LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PSYCHOSOCIAL ASPECTS OF MILITARY COMMUNITIES

SIR—Your timely Editorial in this Journal (1970), on community health in the Services, highlights the problems which have exercised Army Health Specialists, Families, Medical Officers and others for some considerable time. The social survey carried out by Densham-Booth (1969) is avidly awaited by those of us who have carried out morbidity surveys on servicemen's families. An excellent sickness survey carried out by Fanning (1967) on families in B.A.O.R. revealed the adverse effects on physical and mental health of life in multi-storey flats. Power (1970) in a similar morbidity study on flat dwellers draws attention to flat life plus other environmental factors which may adversely affect health.

Social workers are indeed needed in the field of community health in the Services, but first things should come first. It is considered necessary, by further, long term, longitudinal studies, to try to delineate more clearly those specific factors in the general and immediate environment which may be affecting health. Secondly, in the light of available evidence, improved living accommodation, especially multi-storey flats, should be provided in terms of "function" as well as "shelter". The importance of group medical, welfare and social amenities has already been noted by field workers. The prevention of isolation and boredom for instance and the encouragement of group social activities aimed at improving the quality of community life may depend on the provision of good living accommodation, in a good social milieu. Until these conditions are fulfilled medical officers and social workers will inevitably be more concerned with treatment of ill health, than its prevention.

REFERENCES


I am, etc.,

J. G. P. POWER

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February 1970.

GEOGRAPHICAL HISTORY

SIR—Geographical history (or as we used to call it 'Territorial' or 'Residential' history) was firmly impressed on my mind, as a recently classified graded physician, in The Citadel Military Hospital, in Cairo 1939 by the then officer-in-charge, medical division Lieutenant-Colonel (now Major-General) E. B. Marsh. He stressed that in febrile illnesses in the Tropics, or in those who have served in the Tropics, which do not run true to form, two diseases in particular should never be forgotten as complicating factors, namely malaria and amoebiasis. Also, that many cases of hepatic amoebiasis had never had amoebic dysentery although they must have had intestinal amoebiasis. This excellent grounding in the diagnosis of tropical diseases stood me in good stead in many countries (Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Syria, Palestine, Belgium, Germany, Japan, Malaya, Borneo
and England and Scotland) and resulted in the first cases of kala azar in British soldiers, reported in the Middle East Force in World War II, being diagnosed in 53 General Hospital in Eritrea; the disease having been acquired in the Gederef–Gallabat area of the Sudan (Mackay-Dick 1945). Connolly and Thomas (1970) do well to re-emphasise the importance of an accurate geographical history.

REFERENCES


I am, etc.,

John MACKAY-DICK

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12 February 1970.

BOOK REVIEWS

This work by a recognised authority on the shoulder region can only be classified as admirable. Using anatomical bases initially, it gives clear expositions of the varying lesions together with their treatments, both conservative and operative.
Chapters on radiology and rehabilitation are included and a further one on the neurological aspects of shoulder lesions.
The excellent contents deserve and receive an equally good presentation. The print is clear and the quality of the illustrations good.
The book must be recommended to all who deal with shoulder lesions and, it should be in every hospital library.

G. I. SMALL

This book deals with the campaign in N.W. Europe 1944-5 and in particular with the Generalship of Montgomery. The author writes with authority, clarity, understanding and objectivity and has produced the best account of this campaign which I have read.
Mr. Thompson is eminently fair and writes with sympathy and understanding of the forces and stresses which arose and which made Eisenhower's team such a difficult one to control. Unlike some writers he does recognise that the Americans had very good reasons (from their point of view) for their actions and opinions and he sets these out clearly and fairly. The result of this admirable objectivity is that the author captures the reader's confidence and respect, and this gives his study its authority.
I have no intention of spoiling this book for the reader by summarising it—all I need say is that Montgomery's Generalship is carefully analysed and his failures as well as his successes noted.
It was pleasant to read the author's tribute to General Dempsey who has not received the recognition which he so well earned in N.W. Europe.
My only criticism is that the maps and the production of the book are poor and unworthy of Mr. Thompson's text and the relatively high price asked.
In short I find it hard to over-praise this book which is in a class by itself. It can be most strongly recommended to any reader who wishes for a clear, objective and impartial account of the Campaign in N.W. Europe 1944-5.

A. MacLENNAN

Mr. Sarma has written an encyclopedic account of bladder tumours. He starts with a basic study of the bladder and proceeds to consider every aspect of its tumours in detail. Operative procedures are described in detail.
This is an excellent reference book and has a very full bibliography.

I. M. CRAN

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