coated capsule. This great advance in the treatment of resistant cases of amöbic dysentery has changed the whole outlook for patients whose infection had previously resisted all attempts at cure.

TREATMENT OF INTRACTABLE CASES OF AMÖBIC DYSENTERY THAT RESIST ORDINARY TREATMENT.

Day 1-8. Penicillin 30,000 units intramuscularly every three hours for eight days combined with sulphasuxidine 20 gm. daily for the same period; or phthalyl sulphathiazole 10 gm. instead of sulphasuxidine.

Day 9-21. Emetine bismuth iodide grains 3 given in a readily absorbable form by mouth on an empty stomach each night, together with chiniofonum (yatren) retention enema 24 per cent or 4 per cent each morning, 250 c.c. to be retained for eight hours.

Day 9-29. In lieu of chiniofonum retention enema a twenty days’ course of diodoquin may be given by mouth consisting of 3 pills (each contain 0·2 gm.) three times a day for a total of twenty days, this ending on the twenty-ninth day of treatment.

Day 21-33. Stovarsol or carbarsone tablets (0·25 gm.) one twice a day for twelve days.

The patient may be allowed out of bed after the twenty-first day of treatment and can complete his course at a convalescent home or depot.

Tests of cure are not commenced until one month after completing the treatment when specimens should be examined daily for six consecutive days; three months later a similar clearance test should be performed.

TRIAL DEMAND “X.”

BY

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For my own part, I don’t want this story to die. Mainly because it reminds me of those fantastic days when I was associated, even if remotely, with the hindmost of the back-room boys and because it keeps green the memory of a good soldier, Pete the Paramule.

Pete’s story lives in dry and stilted phraseology in official reports, and his photograph hangs in a certain little-known Officers’ Mess in Northern India. Yet his saga is bound up with those early stirring days of Wingate’s Raiders when the Chindits, taking the long-awaited offensive in Burma, savagely bit huge chunks out of the Japanese lines of communication. What he did left little mark on the actual outcome of events but, as he browses contentedly in some sun-washed compound on the Plains, he can remember with pride that he was the pioneer of what may well have been a few and decisive departure in jungle warfare.

In the thick dah- and kukri-resistant tropical undergrowth which was the guerilla’s playground even the ubiquitous Jeep had to give precedence to the mule as the only reliable means of transport, and often on the surefootedness and stamina of these pack animals the survival of the jungle-penetration groups depended. But the mules were equally as vulnerable as humans to bullets and
disease, and as their numbers diminished so the task forces in which they were incorporated became less mobile until finally the problem of animal replacement became one of pressing necessity.

The Air Despatch companies operating from airfields on the Assam-Burma frontier had supplied by parachute everything from monocles to "Men Only," and from chewing gum to chillis, to the columns which had crossed over the Chindwin, and it was only a logical if perhaps longer step in reasoning to suppose that mule reinforcements could be dropped in the same way. The original idea germinated in the bizarre Arabian Nights atmosphere of New Delhi where anything could, and did, happen—on paper. It captured the whimsical bureaucratic imagination and, gathering impetus as it drifted from Directorate to Directorate, eventually emerged as a highly confidential and much be-taped directif in the form of Trial Demand "X." From then on the whole project was in the hands of that mysterious organization known to the initiates of South East Asia Command as "The Fortress of Science," "The Royal Corps of Majors," the "Heath Robinson Home," or just simply as "The Bughouse." It would take, and has taken, many volumes to describe the multiple activities of this inter-Service institution, but it is sufficient to say that the suggestion of a parachuting mule was novel enough to be seized upon with acracy and enthusiasm by the geniuses of the Forgotten Army.

At first the technical difficulties appeared to be overwhelming but, fortunately, the S.T.O. of the R.A.F. Element, who was never happier than when faced with an apparently insoluble problem immersed himself in the deep contemplation of a slide rule, statistics and a model fuselage to the exclusion of all the considerable temptations of the Mess Bar and the Club hours. All the Services were co-opted. The R.I.A.S.C. supplied the mules who were looked after by the vets., who, in turn, as they became the victims of nervous prostration, were looked after by the doctors. Sappers and R.A.F. technicians considered the matters of stress and strain, parachute fabrics, landing pontoons and fuselage modifications.

After many designs for a mule parachute platform had been submitted, considered and rejected, a prototype was finally approved.

This was a small, well-constructed wooden platform on to which the mule was to be strapped lying on its side on a mattress of shock-absorbing air cushions. The platform and its load were to be ejected from the aircraft through a specially enlarged aperture in the fuselage by a device which had already proved itself invaluable in large-scale supply-dropping operations. Two clusters of large gaily coloured statichutes were attached to the pontoon in such a way that it would drift gently and horizontally to the ground.

At last came the first dropping test using a dummy mule of standard weight. The dropping zone itself was a carefully selected site in the arid Northern plains, far from any village, remote from observation except that of an occasional cow-herd who would have been surprised had he known the excitement that filled the four occupants of a Jeep parked by the side of a mound of stones. The 'plane from the Experimental Flight banked in the shadow of the snow-capped mountains and glided down gracefully on to its
dropping run, disgorging as it approached the T cloth a large cylindrical bundle which tumbled slowly over and over in the clear air.

The parachutes had fluttered out in long cigarette-shaped streamers, all failing to open except one, which, tattered and ripped, plommeied despondently down above the dummy mule, a loud crash, the sharp crack of bursting airbags, and a rain of wooden splinters marked the end of the first trial. The die-hards of the Veterinary Corps sympathized with smug virtue and a "I told you so" look in their eyes, but the research team was not to be deterred so easily. A few parachute adjustments and modifications were made, and since time was becoming short it was decided to proceed with the first pukka trial as soon as there was a reasonable chance of success. The paramount problem was to find a suitable mule. The vets. were extremely loath to provide any sort of young and healthy animal for an experiment which they regarded as nothing but a summary execution. The second trial with a dummy mule went off without a hitch, and at last the local Veterinary Hospital was persuaded to send Methusaleh, who had grown old in service on the Frontier and was now awaiting calmly and dispassionately a swift and humane death.

It is quite sure that Methusaleh had no real conception of the role he was about to play when he saw the unusual bustle on the runway, but some suspicion that his world was changing too rapidly and that perhaps he had lived too long must have percolated through his random musings, for, during the night, he lay down close by the thatched wall of the compound and quietly died.

Mule being released from pontoon after first 100% parachute drop, February, 1945 (Author in beret and paratroop jacket).
Pete, the second "volunteer," came from sterner pioneering stock. Younger than his predecessor, he was inclined to be aggressively inquisitive and certainly more restive. Because of this he was given a large dose of a sedative known to the layman as "Mother's Mixture," prior to being strapped down expertly on his airborne mattress. That morning there was a large crowd, composed mostly of sceptics, at the dropping zone. At the exact moment Pete, secure on his platform, was ejected from the 'plane. There was a moment of breathless suspense, and then a concerted sigh of relief as all the parachutes breathed and flowered in the sky and the pontoon sailed levelly and evenly down. A gust of wind caught the pontoon as it bumped the ground and the parachutes bellying dragged it over on its edge until it tottered and fell slowly over pinning Pete beneath.

But already knives were slashing at the webbing straps, and the vets. were inspecting their emergency kit. Freed from his complicated harness, Pete did not appear to be ruffled. He gave us all a very dirty look out of the corner of one bloodshot eye and left the rest to the imagination, as the muleteers stood warily by. Time passed, but the hero of the moment had lost all interest in the proceedings, occasionally turning his head to crop casually at the sparse grass. After twenty minutes, the photographers began to get impatient at this hiatus, and Pete was rolled over and his tail twisted. Cajoled and threatened, he refused to satisfy the despondent observers and in view of the vets. assurances that nothing had been broken it was assumed that he was only being mulishly stubborn. At the height of a heated discussion as to how to give him a rise in the world, he suddenly jerked himself to his feet and ambled unconcernedly off. The trial had been a success, and in an ensuing small ceremony the first Paramule was presented with an outsize pair of parachute wings worn proudly round the neck and a maroon beret which was perched jauntily between his ears.

For the benefit of representatives from the Special Forces and numerous V.I.P.'s Pete gave five more demonstrations without mishap, although the failure of one or more of the parachutes to open completely on occasion gave his sponsors some anxious split seconds. As a result of these trials, this method of mule reinforcement was considered practicable in certain circumstances, and the carefully edited reports together with photographs and detailed blue-prints were jubilantly despatched to higher authority. Back came the immediate reply, "Trial Demand 'X' is now considered obsolete."

This was accepted with all the stoic resignation of pioneer workers, but there was some compensation in the fact that the object of the experiment had been completely achieved, and that Pete, permanently reprieved from the oblivion of the humane killer, was pensioned off and allowed to enjoy his tranquil and comfortable old age.