

PSYCHIATRY

Advice Useful in Training

Induction of teen age men into Army increases need for adequate psychiatric guidance during early training period to salvage misfits.

► **INDUCTION** of 18-and 19-year-old young men into the Army increases the importance of having the advice of a psychiatrist available during the early training period, it is pointed out editorially by the scientific journal *Psychiatry* (November, 1942).

Young men in their teens are highly desirable for military service, the editorial states, because of their capacity for great exertion in emergencies, the recuperative power, and their amenability to moulding influences which can fuse them into a reliable solidarity of high morale and excellent discipline.

But when acute mental disorder does attack these young men the evil effects are greater than when older men are affected. Psychiatrists try to eliminate before induction all those likely to break under the strains of Army training and military life, but this is a difficult job to do well in the fifteen minutes or less allowed for the examination.

May Make Good Soldiers

Bad psychiatric risks who have been accepted into the Army can often be made into good soldiers if some attention is given to their personal problems, Dr. Harry Stack Sullivan, former advisor to the Selective Service System and author of the editorial, explained.

Some boys going into the Army straight from school have suffered unfortunate experiences earlier in the schooling. Because of these early difficulties, they resent any later efforts to teach them anything. An experienced psychiatrist understands this situation

and knows how to handle it, but it is likely to baffle the ordinary drill sergeant. He cannot understand why he is not "connecting" with his problem students.

It will be better for the Army and also for the individuals if these problem boys in uniform are salvaged and turned into good soldiers, Dr. Sullivan indicated. It will also be a good thing for the nation. These boys taken from school do not have a chance to learn citizenship in the normal way through their relationships in industry and in the community. What they are when they get out of the Army again and go back to their own home town will depend mainly on the instruction and handling they get in the Army.

The psychiatrists selected for such advisory duty in replacement and training centers should be experienced men who know what they are doing, Dr. Sullivan said. Inexperienced or half-baked psychiatrists might be better than no psychiatrist in treating the very ill mentally—some of them can't be helped much anyway. But young soldiers should have the best available advice. The psychiatrists should be given special indoctrination in the Army for this work.

"They should not be expected to gallop right out of a child guidance clinic into the Army," he said.

"The problem of advising soldiers is a specialized one. The new school for Army Neuropsychiatry established at the Lawson General Hospital, Atlanta, Ga., under direction of Col. William C. Porter is a long step in the right direction."

Science News Letter, March 6, 1943

● RADIO

Saturday, March 13, 1:30 p.m., EWT

"Adventures in Science," with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over Columbia Broadcasting System.

Dr. Esther Batchelder, chief of the Foods and Nutrition Division, U. S. Bureau of Home Economics, will talk on "Vitamins in our Daily Food."

Monday March 8, 9:15 a.m., EWT; 2:30 p.m., CWT; 9:30 a.m., MWT; and 1:30 p.m., PWT

Science at Work, School of the Air of the Americas over the Columbia Broadcasting System, presented in cooperation with the National Education Association, Science Service and Science Clubs of America.

"It's Human Nature" will be the subject of the program.

INVENTION

Two New Rifle Sights Intended to Improve Aim

► **TWO NEW** rifle sights, both of the kind that would probably be used by snipers and other special marksmen rather than in ordinary rough-and-tumble fighting have been invented.

One of them, protected by patent 2,310,929, is the invention of John Beresky of Brooklyn. It substitutes for the customary head or knife-edge front sight a device similar to the iris shutter of a camera. It is opened wide at the outset, to permit the rifleman to "frame" his target, then stopped down to a pinhole, to sharpen the aim just before he pressed the trigger. Adjustment is made by the thumb and forefinger of the left, or aiming hand.

The other sight, offered by Burr Lobdell of Cowdrey, Colo., for patent 2,311,186, interposes two small reflecting surfaces between the marksman's eye and the front sight, which have the effect of optically doubling the sighting base and thereby increasing accuracy.

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