

PHYSIOLOGY—PSYCHOLOGY

Physical and Mental Needs Of Paratroopers Listed

Intelligence, Good Eyes and Teeth, Emotional Stability Among Requirements; Giants and Runts Alike Rejected

THE PARATROOPER needs intelligence, good eyes and teeth, and emotional stability, as well as physical strength and an athletic body, Capt. David E. Thomas, Medical Corps, U. S. Army, declares. (*Military Surgeon*, July).

"The avoidance of injury," he states, "depends on a man's ability to think fast, to learn the proper technique and to make his muscles obey his mind. The clumsy, athletically inept person is a liability. The person who permits his fear reactions to make him forget what he has learned cannot be trained successfully."

Men serving as parachutists must be between 66 and 72 inches in height and weigh between 150 and 185 pounds. Tall men have difficulty getting out of the plane door and very heavy men may blow out the panels of the parachute during the opening shock, Capt. Thomas explains. Tall, thin men have difficulty tumbling properly and smaller men, while they make easier landings, do not have the strength to handle the heavy equipment.

Good vision without eye glasses is necessary so a man may gauge his height from the ground accurately when landing. He must also be able to see equipment bundles after they land. Since some of these are dropped by colored parachutes, he must have ability to distinguish colors.

As to teeth, men with small bridges are accepted but not those who wear plates because of the possibility of breaking or losing them.

Ability to do 15 push-ups is one of the tests for physical strength. Men who have had severe injuries or frequent sprains are not acceptable because old injuries are likely to recur during training.

High school education or its equivalent and at least a Group 3 rating in the A.G.O. intelligence test scale are required to make sure the man has the initiative and ability for individual thinking required by the parachutist's duties after landing.

Those who faint at the sight of blood

or who have had epilepsy, migraine or similar nervous diseases are not accepted. Fixed standards for emotional requirements cannot be given at present, but Capt. Thomas believes these may be established after further study of soldiers who refuse the training or who volunteer for parachute duty just to find out whether or not they have the necessary courage to jump out of a plane voluntarily.

Science News Letter, July 25, 1942

NUTRITION

Food Enrichment Program Calls For New Breeds

NEW plans for a really all-out food enrichment program, in which plant and livestock breeders will aid by starting enrichment from the roots up, were called for by Dr. Hazel K. Stiebeling, nutrition authority of the U. S. Bureau of Home Economics, at the Second Inter-American Conference on Agriculture in Mexico City.

Enriching bread and flour by adding vitamins and minerals at the mill or in the bakery, hailed in the United States a year ago as a revolutionary step toward better national nutrition, is only the beginning of a real food-enrichment program, Dr. Stiebeling made clear.

"Such enrichment of grain products," she pointed out, "is largely a restoration of some of the nutrients removed in processing.

"There is another type of enrichment which has great promise of improving nutrition. This is the improvement of the nutritive value of food both through better feeding of livestock and better cultural practices with plants and through the selection of varieties of plants and breed of animals that are prized not merely for size or quantitative returns but also for exceptional nutritive value.

"To this," she declared, "agricultural planners should address themselves."

Science News Letter, July 25, 1942

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