

PSYCHOLOGY

Armed Forces Test Valid

The armed forces qualification test, criticized as being too difficult, tests what it is designed to test. The men simply are not qualified.

► THE ARMED forces qualification test jumped on by Maj. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey, head of Selective Service, as flunking too many men, is doing just what it is designed to do, Army records indicate.

This test is designed to keep out of the Army those men who are so stupid or ignorant that they would do the Army more harm than the enemy itself. Difficulty of the test was planned so as to disqualify 13% of men of draft age. It is just that proportion of the population that is too low in intelligence or education to make good soldiers, Army figures indicate.

Actual rejections during the month of July for failure on the mental test amounted to 15.2%, a figure slightly higher than the expected 13%. But the drafted men sent to the Army were not representative of the whole population. Screened out were all those who had enlisted in the Navy or Air Force, all veterans, all college boys who were in the upper 50% of their classes, and all R. O. T. C. students.

Passing mark on the test was not set by the Army; it was set by Congress in the Selective Service Act of 1948, where it is provided that the Army should accept all men who make a score better than 70 on the old Army General Classification Test.

By giving the new all-services test to 12,000 men who had also taken the old GCT, an equivalent on the new test for the grade of 70 on the old one was found. This is the new cutting point.

The new test, which has been in use since Jan. 1 of this year, is the answer to a demand that all the armed forces have one single scale for measuring the talents of their men. It was prepared by experts from the personnel research section of the Army and from equivalent offices in the Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. Practically all the experts who worked on the test had seen service during World War II; the rest had been civilian employees of the Armed Forces during the war.

The test is designed to measure native intelligence, that is, the ability to learn what a soldier needs to know, and also ability to read simple instructions.

Care was taken to make the instructions in the test clear and simple to understand. Every word used was looked up on the famous Thorndike list of word difficulty, and no word was included that was above fourth grade difficulty.

Three kinds of questions are included in

the test. One kind is arithmetic reasoning, none of the questions beyond eighth grade in difficulty. Some questions test knowledge of words. And then there are questions that measure ability to sense spatial relations. This is measured, for example, when a drawing shows the surface of a construction of irregular form built of blocks. The candidate is asked to count how many blocks were used to build the form. Ability to do this has been found to be a good index to ability in certain occupations such as that of automobile mechanic.

Before being used in the test, every single question was first tried out in recruiting offices throughout the country to find out

its difficulty. Trials were made on two and a half times as many questions as were actually used. Those selected were found to distinguish best between good soldiers and poor soldiers.

The test as a whole was then tried out on 12,000 men who were representative of all the armed services in the last year of the war.

Whenever a man fails the mental test, he is immediately checked up on to see whether or not he is goldbricking. His work record and history of schooling, as provided by his own draft board, are examined. If it is found, for example, that he has graduated from high school, he is in the Army regardless of his score on the test. Less than one high school graduate out of a hundred should fail this test. Also if he has held a good job, that is considered as evidence that he is not deficient in intelligence, no matter what his test score.

If, however, he has a history of never being able to hold a job or to stay in school, that is considered to indicate that he would not be a good man in the Army.

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MEDICINE

Two Medical Firsts

► TWO medical firsts are reported from the Naval Medical Center at Bethesda, Md.

A mental patient who choked himself to death was one of the firsts reported by Drs. Morton J. Aronson and Samuel V. Thomp-

son, of the Neuropsychiatric Section.

The other was a patient saved from death after his temperature had gone up to 106 degrees in a state of acute excitement. Extremely high temperatures are not unusual



ANTI-SUBS—The ZPN airship, newly developed for the U. S. Navy, will help to combat the submarine menace in the event of future war. The net, shrouding the huge ship, is used to hold the helium-filled envelope down while the control car and other fixtures are being attached.