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MILITARY NEURO PSYCHIATRY, DISCIPLINE AND MORALE¹

P. S. Madigan²

Before discussing the effect of military discipline upon the individual who has definite evidences of emotional instability, let us first briefly consider what military discipline is. This subject is one but little understood outside of the Army, and it must be confessed, is not always seen in its proper light even within the Army. It has been said that the trouble seems to be that most people either do not, or will not, grasp the proper meaning of what is called military discipline, its nature, its purpose, its necessity, and finally and most important of all, its spirit.

Our Concept of Military Discipline

Living within an atmosphere of strict discipline from the cradle to the grave, most people fail to grasp its primary principles. As a matter of fact, the idea of rigid discipline surrounds us every moment of our lives. We can never escape it for an instant. Practically every experience through which we acquire knowledge is in the nature of a disciplinary correction inflicted upon us by some agency of nature or of civilization.

Outside of military circles the average man recognizes fully the necessity of discipline in his family, his business, his relations with his fellowmen, because he is familiar with the conditions which surround the rearing of a family or

which must govern the relations of men in civilized intercourse.

On the other hand he is not familiar with conditions in the military service; hence, he does not understand the reasons for the rules and regulations, and in consequence is more than likely to view them with intolerance. Even within military circles, among men who should be familiar with the reason and spirit of military regulations and military procedure, many make the serious mistake of confusing the exercise of authority with the maintenance of discipline. In brief, they appear to think that discipline must be maintained solely for the purpose of upholding their authority, and again, both outside and inside of military circles, many fail to understand the spirit upon which true military discipline is based and must be based. Failing in this, they fail altogether, for the simple reason that men can understand the principle of military discipline only when they appreciate its underlying spirit.

Without the proper spirit there can be no such thing as discipline in any army. Proper discipline should in no sense be based upon the fear of disciplinary correction, since in this instance we merely have schoolroom discipline. The discipline upon which a successful army must

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be built is a different kind—a kind that endures when every semblance of authority has vanished, when the leader has fallen, when members of the team are dropping out one by one and when the only driving power that remains is a strong and unconquerable spirit of attainment. This concept gives us at once a working definition of military discipline; the spirit of the team.

Strange as it may seem, an element of good discipline is the fear of losing the respect of one's fellow soldiers or officers, and this desire for esteem is one of the essentials of military discipline. It is to be seen in all trained and disciplined units the members of which feel for each other a natural respect and admiration. The knowledge that he enjoys the respect and admiration of his fellow soldiers is a source of the greatest pride to each member of the unit. The desire to retain this respect, to be looked upon as a worthy member of the unit, is greater than a man's fear of injury.

Oftentimes the question may be asked: "Of what necessity is military discipline?" I can only refer to the necessity of team work in any undertaking, irrespective of whether it be team work of a football squad or the training of an army of a million and a half soldiers.

In our present emergency we are attempting to inculcate in the minds of our soldiers the necessity of properly protecting our country in the event of attack. As Pew states in his manual, *Making a Soldier*, the kind of soldier who interests us is the one who finds satisfaction in serving a cause and who has learned to expend his energy for that cause. He must be physically de-

veloped, trained to conserve health, and he must perform with technical skill his part in every incident.

Besides these qualifications he must have the mental attitude of a soldier. To attain this proper attitude is an important step; there is an ideal which is characterized by the tendency to correct action and supreme satisfaction in such action.

Under this grouping the author classifies military bearing, courtesy, putting forth physical and mental efforts (that is, high level of effort), self control (physical and mental), neatness and order, smartness, exactness, and promptness; sub-conscious obedience, mental alertness, and confidence; and last, but not least, team work in all military efforts.

Weaklings Beware

We must forever keep before our minds that the Army is one of the elements of national defense, and its present mission is one of preparation for offensive and defensive warfare. It is, in no sense, a social service or a curative agency. It is to be considered neither a haven of rest for the wanderer or shiftless, nor a corrective school for the misfits, the ne'er-do-wells, the feeble-minded, or the chronic offender. Furthermore, it is neither a gymnasium for the training and development of the undernourished or underdeveloped, nor is it a psychiatric clinic for the proper adjustment of adults who need emotional development. Therefore, there is no place within the Army for the physical or mental weakling, the potential or present behavior problem. If an in-

dividual is a behavior problem in the civilian community, he will certainly become a more intensified problem in the Service.

*Gap between Home and Camp
Conditions*

In the present emergency, it must be forever kept before our minds that our soldiers are coming from all walks of life, from distant points of the country, from farm and factory, from ranch and bench—the rich and the poor, the illiterate and the educated—and all are thrown together into a heterogeneous mixture and subjected to the same discipline, the same regulations, the same dull routine.

The selectee coming from the average American home has received the fond care and protection of indulgent parents. He has been protected from all disturbing and disrupting influences that might interfere with his normal development. His parents have been interested to see that he had the proper clothing for all types of weather, that he did not leave the house without his overcoat, overshoes, muffler, or what not in inclement weather. New problems that confronted this individual were promptly taken over by his protectors and solved by them.

In other words, his entire life has been guarded and protected, and his course of action steered by over-seeing parents. His personal responsibilities have been at a minimum, and he has not been trained to accept life as it really is.

Upon this boy's induction into the Army, you will readily see that a tremendous amount of psychological read-

justment must be made. Here he must train himself to stand upon his own feet. to make decisions, learn to live with other men, adapt his own personal wishes to the wishes of others about him. He must live in close contact with his fellow soldiers and adjust himself to their method of living.

It will be necessary for him to accustom himself to the deprivation of various luxuries and pleasures to which he formerly has been accustomed. There will be a complete change in his habit routines. He will become conscious of a certain amount of loss of individuality to which he was accustomed in civilian life and be considered as a "cog in a wheel." He will be living under conditions entirely new and different from those to which he has been accustomed. It will be necessary for him to overcome a certain amount of lonesomeness from separation from his family, companions, and friends. In addition to the acquisition of these new and different routines, he perhaps may still be carrying responsibilities from his former civilian capacity, home, etc. As he continues throughout his first year of military life, increased responsibility will be placed upon him as he becomes more proficient in carrying on as a soldier, comes up for promotion, or is given an important part to play in his squad. It is needless to say that he will be confronted with quite a few disappointments and feelings of frustration in his various efforts to make the necessary grade. Quite frequently disturbing influences reach him from his family and home situations, financial difficulties and numerous other conditions. It will be necessary for him

to adjust to various rumors that may spread throughout his company as to why they should be in the Army and why it should be necessary for them to take this sacrifice for no apparent rhyme nor reason. His reaction while on pass will be of importance in the formulation of his behavior pattern while under military control.

These boys quite naturally will be exposed to new experiences along social lines when they are taken away from their homes and transferred to distant cities and towns.

In other words, he is passing from a set of circumstances where the stage was set about him and his wishes, to one where he must recognize, appreciate, and conform to the personal desires and wishes of his fellow soldiers.

This readjustment will have a wonderful effect upon the boy's future. During the recruit's first year of service, he will experience a well-planned period of training to develop his professional abilities as a soldier, as well as to develop his character.

Discharges for Mental Defects

A study of disability discharges now under way indicates that during the period of January through May, 1941, discharges for disability existing prior to entering into the army were very high for mental defects which total about 1/5 of all cases. Among the mental defects, dementia-praecox supplies about 35%, while epilepsy furnishes 1/3 of the causes for discharge in the group of nervous conditions. Those individuals affected with personality deficiencies demonstrate their inability to cope with

the military situation shortly after their entrance into the army. They are usually resentful of discipline, and unable to conform to regulations. They become irritable, tire easily, have a tendency to remain by themselves, have very few associates among their comrades. They are not interested in the training program nor do they take an active part in any recreational features that may have been planned for them. They show rather marked indifference to the attainment of any military knowledge and have a decided influence upon instilling insubordination in their fellow soldiers. They become moody, introspective, have periods of depression, crying spells, are careless about their personal appearance, complain of psychosomatic disturbances relative to various systems of the body, cardiovascular, gastro-intestinal, endocrine, genito-urinary. As the period of training progresses, the above symptoms apparently progress also until it is apparent that the soldier must be hospitalized for observation.

For the week ending August 30, 1941, there were 2,164 neuro-psychiatric patients in our army hospitals. This total includes all types of mental, nervous, and neurological patients, and we should be careful not to conclude that this number is composed of psychotic individuals. To make myself clear along this point, and to correct an erroneous impression that our army hospitals throughout the country are overburdened with psychotic patients, I offer here a neuropsychiatric report from one of our large station hospitals. The mean strength of this command during the period of these admissions was 18,509 and the follow-

ing is a tabulation of admissions to this hospital.

Manic-depressive	10
Dementia- <i>praecox</i>	14
Acute Mania	1
Psychoneurosis	16
Constitutional Psychopath	10
Mental Deficients	6
Posttraumatic	3
Hysteria	2
Epilepsy	7
Neurological	6
Alcoholism acute	2
Syncope	3
No disease found.....	4
—	—
Total	84

Transferred to General Hospital..	5
Returned to Duty.....	34
Remaining	12
Section VIII, AR-615-360.....	8
Certificate of Disability for Dis- charge	25
—	—
Total	84

In studying the above report we see that there are only 25 psychotic cases present and of the remaining, 16 were psychopathic personalities and mental defectives; seven cases of epilepsy are included, and six were entirely neurological. Four cases in the above were found to have no disease, 34 cases were returned to duty as not having sufficient disabilities to warrant separation from the service. Of the 25 cases discharged on certificate of disability, it was found that in all of these cases the condition existed prior to the enlistment, had no connection with military service and were not aggravated by it.

Another compilation of statistics covering a seven week period ending August 16, 1941, shows the mean strength, the number of patients admitted to the hospital with tentative diagnoses of

nervous and mental conditions and this number expressed as the per cent of the mean strength of the period.

Camp "A"...	24,816	16	0.064
Camp "B"...	46,935	75	0.160
Camp "C"...	25,879	42	0.162
Fort "A"....	21,770	7	0.032
Fort "B"....	42,446	59	0.139

It is apparent from the above figures that the incidence of mental and nervous conditions is by no means alarming at the present time and compares favorably with civilian statistics. When comparing statistics of this nature, we must remember that a goodly number of these patients would not be hospitalized in civilian life, but due to our close contact with them in the Army these personality deficiencies become noticeable at once and the individual is hospitalized for disposition.

Army Morale

A determined effort has been made by the War Department to improve, as far as possible the living conditions and increase morale among the troops. Zeal, spirit, hope and confidence are pillars of morale. When united with pride in endeavor and desire of approbation they bind together the manpower of a modern army.

The Chief of Staff, in his biennial report to the Secretary of War, stresses the importance of morale among the soldiers, and states that the problems incident to the maintenance of a high state of morale have been of primary importance in our rapidly expanding army.

The introduction of selective service, the induction of the National Guard, and

the calling to active duty of a large number of Reserve officers have brought many diverse elements into the Army. This rapid expansion, coupled with the difficulties encountered in housing, clothing, feeding, and training the new Army produced many new problems in the field of morale. These special problems were recognized early in the expansion, and steps were taken immediately to solve them. As a result of these timely measures, it can be reported that a high state of morale is now clearly evident throughout our Army.

One of the outstanding indications of improvement has been the continuous diminution of court-martial rates. During the fiscal year 1940, the general court-martial rate per thousand enlisted men fell from 11 to 9; the special court-martial rate, from 23 to 21; and the summary court-martial rate, from 56 to 48.

A growing consciousness of the importance of these activities led to the creation, on March 14, 1941, of a separate branch for military morale with a general officer as chief. The functions previously exercised by the Morale Division of the A. G. O. were transferred to this Branch, which thereafter functioned under the supervision and control of the Chief of Staff.

A new impetus was imparted to this activity both on the part of the War Department and of commanders in the field. The Chief of the Morale Branch was charged with the development of methods and procedures to enable him at all times to know the state of morale of the Army. There was no disturbance of the conception that morale and leadership

are inseparable. That conception was strengthened by increased latitude permitted to regional and tactical commanders by the grant of authority to conduct conferences of such officers and the authorization of a special staff officer, without additional duty, for morale purposes.

The appointment by the President of the Federal Security Administrator as Coordinator of Health, Welfare, Recreation, Education, Nutrition and all other activities related to the defense program permitted a normal division of responsibility for morale activities. Under this arrangement, the War Department assumes full responsibility for this activity within the borders of military reservations, and other Federal agencies assume the responsibility outside military boundaries.

Within the borders of a military reservation, the commander is held accountable for the state of morale. The Morale Branch exists to coordinate, stimulate, and influence these activities and to act as consultants and advisers. Athletic equipment has been made available by reasonable allotments of funds for that purpose, and inclement weather problems are being solved by the erection of field houses which permit continuity of athletic programs in winter months. The primary source of entertainment has been motion-picture programs and will continue to be so. To date 185 posts and camps have been provided with facilities for showing pictures to approximately 214,000 men at a single showing. Amateur theatricals have been encouraged and have proved highly successful. A system of mobile units has been in-

augurated to provide entertainment with volunteer professional talent. The social life within military camps has been the subject of extensive thought and preparation. The outstanding need of a place to gather, to read, to hold dances and entertain friends has been met by the construction of 113 service clubs. The great majority are equipped with a library and a cafeteria. Provision in the form of 97 guest houses has been made to furnish simple overnight accommodations to families and friends who may visit the soldier in camp. Due recognition has been given the need of feminine influence in the guidance of morale activities by the employment of 297 hostesses and 96 librarians.

A new problem arose with camps far removed from communities of sufficient size to meet the recreation needs of a large military population. A solution has been found by the construction of tent camps in the nearest sizable communities where recreational facilities are already in existence. Currently 26 such camps have been authorized which will accommodate 15,000 men each week-end. The basic consideration in the establishment of a recreational camp has been to provide soldiers at nominal cost with a place to spend a full week-end in enjoying the normal pleasures available in an average American community.

Another important step in our morale program was the establishment in December, 1940, of a civilian committee which subsequently became known as the joint Army and Navy Committee on Recreation and Welfare. The function

of this committee is to coordinate welfare activities between the War Department and other Government departments and to develop closer relationship between civilian communities and military garrisons in order to provide a wholesome, leisure-time atmosphere for the enlisted men. The work of the committee has been of great value in developing public morale and in directing civilian effort into channels which will best serve to increase the morale of the Army.

While the physical comforts and recreational needs will remain in the spotlight of attention, it is recognized that everything physical and psychological affects human conduct. The Morale Branch is constantly engaged in the study of all factors which contribute to morale or adversely affect it and in advance planning for morale work in the event of a movement to theaters of operation.

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