REPORT OF THE EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF MILITARY MEDICINE AND PHARMACY.
TRANSLATED BY WING-COMMANDER G. STRUAN MARSHALL, Royal Air Force.

The Eighth International Congress of Military Medicine and Pharmacy has just completed its work. Delegates were sent by the Governments of the following countries to take part in its deliberations:

Germany, Argentina, Belgium, Bulgaria, Chili, China, Colombia, Denmark, Spain, United States of America, France, Great Britain, Hungary, Dutch East Indies, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, Nicaragua, Norway, Paraguay, Holland, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, Sweden, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, Turkey, U.S.S.R., Venezuela, Jugoslavia, and also by the International Red Cross Committee, the League of Red Cross Societies and the Belgian Red Cross.

The inaugural session was held in the Great Hall of the Palais des Académies under the presidency of M. Devéze, Minister of National Defence. M. Devéze recalled the history of the International Congress of Military Medicine and Pharmacy, and the creation and development of the International Military Medical Record Office to which we owe the fact, the ultimate effect of which is incalculable, of the creation of bonds of friendship, esteem and union between military doctors regardless of national boundaries or possible future antagonism. They serve a common ideal of kindness, of aid to the suffering, of conscious hatred for warfare abhorred by motherhood with its parade of human sacrifice and moral ruin. In their eyes military medicine is a high calling which demands complete self-abnegation, scorn of danger, self-sacrifice, brotherly pity for all victims alike, confident knowledge and a sure hand. Thus are they united in the one great mystery, beyond the passions that tear the nations asunder, for the service of humanity.

He went on to refer to the work undertaken in Madrid and Monaco, and added: "I know that H.R.H. the Prince of Monaco has taken the lead in forming a Commission of Jurists and Physicians to study and pave the way for your work. I know that you are to deliberate on the drafts which have been prepared for you and I sincerely trust that I shall soon be able to greet your achievements."

The work-sessions of the Eighth Congress were held within the Exhibition at Brussels.

The first question concerned the principles of organization and operation of medical services in mountain warfare.

The rapporteurs were Colonel Bassi, Italy, and Colonel Marinesco, Rumania.

After discussion, the following conclusions were adopted:

I. That medical services with mountain troops should be provided with an elastic, light and mobile organization capable of following all evolutions, and of adapting itself to all military situations.
II. That the important problem of mountain transport should continue to be attentively studied by all military medical services concerned, with the object of discovering the most rapid, comfortable and effective procedure.

III. That the question of treatment and hospitalization in mountainous country should be similarly studied.

The second question concerned vocational selection in sea, land and air forces.

The rapporteurs were Colonels Schickelé, Candiotti and Goett, France, General Iliesco and Major Stefanescu, Rumania, and Major Sillevaerts, Belgium.

The conclusions adopted were as follows:

The Congress regarded as indispensable a special examination of candidates for the various special military branches which tend to become more and more numerous and varied.

This examination should have regard to physical, physiological, biological and psychological conditions, in which connexion recourse may be had to special tests which must be chosen and interpreted with discernment.

With regard to this the modern methods of investigating the constitution of the healthy man, for which biotypology is at present the best term, are of military interest. While these methods may be accorded their full value, their results should still be regarded as only informative and decisions should only be taken on a basis of clinical experience especially in litigious and difficult cases.

The third question concerned the sequelae of abdominal injuries.

The rapporteurs were Captain Bainbridge, Captain Johnson, Commander Hook, United States of America, Majors Gilorteanu and Costescu, Rumania, Captain Pireaux, and S/Lt. Beine, Belgium.

The following conclusions were adopted:

I. An abdominal injury should always be regarded as liable to immediate or delayed complication, whatever the condition of the patient on examination.

II. The most frequent complications are adhesions with all their sequelae.

III. The treatment of the sequelae of abdominal injuries should be, above all, preventive. The surgeon should guard against infection and be prepared to operate at short notice. These conditions imply perfect organization which must be systematically followed whenever the military situation permits.

IV. Post-operative hospitalization is a sine qua non because of its decisive influence on the final result.

The fourth question concerned investigation into the standardization of methods of analysis of foodstuffs for military use.
Rapporteurs were Major (Pharm.) Sucharda, Czechoslovakia, Colonels Jonescu Cerbulesco and Bibesco, Rumania, Captain (Pharm.) Nicaise, Belgium.

The conclusions reached were:

The methods of analysis of foodstuffs should be the subject of intensive study with a view to their ultimate standardization, and that of laboratory equipment, in order to place beyond argument a comparison of different analyses.

The fifth question concerned bucco-dental practice at the front.
The rapporteurs were Colonel Stancius, Lithuania, Colonel Dimitriesco, Rumania.

The conclusions adopted were:

I. Granted the increasing and recognized importance of odontostomatology, it is desirable that odontostomatological services should be entrusted to qualified specialists personally engaged in the bucco-dental examination of soldiers on recruitment and during service, and should be established in all armies.

II. That these specialists should undergo a course of instruction to fit them for the treatment of maxillo-facial injuries.

III. That in field armies bucco-dental treatment in forward areas should be carried out by qualified specialists.

IV. That the provision of dentures should be carried out within the military zone.

V. That maxillo-facial injuries should be entrusted to qualified specialists in all military medical detachments and under the same conditions as other injuries.

The sixth question concerned the comparative study of the jurisdiction of the administrative medical services in the various land, sea and air forces.

Rapporteurs were General Negoesco and Colonel Balanesco, Rumania, Captain (Admin.) Morel, Belgium.

The conclusions were as follows:

From a comparative study of the medical services of different countries there emerges a tendency to technical and administrative autonomy becoming more and more accentuated with its own personnel.

In time of peace as of war, the proper function of the medical service requires a single control in administrative as in technical matters, and this can only be a medical control. Good administrative work can only be assured by qualified specialists belonging to and appointed by the medical service.

The selection of administrative medical officers should be made on precisely the same basis as in other branches.
According to its statutes, the International Military Medical Record Office held its sittings in connexion with the Congress.

The following very interesting papers were read by:—

Major Arborelius, Sweden, on "Primary Tuberculosis in the Army."

Major Sieur, France, on "The Results of Systematically Repeated Radioscopy."

Colonel Schickelé, France, on "The General Principles of Organization of Medical Services in the Field."

Major (Pharm.) Maldonado, Peru, on "Verruca Peruviana."

Captain Bainbridge, United States of America, on "The Diagnosis of Unrecognized Syphilis."

Major Sillevaerts, Belgium, on "The Lessons of the Recent Air Ambulance Congress."

Dr. Winters, Holland, exhibited an ingenious haemostatic bandage of his own invention.

The closing session of the Eighth Congress was honoured by the presence of Prince Ghika, Rumanian Minister in Belgium, who announced that the Ninth International Congress of Military Medicine and Pharmacy would be held at Bucharest in May, 1937, by invitation of the Rumanian Government.

The agenda was agreed as follows:—

First question: Organization and work of the medical service in combined military and naval operations. (Rapporteurs: Great Britain, Germany.)


Third question: Organization and work of the surgical service with mechanized troops. (Rapporteurs: Rumania, Spain.)

Fourth question: The use of colorimetric analytical methods in military medical laboratories. (Rapporteurs: Japan, Switzerland.)

Fifth question: The edentulous soldier—definition—treatment—prosthesis—military employment in peace and in war. (Rapporteurs: Greece, Holland.)

Sixth question: Comparative study of the commissariat and feeding of sick and wounded in peace and in war. (Rapporteurs: Turkey, France.)

The Permanent Committee of the International Congress of Military Medicine and Pharmacy met during the Eighth Congress.

It approved the report made by Dr. Louet on behalf of the Medico-Legal Commission, and decided:—

I. To refer to the International Red Cross Committee certain features of the Monaco draft which it hoped to see inserted in the Geneva Convention.

II. To encourage the formation of a private international association for the study of the medico-legal problems of the Monaco Commission.