

Clinical and Other Notes.

THE LLOYD ROBERTS LECTURE, 1946

(A Digest)

THIS Lecture was delivered by Field Marshal The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, G.C.B., D.S.O., to a large and distinguished gathering of the medical profession at the Royal Society of Medicine on October 28, 1946. It was entitled "Morale, with Particular Reference to the British Soldier."

The Field Marshal dealt with morale in the particular aspect of "Morale in Battle."

Morale is necessary for success in battle. It is a mental quality conditioned by the interplay of two factors, mind and conscience.

The strength of a nation lies in its people—their virility and their capacity to work. These develop the national character which produces the fighting man. The aspects of the individual social figure are influenced by Home conditions including upbringing and environment. The soldier remains a citizen with his individuality reflecting national character.

The Army is a fighting weapon moulded by discipline and controlled by leaders. The selection of leaders and the infusion of discipline are the basic fundamentals for success.

Men's characters may be refined by war. There are others who, under stress, surrender to fear and fatigue and allow their characters to be disintegrated with a loosening of moral fibre shown by timidity and slackness. A good soldier does not surrender to fear; he maintains his standards.

Morale is a mental quality and is that which keeps men up to humanity's level and develops a man's latent heroism. High morale maintains man's dignity at all times.

High morale is not the contentment or satisfaction derived from easy living. This is merely complacency and the acceptance of luxury.

It is not merely fitness nor healthiness. We must not confuse physical happiness with morale. Happiness may be a contributory factor to the maintenance of morale over a long period.

Many tough men are often disappointing in action although they may produce isolated acts of bravery.

The essential, basic and fundamental factors in the production of high morale are: (1) Leadership; (2) Discipline; (3) Comradeship; (4) Self-respect.

Some would include a fifth—devotion to a cause—but in the lecturer's opinion this is not basic and fundamental.

Leadership.—High morale is not possible without good leaders. All men are afraid at one time or another in a greater or lesser degree. They band together and look for guidance. The leader accepts the burden of others and

thereby acquires the right of leadership. The leader has the power of decision. Fight, and survive—fear, and be slain. The leader decides. He remains imperturbable. The leader's character develops in proportion to the responsibility with which he is entrusted. His essential qualities are decision in action and calmness in a crisis.

Discipline.—The object of discipline is the conquest of fear. The mind is so fortified that it accepts abnormal sights as the normal. There are two types of fear—sudden and gradual. Discipline strengthens the mind and instils the habit of self-control. The individual loses his identity and becomes part of a larger and stronger unit; this helps him to face the unknown.

Discipline produces the unification of men into groups who obey orders as one man. Obedience of orders is essential to good discipline.

A sense of duty is also an essential—this does not extend to abstractions but extends to the friends who are around the individual.

Comradeship.—Men must come to have an affection for each other. War is a "rough and very dirty game" but is not necessarily very grim. Men must be able to get some fun out of life, even in danger. Mutual goodwill and interdependence are a great antidote to fear. All men have within them a touch of nobility. "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend." Vital to high morale is an atmosphere of warmth and strength when a man is feeling cold and weak.

Self-respect.—There must be a determination to maintain personal standards of behaviour. Efficiency is inseparable from self-respect. If a man feels he is trusted he will feel efficient and gain self-confidence. Self-respect develops inevitably if Leadership, Discipline and Comradeship are present.

Devotion to a cause cannot be considered a fundamental factor—nor is it entirely contributory. Most soldiers are not greatly moved by "Cause." Statements such as Cromwell's are dangerous ("When a man knows . . .").

No nation can fight an unpopular war. The soldier must acquiesce in the declaration of war and his passive acceptance must be converted into enthusiasm by the four basic factors given above.

Some few are deeply moved by "a cause" which is in many a sustaining factor and *may* be a most important factor.

The lecturer then dealt with contributory factors amongst which he gave:—

Success.—High morale is possible in defeat but not during a long period of defeat when confidence in leaders will wane.

Regimental Tradition.—*This can be* a powerful factor, it differs slightly from comradeship which is effective in a small group. Regimental tradition is a soldier's pride in the traditions of his Regiment. In a battle soldiers do not derive comfort from the traditions of the past.

Personal Habits.—Personal life, including home life, should be in order. Trouble at home can be very weakening. A soldier's job is to fight—to kill the enemy—in so doing he has to expose himself to danger.

Administration.—The daily life of the soldier must be cared for; there must be good living conditions and good food. Remember that welfare must not be an end to itself but must be an aid to morale. Welfare is essentially soft and

morale must contain an element of hardness. If there be a choice between "guns and butter" many may well choose butter and there will be no true butter in the end.

Propaganda.—It is a good thing at times to extol the fighting soldier.

We live in a scientific age and our soldiers have to remember that our raw material is *men*. Man is still the first weapon of war and the training of men is the first consideration in the training of a fighting army. Science can be directed towards making things easier for the man.

Morale of Higher Command.—Soldiers may be worked up to a state of terrific morale. They may begin to think that they can do nothing wrong and that the Higher Command can do nothing wrong. This is a real danger.

The lecturer closed with a quotation from Henry the Vth "Oh, God of Battles—steel my soldiers' Hearts."