isolated.

If you enjoy work with machines or doing things with your hands, you may not find the same satisfaction in purely mental work at a desk. If it troubles you to have to make decisions and be responsible for the work of other people, you probably (*Turn to page 302*)

CHEMISTRY

Plastic-Coated Fabrics

➤ DAINTY white gloves that may be washed under a faucet while still on the hands, and damask linen tablecloths from which spilled gravy may be wiped with a damp rag, are probabilities of the future if the fabric in the article is coated with a transparent plastic that does not materially alter its appearance or feel. This coating is now in extensive use in military fabrics but soon will be available for civilian purposes.

Application of plastics to the outer surfaces of fabrics is not new, but where employed, as in making kitchen oil cloth and rubberized raincoats, they changed the appearances and feeling of the cloth. The new method is with the use of vinyl butyral, and the invisible coating is so thin that its presence can hardly be detected.

Scientists of the Monsanto Chemical Company were assigned the job early in the war of finding materials with which to replace natural rubber for waterproofing and to extend the life of textiles. Intensive and concentrated research was begun even before the outbreak of the war closed off the nation's supply of natural rubber.

They turned to vinyl butyral, a plastic previously used almost exclusively as an interliner material in automobile safety glass. This material was available, and was quickly modified to meet textile requirements and those of rubber processing methods. It is now suitable for many uses, not only in coating fabrics, but also in the form of a free film, free in the sense that the plastic is used alone and not attached to a fabric.

Science News Letter, May 12, 1945

From Page 300

should not try to be an executive—at least not right away.

And other interests, besides your particular occupational interests, may be important in picking the job that is best for you.

You need to be sure your pay will be adequate, the specialists warn. For most men that is a very important consideration.

Yet pay is almost never the whole story. It is not even always the most important point. You can have fine pay on a job and at the same time be very unhappy in it. There are many other things you will want to ask about a job besides how much it pays—always supposing that you are lucky enough to have much choice about which job to take. Here are some of the main questions:

You will want to know about getting back and forth from work. You will be interested in what kinds of places are available for you to live in. It is important to learn whether your work is always between set hours or whether you have to work special shifts and do a great deal of overtime. The cleanliness, lighting and ventilation of the place where you work may be important to you.

You may enjoy working with women, or you may hate it; that can be very important, especially if you are likely to have a woman as supervisor or employer. If you are sociable, you may want to know whether the particular company demands constant attention to the work, so that you will not be able to talk while you work. If you smoke, you may want to know whether smoking is permitted during work hours. If the job is in a plant that provides music during work hours, that may be something you will enjoy or dislike very much.

Health benefits, medical attention, and retirement plans are important in giving you a feeling of security. For security, some men will choose a government job even if they would otherwise have preferred private industry.

Any of these things may seem of fairly small importance at the time of taking a job. Then the kind of work and your qualifications for it, plus the amount of pay offered may seem to be the main things.

But if you hope to stay in the same place for a period of years, these other sides of the job will come to seem more and more important. They are what make a job a good job.

Science News Letter, May 12, 1945

The U. S. *Mint* turned out during 1944 approximately 8,000,000 coins for more than a score of friendly nations.