RECRUITMENT FOR THE ARMY MEDICAL SERVICES

BY

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ONCE again the British Army is undergoing change; by 1963 a volunteer all-
regular army of 180,000 will come into being. In spite of great developments
in electronics, ballistic missiles and space travel, the most important weapon
of war still remains man himself. The soldier (particularly the infantryman) will
still dominate the battlefield.

The future all-regular highly professional army will make greater demands
than ever on the Army Medical Services. The increased health hazards which
accompany the handling of missiles, electronic equipment and possibly radio-
active materials; the new approaches to traumatic and accident surgery, and the
medical care of the greatly increased proportion of highly-trained specialists in
all fighting and supporting arms, will demand both in peace and war, professional
standards in army doctors, dentists, nurses and medical technicians, second to
none, a corps d'élite.

In an era of full employment such as at present, with the wide range of
attractive civilian technological apprentice schemes and career patterns, recruit-
ment for the Army is competing against heavy odds, calling for a special approach
and techniques. Although pockets of unemployment exist (the unemployed
are in the majority those without profession or craft) the problem facing youth
today is of choosing rather than finding employment.

It may be opportune to consider what personnel the Army Medical Services
require; whether such individuals are available for recruitment; what are the
views of contemporary youth on the armed forces as a career; whether male
nursing is popular in the United Kingdom today; what are the views of parents
and other relatives towards careers in the services and finally how can recruits
be attracted to join the Army Medical Services.
Recruitment for the Army Medical Services

What Personnel do the Army Medical Services require?

A peaceful cadre of doctors, dentists, nurses and medical technicians and auxiliaries (e.g., male nurses, operating theatre technicians, radiographers, physiotherapists, laboratory technicians, hygiene personnel, etc.), with professional qualifications and skills equal to their civilian colleagues is essential.

To these professional skills must be superimposed training in the operations of modern war; the ability to be flown at a few hours’ notice in medical support of a force involved in active operations anywhere from the Caribbean sea to Korea; in temperate or tropical climates; in cold, limited or global nuclear warfare.

The requirements are for individuals with high levels of intelligence, mental and physical robustness, powers of leadership, displaying a deep interest in the medical sciences. That such individuals exist is proved by the superb achievements of the medical services in recent years in Malaya, Korea, Suez, Muscat and Oman.

Are adequate Personnel available for Recruitment?

The rise in birth rate in the years following the war is producing the so-called “bulge.” This commenced to be felt in 1958 and by 1962 there will be 929,000 school-leaving boys coming on to the labour market.

In civilian industry although there is no lack of applicants, promising boys leaving school eager to learn a skilled trade, there is a serious shortage of apprentice places available. In London for example there are two applicants for every vacancy; in the industrial north such as Lancashire, the position is even worse. During the next few years there is likely to be a surplus of first-class apprentice personnel. A carefully planned campaign to bring the R.A.M.C. Apprentices School with its careers prospects, to the notice of potential medical auxiliaries and technicians, would enable selected applicants to join the Army Medical Services at apprentice age.

What are the views of present day youth on careers prospects in the Army?

From information gained by careers conventions, army schools liaison officers, and information offices, it is clear that there is no hostility towards a service career but a marked lack of knowledge on the part of parents, schools careers masters, and youth employment services, concerning service careers potentialities. Many seem quite unaware of the fact that the army educational advantages, pay, allowances and privileges together approximate to civil life and in many cases exceed them.

In particular visits to army information offices have made it clear that in the past the unique careers prospects of the Army Medical Services have not been given the same emphasis as those appertaining to the arms and supporting corps (Royal Engineers, Royal Corps of Signals, etc.).

The youth of today is clearly interested in the medical sciences. A recent
survey of school-leaving boys showed the following answers to the question of what constitutes the most important field of human activity today*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Public school boys %</th>
<th>Grammar school boys %</th>
<th>Technical school boys %</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious or Welfare Work</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Forces</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is significant that medicine and science occupy the two most popular places amongst school-leaving youths. Again it has often been alleged that nursing is not popular amongst men in the United Kingdom. This is quite untrue. In England, Scotland and Wales alone, over twenty thousand men have voluntarily taken up nursing as a career. At midsummer 1959 the total numbers of male state registered nurses were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male S.R.N.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>7,378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental</td>
<td>10,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Defective</td>
<td>1,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fever</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20,218</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Nursing in the army covers a much wider field than any civilian counterpart. To all the latter can be added the nursing of traumatic, accident and combat injuries, the nursing of tropical conditions, training in mass casualty techniques, nursing under field conditions in all parts of the world, and finally the nursing of cases in transit by air or surface means.

Information about army nursing career prospects must be disseminated more widely than hitherto.

What are the views of relatives of potential recruits

Parents still exercise very great influence on their children in the choice of careers. A recent questionnaire sent by a youth employment authority to a random sample of 200 parents, showed that 85 per cent showed a detailed interest in their sons' choice of a career.

In another survey carried out to assess motivation amongst youth in selecting careers, the question was asked: "Who do you think has been most helpful to you in deciding on a career"?

* In some cases more than one item was selected, and in other cases no choice was made.
Recruitment for the Army Medical Services

The answers given by school-leaving youths were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Most help given by</th>
<th>Lower 6th Form</th>
<th>Upper 6th Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public school boys</td>
<td>Parents 45%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Masters 19%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar school boys</td>
<td>Parents 35%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Masters 27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical school boys</td>
<td>Parents 17%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School Masters 65%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to information concerning R.A.M.C. careers potentialities and details of the R.A.M.C. Apprentices School being disseminated amongst parents and youth employment and schools liaison officers, organised visits by parents and Y.L.Os. to the Depot and T.E. R.A.M.C., and the Apprentices School as frequently as possible will be of value.

Any recruiting campaign must also recognise the greatly increased proportion of young men who are either married or engaged. Accurate up-to-date information on facilities for married families at home and overseas, educational facilities and amenities, etc., will be essential to "win the wives."

The increasing influence of dependents on potential apprentices and recruits must not be underestimated, but must be influenced in favour of the service by a clear exposition of R.A.M.C. careers prospects, educational advantages, pay, allowances and privileges.

How can youth be attracted to join the Army Medical Services?

The ideal job may be defined as the one in which you get paid for doing something that you would want to do anyway. How can modern advertising techniques be used to assist recruiting for the Army Medical Services? Modern advertising is based upon different techniques of persuasion. Somebody with something to sell wants to persuade somebody else to buy. Both seller and buyer are human beings with varying motivation (frequently subconscious), prejudices and degrees of rationalisation.

If these principles are important for selling articles of merchandise how much more important it is when persuading youths to take up service careers for the best years of their lives. Youths of today want variety and adventure, to move about and see the world, to deal with people in jobs that are clearly worth doing, and where they feel that they are needed. Careers in the Army Medical Services can satisfy all these requirements, but how can these opportunities be brought to the notice of contemporary youth?

The main channels of communication between the Army Medical Services and potential apprentices or recruits are:

1. Internal recruiting.
2. Liaison with parents, schools careers masters, youth employment authorities, appointments boards, etc.
4. Advertisements in the Press (both national, and provincial).
5. Army Information Offices.
6. Military exhibitions, tattoos, bands, mobile exhibition vans, etc.
7. Posters (a) Static
   (b) Transport advertising (vehicles and escalators).
8. Pamphlets and circulars.
10. Sound broadcasting.

To evaluate the respective merits of these different media would require separate study. But recent recruiting experiences have shown that the most potent recruiting agent today is the contented officer or soldier, the one who enjoys his working and living conditions and career prospects, and who is anxious to fire other people with his enthusiasm. No other medium of communication can beat the personal impact of an enthusiast; in the words of Newman, Cor ad cor loquitur.

Methods 2 and 3 have been discussed above; of particular importance are visits to medical units, hospitals and the R.A.M.C. Depot and Apprentices School by parents, schools careers masters, youth employment and schools liaison officers, etc.

Advertisements in the Press: these are controlled by the Director of Public Relations at the War Office. Whilst advertisements in the national dailies of specific arms, corps or services may stimulate recruiting, "local boy" stories in newspapers restricted to certain provincial areas such as the Birmingham Post or the Liverpool Echo, etc., describing the experiences, adventures and life of officers or soldiers from the local town, can evoke deep interest in service life and have a recruiting value. Publicity must be persistent and constant. The soldier likes to see himself in print.

Army Information Offices are situated on main thoroughfares, their display windows are seen by thousands of passers-by each day. It is essential that the staffs of A.I.Os. should be adequately briefed with up-to-date information relating to the Army Medical Services. Attractive and informative hand-outs covering only the Army Medical Services should be available in adequate numbers; it is not sufficient to have omnibus pamphlets in which the Army Medical Services are relegated to small paragraphs.

Military exhibitions, tattoos, military bands, etc. Although modern efficiency experts decry tradition, throughout the history of warfare, military symbols have moved men to perform outstanding feats of bravery and endurance. The public still responds to martial music, bugles, pipes, and drums; on numerous parade grounds, military music and ritual have helped to evoke the esprit de corps which gives a unit a soul.

Never has there been greater need for the Army to use its traditional tools for motivating men. Every opportunity should be taken of inserting a stand
portraying the Army Medical Services into local exhibitions. Part of this stand should include historical items, the superb series of winners of the Victoria Cross, and the achievements of the Army Medical Services throughout British military history.

Posters (static or located on transport, escalators, etc.). Posters function as a persistent reminder of goods and services. Posters should be designed to attract attention, to influence the mind of the viewer, and to persist in his memory with pleasant and worthwhile associations; who can ever forget the famous First World War poster, a portrait of Lord Kitchener accompanied by the slogan “Your Country needs YOU!”

Broadcasting and television have now become part of the very mental air we breathe; these fundamental information and entertainment services have become a stable element in the normal life of people both highly civilised and less mature. By them the majority of the population have undoubtedly become better informed about national and world affairs. Audience research has shown the intense interest taken in medical and scientific studies and in problems of the social sciences.

Is not “Emergency Ward 10” one of the most popular current features? How many people have been thrilled by “The Flying Doctor”? Would sound broadcasting and television be of value in recruiting for the Army Medical Services?

Whilst advertising is confined to commercial television and is prohibitively expensive, is there any reason why planned documentary television surveys of the Army Medical Services at work, in peace and war, should not be arranged?

Thousands of schools in this country are now using both sound broadcasting and television as ancillary aids to the curriculum. Would not a televised commentary on the daily work and life of the R.A.M.C. Apprentices School be a revelation and a stimulus to boys of school-leaving age?

Summary

It is submitted that adequate potential recruits for future Army Medical Services are available, but at the present time, parents, schools careers masters and youth employment authorities are not fully aware of the superb careers facilities they afford. The problem is essentially one of communicating this information to them. Whilst the most potent recruiting agent is the contented officer and soldier, the other means of communicating information must all be vigorously explored.