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FROM THE SCIENCE OF SELECTION TO PSYCHOLOGISING CIVVY STREET: THE TAVISTOCK GROUP, 1939-1948

A thesis submitted to the University of Kent for the degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities

ABSTRACT

The work of psychiatrists affiliated with the Tavistock Clinic and Tavistock Institute has been credited with reshaping how workplaces were managed and with psychologising British society, providing British people with a new psychological language for thinking about problems. This thesis provides a history of the Second World War roots of this work. It examines two projects which emerged from a remarkable collaboration between the Tavistock group and the British Army: the War Office Selection Boards (WOSBs) and Civil Resettlement Units (CRUs). These projects, whose scale was vast and unprecedented in British human science, involved the creation and management of processes to choose leaders and to help communities disrupted by war to return to peace.

As well as exploring how particular psychological programmes, theories, methods and technologies were devised, this work considers the implications of this work for those who were involved in the wartime work. It provides a history of the co-constitution of psychological expertise, military management strategies, technologies of assessment, and therapeutic intervention. This is achieved by reconstructing the complex negotiations that surrounded the WOSBs and CRUs, by tracing the macro-scale social concerns and the micro-scale personal relationships of individuals that shaped the WOSBs and the CRUs. Historiographical approaches such as actor-network theory and S.L. Star's work on "boundary objects" are used to examine how psychological theories were balanced with military expectations and demands. The thesis highlights the importance of communication strategies, the negotiation of networks, and administrative structures in the production of science and expertise.

Alice Victoria White

SCHOOL OF HISTORY

2015

258 pages

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* Not in an inappropriate way...

ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

TERM	MEANING	FURTHER INFORMATION
ATS	Auxiliary Territorial Service	The women's branch of the British Army during the Second World War. ATS staff were responsible for many clerical duties and also for hospitality at the WOSBs and CRUs.
CCS	Company Commanders' School	A place where British Army officers received training.
CDC	Control and Development Centre	Established in September 1942 at Wall Hall, near Watford, to organise the work of the WOSBs. The name was very unpopular with the staff.
CLO	Civil Liaison Officer	A (woman) social worker trained in psychological methods to help POWs adjust back to civil society. The Tavistock Clinic had been involved in training psychiatric social workers before the war, so it is likely that they had existing connections with many of these women.
CRU	Civil Resettlement Unit	Officially established in summer 1945 to deal with returning prisoners of war. Ostensibly CRUs had no psychiatric influences as these were carefully disguised, but the Tavistock group and their theories were integral in the development of these units.
DAP	Directorate for Army Psychiatry	The Directorate of Army Psychiatry was part of the Adjutant General's Department. It was responsible for giving advice on morale, discipline, training and equipment; for the selection, training and allocation of Army psychiatrists; for supervising clinical psychiatry at Army psychiatric hospitals and clinics; for psychiatric aspects of rehabilitation and injury. It also liaised on psychiatric issues (such as rehabilitating POWs) with the Ministry of Labour and National Service, Ministry of Pensions and the Ministry of Health.
DSP	Directorate for Selection of Personnel	Branch of the British Army organisation established in Summer 1941 to oversee the use of manpower. The DSP conducted job analyses, governed the GSS, and was mainly staffed by NIIP psychologists.
EMS	Emergency Medical Service	The Emergency Medical Service was introduced at the outbreak of the war. It directed voluntary and municipal hospitals across Britain (including civilian psychiatric hospitals).
GSS	General Service Selection scheme	From 1942, all men entering the army went through this scheme, receiving basic training and undergoing tests of their abilities (including intelligence testing, agility and fitness tests, and medical tests) in order to place them in a role.
MTO	Military Testing Officer	A soldier with the ranking of Major or Captain who conducted tests at WOSB, particularly the Leaderless Group Test (see Chapter 3).

TERM	MEANING	FURTHER INFORMATION
NIIP	National Institute of Industrial Psychology	An organisation founded in 1921 to 'promote by systematic scientific methods a more effective application of human energy in occupational life.' (Welch & Myers, Ten years of industrial psychology: An account of the first decade of the National Institute of Industrial Psychology (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1932), p.5). During the Second World War, the NIIP psychologists conducted selection work for the rank and file of the British Army and for the Royal Navy.
OCTU	Officer Cadet Training Unit	After mobilisation in 1939, training of potential officers took place at OCTUs, where cadets were drilled in the basic principles of being an officer. After this, they would either receive their commission or be Returned to Unit (RTU'd) without a commission. High RTU rates were said to be causing low morale in the early years of the war.
OIR	Officer Intelligence Rating	The level of an officer candidate's intelligence, measured as a percentile of average soldiers' intelligence.
POW	Prisoner of War	The abbreviation POW was considered far preferable to the term "prisoner," which it was felt might cause soldiers to be confused with criminals.
PSO	Personnel Selection Officer	Officers responsible for helping to allocate others to roles in the military. PSOs underwent three weeks' training from the DSP, and were ideally (and initially) psychologists, but also drawn from teaching, social service, and industrial employment professions.
RAMC	Royal Army Medical Corps	A specialist corps of the British Army responsible for providing medical services to personnel. The Tavistock psychiatrists who conducted work for the British Army served in the RAMC.
RTC	Research and Training Centre	The revised version of the CDC developed at the end of 1942, and located in Hampstead, closer to the War Office.
TIHR	Tavistock Institute of Human Relations	Organisation founded in September 1947 to 'develop work in social and preventive psychology... its most important specific task is the observation, analysis, and diagnosis of those labour troubles which have their roots in group maladjustment.' ("Group Neurosis" in Industry: Work of the Institute of Human Relations,' The Manchester Guardian (25 June 1947), p. 4, ProQuest Historical Newspapers)
WOSB	War Office Selection Board	From 1942, the method by which officers were chosen for the British Army, based upon psychological methods developed by the Tavistock group. These methods were later developed for use by the Civil Service (Civil Service Selection Boards were known as CSSBs) and Unilever, amongst others.

INTRODUCTION

The history of Army psychiatry during the Second World War has been told as a comic battle. On one side of the caricature-battle was Colonel Blimp, a swaggering, blustering, reactionary old fellow representing the Army, and on the other the 'trick cyclists' (soldiers' nickname for psychiatrists) wove about ridiculously and unpredictably. This history of Army psychiatry during the Second World War tells a different story. Whilst it does highlight points of tension between soldiers and psychiatrists, it also does justice to the complex circumstances, hard work, and tactical manoeuvring that brought about collaboration between these two unlikely groups. It provides insight into the schemes that developed from this collaboration, in which thousands of soldiers participated. Moreover, it highlights the way that ideas about groups and leaders were transformed by this work, and that psychiatrists consequently came to occupy a new role in society.

The detailed history of Second World War Army psychiatry is even more remarkable and unlikely than simplified stories of comic battle suggest. The 'trick cyclists' that went to work for the British Army mostly came from the Tavistock Clinic, where psychoanalysts saw patients for one-to-one therapy.¹ Psychoanalysts were outsiders in wider society due to their discussion of topics that were taboo, and the Tavistock were outsiders even amongst their psychoanalyst peers, shunned by the British Psycho-Analytical Society for not adhering closely enough to the Freudian approach. The Tavistock group's collaboration with the British Army, who were notorious for being old-fashioned, is therefore remarkable.

The nature, scale and scope of the schemes that the Army psychiatrists worked on is also extraordinary, and yet some of the Tavistock's most fascinating war work has remained largely unexamined until now. This is surprising, as one branch of the Tavistock's wartime work for the British Army is very well known: the Northfield Experiments. They involved Army psychiatrists working at a military psychiatric hospital using group interactions to treat patients, a development that came to be known as 'therapeutic communities.' The Northfield experiments are considered a key moment in the history of psychiatry, group therapy, and organisational studies. Tom Harrison goes so far as to say that:

The legend of Northfield is one of those myths of creation... populated by Olympian psychiatrists and psychotherapists.²

Whilst the Northfield Experiments are now part of a 'fabled past', other war work by Tavistock psychiatrists was equally innovative. This thesis focusses on two such projects: the creation of a scheme to select officer candidates, called War Office Selec-

1 This thesis refers frequently to the Tavistock group. As well as being common usage, this helps to emphasise that a wider group of people are referred to than just the employees of the Tavistock Clinic, who were joined by many others during the course of the war. Many of these new faces became 'officially Tavistock' after the war and helped to found the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations. See H. V. Dicks, *Fifty Years of the Tavistock Clinic* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1970), p. 138.

2 Tom Harrison, *Bion, Rickman, Foulkes, and the Northfield Experiments: Advancing on a Different Front* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000), p. 7.

tion Boards (WOSBs), and a scheme to create Civil Resettlement Units (CRUs) to assist returning POWs. Like Northfield, these schemes involved the application of 'therapeutic community' principles and group psychology, but to non-pathologised groups who were not the usual subjects of the psychiatrists' gaze, and on a tremendous scale. Whereas the Tavistock staff had previously worked one-to-one for months with patients, these schemes involved tens of thousands of normal (or even elite) British soldiers, and had to be conducted at speed. This work required a transformation of the theories, methods, and institutional relations of the psychiatrists as well as of the British Army, by processes examined in this thesis.

As if persuading the British Army that psychoanalytic knowledge was relevant to their problems, and then developing huge schemes to solve those problems, was not ambitious enough, the Tavistock group had even higher aspirations. They endeavoured to impress their psychological peers and to prove that their work was truly 'scientific.' They even called themselves the 'invisible college' after the men who created the Royal Society in the seventeenth century.³ As well as analysing military-psychological interactions, this thesis traces how the Tavistock group operated within a wider community of experts from the human sciences, and the challenges and opportunities that this context created. Such wrangling within the scientific community resulted in a momentous fracas in British psychoanalytic circles,⁴ and the creation of a new body, the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, which was 'a key element, model and example in the development of an expertise of subjective, interpersonal and organisational life and its wide extension in modern society.'⁵ The negotiations which brought about these events are therefore worth delving into: what follows is an analysis of the ambitious work of the Tavistock group to form, institutionalise and legitimise a scientific discipline in Second World War Britain.

The research questions guiding this thesis follow the order of tasks the Tavistock group faced. They can be grouped into three categories. Firstly, how did the Tavistock's work for the British Army begin? In other words, what were the concerns that psychological knowledge spoke to- were they practical, political, social or economic? The British Army were the only military force in the world to have psychiatrists rather than psychologists lead their officer selection work. This was not simply due to shortage: psychologists were speedily trained for work with the British Navy, and imported from Canada to work with the Royal Air Force. This makes the reasons for Tavistock involvement in WOSBs all the more intriguing. Secondly, how did the work develop? How did people, ideas, and methods come together in the schemes; what were particular points of conflict or collaboration? And thirdly, what influenced the Tavistock group's efforts to create something 'scientific'? What were the roles of patrons, sub-

3 Dicks, p. 107; Lauren Kassell, 'Invisible College (act. 1646-1647)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford University Press, 2013) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/theme/95474>>.

4 See the sections concerned with the 'controversial discussions' in "Appendix C: Timeline of Events Related to Tavistock Group & Army Work" on page 212

5 Peter Miller and Nikolas Rose, 'The Tavistock Programme: The Government of Subjectivity and Social Life', *Sociology*, 22.2 (1988), 171-92 (p. 175).

jects, rivals, and other experts in shaping science? As these questions make clear, in tackling the big wartime schemes of the Tavistock group, the WOSBs and the CRUs, the focus of this thesis is upon the people, practices, and places involved in scientific work. This approach broadly follows constructivist science and technology studies methodologies, for instance as identified by Jan Golinski in *Making Natural Knowledge*.⁶ This focus makes it possible to analyse psychological knowledge and practices in context. Exploring how psychological science was influenced by broader culture, and how it in turn influenced broader culture, enables this research to speak to interests in a range of historical fields concerned with twentieth-century Britain.

PRE-WAR PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE

First, it is worth considering the situation of psychological science, and the Tavistock specifically, in the years preceding the Second World War, to establish the context that made the war work so remarkable.⁷ Psychology was an increasing presence in British society over the early twentieth century:

In Germany and America psychology was already established as an independent science with laboratory courses... [Britain] was awakening to the importance of this new development.⁸

The *British Journal of Psychology* was established in 1904 and a boom in membership of the British Psychological Society followed. The First World War provided opportunities for the burgeoning discipline: work on shellshock is now very well-known, but psychological work was also conducted under the auspices of the Health of Munition Workers Committee and later the Industrial Fatigue Research Board (IFRB). These groups increasingly investigated psychological problems and employed those with psychological qualifications. After the First World War, the psychological sciences achieved a cultural resonance. Historians have shown how the ideas and terminologies of psychology became culturally widespread during the early twentieth century, permeating into an 'everyday psychological language'.⁹ For instance, Mathew Thomson has discussed at length how a popular 'practical psychology' emerged in the 1920s.¹⁰ Institutional developments included the establishment of the National Institute of Industrial Psychology (NIIP) in 1921, and the Tavistock Clinic in 1920.

Ernest Jones and Simon Wessely have noted, however, that 'the conventional wisdom

6 Jan Golinski, *Making Natural Knowledge: Constructivism and the History of Science* (University of Chicago Press, 2008); For more on constructivism in STS, see Sheila Jasanoff and others, *Handbook of Science and Technology Studies* (Sage Publications, 2001); Stephen G. Brush, *Making 20th Century Science: How Theories Became Knowledge* (Oxford University Press, 2015); Wiebe E. Bijker and others, *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology* (MIT Press, 2012).

7 For ease of reference, a summary of this context and the Tavistock's later work is included in "Appendix C: Timeline of Events Related to Tavistock Group & Army Work" on page 212

8 Beatrice Edgell, 'The British Psychological Society', *British Journal of Psychology. General Section*, 37.3 (1947), p. 113.

9 Kurt Danziger, *Naming the Mind: How Psychology Found Its Language* (Sage, 1997).

10 Mathew Thomson, 'Practical Psychology', in *Psychological Subjects: Identity, Culture, and Health in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2006); D.C. Doyle, 'Aspects of the Institutionalisation of British Psychology: The National Institute of Industrial Psychology, 1921-1939' (University of Manchester, 1979), p. 21.

that World War I ushered in an era of psychological enlightenment, as doctors discovered the mysteries of shellshock is... in need of revision.¹¹ It would be inaccurate to describe a straightforward professionalisation of the discipline, and historian Joanna Bourke has cautioned that the emergence of military psychology was ‘not an inevitable occurrence... [psychology’s] scientific status was looked at suspiciously and its predictive possibilities questioned.’¹² In mid twentieth-century Britain, psychology was a relatively young discipline, still in the process of establishing its boundaries and remit, and with its practitioners still in the process of establishing their expertise.

Today, the branches of the psychological sciences have quite clear, differentiated definitions, as explained in Paul Brians’ *Common Errors in English Usage* (though as Brians’ title suggests, they are still sometimes confused):

A psychologist is a person who has studied the mind and earned a Ph.D. or Psy.D. Although some definitions state that psychologists have undergone clinical training but cannot prescribe medicines, there are research psychologists who are not engaged in clinical work at all, but do experiments to discover how our minds work. Some of their work can concern animal rather than human minds.

A psychiatrist is a medical doctor specializing in the treatment of mental problems who can prescribe medicines.

Psychotherapist is not a technical term, and may be used by anyone claiming to offer therapy for mental problems. That someone is called a “psychotherapist” tells you nothing about his or her qualifications. But qualified clinical psychologists and psychiatrists can be properly called “psychotherapists.”

A psychoanalyst is a very specific kind of psychotherapist: a licensed practitioner of the methods of Sigmund Freud.¹³

These distinctions between psychological disciplines had not yet become established in interwar Britain, particularly amongst the lay public. In 1939, an amendment to a House of Commons bill attempted to establish what a psychologist was, but even by this date Sir Donald Somervell argued that this was not possible:

medical practitioners were not divided into any line that Parliament could draw into those who were experienced in psychological medicine and those who were not. It would be impracticable to impose a statutory restriction on those qualified.¹⁴

It was not clear what counted as ‘experience,’ and because the boundaries of psychological expertise were unclear, this raised concerns about charlatans and blackmailers using psychological disguises.¹⁵ Concern about the definition of psychology was clearly present at the British Psychological Society, which experienced ‘growing pains’ in the 1920s as members debated where to situate the boundaries of the discipline and how

11 Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely, ‘Battle for the Mind: World War I and the Birth of Military Psychiatry’, *The Lancet*, 384.9955 (2014), 1708–14 (p. 1713).

12 Joanna Bourke, ‘Psychology at War, 1914–1945’, in *Psychology in Britain: Historical Essays and Personal Reflections*, ed. by Geoff Bunn, G. D. Richards, and A. D. Lovie (BPS Books, 2001), p. 133.

13 Paul Brians, *Common Errors in English Usage* (Franklin Beedle & Assoc, 2013).

14 ‘Medical Notes In Parliament’, *The British Medical Journal*, 1.4079 (1939), 539–43.

15 Graham Richards, ‘Britain on the Couch: The Popularization of Psychoanalysis in Britain 1918–1940’, *Science in Context*, 13.02 (2000), 183–230 (p. 217).

they could ensure that it was taken seriously as a science.¹⁶ What psychology actually *was* seemed at times unclear both to outsiders and to the practitioners themselves.

Part of the problem of defining psychology was the difficulty of distinguishing between a ‘real’ psychologist of any variety and a ‘quack.’ At this point, psychologists were not primarily concentrated in academia, or even necessarily defined by academic qualifications. At the dawn of war in 1939, there were ‘only six psychology chairs in England and only about thirty university lectureships.’¹⁷ People who called themselves “psychologists” might come from a wide variety of educational or training backgrounds, and use a range of approaches, and work in very different fields.¹⁸ To complicate matters further, they might also move between approaches or fields: a psychiatrist could become a psychoanalyst, or a psychologist a psychiatrist, and so on.

Psychologists themselves did recognise some distinctions, however. Writing in the 1930s, one of the few university psychologists, Frederick Bartlett, mused:

If am to say what sort of a psychologist I am, I think I can say only that I am a Cambridge psychologist... Cambridge psychology of the laboratory type has never committed itself to any hard and fast and settled scheme of psychological explanation.¹⁹

Whilst Bartlett might not have committed himself to particular theories and approaches, he did distance himself from some; Eric Trist recalled that ‘the only funds for psychology that you could get at Cambridge in those days were for physiological psychology. Because I showed all the signs of becoming a social psychologist I was out.’²⁰ Charles Myers, founder of the NIIP and first president of the BPS, was also suspicious of ‘metaphysical preconceptions and aims.’ In this, he was supported by Viscount Haldane, who said that:

although the word ‘psychology’ was suspect in many quarters, the sphere of psychology with which the Institute was concerned did not embrace those fascinating studies of the subconscious, such as dream phenomena, but was limited to a very simple method of applying exact observations in industry.²¹

As Haldane’s reference to the subconscious and dreams suggests, the most ambivalent attitudes were expressed in reactions to psychoanalysis. Many psychologists clearly believed that psychoanalysis was far removed from “scientific” experimental or vocational psychology.²²

16 Edgell, p. 122.

17 Henryk Misiak and Virginia Staudt Sexton, *History of Psychology: An Overview* (Grune & Stratton, 1966), p. 228; as quoted in Adrian Wooldridge, *Measuring the Mind: Education and Psychology in England c.1860–c.1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 138.

18 The wide range of fields and the crossover of psychological approaches just in the subsection devoted to vocational psychology is illustrated in a contemporary diagram in “Appendix G: Diagram of Vocational Psychology” on page 225

19 F. C. Bartlett, ‘Frederick Charles Bartlett’, in *A History of Psychology in Autobiography* (Worcester, MA: Clark University Press, 1936), 39–52.

20 Eric Trist, “‘Guilty of Enthusiasm’”, from *Management Laureates*, Vol 3, Ed. Arthur G. Bedeian (Jai Press, 1993), *The Modern Times Workplace*, 2008 <<http://www.moderntimesworkplace.com/archives/ericbio/ericbio.html>> [accessed 24 October 2012].

21 Doyle, p. 24; ‘Psychology In Industry’, *The British Medical Journal*, 1.3196 (1922), 532–33.

22 This is rendered visually apparent in a diagram created by psychologists and included in “Appendix G: Diagram of Vocational Psychology” on page 225

The history of psychoanalysis in Britain has undergone a relatively recent revision. There has been a shift from the idea that the British were 'sceptical and resistant... reluctant modernists, culturally conservative, anti-intellectual and resistant to the sway of theory' to the idea that 'there was considerably broader interest and enthusiasm than hitherto recognised.'²³ For instance, psychoanalytic terms like 'ego' or 'subconscious' were prevalent in everyday psychological language. However, as L.S. Hearnshaw noted in his still respected *Short History of British Psychology*, the most widely accepted form of analysis was 'a hybrid eclectic "depth" psychology, purged of the more bizarre, "improper" and pessimistic features of Freudian theory'. In texts aimed at broad audiences, 'passages aimed at dispelling widespread misconceptions, images, and myths about psychoanalysis and Freud [were] ubiquitous.'²⁴ Whilst these examples of analysis spreading do indicate a popular appetite for its ideas – if in a bowdlerised form – they also highlights that the approach was dogged by fears of the taboo. Despite the rising profile of psychoanalysis, it was viewed by contemporaries as having 'proximity to a range of occult, religious, and variously unorthodox ideas.'²⁵

As a group who used analysis in their psychotherapeutic work, the Tavistock Clinic battled suspicions that they were a dangerous influence.²⁶ The Tavistock was an outpatient clinic staffed by 'psychological specialists' that saw adults and children for psychotherapeutic treatment and took means-tested payment from patients but primarily relied upon charitable donations.²⁷ It 'had a curiously independent, indeed isolated, position somewhere between official psychiatry and medicine on the one hand and 'orthodox' psychoanalysis on the other.'²⁸ Hearnshaw cited the Tavistock group as an example of 'hybrid' psychology.²⁹ However it was often seen by laypeople as being a psychoanalytical organisation. Consequently, its staff struggled to find premises 'because it was difficult to secure permission from ground landlords for what they feared might turn out to be a clinic for wildly disturbed lunatics!'³⁰ Psychoanalysis carried suggestions of dangerous deviance or of being potentially corrupting to morality and decency.

Such pernicious associations resulted in caution from the British establishment towards psychoanalysis. The British Medical Association conspicuously refused to take a stance on psychoanalysis, refusing to either legitimate or to entirely castigate it. They established a Psycho-Analysis Committee in 1928 to investigate, but this com-

23 Thomson, 'Practical Psychology', p. 17.

24 Richards, 'Britain on the Couch', p. 191.

25 Sandra Ellesley, 'Psychoanalysis in Early Twentieth-Century England: A Study in the Popularization of Ideas.' (unpublished Ph.D., University of Essex, 1995); as referenced in Thomson, 'Practical Psychology', p. 22.

26 To some extent, their modern counterparts continue to do so: after their official website and an encyclopedia entry, a Google search for "Tavistock Institute" produces results about 'secrets,' 'conspiracy,' 'mind control' and 'global manipulation.' <<https://goo.gl/YXek7A>> [accessed 7 October 2012].

27 Nina Hamilton and others, 'Clinic For Nerve Cases', *The Times* (London, England, 10 September 1920), p. 6.

28 Dicks, p. 2.

29 L.S Hearnshaw, *A Short History of British Psychology 1840-1940*, Methuen's Manuals of Modern Psychology (Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1964), p. 238.

30 Dicks, pp. 13–14.

mittee came to the non-committal conclusion that 'it must, as in other disputed issues, be tested by time, by experience, and by discussion.'³¹ Whilst psychology had found its way (albeit in limited numbers of positions) into British Universities, there were very few academics teaching psychoanalysis.³² The Tavistock Clinic 'wanted to be part of the University scene' in the mid-1930s but had struggled to achieve university recognition. Negotiations with Bernard Hart, a lecturer in psychiatry at University College, to create a programme of study run by the Tavistock and accredited by the University, were unsuccessful.³³ Other organisations also took steps to demarcate their science in a way that excluded the Tavistock; Ernest Jones, the President of the British Psycho-Analytical Society (BPAS), refused to allow his group of 'proper' psychoanalysts to work with or at the Tavistock because their approach incorporated Jungian concepts. Mental hospital psychiatrists also viewed the Tavistock with disdain and suspicion. Edward Mapother of the Maudsley Hospital (established shortly after the Tavistock, in 1923) was highly critical of the Tavistock, which he considered 'the intellectual poor relation of the Maudsley.'³⁴

These rejections of the Tavistock can be seen as forms of boundary work. The university rejection was reportedly due to concerns about power, because those at the university believed that the number of staff at the Tavistock meant that to include them would 'be a case of the tail wagging the dog.'³⁵ The Tavistock staff also attributed Jones' antipathy to them to a fear of 'loss of inner cohesion and professional discipline if [BPAS] members accepted posts or even mixed too freely with the unqualified or half-qualified.'³⁶ The idea that the fragile reputation of psychological science was at risk from too close an association with this peripheral group runs through both of these interactions. Similarly, Mapother's aversion to the Tavistock was not only due to disapproval of their methods, but also because they were rivals for Rockefeller funding in the 1930s. Both funds and prestige were jealously guarded commodities for psychology in inter-war Britain. As these various examples indicate, the Tavistock were therefore a nonconformist subgroup within a discipline already on the edges of acceptability. If it was 'not inevitable' that military psychology should emerge, as Joanna Bourke wrote, it was even less inevitable that a group such as the Tavistock would be participants in such military work. Yet by 1943, members of the BPAS such as psychoanalyst Adrian Stephen were forced to acknowledge that:

The men who manage the Tavistock... may have no profound grasp of psychopathology, but they can teach us something in the way of practical psychology... in the tactful handling of negotiations... the entire organisation of Army Psychiatry is

31 'Supplementary Report Of Council, 1928-29', *The British Medical Journal*, 1929, 249-76 (p. 270).

32 J.C. Flugel and Susan Isaacs were key figures in this very small group.

33 Dicks, p. 83; Gordon Wolstenholme and V Luniewska, 'Bernard Hart', *Munk's Roll: Lives of the Fellows* (Royal College of Physicians, 2009), p. 226 <<http://munksroll.rcplondon.ac.uk/Biography/Details/2069>> [accessed 2 February 2014].

34 Edgar Jones and Shahina Rahman, 'The Maudsley Hospital and the Rockefeller Foundation: The Impact of Philanthropy on Research and Training', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 64.3 (2009), 273-99 (p. 289).

35 Dicks, p. 83.

36 Dicks, p. 39.

in their hands.³⁷

Stephen's quote highlights the negotiations and practical work of the Tavistock group; this thesis is about the way that they attempted to negotiate a place for 'practical psychology' at the heart of the British Army and of civilian life.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Having traced how the Tavistock fitted into a broader context of interwar psychological science, in preparation for the chapters that will trace the development of a seemingly unlikely military-psychological collaboration, I will now establish how this thesis fits into existing historical literature and broader historical themes. As the WOSBs and CRUs were schemes developed for the British Army, this research will be of interest to military historians. The military application of psychological science has been a growing field of historical scholarship in recent years. Despite many new contributions, however, Second World War military psychology and psychiatry remains under-researched; studies of First World War shell-shock continue to dominate. There are not many accounts of Army psychiatric services in Second World War Britain. Yet psychological knowledge was applied on a far greater scale, and to a far wider range of problems, during the Second World War; it has potential as a research topic to tell us a great deal about psychological thought and mid-twentieth-century British culture. The limited number of existing studies of the WOSBs hint at why they are such an interesting subject. Officer selection was controversial. It sparked debates about class versus meritocracy, it caused rows between prominent military figures Winston Churchill and Sir Ronald Adam, and a number of senior military men spoke out against psychiatrists' involvement. In studying WOSBs, this thesis places these controversies into a wider context; for instance, social concerns about class and ability coexisted with concerns about modernity and Britain's place in the world, and none of these concerns alone pressured the military to change officer selection procedure.

Histories that have been written on Second World War military-psychiatric work frequently focus upon a single specific aspect of the work, such as a particular mental hospital, or a type of psychiatric classification.³⁸ In examining both WOSBs and CRUs,

37 Adrian Stephen speaking at a Society meeting in 1943, as quoted in Pearl King, 'Activities of British Psychoanalysts during the Second World War and the Influence of Their Inter-Disciplinary Collaboration on the Development of Psychoanalysis in Great Britain', *International Review of Psycho-Analysis*, 16.15 (1989), 14–33 (p. 17).

38 Northfield Military Hospital has been at the centre of several accounts, including the excellent Tom Harrison, *Bion, Rickman, Foulkes, and the Northfield Experiments: Advancing on a Different Front* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000); Dorit Szykierski, 'The Northfield Experiment and the Enigma of Psychiatry without Psychiatrists: Exclusion by Inclusion of the Radical Contribution of WR Bion', *Organisational and Social Dynamics*, 8.1 (2008), 38–62; and Nafsika Thalassis, 'Soldiers in Psychiatric Therapy: The Case of Northfield Military Hospital 1942–1946', *Social History of Medicine*, 20.2 (2007), 351–68. ; Screening-out of misfits is covered in several works, including: Naoko Wake, 'The Military, Psychiatry, and "Unfit" Soldiers, 1939–1942', *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 62.4 (2007), 461–94; Edgar Jones, K. C. Hyams and Simon Wessely, 'Review: Screening for Vulnerability to Psychological Disorders in the Military: An Historical Survey', *Journal of Medical Screening*, 10.1 (2003), 40–46; Edgar Jones, Ian Palmer and Simon Wessely, 'War Pensions (1900-1945): Changing Models of Psychological Understanding', *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 180.4 (2002), 374–79; Edgar Jones and

this thesis contests the idea that ‘the themes of charlatanry and the potential for harm resurface at intervals in the long history of military psychiatry.’³⁹ The WOSBs and CRUs were created at the same time, by the same group, for the British Army, yet their reception was very different. Psychiatrists’ creation of and participation in civil resettlement did not stir even a whisper of protest, yet their involvement in officer selection remained contentious throughout the war and they were removed from WOSBs in 1946. This thesis argues that psychiatrists themselves were not the problem, and nor was a particular trend of military thinking the root of the trouble. Instead, specific aspects of the WOSBs were problematic; the cause of conflict was rooted in rival experts stirring up trouble, and particular methods that pitted military and psychological authority against one another.

Unlike WOSBs, CRUs are almost never discussed in histories. This is likely because few POWs returned to the fighting forces, and though the CRUs were a military programme, they mostly involved the return of soldiers to civilian life. Because of this very focus, CRUs enable historians to have insight into the interests and concerns of returning servicemen, who were interested in practical skills to equip them for new careers and not lectures on abstract themes. It also shows how civilians and the government viewed soldiers and the military as a potential threat to social order, and how Britons hoped to transition to peace, with active support from government.

Though there are few accounts of WOSBs and CRUs, there are some key pieces of literature upon which this thesis builds. For many years, the only published accounts of Second World War Army psychiatry were supplied by psychologists and psychiatrists rather than historians, and by men with personal links to the work. The head of the pre-war Tavistock Clinic and the only Consulting Psychiatrist appointed by the British Army at the outbreak of war, J.R. Rees, published on the work whilst the war was still raging and before the CRUs had even been created.⁴⁰ At the end of the 1940s, a more critical account of WOSBs was produced by psychologists who had worked for the Army and the Navy, Philip Vernon and John Parry.⁴¹ These men worked for the National Institute of Industrial Psychology (NIIP), another group that offered psychological consultancy services to industry and worked on selection. A few years later, the official medical history of the war included some information on the psychiatric services, and War Office psychiatrist Robert Ahrenfeldt produced a monograph on the war work, which is the only contemporary work to discuss the CRUs as well as WOSBs.⁴² Though these works include a great deal of detail and

Simon Wessely, ‘British Prisoners-of-War: From Resilience to Psychological Vulnerability: Reality or Perception’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 21.2 (2010), 163–83; Daniel Pick, *The Pursuit of the Nazi Mind: Hitler, Hess, and the Analysts* (OUP Oxford, 2012).

39 David Wainwright, ‘Review of “Shell Shock to PTSD: Military Psychiatry from 1900 to the Gulf War”, by Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely’, *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 35.5 (2006), 1367–68.

40 John Rawlings Rees, ‘Three Years of Military Psychiatry in the United Kingdom’, *The British Medical Journal*, 4278 (1943).

41 Philip Ewart Vernon and John B. Parry, *Personnel Selection in the British Forces* (London: University of London Press, 1949).

42 Francis Albert Eley Crew, ‘The Army Psychiatric Service’, in *The Army Medical Services, Administration* (London: HMSO, 1955), II, 467–97; Robert H. Ahrenfeldt, *Psychiatry in the British Army in the Second World War* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1958).

information, they are treated as primary sources. For instance, Vernon and Parry's work only raises questions about the nature of the relationship between the Army psychiatrists and other, potentially rival, experts (which are examined in Chapter Three of this thesis).

David Edgerton has argued that the British Army had a doctrine in support of scientific and technical innovation, but the limits to the extent of this support are delineated in military histories by Jeremy Crang, Geoffrey Field, and David French.⁴³ Crang, Field, and French situate the WOSBs within a broader narrative of institutional and organisational change. They consider officer selection as an aspect of military policy, and accordingly trace battles between influential military figures such as Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who detested psychiatrists, and Adjutant-General Sir Ronald Adam, who supported them. The military historians also examine military leadership: whether the type of officer changed as a result of changes to selection, and how soldiers felt about this. Essentially, these historians look at battles and their consequences, though these are battles over technocratic or welfare ideologies rather than battles fought with guns. They provide valuable insight into why the military felt the need to bring in experts, highlighting shortages and the Army's image problem, but do not consider why these experts were psychiatrists. Even the fact that Britain was the only nation to use psychiatrists rather than psychologists seems to pass them by. The ideas and methods developed by the experts are described rather than analysed; their origins remain unexamined though their results are explored. Whereas Crang, Field, and French question the effect of the WOSBs upon the military, this thesis instead examines what was the *intended* effect, from the perspective of public concerns, psychiatrists' interests, and local senior officers who facilitated early experiments.⁴⁴ This thesis compliments these military histories by providing a parallel narrative to the Army's problems, which scrutinises psychiatrists' claims to useful and relevant knowledge and their efforts to develop solutions.

Ben Shephard, Nafsika Thalassis, and Jones and Wessely have produced histories of psychiatry that have a closer focus upon the psychological staff. Shephard's work ranges across the entire twentieth century and various nations' Armies; it touches upon both projects covered by this thesis, the WOSBs and the CRUs, though due to its scale, each is necessarily dealt with quite briefly.⁴⁵ The account of WOSBs emphasises the battle between Churchill, a reactionary suspicious of Freudians' unnecessarily probing, and Adam, a moderniser who developed other welfare programmes such as the Army Bureau of Current Affairs (whose programmes of discussion and

43 David Edgerton, *Warfare State: Britain, 1920-1970* (Cambridge University Press, 2006); Jeremy A. Crang, 'The British Army as a Social Institution, 1939-45', in *Rethinking History, Dictatorship and War: New Approaches and Interpretations*, ed. by Claus-Christian Szejnmann (A&C Black, 2011); Jeremy A. Crang, *The British Army and the People's War, 1939-1945* (Manchester University Press, 2000); Geoffrey G. Field, *Blood, Sweat, and Toil: Remaking the British Working Class, 1939-1945* (Oxford University Press, 2011); David French, *Raising Churchill's Army* (Oxford University Press, 2001).

44 In this respect the thesis draws upon approaches from the history of technology, such as those discussed in Bijker and others.

45 Ben Shephard, *A War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Twentieth Century* (Harvard University Press, 2001).

questioning of ideas some saw as a left-wing propaganda machine that credited with Labour's post-war victory).⁴⁶ Shephard considers CRUs in relation to tales of hardship experienced by POWs; he discusses in moral terms whether the CRUs were an adequate response. Though this book provides fascinating details, it re-tells the same version of the story that psychologists told in the immediate post-war period, rather than challenging or enlarging upon it as this thesis does. The chapters which follow in this thesis problematise the official form of WOSBs and CRUs presented in Shephard's overview. Though they draw upon his work in instances for insight into exchanges between high-ranking figures, in return they contribute an insight into the work of the many less eminent men who worked on the schemes.

Jones and Wessely have also produced work with a large scale, stretching from 1900 to the Gulf War.⁴⁷ They have also contributed several articles on specific aspects of British psychiatry, including studies of motivation, trauma, and the mentality of the POW across the twentieth-century.⁴⁸ Jones and Wessely are psychiatrists, but their work takes a historical approach, tracing the ways that psychological ideas changed over time and the corresponding changes to practice and bureaucratic systems. They redress assumptions of progress and 'psychological enlightenment' by tracing the turbulent relationship between military officials and psychiatrists. A particular strength of their approach is that they situate this oscillating military-psychiatric relationship within a broader social context and larger debates about the role of the state, such as discussions of the deserving and undeserving poor. This thesis similarly looks to how specific ideas and actions were linked with general social concerns. Building on Jones and Wessely's work, it also closely examines which particular elements of the WOSBs and the CRUs were either problematic or accepted with ease, and why that was the case, for instance by examining strategies of communication like the psychiatrists' choice whether to clarify or leave psychological ideas ambiguous for their military collaborators. This research also contributes to an scholarship on official policy and trends in published ideas by examining specific local situations, informal dealings, and particular 'ingredients' in the Second World War melting pot that produced the WOSBs and CRUs.

Thalassis, like Jones and Wessely, offers a study specifically focussed upon British Army psychiatry during the Second World War. She examines the relationship between psychiatrists and the military, the 'rationalisation of recruitment and

46 Woodrow Wyatt's assertion of this, for instance, is quoted in Crang, *The British Army and the People's War, 1939-1945*, p. 127 The notion that the ABCA shaped the election results has been strongly contested by Crang and others since, as servicemen's results had little effect on the overall result. However, such feeling serves as an example of the suspicion of such new schemes.

47 Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely, *Shell Shock to PTSD: Military Psychiatry from 1900 to the Gulf War* (Psychology Press, 2005).

48 Simon Wessely, 'Twentieth-Century Theories on Combat Motivation and Breakdown', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 41.2 (2006), 269-86; Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely, 'Psychological Trauma: A Historical Perspective', *Psychiatry, Trauma and stress-related disorders*, 5.7 (2006), 217-20; Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely, 'A Paradigm Shift in the Conceptualization of Psychological Trauma in the 20th Century', *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, Challenges to the PTSD Construct and its Database, 21.2 (2007), 164-75; Jones and Wessely, 'British Prisoners-of-War: From Resilience to Psychological Vulnerability: Reality or Perception'; Jones, Palmer and Wessely.

promotion through psychological techniques' and the various forms of psychiatry practised in different settings. One feature of Thalassis's approach which is particularly interesting, and is borrowed from and developed on in this thesis, is the way that she explains the focus on soldiers' intelligence in the British Army as part of a wider social concern about declining mental capability. When exploring the origins of the CRUs and the WOSBs, this thesis likewise situates the concerns about officer quality and POW resettlement with larger social concerns about management and leadership and post-war reconstruction.

Thalassis' focus upon relationships is generally structural, and she provides valuable insight into the way psychiatry worked as a department of the Army. In examining the relationships between individuals and groups, this thesis provides another layer of complexity to Thalassis' picture of sections and departments, and complicates the argument of Thalassis, French, and Edgerton that the British Army had a policy of supporting medical, scientific, and technological innovation.⁴⁹ It was not that there was a 'great degree of cooperation between specialists, regimental officers and combatant officers, and an army keen to listen to the advice of experts.'⁵⁰ Rather, in some particular instances, there was successful cooperation and a willing audience for the psychiatrists' ideas. The degree of support from the upper echelons of the Army depended very much upon the project; officer selection work provoked resistance from senior military figures, whereas resettlement of POWs proved far less problematic. The less the subject of work resembled a 'patient,' the more the relevance of psychiatrists' work was questioned. Although her work includes a discussion of officer selection, Thalassis studies Army psychiatry generally. The majority of Army psychiatry was clinical in nature and thus had similar concepts and practices to pre-war psychiatry. This thesis instead focusses particularly on psychiatric work with 'normal' populations, where new justifications for expert intervention were made, and where the ideas and methods applied, though grounded in existing principles in many cases, underwent significant revision. In doing so, this approach fits within a growing field of scholarship focussed upon psychology and everyday life.

The schemes this thesis examines are also of interest to historians of science as they are fascinating examples of a psychological variant of Big Science: large-scale, supported by government funding, operating within bureaucratic systems, and involving groups of experts.⁵¹ This research therefore furthers our understanding of how scientific endeavour worked under Big Science, examining what James Capshew and Karen Rader described as the 'interesting question of how science

49 Nafsika Thalassis, 'Treating and Preventing Trauma: British Military Psychiatry during the Second World War' (University of Salford, 2004), University of Salford Institutional Repository; French; Edgerton.

50 Thalassis, 'Treating and Preventing Trauma: British Military Psychiatry during the Second World War', p. 6.

51 Michael Aaron Dennis, 'Big Science', *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2015 <<http://www.britannica.com/science/Big-Science-science>> [accessed 1 February 2015]; The definitions and uses of the concept 'Big Science' have been explored in James H. Capshew and Karen A. Rader, 'Big Science: Price to the Present', *Osiris*, 7 (1992), 2–25.

becomes larger.⁵² It examines the ways that many people interacted in the process of developing schemes to deal with officer selection and POW rehabilitation, how psychiatrists came to work with military patrons with access to many resources (not least in terms of subjects of study), how large-scale technological systems were developed as solutions to perceived operational problems, and some of the social, political, economic, and institutional factors that shaped interactions and work. Administration, organisation and committees are as much a part of this account as individuals; both individual personalities, and their position within a larger nexus, shaped how military-psychological work proceeded. In doing so, this work offers insight into the application of expert knowledge; the creation of technological systems of scientific knowledge; the relationships between scientists, government, and military; and the dynamics and networks of groups working on science.

As this review of the existing literature has made clear, of the two projects discussed in this thesis, one has received significantly more scholarly attention than the other. CRUs have received almost no attention from historians, whereas WOSBs have featured in a number of studies. By examining the two, this thesis suggests a possible reason why this should be the case. Whilst WOSBs were the focal point of several senior military figures' distrust of psychiatry, the psychological underpinnings of the CRUs were carefully disguised. Differences between projects that cause conflict and projects that produce cohesion are highlighted by closely studying both schemes. As the efficacy of collaborations on a large scale remains a concern of those working in the psychological sciences, this thesis may prove of interest to psychologists today.⁵³

As well as being relevant to historians of science generally, this work also has particular interest for those interested in the history of the human sciences. In tracing the movement of ideas between psychological practitioners, various military personnel, and a broader British public, this thesis contributes to scholarship on psychology and the 'everyday.' Many histories of psychological science have focussed on either the asylum or the experimental, the clinic or the university departments, but an increasing number are probing the ways that wider audiences have interacted with, shaped, or even co-opted the psychological.⁵⁴ From the 1980s onwards, the work

52 Capshew and Rader, p. 4.

53 Ed Diener, 'Introduction to the Special Section: Professional Issues in Psychological Science and a Discussion of Collaboration Indicators', *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 1.4 (2006), 312–15 (p. 312).

54 Historiographical essays charting this changing focus include Wade Pickren and Alexandra Rutherford, 'Why History? Why History of Psychology?', in *A History of Modern Psychology in Context* (John Wiley & Sons, 2010), pp. xvii – xxi; Mark S. Micale and Roy Porter, 'Reflections on Psychiatry and Its Histories', in *Discovering the History of Psychiatry* (Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 3–13; Graham Richards, 'Of What Is History of Psychology a History?', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 20.2 (1987), 201–11; Roger Smith, 'Does the History of Psychology Have a Subject?', *History of the Human Sciences*, 1.2 (1988), 147–77. Examples of histories that trace non-expert engagements with the psychological sciences include Rhodri Hayward, 'The Pursuit of Serenity: Psychological Knowledge and the Making of the British Welfare State', in *History and Psyche: Culture, Psychoanalysis, and the Past*, ed. by Sally Alexander and Barbara Taylor (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 283–304; Rhodri Hayward, 'Sadness in Camberwell: Imagining Stress and Constructing History in Postwar Britain', in *Stress, Shock, and Adaptation in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by David Cantor and Edmund Ramsden (Boydell & Brewer, 2014); Mathew Thomson, *Psychological Subjects: Identity, Culture, and Health in Twentieth-Century Britain* (OUP Oxford, 2006); Mathew Thomson, 'The Popular, the Practical and the Professional: Psycholog-

of Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller on psychology's role in the governance of modern life provided an informative and useful narrative.⁵⁵ Much of this work focussed on the Tavistock, who are at the core of this thesis. Rose and Miller's work has proven very useful in enabling historians to think about how psychological technologies are used to govern by revealing new objects and forces. However, this thesis suggests that historians could benefit from reconsidering *how* such objects and forces come into being as concepts, and whether or not in practice they are actually used to govern in the way that was claimed, intended, or hoped. Rose suggested that the work of the Tavistock enabled a large variety of problems to be 'analysed within a single framework.'⁵⁶ Yet whilst the group hoped to develop a single framework in the sense of a coherent science, this thesis shows how the concept of their work as a single framework is problematic. Instead, the many ideas, practices, people, and plans involved in just two schemes are highlighted in what follows.

Throughout, there is a focus on co-production. The thesis closely examines how a variety of individuals and groups worked together, and either conflicted or came to agreement on ideas and methods. The different people who shaped the WOSBs and CRUs brought a variety of interests and priorities to their work. It is useful to consider what government or managers potentially saw as valuable about psychological science, and to assess the ways that psychological ideas might affect the way people thought about themselves, and how this related to historical context, as in the work of Rose and Miller. However, it is also useful, and timely, to think about both the limitations of psychological work and the agency of non-psychological staff in shaping it. This thesis thus furthers Mathew Thomson's work to 'modify some of our assumptions about the extent and nature of a psychology imposed on its subjects.'⁵⁷ By necessity, the large-scale schemes of the Tavistock group had to achieve acceptance and support from both participants and patrons, and this research follows their attempts to do so. This work examines how psychological ideas were developed by moving back and forth between the public/military and the psychological realms. There was no straightforward process of development and then communication; instead, psychological approaches were co-produced. The Second World War military-psychological programmes were just that: military *and* psychological.

Social and cultural historians will also find some of the findings of this thesis relevant to their field; WOSBs dealt with 140,000 candidates, and CRUs with 19,000 European POWs and 4500 POWs from the Far East.⁵⁸ These schemes are worth studying in their own right because they affected so many people; researching the WOSBs and

ical Identities in Britain, 1901-1950', in *Psychology in Britain: Historical Essays and Personal Reflections*, ed. by G. C. Bunn, A. D. Lovie, and G. D. Richards (BPS Books, 2001).

55 Nikolas Rose, *The Psychological Complex: Psychology, Politics and Society in England 1869-1939* (London, United Kingdom: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985); Nikolas Rose, *Inventing Our Selves: Psychology, Power, and Personhood* (Cambridge University Press, 1996); Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, *Governing the Present: Administering Economic, Social and Personal Life* (Polity, 2008).

56 Nikolas Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (Routledge, 1990), p. 89.

57 Mathew Thomson, 'Psychological Subjects: Response', *History of the Human Sciences*, 20.3 (2007), 123-39 (p. 114).

58 Crang, *The British Army and the People's War, 1939-1945*, p. 33; Ahrenfeldt, p. 240.

CRUs gives us a better understanding of life during the war and shortly afterwards. These schemes also give an insight into what people thought about leadership and citizenship in the 1940s; they believed that leaders produced by the traditions of class might not be suited to the modern world, and were concerned about whether soldiers were unalterably tainted with violence.⁵⁹ This thesis thus contributes to scholarship on contemporary British history, military history, history of psychology and psychiatry, and history of science in the twentieth century.

METHODOLOGY

To ensure that this thesis does justice to the roles played by psychological staff, official policy, and the public, it is based on an examination of archive materials from several sources. The archive of the Tavistock, recently brought out from storage, was a particularly valuable source of evidence, including memoranda circulated amongst the expert staff, notes from lectures, planning notes, and correspondence. It offers an insight into the views, methods, and aims of the psychological staff working together on the WOSBs and CRUs. Often, the few works which mention these schemes give assessments of their success whilst failing to acknowledge what their creators actually hoped to achieve, or even the theories and methods they used to tackle them. This research therefore restores to history the psychological side of military-psychological work. Moreover, these archives highlight individuals who were not important enough to be mentioned at a policy level, but who the psychological staff felt influenced their work (whether positively or negatively). These people have often not received credit and are passed over in other histories, but their role is brought to light here.⁶⁰ Some figures remain under-represented, however, because they are largely absent from written records. It was not possible within the scope of this thesis to conduct interviews for an oral history.⁶¹

In addition to the documents from the Tavistock archive, files from the National Archives (mainly the War Office and the Ministry of Labour), journal articles (largely from *The British Medical Journal*, *The Lancet*, and *The Journal of the Royal Army Medical Corps*), parliamentary debates, government committee minutes, newspaper articles, and Mass Observation studies were important sources for this research. This evidence supplemented and complicated the picture presented in the Tavistock's archives. In some instances, these documents suggested how the psychological staff's ideas and methods fitted into broader trends or discourses. In others instances,

59 For more on such concerns see Rex Pope, 'British Demobilization after the Second World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 30.1 (1995), 65–81; Adam R. Seipp, *The Ordeal of Peace: Demobilization and the Urban Experience in Britain and Germany, 1917-1921* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2009); Bourke.

60 To assist the reader and clarify who did what on which projects or schemes, a 'Who's Who' of the large cast of characters discussed in this thesis is included in "Appendix B: Who's Who of Thesis" on page 205. This contains all information discovered in the course of this research, and may be of use to future studies.

61 For instance, the women of the Auxiliary Territorial Service were instrumental to the running of WOSBs and CRUs, but the work that they performed is barely documented and their experiences are absent from the historical record.

these sources alluded to points of misunderstanding or conflict, and the rules and structures that the 'invisible college' worked within, pushed against, or subverted. Access to this material provided an opportunity to examine broader themes, such as modernity, democracy, civilisation, and the 'normal.'

The structure of this thesis is broadly chronological. It begins with early claims about the relevance of psychological knowledge to the British Army. It then examines work on two wartime schemes, and the ways that psychological staff contemplated the post-war future.⁶² The Tavistock and the British Army were unlikely bedfellows (for reasons detailed in the first chapter of this thesis), so the early chapters explore the circumstances that brought about a collaboration between these two institutions. Chapter One explores the macro-view of how the Tavistock staff came to work for the Army. It gives a brief history of interwar psychology and psychiatry, and of the Army, to demonstrate why their collaboration would have seemed unlikely in the 1930s. It then explores the motivations and pressures that brought about this unlikely linkage. A strength of this thesis is that it questions why the Tavistock were interested in selection and POW problems: the psychological staff's motivations are not taken for granted, as they have been in previous accounts. Whilst many histories emphasise how war provided new directions for the Tavistock group, this work noted the underlying continuities of institutional and individual research interests, which were increasingly directed towards maladjustment (rather than treatment and full blown mental illness) and the wider 'field' of relations that shaped behaviour. WOSBs and CRUs fitted a broader pattern of a move towards mental hygiene and holism in British psychiatric work.⁶³ This partly explains why psychiatry was a better fit than British psychology for this work, as psychiatrists were guided by a holistic approach that predisposed them to an interest in German methods. This suited the interests of military staff who were concerned to find as many officers as possible and to maintain the quirks of the officer class.

It was less 'motivation' than pressure which caused the British Army to eventually employ psychiatrists. Historians have noted that the British Army was desperate to solve a drastic shortage of officers, and was thus forced into psychological innovations by full mobilisation.⁶⁴ But this was only the final straw; there were various other pre-existing pressures. Nafsika Thalassis argued, for instance, that psychological intervention was spurred by cultural 'hardening of attitudes towards the mentally deficient' and a 'political need for promoting meritocracy in all spheres.'⁶⁵

62 There is a timeline in "Appendix C: Timeline of Events Related to Tavistock Group & Army Work" on page 212, which can be used to clarify chronology.

63 Mathew Thomson, 'Mental Hygiene in Britain during the First Half of the Twentieth Century: The Limits of International Influence', in *International Relations in Psychiatry: Britain, Germany and the United States to World War II* (Boydell & Brewer, 2010); Jonathan Toms, *Mental Hygiene and Psychiatry in Modern Britain* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Andrew Hull, 'Glasgow's "sick Society"? James Halliday, Psychosocial Medicine and Medical Holism in Britain c.1920-48', *History of the Human Sciences*, 25.5 (2012), 73-90; Christopher Lawrence, *Greater Than the Parts: Holism in Biomedicine, 1920-1950* (Oxford University Press, 1998).

64 Field; Crang, *The British Army and the People's War, 1939-1945*; French.

65 Thalassis, 'Treating and Preventing Trauma: British Military Psychiatry during the Second World War', p. 10.

Chapter One therefore examines the social, political, and economic arguments made in favour of changing officer selection at the national level in newspapers and parliamentary debates. These can be grouped into three categories: that the Army was not democratic and that it was hypocritical to fight fascists whilst privileging elite bloodlines in the British Army; that a modern war required different types of officers; and that the existing system was inefficient. Several historians have picked up on some of these concerns, particularly the issues of democratisation and waste. This thesis builds upon existing accounts by revealing the extent of the pressure upon the War Office to implement change, identifying these overarching narratives, and also linking them with claims made about the psychological sciences. The chapter highlights how psychological experts claimed to have knowledge and abilities relevant to the particular problems confronting the Army at the beginning of the Second World War. In so doing, it moves towards an explanation of why, when changes to officer selection were implemented in 1942, they were psychological in nature.

Complementing the macro-view of wider societal pressures presented in Chapter One, Chapter Two provides insight into the small-scale personal interests and local influences that brought about the first experiments in officer selection. It highlights the role of the middle managers of the Army. Sir Ronald Adam is frequently portrayed as the 'champion' of change in the British Army, but after his promotion to Adjutant-General he was no longer in a position to facilitate experiments; new work was only possible because individual senior Army officers, by contrast to the War Office, were proactive and eager collaborators in early trials of new ideas and methods. Within the networks that produced new psychological work, managers were as important as technical staff. This history-of-science-style focus on the communities that co-produced military-psychological schemes brings new complexity to existing accounts of the WOSBs.⁶⁶

The third and longest chapter moves from a study of how WOSBs came to be, to an analysis of what a WOSB *was*, linking problems with the effort to create solutions. It gives a brief summary of the programme at a typical WOSB, and then takes each of the testing components in turn and explores their origins, then discusses their use. Surprisingly, such analysis has previously been lacking. For instance, though Crang and Thalassis each devote a chapter to the topic of officer selection, Crang only spends one page on methods, and Thalassis three.⁶⁷ In this chapter, the way that the different tests acted (or failed to act) as boundary objects is discussed. This facilitates consideration of the different ways that those involved in the WOSBs viewed the tests, and how that related to their own concerns and priorities.⁶⁸ The approach is

66 This approach is explained in Thomas P. Hughes, 'The Seamless Web: Technology, Science, Etcetera, Etcetera', *Social Studies of Science*, 16.2 (1986), 281–92; Steven Shapin shows the influential role of managers in the production of scientific work (though in his account, they frequently hinder rather than facilitate): Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Life: A Moral History of a Late Modern Vocation* (University of Chicago Press, 2009).

67 Crang, *The British Army and the People's War, 1939-1945*, p. 32; Thalassis, 'Treating and Preventing Trauma: British Military Psychiatry during the Second World War', pp. 127–129.

68 Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer, 'Institutional Ecology, "Translations" and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39', *Social Studies*

particularly useful in providing a way of exploring where and why conflicts arose; this Chapter argues that conflict between military and psychological staff was centred specifically upon the interview. This test raised concerns from the respective groups about their authority, which resulted in them attempting to clarify their own meanings for the test and suppress alternatives. In carefully picking apart the different test elements, Chapter Three therefore provides a detailed explanation of conflict and collaboration in this military-psychological enterprise.

In this thesis, the WOSB tests are also treated as technologies. This enables the third chapter to also explore the fascinating questions this raises about the agency of consumers of technology, how users shape technology as it is being created, and issues of control and out-of-control technologies used in ways unintended by those who developed them.⁶⁹ The scientific nature of the WOSBs was vulnerable, as laymen felt they could operate technologies without experts. This worried the psychological experts, who feared potential obsolescence of their skills. However, the chapter shows that the Tavistock group could not resist the 'Faustian bargain' of work for the Army; they had access to vast resources to develop their work, such as access to thousands of subjects and even an early form of computer. As with postwar computer technology, the technologies of testing provided 'the possibility of novel insights... yet at the same time they threatened the existence of the subject's very soul.'⁷⁰

Chapter Four follows up on concerns about the scientific nature of the WOSBs work. This is approached from three angles: the Tavistock group's conflict with other experts such as neurologists and medics; the interaction of various 'selection scientists' at a government-convened Expert Committee; and the work of the Tavistock group at the WOSBs Centre for Development and Control (CDC). Firstly, this chapter examines how rival experts stirred up military suspicions about psychological work for the Army by using unofficial communications with influential contacts. Neurologists and medics raised concerns with senior military staff about the work of the psychiatrists. The chapter notes how this rivalry was built around ideological and epistemological conflict as well as competition for resources; the psychiatrists' holistic approach symbolised a threat to their medical and neurological adversaries. High-level Army concerns about the role of psychiatry prompted the creation of a committee to investigate their work. This is often described in histories and given as an example of the Army's resistance to psychological innovations. However, in a close

of Science, 19.3 (1989), 387–420; Thomas F. Gieryn, 'Boundary-Work and the Demarcation of Science from Non-Science: Strains and Interests in Professional Ideologies of Scientists', *American Sociological Review*, 48.6 (1983), 781–95; Susan Leigh Star, 'This Is Not a Boundary Object: Reflections on the Origin of a Concept', *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 35.5 (2010), 601–17; William C. Barley, Paul M. Leonardi and Diane E. Bailey, 'Engineering Objects for Collaboration: Strategies of Ambiguity and Clarity at Knowledge Boundaries', *Human Communication Research*, 38.3 (2012), 280–308.

⁶⁹ In pursuing these questions, this thesis follows upon classic work in the field of science and technology studies such as Bijker and others; and particularly Thomas P. Hughes, 'The Evolution of Large Technological Systems', in *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology*, ed. by Wiebe E. Bijker and others (MIT Press, 2012), pp. 45–76.

⁷⁰ Rhodri Hayward, "'Our Friends Electric": Mechanical Models of Mind in Post-War Britain', in *Psychology in Britain: Historical Essays and Personal Reflections*, ed. by Geoff Bunn, A. D. Lovie, and G. D. Richards (Wiley, 2001), p. 290.

examination of the minutes from this Committee's first year of meetings, this chapter reveals how the psychological staff working on selection for the different forces used the Committee to their advantage. It analyses how they subtly marked out territory and worked together to resist outsiders' efforts to define an appropriate scope and method for their work. This gives a unique insight into the dynamics between psychological groups in mid-twentieth century Britain.

At the same time that the Tavistock group were working with or against other experts to secure their science, they were also working to shore-up their theories and methods with the same purpose. Chapter Four examines the Tavistock group's aims – to validate, educate, and experiment – which they suggested were vital to cement the cornerstone of a science of the relations between people. In exploring the Tavistock group's hopes for their work, this chapter shows that their priority during the war was not simply to please their military patrons, as is often assumed, but to impress their expert peers and thus secure the longer-term benefits derived from being considered a 'science.'⁷¹ The ways that the Army thwarted some goals, such as to develop an accredited educational programme and to continue researching new avenues of work, shows how a scientific group's position in an organisational nexus can simultaneously provide resources and yet impede development.

The final chapter, Chapter Five, presents a later instance of the Tavistock group's military work: the CRUs. CRUs were intended to facilitate the return of POWs to Britain and to their productive and socially engaged life. Unlike the WOSBs, there was little controversy over the CRUs; this chapter explores why by examining two focusses, the public and the bureaucratic. At WOSBs, there had been conflict between some military and psychological members; the CRUs were carefully built with the avoidance of conflict in mind. The satisfaction of bureaucratic requirements and the manipulation of bureaucratic structures was more of a feature of the CRUs than it had been of WOSBs; this chapter analyses how they shaped the choice of staff, the relationships with other institutions, and the organisation of the CRU programme. In stark contrast to the WOSBs, there was an emphasis on deferring to the expert if in doubt, and on central control at the CRUs. This can be seen as a response to the problems faced by the CDC which the Chapter Four discussed. In addition, CRU staff were specifically selected to fit programme requirements. For instance, both Wilfred Bion and Tommy Wilson studied returning POWs. Though Bion has subsequently received far more acclaim for his work, the practical demands of time, scale, and creating an acceptable image for the programme meant that Wilson was selected instead of Bion to head the development of the CRU scheme.⁷² The importance of bureaucratic manipulation is also apparent in dealings with the Ministries of Labour and Production. Wilson and his colleague Colonel Rendel carefully courted the

71 Gieryn.

72 This mirrors the system-building pattern traced by historian of technology Thomas Hughes, whereby an 'inventor-entrepreneur' might be replaced by a 'manager-entrepreneur' as a project develops. Thomas P. Hughes, 'The Electrification of America: The System Builders', *Technology and Culture*, 20.1 (1979), 124–61.

ministries and received their support, whereas those planning the RAF's resettlement scheme was not as tactful and approached the wrong person, and were subsequently turned away.

As well as being influenced by many local and structural factors, CRUs were strongly influenced by broader concerns. Jones and Wessely argued that, during the Second World War, a conceptual shift occurred, from a view of the POW as insulated from harm to one of the POW as in need of assistance.⁷³ This thesis explores how that shift in perception occurred, driven by wider public concerns that influenced shifting psychological epistemologies. The case of POWs, like that of officers, demonstrates the process by which ideas passed back and forth between psychological experts and the lay-public via the pages of newspapers and journals, and thus the agency which non-psychologists had in shaping psychological thought and expanding the scope of the psychological gaze. Though insistent that POWs were normal, the public demanded expert intervention to facilitate their resettlement. In the process, the idea that psychiatrists could legitimately study 'normal' people as well as patients was strengthened. The treatment of POWs came to be seen as representative of government intentions towards post-war reconstruction; implicitly, Britons simultaneously insisted that they were normal whilst also seeking support and expert guidance. This was influenced by a cultural memory of post-World War One disruption. As well as the public shaping the psychological discourse on POWs, psychological ideas fed back out into wider society. Whereas officer candidates had no choice over whether to attend a WOSB, the CRUs were an entirely voluntary scheme; efforts to engage the public with the work were vital to its success. Rendel and other CRU Presidents spoke with journalists from publications ranging from *The Times* to *The Daily Worker* to 'sell' resettlement. Psychological ideas were thus absorbed back into a public discourse centring on adaption and adjustment, and the challenges of moving from one environment to another.

This brings the thesis full circle, from efforts to promote the value of psychological knowledge generally, via the complicated process of working out schemes to apply it, back to efforts to promote a specific type of psychological knowledge. In tracing the history of some of the organisation of Army psychiatry that was in Tavistock hands, this thesis takes its cue from the Tavistock themselves and teaches us something *historical* 'in the way of practical psychology' and about 'the tactful handling of negotiations.'

73 Jones and Wessely, 'British Prisoners-of-War: From Resilience to Psychological Vulnerability: Reality or Perception.'

CHAPTER ONE: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES GO TO WAR

INTRODUCTION

On June 26, 1942, *The Times* announced a new set of tests for the selection of officers in the British Army. These tests were to 'introduce scientific checks and balances' to the choosing of officer candidates from the ranks.¹ By the end of the war around 140,000 candidates had passed through the new War Office Selection Boards (commonly known as WOSBs).² Many of the limited number of psychiatrists working for the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) in various Army commands had been involved in months of painstaking work to devise these tests in collaboration with military staff.³ This collaboration was remarkable; the Army and the Tavistock Clinic (the organisation that supplied most of the Army's psychiatrists) were strikingly different institutions, one with a reputation for being 'hidebound' and the other for being 'outsiders' even within the discipline of psychoanalysis.

In order to reach the point where psychiatrists' ideas on officer selection were being acknowledged, let alone used, the War Office and the Army required extraordinary pressures, sustained for some time. Other historians, notably Jeremy Crang and Geoffrey Field, have described the sorts of criticisms levelled at the British Army officer selection procedure in terms of 'democratisation.' This chapter tries to pick apart in more detail what that meant, and what criticisms were levelled at the 'undemocratic' pre-existing methods. This highlights what the patrons and the public wanted from the experts making changes to officer selection, and thus helps to make sense of a) how the Tavistock group navigated or operated in networks (the subject of Chapter 2 of this thesis) and b) what methods were devised for officer selection by the Tavistock group (Chapter 3). There were social pressures to reform the Army, including widespread ridicule of its reactionary nature and the moral argument that the Army must be more democratic. Changing technology was also a factor in this, as political figures, psychologists, and folks writing letters to newspapers argued that 'modern warfare' required correspondingly 'modern' men to effectively officer the Army. Efficiency proved to be the tipping point, as economic pressures played a significant part in bringing about change. There was a chronic shortage of candidates, and an embarrassingly high failure rate at officer training for those who were selected; the Army was rapidly running out of officers. Whether this was because of the inadequacy of the methods or men choosing officer candidates, or because of the image problem of the process inhibiting men from coming forward for selection, the result was the same.

These pressures created a demand for change to the British Army, but it did not nec-

1 'Selection of Officers', *The Times* (London, England, 26 June 1942), p. 5, Gale NewsVault.

2 Jeremy A. Crang, *The British Army and the People's War, 1939-1945* (Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 33.

3 The collaborations and productions that shaped the tests themselves are the subject of Chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis.

essarily follow that these changes should be wrought by psychiatrists. In fact, other services in Britain and other nations' armies relied upon psychologists as their human experts. This chapter scrutinises the form taken by criticisms of the Army's existing officer selection procedures in order to establish what it was that they required from outside experts that led them to engage psychiatrists. In Second World War Britain, J.R. Rees of the Tavistock Clinic and some of his colleagues and supporters engaged in an active campaign on behalf of psychiatry.⁴ The psychiatrists often adopted the arguments of campaigners for change to the Army in their justifications for their own expertise and usefulness. They claimed that their work was relevant because it could address the criticisms and woes of the Army. Even counterarguments against psychological testing were used to the advantage of the psychiatrists. They argued that whilst psychologists were unsuited to officer selection, a psychiatric approach was appropriate. The science of selection was shaped before it was even begun by the practitioners themselves, their patron's needs, and also the public. Psychiatrists' work was subsequently steered by the types of arguments that had persuaded the Army to involve them in officer selection. The claims for what their discipline could do became a self-fulfilling prophecy in that they then had to deliver on the promises that they had made.

This chapter firstly traces the institutional, social, economic, and cultural contexts of the institution of the British Army in the years leading up to the Second World War in order to suggest factors that led towards changes to officer selection even before it became a pressing problem. It then explores how a variety of influences impressed the Army with the need to change their approach to officer selection, and unpicks the dominant narratives of the arguments made by the proponents of change. The final section of this paper describes how the Tavistock group (primarily J.R. Rees and his colleagues at the Tavistock Clinic) went into battle to establish their expertise and its relevance to the modern world and to the British Army. They echoed the narratives of change in their justifications for the utility of their work.

THE TAVISTOCK TAKE AN INTEREST IN WAR WORK

As detailed in the introduction to this thesis, the pre-war situation of the Tavistock made it seem unlikely that they would participate in developing large-scale psychological schemes for the Army. However, there were some early indications that the Clinic's staff might be interested in the opportunities of conducting war work. Psychological science was increasingly being employed prophylactically in mental hygiene and welfare work, and the Tavistock were also moving in this direction, which was a particular interest of J.R. Rees.⁵ In 1936, the Feversham Committee was established

⁴ For more on Rees and his Tavistock colleagues, see "Appendix B: Who's Who of Thesis" on page 205

⁵ Mathew Thomson, 'Mental Hygiene in Britain during the First Half of the Twentieth Century: The Limits of International Influence', in *International Relations in Psychiatry: Britain, Germany and the United States to World War II* (Boydell & Brewer, 2010); Jonathan Toms, *Mental Hygiene and Psychiatry in Modern Britain* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 112. Toms calls Rees a 'leading mental hygienist.'

to investigate mental health provision; this independent enquiry was run like a governmental departmental committee under the Earl of Feversham, a Parliamentary Secretary, and one of its members was Lord Alness, the Chair of the Tavistock Clinic Council. In July 1939, the Committee reported that ‘just as the understanding of the requirements of physical health has improved social conditions out of all recognition in the past 50 years, so we need now to get a practical grasp of the everyday necessities of mental health.’⁶ Trends in psychology were moving towards an improvement of social conditions and more work in improving mental health rather than treating mental illness, from the extreme to the ‘everyday.’

The Tavistock’s changing interests over the 1930s reflected this trend: the speech opening their annual luncheon in 1939 declared that ‘the progress of the Clinic had been along the lines which the Feversham Committee suggested – the exaltation of the human factor.’⁷ By the mid-1930s, the Tavistock sought ‘new laboratories for research work.’⁸ This was echoed a few years later when the official report of the Tavistock’s 1938 annual luncheon noted that ‘if the much-needed further contribution was to be made to all branches of occupational disorder, the work for which the Tavistock Clinic stood must develop at an even faster rate,’ indicating a strong interest in rapid expansion in the years immediately preceding the Second World War. The Clinic’s staff expressed an intention to investigate ‘the employer and managerial classes, for it was just as important that they should be harmoniously balanced.’⁹ They wanted to apply the ‘scientific handling of psychoneurosis’ to large-scale issues of occupational efficiency and to leaders, and officer selection was a potential way to achieve this.¹⁰

Moreover, Sir Henry Brackenbury, the newly elected Chair of the Tavistock Clinic Council, noted that expansion:

necessitated a much greater measure of financial support than the clinic had hitherto received [and] appealed to all concerned to double their efforts to secure a larger number of adherents to the cause for which the clinic worked.¹¹

Work for the British Army would likely have appealed to the Clinic because not only might it facilitate expansion into the everyday occupational conditions and social fields, but also offered financial provision to do so. By May 1939, the Minister of Health (as chief guest at the Tavistock’s annual luncheon) noted ‘the additional strain which might be placed upon the medical services in dealing with the situation that

6 ‘The Report of the Feversham Committee on the Voluntary Mental Health Services’, *The British Journal of Nursing*, 87 (1939), 206.

7 ‘The Tavistock Clinic: Minister Of Health At Luncheon’, *The British Medical Journal*, 1.4090 (1939), 1092.

8 ‘Medical Psychology: A Record of Research the Tavistock Clinic’, *The Observer* (London, United Kingdom, 13 May 1934), p. 11.

9 ‘The Tavistock Clinic: Effective Results Of Treatment’, *The British Medical Journal*, 1.4037 (1938), 1118–19.

10 ‘The Tavistock Clinic: Effective Results Of Treatment’.

11 ‘The Tavistock Clinic: Effective Results Of Treatment’; Newspaper reports from later that year indicate that the financial situation of the Clinic had become an ‘alarming prospect.’ Our London Staff, ‘Mental Illness: Tavistock Clinic’s Need of Funds’, *The Manchester Guardian* (Manchester, United Kingdom, 10 May 1938); ‘Tavistock Clinic in Difficulties’, *The Manchester Guardian* (Manchester, United Kingdom, 9 April 1938).

would arise in the event of war' and implied that the Tavistock would play a role in this work.¹² Despite the Minister's statement, the Tavistock Clinic going to war proved far from straightforward.

Some limited attempts were made to promote the idea of psychological science having military applications. The value of psychological work as a prophylactic to the British Army was discussed in the pages of medical journals. For instance psychiatrist T.A. Ross expressed concern at the effect of recruiting mentally disordered men in the letters pages of the *British Medical Journal*, garnering 18 responses in the following week's edition, including from Tavistock members Ronald Hargreaves and A.T.M. Wilson.¹³ This indicates that many psychiatrists had an interest in participating in psychological war work. Some actively sought out such work. In his autobiography, Ernest Jones, the President of the British Psycho-Analytical Society bemoaned how 'in a lethal war, in which psychological factors played a central part, the only 'psychologists' engaged by our government to advise them were advertising agents, while I accepted the post of salvage officer to my village!'¹⁴ John Bowlby, at the time an independent psychoanalyst, similarly found that his expertise was not in demand at this stage: 'I offered my services here and there but there was no response.'¹⁵ Though the psychiatrists were interested in military collaboration, the Army was not interested in psychological work.

THE PRE-WAR BRITISH ARMY

In the build-up to the Second World War, the British Army was a vastly different institution to the Tavistock Clinic in terms of attitudes. It was described as 'hidebound' and 'far more patrician... than it had been between 1914 and 1918.'¹⁶ At the outset of the Second World War, therefore, the British Army had no interest in new ideas or approaches like those offered by psychology. This was not only the perspective of outsiders. The Financial Secretary to the War Office of 1938 stated that the:

feeling of tradition in the Army is very strong and that there are traditions which the men as well as the officers cling to most jealously... the man who endeavours to modernise the Army by revolutionary methods and ignores that vital fact is an exceedingly foolhardy and rash person.¹⁷

Similarly, one senior Army figure noted in 1928 that 'drastic changes are distasteful to army experts and rightly so, while the uninitiated are too liable to hanker after quack

12 'The Tavistock Clinic: Minister Of Health At Luncheon'.

13 T. A. Ross, 'Psychological Casualties in War', *British Medical Journal*, 2.4113 (1939), 925.

14 Ernest Jones, *Free Associations: Memories of a Psychoanalyst* (Transaction Publishers, 1990), p. 118.

15 Milton Senn, 'John Bowlby Interview with Milton Senn, M.D.', *Beyond the Couch: The Online Journal of the American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work*, 2007 <http://www.beyondthecouch.org/1207/bowlby_int.htm> [accessed 4 November 2013].

16 Ernest Sackville Turner, *Gallant Gentlemen: A Portrait of the British Officer, 1600-1956* (M. Joseph, 1956), pp. 14, 295; David Cannadine, 'The Second World War', in *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy* (London: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 607.

17 'House of Commons: Orders of the Day, Supply: Army Estimates, 1938', 1938, Hansard, Series 5 Vol. 332.

medicines which their more experienced seniors regard as poison.’¹⁸ The reference to ‘quack medicines’ is interesting in relation to the aforementioned difficulties that psychologists were experiencing in differentiating between themselves and ‘quacks.’ This illustrates why even recommendations to make greater use of psychology made by government committees established to ‘learn lessons’ from the First World War were ignored. The Shell Shock Committee had published its findings in 1922, suggesting that better processes of recruitment and selection of personnel should be implemented in order to ensure mental fitness for duty (largely in order to avoid having to pay a large bill for discharge pensions due to psychological breakdown). However nothing was done in this regard in the build up to the Second World War.¹⁹

Despite the Army’s disinclination to change, the director of the Tavistock Clinic, J.R. Rees, sought out work with the military. In the spring of 1939, Rees and Alec Rodger of the NIIP wrote to the War Office to suggest that scientific selection methods should be implemented in the Army, citing recent developments in the psychological sciences – specifically those in vocational selection and aptitude testing – to support their argument.²⁰ Their suggestion was made in the context of two military-political announcements, which Rees and Rodger may have perceived as promising opportunities for the application of their work. The Military Service Act of 27th April 1939 made preparation for impending war by mandating six months of military training for all men aged 20 and 21. The implied scale of such an operation appears to inform Rees’ and Rodgers’ references to industrial psychology and to the United States Army, both of which used psychology on a large scale to improve efficiency.

The other announcement alluded to in Rees and Rodgers’ letter also concerned efficiency, both in finances and in practices. Hoping to prevent the costs incurred due to shellshock in the First World War, the Ministry of Pensions took an early hard line on psychological breakdown, announcing that breakdown with war neurosis would largely be an unacceptable justification for the granting of pensions. Rees and Rodger noted in their letter that recent research indicated that between one quarter and one third of absence from work was caused by neurotic illness. This implied that psychiatric problems would remain prevalent, even if the army refused to recognise them as a reason to pay pensions, and referred to the successful use of aptitude tests in dealing with Borstal boys, suggesting that with the right expertise, problems could be avoided.²¹ Their arguments, at this stage, were not compelling: the response was complete silence.

Even when proposed by soldiers, psychology held no appeal for the British Army in the early years of the Second World War. General Sir Andrew Thorne had been Mil-

18 G. V. Breffit, ‘The Army Officer Problem’, *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, 73 (1928), p. 794.

19 John Rawlings Rees, ‘Three Years of Military Psychiatry in the United Kingdom’, *The British Medical Journal*, 4278 (1943), p. 1.

20 Robert H. Ahrenfeldt, *Psychiatry in the British Army in the Second World War* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1958), p. 31.

21 Ahrenfeldt.

itary Attaché in Berlin from 1932, and had ‘the distinction of being the only serving British officer who had seen the German army officer selection work in progress,’ having witnessed the psychological testing of soldiers that had begun in Germany in 1927. The British Army’s disinterest in applying any such tests was clear when, on his return to Britain, Thorne ‘had pressed the authorities to start some similar work in the British Army, but the suggestion was turned down and he was told, ‘[Thorne] – you’re the bloody Freud of the British Army!’ Many high-level military minds clearly still associated any form of psychology with Freud and taboos, and thus its use for selection was explosively rejected at this point.

Despite the lack of initial interest in Rees and Rodgers’ proposal that psychological expertise should be used by the Army to select men, some limited psychological provision was made for war. In March 1939, Rees was appointed the Consultant to the Army at Home, one of the two roles created for psychiatrists. Nafsika Thalassis has explained that whilst the Tavistock’s controversial psychotherapeutic approach might appear to make Rees an unusual candidate for ‘the most prestigious psychiatric job in the Army,’ it can be explained by his personal network and credentials, as well as that of his Tavistock colleagues.²² Rees had worked for years with the Ministry of Pensions as their Neurological Specialist, and had worked in the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) during the First World War, which likely helped him to secure his nomination for the Army role from the Royal College of Physicians. When war was declared, Rees’ role became active and he was commissioned with the rank of Colonel. Rees recalled that at this time ‘I was the only... representative of psychiatry in the British Army.’²³ Though this seemed unpromising, it provided Rees and his colleagues at the Tavistock Clinic with the opportunity of an official and almost unrivalled position from which to make recommendations and shape the type of psychology adopted by the British Army.

Rees’ personality was an important factor both in getting him his commission and in securing roles for his colleagues. His colleagues believed that Rees had a ‘genius for ‘roping in’ lay support’ and noted that he followed the Tavistock Clinic’s creator Hugh Crichton-Miller in ‘managing to enlist the constant and enthusiastic support of the kind of representatives of the community who carried weight and were also regarded as guarantors of the Clinic’s own respectability and integrity.’²⁴ If anyone was capable of establishing a connection between the British Army and the Tavistock Clinic, it was likely to be Rees. One of the useful connections that Rees possessed was with MP Sir Francis Fremantle and with the Parliamentary Medical Committee, and he was thus able to arrange to have questions asked in Parliament about the state of Army psy-

22 Nafsika Thalassis, ‘Treating and Preventing Trauma: British Military Psychiatry during the Second World War’ (University of Salford, 2004), pp. 83–84, University of Salford Institutional Repository.

23 John Rawlings Rees, ‘Untitled Typescript’, 1966, pp. 1–2, The National Archives, Kew, WO 32/13462.

24 Henry Dicks, ‘John Rawlings Rees’, *Munk’s Roll: Lives of the Fellows* (Royal College of Physicians, 2009), 387 <<http://munksroll.rcplondon.ac.uk/Biography/Details/3726>> [accessed 14 May 2014]; H. V. Dicks, p. 37.

chiatry.²⁵ The answers revealed publicly that ‘the recommendations of the War Office Committee of 1922, based on the experience of the last war, regarding the prevention and treatment of nervous disorders’ had largely been ignored and that only two men had been hired.²⁶ The point was pressed in February 1940, when Oliver Stanley was asked about psychological specialists. Harold Boyce queried: ‘Will the right hon. Gentleman ensure that these men are not lost, as many of our most distinguished specialists were in the last war, in doing general services?’²⁷ Boyce was placing psychological practitioners on a par with other scientists; he referred to the hue and cry in the previous war about the Army’s failure to utilise expertise and in doing so he suggested that greater use should be made of psychological specialists.²⁸ Dr Raymond Fosdick, President of the Rockefeller Foundation, similarly referred to the ‘ghastly sacrifice’ of scientists in the First World War and the hoped that Tavistock Clinic would be able to continue in their specialist work. The *BMJ* also referred to the Tavistock in a concerned article on ‘Black-Out in Intellectual Europe.’²⁹ Allies such as this, pressing for greater use of psychology by the British Army, helped Rees to strengthen his position; he was able to recruit psychiatrists (mostly chosen from his colleagues at the Tavistock) to Army Commands.³⁰

THE OFFICER PROBLEM

The British Army was reluctant to use psychologists, so pressure had to be sustained and intense in order to overcome their aversion to change and for them to consider making significant use of the ideas and methods of a group as marginal as the Tavistock. The sustained and intense pressure that spurred change in the Army was applied to the matter of officer selection. Politicians and public figures were joined by a cacophony of voices in newspaper articles and letters pages arguing that the way the British Army chose its officers needed an overhaul. Modernity and democracy (often intertwined) emerge as the dominant features of these arguments, reflecting a widespread (though contested) belief that British society and politics needed updating in order to function more efficiently, win the war, and to succeed in the longer term.

Concerns about ‘The Army Officer Problem’ were discussed within military circles in the pages of the *Journal of the Royal United Services Institution* back in 1928. Major G.V. Breffit noted ‘the danger of a shortage of officers in the future... especially in these

25 Eric Trist and Hugh Murray, ‘Historical Overview: The Foundation and Development of the Tavistock Institute’, in *The Social Engagement of Social Science: The Socio-Psychological Perspective* (London: Free Association Books, 1990); ‘Medical Notes in Parliament (March 1939)’; ‘Medical Notes In Parliament’, *The British Medical Journal*, 1.4130 (1940), 371–72.

26 ‘House of Commons Written Answers: Nervous Disorders (Treatment)’, 1939, Hansard, Series 5 Vol. 355.

27 ‘House of Commons Debate: Psychological Specialists’, 1940, Hansard, cc 1892-3.

28 Elizabeth Bruton, “‘Sacrifice of a Genius’: Henry Moseley’s Role as a Signals Officer in World War One”, *Royal Society Television*, 2013 <<http://royalsociety.tv/rsPlayer.aspx?presentationid=1145>> [accessed 21 October 2013].

29 Raymond B. Fosdick, ‘Night over Europe’, *The Scientific Monthly*, 51.4 (1940), 365–68; ‘Black-Out In Intellectual Europe’, *The British Medical Journal*, 1.4144 (1940), 935.

30 See “Appendix D: Map of Psychiatric Services in SecondWorld War Britain” on page 223, and “Appendix E: Command Psychiatrists & Commanding Officers” on page 224.

days when families providing the type required are so small.’³¹ He suggested alterations to the selection procedures and more regular promotions. Breffit’s reference to ‘families providing the type required’ indicate the degree to which selection of potential officers had been governed nepotistically, with the ‘right’ families and schools providing the majority of officer candidates. Historian Jeremy Crang has noted that:

During the First World War the expansion of the army and the high officer casualty rate ensured that the service was forced to cast its social net wider and deeper than ever before in the search for potential officers. The officer corps continued to be drawn between the wars, however, from a narrow segment of society.³²

This segment of society was less aristocratic than it had been, but continued to be drawn from elite circles.

With the introduction of conscription, the lack of officers became especially problematic, and officer cadet training units (OCTUs) were rapidly established to train men to officer the Army. The selection of candidates to attend OCTUs involved the recommendation of a candidate by his commanding officer and then an interview by a senior officer who would decide on his suitability. This method was favoured by the Army as ‘simple and traditional,’ qualities that were entirely in line with the Army’s nature.³³ Based on their experience, ‘commanding officers had been given the ‘magic eye’ to select their officer slates.’ It was believed, however, that this meant officers ‘were predisposed to replicate themselves’ and that ‘family background, school, accent, and social skills counted much more than intelligence, temperament, or capacity for leadership.’³⁴ The favouring of particular schools caused this method to be dubbed the ‘old school tie’ method of selection. By the late 1930s, scholarships for cadet colleges had been introduced, but in 1939 more than 85 per cent of cadet college entrants were from public schools.³⁵ This method was criticised on three fronts: firstly, it was seen as undemocratic, against the war’s anti-authoritarian purposes; secondly, it was seen as outdated and overlooking men more suited to ‘modern’ technological warfare, and finally, from a practical point of view, it was seen as highly inefficient, meaning that there was a great deal of time and money wasted and capable men were denied the opportunity of fulfilling their potential, holding the Army back.

BLIMPS AND BRASS HATS

Emotive arguments in Parliament and the press for changing officer selection methods highlighted the moral aspect of officer selection. They raised the idea that the British Army was hypocritical to fight for democracy whilst so profoundly invested in the class-linked public school system as a method of choosing its officers. National

31 Breffit, p. 787.

32 Crang, p. 21.

33 Geoffrey Hayes, ‘Science and the Magic Eye: Innovations in the Selection of Canadian Army Officers, 1939-1945’, *Armed Forces & Society*, 22.2 (1995), 275–95 (p. 276).

34 Geoffrey G. Field, *Blood, Sweat, and Toil: Remaking the British Working Class, 1939-1945* (Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 262.

35 Crang, p. 22.

morals and national morale were closely linked in this rhetoric, which suggested that the existing system produced an undemocratic Army that was not only un-British but also harmful to the war effort because it divided the British at a time that they needed to be united against Hitler.

Before the war began, politicians had taken issue with the methods of officer selection as being unsuited to British ideals. Back in 1938, attempts had been made to 'democratise the army,' particularly in relation to its officers, by the then Secretary of State for War, Leslie Hore-Belisha. This largely involved introducing scholarships, reducing officers' costs of living, and removal of old officers. Even at the time, this was not seen as sufficiently democratising, particularly for those on the left of the political spectrum. Labour MP Jack Lawson argued that 'merit should be the future test for officers, irrespective of class, family or the walk of life to which men belong... new standards are being thrust upon us by new conditions.'³⁶ His colleague, Joseph Batey, went to far as to request the amendment of the Parliamentary Question to add 'in the opinion of this House, the present Army system... under which officer commissions are almost wholly reserved for the sons of the well-to-do is out of date in a democratic country.'³⁷ John Parker added that 'We believe that this is a democratic country and should be defended by a democratic Army.'³⁸ Though critical of existing forms of selection, these men did not specify what alternative methods they would prefer, leaving an opportunity for psychologists like Rees and Rodger to propose their methods. Although their initial approach in the War Office letter was unsuccessful, they did not give up.

In 1940, Hore-Belisha's reforms returned to the spotlight with his resignation. Neville Chamberlain was forced to address rumours of a conspiracy:

It has been suggested that my right hon. Friend's resignation was connected with, or was the result of, a battle between him and certain high officers, vaguely described as 'Brass Hats,' over the system of promotion in the Army.³⁹

After denying that old-fashioned Army leaders had deposed the Secretary of State for War due to his modernisation of officer selection (amongst other changes), Chamberlain then reassured politicians that 'there is no intention of changing the process of the democratisation of the Army. I think-we ought to get that absolutely specifically.'⁴⁰ This controversy and rumours of conspiracy were seen as damaging to national morale and therefore requiring a statement on behalf of the Prime Minister to explicitly dispell them, such were their importance. Hore-Belisha's changes were seen as a first step in democratisation of the Army, but there was a pronounced desire for a new way to find suitable officers that did not rely upon their educational background. The pressure upon the Army to continue to democratise their system of promotion was present even in the very early stages of the war, and was a cross-party view. The Con-

36 'Army Estimates, 1938'.

37 'Army Estimates, 1938'.

38 'Army Estimates, 1938'.

39 'House of Commons Debate: War Situation', 1940, col. 34-45, Hansard, Series 5 Vol. 356.

40 'War Situation'.

servative politician Charles Bathurst, the first Viscount Bledisloe, wrote to *The Times* to advocate:

breaking down what remains of privilege and patronage, based upon relative affluence, to consolidate our social structure on the foundation of a common patriotism, with resulting contentment and mutual confidence... Democracy, as you truly say, connotes 'not merely the right to vote but the right to work.'⁴¹

He implied that men had 'the right' to take the role most suited to them and suggested that this would improve patriotism and morale.

The new Secretary of State for War, Mr Oliver Stanley, was pressed by Clement Attlee and others to provide statistics on the educational backgrounds of candidates for commissions. He was also grilled on whether prospective candidates' educational history was included in the written notes kept on them, as it was implied that this was affecting decisions as to their suitability as officers.⁴² Stanley noted the vicious circle that he found himself in, whereby he was expected to keep track of candidates' backgrounds to record how democratic officer selection was, but that commanding officers were not trusted with information on candidates' educational histories lest they become biased against them. This situation provided support for the psychologists' approach, as they were outsiders not invested in the 'old school tie' method who could therefore potentially be trusted with the controversial information.

Views on morality and morale were expressed outside of Parliament too. Under the headline 'Isn't this what we're fighting for?' Emrys Jones discussed 'a controversy which has been taking place in the correspondence columns of one of our national newspapers.'⁴³ The instigator of this explosion in the officer selection debate was an Army man. Lieutenant-Colonel R.C. Bingham created a furore when he wrote to *The Times* to argue that the process of selection should not be changed because the 'old school tie' was perfectly suited to producing officers. He believed that 'the middle, lower middle, and working classes... unlike the old aristocratic and feudal (almost) classes who led the old Army, have never had 'their people' to consider.'⁴⁴ His letter was all the more scandalous because Bingham was a prominent member of 168 Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU).

Some readers considered that Bingham was ruining the Army with his bias but others felt that he knew what he was talking about. There were many supporters of Bingham, from those who considered that the public schoolboy 'will make a natural manager of men... he knows instinctively that their care is his first consideration, just as a good sportsman sees to his horse after a day's hunting before he has his own hot bath' to those who wrote to newspapers to express that 'I believe with Colonel Bingham in

41 Bledisloe, 'The New Europe: Democracy and "The Golden Mean"', *The Times* (London, England, 3 July 1940), p. 5, Gale NewsVault.

42 'War Situation'.

43 Emrys Jones, 'Isn't This What We're Fighting For?', *Daily Mail*, 24 January 1941, p. 2, Daily Mail Historical Archive.

44 R. C. Bingham, 'Man Management', *The Times* (London, England, 15 January 1941), p. 5, Gale NewsVault.

MAN MANAGEMENT

JUNIOR OFFICERS OF THE NEW ARMIES

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir,—The authorities who govern the Army and, indeed, all senior officers, are rightly and justly worried about one of the aspects of life in our new armies. That aspect is known as man management, and man management is chiefly the responsibility of the junior officers—the company and platoon commanders. The subject embraces not only the physical but the mental and moral welfare of the soldier—and the word moral is not here used in the customary “goodie-goodie” sense.

Two or three weeks ago a Sunday newspaper published an address by the Prime Minister given to Harrow School on the subject of the character training acquired by the boys at the older public schools and completely justifying the human product which cheap music-hall artists have jeered at and labelled the old school tie. Never was the old school tie and the best that it stands for more justified than it is to-

day. Our new armies are being officered by classes of society who are new to the job. The middle, lower middle, and working classes are now receiving the King's commission. These classes, unlike the old aristocratic and feudal (almost) classes who led the old Army, have never had “their people” to consider. They have never had anyone to think of but themselves. This aspect of life is completely new to them, and they have very largely fallen down on it in their capacity as Army officers.

It is not that they do not wish to carry out this part of their duties properly, but rather that they do not know how to begin. Man management is not a subject which can be “taught”; it is an attitude of mind, and with the old school tie men this was instinctive and part of the philosophy of life. These new young officers will be just as brave and technically efficient, but they have been reared in an atmosphere in which the State spoon feeds everybody from cradle to grave, and no one feels any responsibility for his fellow men. This, Sir, is a sad reflection on our educational system.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
R. C. BINGHAM, Lieutenant-Colonel,
168 O.C.T.U.

Other Letters will be found on page 7

the principle of ‘noblesse oblige.’⁴⁵

However, a great many others believed that a change was required. They saw men such as Bingham as relics, whose views:

would have startled Napoleon and his marshals

FIGURE 1: Colonel Bingham's letter to *The Times*, 15 January, 1941, © Gale Newsvault.

a hundred and fifty years ago. Forty years ago it would have startled Both and De Wet, whose successful resistance to an army still preserving the character to which Colonel Bingham looks back so wistfully excited the admiration of Europe.⁴⁶

As well as bringing a great deal of wrath upon himself from the public, Bingham had also broken Army regulations in expressing his views publicly, leading MP Malcolm Macmillan to pronounce in the House of Commons that:

not only has this officer aroused a storm of protest—certainly a justified storm—among officers at least as able as he is and more gentlemanly—[HON. MEMBERS: “Order.”]—I withdraw the last words—but he has also used the name of the Prime Minister and quoted his speech in support of his views.⁴⁷

As far as Macmillan and others were concerned, Bingham had broken King's Regulations, upset officers, and contributed to impressions of the British Army as class-ridden and hidebound. The Secretary of State for War was bombarded with up to thirty Parliamentary Questions per week on officer selection in mid-1941, suggesting that concerns about selection were widespread and exacerbated by Bingham's letter.⁴⁸ Bingham's letter therefore (ironically) contributed to the Army's need to address such impressions by altering their officer selection procedures.

Opponents of Bingham emotively linked the democratising of the forces with the aims of the war: ‘the class view, whether it comes from above or below, has no place in the fight against HITLER. We are all in it together.’⁴⁹ Likewise, Jones argued that

45 Gerard F.T. Leather, ‘Sir-Lieutenant-Colonel R. C. Bingham's’, *The Times* (London, England, 21 January 1941), p. 5; Mary E. Brooke, ‘Letters to the Editor’, *The Manchester Guardian* (Manchester, United Kingdom, 29 January 1941), p. 10, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

46 ‘The Feudal Army’, *The Manchester Guardian* (Manchester, United Kingdom, 17 January 1941), p. 4, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

47 ‘House of Commons Debate: Communication to Press (Lieut.-Colonel Bingham)’, 1941, col. 15–17, Hansard, Series 5 Vol. 368.

48 Ben Morris, ‘Officer Selection in the British Army 1942-1945’, *Occupational Psychology*, 23 (1949), 219–34 (p. 220).

49 ‘Leaders of Men’, *Daily Mail* (London, England, 16 January 1941), p. 2, Gale NewsVault.

'the simple liberal proposition that men should have equal opportunities is one of the things we surely are fighting for against the German idea of the master class and the master race.' Like many others, he believed that the Army should reflect the ideals for which the war was being fought and believed that it was hypocritical to choose officers based on bloodlines when decrying the Nazis for desiring to order the world in the same fashion. The *Daily Mail* even suggested that the 'old school tie' method of selection was based on outdated German procedures: 'our Army began to copy the iron methods of the Prussian FREDERICK... caste barriers were erected.'⁵⁰ Those who resisted change to officer selection were implied to think like the enemy, only worse; their politics coloured their views. The Army needed to be seen to be removing the power from men like Bingham and introducing a more objective method.

Jones and others such as soldier Alan Wood (writing under the pseudonym 'Boomerang' so as not to break the same King's Regulations that Bingham had) suggested that it did not matter whether those resistant to changing officer selection *actually did* think like the Germans. They suggested that whether or not the officer selection procedures implied 'fascist sympathies' on the part of those invested in this system, the effect of people believing that this was the case was damaging. For Emrys Jones, the moral matter gained a degree of urgency precisely because of the war and the effect on the morale of the nation that such class conflict had:

Now we could leave those gentlemen to argue in peace in their newspaper if such arguments did not encourage movements in the fields and factories that are likely to hinder the conduct of the war.⁵¹

He believed that the working class and their work in production and supply were vital to the war effort, reflecting the idea that morale on the home front was key in the modern war machine: 'it is the man (and, increasingly, the woman) who makes the machines that is the factor upon whom in the long run all depends.'⁵² Jones acknowledged the effect that the debate over class in the Army had on his own morale, saying 'If I understood that [such] views were accepted by the majority of our lords and masters I should join the peace party to-day.' The idea that the public might become politicised and refuse to support the war any longer if they became too dissatisfied with what they perceived to be happening in the Army was also a concern of the Americans. They were concerned that the class of officers agitated the working class troops and 'threaten[ed] the whole organisation [of the Army] with disunity.'⁵³ As Hew Strachan has noted: 'the wartime conscript soldiers were more class conscious and generally better educated than their predecessors and were to look much more sceptically on the privileges of rank and the autocratic style of leadership that characterised the Army.'⁵⁴ In this 'people's war,' the people needed to be pacified. Pressure came from within government and from the press and from abroad to

50 'Leaders of Men (Jan)'.

51 Emrys Jones.

52 'Morale On The Home Front', *The British Medical Journal*, 1.4245 (1942), 612.

53 Field, p. 264.

54 Hew Strachan, 'The British Army as a Social Institution', in *The British Army, Manpower, and Society Into the Twenty-First Century* (Frank Cass, 2000), p. 22.

improve the perception of the class balance of the officer corps. As Jones hinted, the problem for the Army was as much about what was 'understood' as what was truly the case; the problem of officer selection was in part one of public relations and the image of the Army.

The idea of old-fashioned and reactionary 'brass hats' officering the British Army was so well-recognised that it was represented (and lampooned) in wartime popular culture via 'Colonel Blimp.' Blimp was a character depicted by cartoonist David Low 'as a rotund pompous ex-officer voicing a rooted hatred of new ideas.'⁵⁵ Like Blimp, those who were obtaining commissions even under Hore-Belisha's democratisation measures were often derided as belonging to a previous era of 'polished cross-straps, swagger canes, long haircuts, and Mayfair moustaches.'⁵⁶ Defenders of the old school tie method queried whether psychologists and psychiatrists would have recognised great military talents of times gone by. Lord Belhaven believed that:

They would almost certainly have failed Lawrence of Arabia. Nelson and the Duke of Wellington would have had a rough time with them and Alexander the Great would have had no hope at all.⁵⁷

However, would-be-modernisers countered that the carbon copies of old-fashioned officers were terrible, believing that interviewing officers were so blind to talents



wrapped in lower class accents or clothes that 'if he cannot get the genuine ex-public school boy, he will get the best imitation in the market.'⁵⁸ In *Gallant Gentlemen: A Portrait of the British Officer 1600-1956*, E.S. Turner described the interwar period as 'The Age of Blimp,' demonstrating how a view of British officers as homogenous Blimps came to define the interwar and early Second World War officer class.⁵⁹

The Army was aware of these views and, in

55 '(Colonel) Blimp, N', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2013) <<http://www.oed.com.chain.kent.ac.uk/view/Entry/409383>> [accessed 4 November 2013].

56 National Archives (Washington), OSS Research and Analysis Report 617, 'Morale in the British Armed Forces,' 21 March 1942, as quoted in Field, p. 264.

57 Lord Robert Alexander Benjamin Hamilton Belhaven, *The Uneven Road* (John Murray Ltd, 1955), p. 264.

58 Boomerang (pseud.), *Bless 'Em All: An Analysis of the Morale, Efficiency and Leadership of the British Army* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1942), p. 52.

59 Turner.

some quarters, concerned about them. In late 1940, the Commander-in-Chief Home Forces, Sir Alan Brooke, worried that 'it has become far too much a habit to run down Generals and the Army in the press.'⁶⁰ Brooke feared that the morale of Britons would be harmed if they thought that those in charge of the war were incompetent. The Army was regularly ridiculed in the popular media in a way that the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force (RAF) never were. Trenchard, an Honorary Major-General, wrote that he was 'somewhat perturbed at the trend of discussion on the selection of the officers for the Army... I have heard little such discussion in regard to the Royal Navy or the Royal Air Force.'⁶¹ Trenchard implied that it should not matter which class officers were comprised of as long as they were good at their jobs.

For others, though, it very much mattered what class the Army leaders were drawn from, because a lack of officers from other classes suggested that capable men were not being used because of prejudice and snobbishness. Meritocracy, democracy, and success were equated. *The Daily Mail* carried an editorial comparing the Army with the other forces in regards to democracy, arguing that:

The RAF are the most democratic of the fighting Services, and no one can say they are the least successful... under the Air Training Scheme suitable boys are to be taken from anywhere to be made into air officers. They are British. That is their qualification.⁶²

Colonel Walter Elliot, the Director of Public Relations at the War Office, wrote to *The Times* in an attempt to reassure readers that 'it is a source of pride to be able to confirm the facts that our Army is "the Army of the whole people," and that Army officers are chosen on exactly the principle which Lord Trenchard so rightly advocates... solely on merit.'⁶³ He implied that as well as being valuable in its own right, merit was spread throughout all classes, and that merit was therefore a democratic thing to use as the basis for selecting officers. Because of this juxtaposition of merit and privilege, and the association between merit, democracy and success, the Army was pressured to *demonstrate* that it had adjusted its officer selection procedure to measure merit. The problems of national morals and national morale were expressed as problems of perception and attitudes towards the Army. In the early years of the war in the face of the German *Blitzkrieg* the British Army badly needed the British people to believe that it had the best officers it could get and therefore the potential to succeed.

PSYCHOLOGY, PSYCHIATRY, AND THE IMAGE OF THE ARMY

Psychological experts drew on their image as 'objective' scientists to suggest that they could impartially choose officers, and thus improve the image of the Army by

60 Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, Alan Brooke MS 5.3, diary entry, 26 Nov. 1940, as quoted in David French, 'Colonel Blimp and the British Army: British Divisional Commanders in the War against Germany, 1939-1945', *The English Historical Review*, 111.444 (1996), 1182-1201 (p. 1183).

61 Major-General Trenchard, 'Choice Of Officers', *The Times* (London, England, 13 March 1941), p. 5, Gale NewsVault.

62 'Leaders of Men (Jan)'.
63 Walter Elliot, 'Choice Of Officers', *The Times* (London, England, 15 March 1941), p. 5, Gale NewsVault.

replacing a biased system with a fair one. Such claims were made on behalf of all psychological scientists: the same blurred lines between the psychological disciplines which had been problematic for the Tavistock group in the interwar period provided opportunities during wartime. War provided the potential for huge amounts of work, more than enough to go around the various groups of psychologists of one leaning or another. With the competition for resources mitigated, psychologists therefore co-operated, supporting each other in justifying their expertise, as demonstrated by the letter co-authored by Rodger from the NIIP and Rees from the Tavistock. They all advocated for their 'science' generally as shown by Charles Myer's article 'Psychology in War,' which promoted the 'practical applications of psychology.'⁶⁴ As well as discussing occupational guidance and factory training schools, which were his own speciality, Myers also stated that 'the medical side is important' despite being a (non-medical) psychologist rather than a (medical) psychiatrist himself. This worked to the advantage of psychiatrists such as the Tavistock group, lending their work the legitimacy of their more respectable peers.

Psychologists and psychiatrists alike drew upon the legitimacy of the established and widely-accepted psychological method of paper tests of mental ability, or intelligence tests as they were commonly known.⁶⁵ Some of the earliest forays that the Tavistock psychiatrists made into selecting men were based upon the use of psychological tests of ability and intelligence. Such tests formed part of long-accepted practice in America and Germany, and offered to measure 'merit,' the basic element that supposedly made good officers regardless of class. Psychiatrists argued that their tests were linked with mental ability ('merit') rather than education ('privilege'). Whilst all psychological specialists argued that their mental tests measured basic ability, the psychiatrists took steps to particularly develop non-verbal tests so that they could defend against the idea that a reading level (linked with education) affected a man's performance.⁶⁶ By offering such 'objective' tests, they catered to the specific needs of the Army to deal with the perception of class-bias.

Morale was also a field in which psychologists had established expertise. Before the war, psychiatrist John Rickman had published a series of articles in *The Lancet* on related topics 'and was often quoted in newspapers, having a considerable influence on contemporary medical and lay opinion.'⁶⁷ Rees also described work by Army psychiatrists on the 'multitudinous aspects of morale.'⁶⁸ Other medics accepted that morale fell within the psychiatrists' remit, noting in a 1942 article in the *British Medical Journal* on 'Morale on the Home Front' that 'the fundamental problems are psychological.'⁶⁹ The Army also appeared to accept this argument from

64 Charles S. Myers, 'Psychology in War: Its Uses in the Forces and Industry', *The Manchester Guardian* (Manchester, United Kingdom, 22 April 1941).

65 This term was not always accurate according to the psychologists developing the tests, and was publicly contested as discussed in Chapter 3.

66 Rees, 'Three Years of Military Psychiatry in the United Kingdom', p. 3.

67 Michal Shapira, *The War Inside* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 54.

68 Rees, 'Three Years of Military Psychiatry in the United Kingdom', p. 6.

69 'Morale On The Home Front'.

the psychiatrists, noting in a War Office memorandum on Army Psychiatry that it was the duty of psychiatrists to prevent breakdowns by training medical officers in the maintenance of morale and discipline and discussing the psychiatric aspects of morale with regimental and staff officers.⁷⁰ As Thalassis has observed, 'psychiatrists therefore were asked to advise other officers, sometimes their superiors, on how best to conduct this work;' they were recognised as experts in the maintenance of morale.⁷¹ The Army had a particular need to deal with poor morale in relation to officer selection; who better to remedy morale problems in this specific area than those who advised the Army on morale generally?

Rees' psychiatrists were particularly well-placed to represent themselves as objective outsiders who could view officer candidates impartially, without the class-prejudice that commanding officers were believed to have. They were able to call upon their moral authority as medics: Rees observed that 'the psychiatric interview has always been regarded as a medical matter and consequently as something confidential.'⁷² Men believed that they could divulge information (such as the toxic educational information) to psychiatrists. Soldiers accepted the view of psychiatrists as separate and as defending their interests against the Army's Blimps. For instance, *The Fighting Services* magazine published a story which concluded with the two officers toasting the psychiatrist, saying 'A catfish in the tank keeps the rest of us fish on the jump and in good fettle -besides he got rid of old Blimp for us!'⁷³ The psychiatrist's methods were presented as uncovering real underlying ability and not being taken in by 'superficial smartness,' and also as driving away the Blimpish and hidebound to the advantage of the honest soldier.

Historians such as Crang and Field have spent much time discussing whether or not the psychiatrists methods *were* impartial, objective, and democratising. However, this is almost to miss the point of the type of pressure upon the Army; they had an image problem and needed to be *seen* to change. From an Army perspective it was not necessarily important whether or not the methods actually achieved this, only whether the common man believed that they had.

As well as arguments about how psychological science generally could help to democratise the Army and improve its standing, specific arguments related to impartiality were deployed in support of psychiatrists' particular approach. Their standing as medics and the particular efforts that they went to separate ability from education were part of the reason why psychiatric knowledge was suited to the British Army's particular concerns.

70 Stafford Cripps, 'Use of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services - Enquiry by Lord Privy Seal', 1942, The National Archives, Kew.

71 Thalassis, p. 87.

72 John Rawlings Rees, *The Shaping of Psychiatry by War* (W. W. Norton, Incorporated, 1945), p. 74.

73 F Ambroso, 'The Trick-Cyclist', *The Fighting Services*, 1942, 156-58; as quoted in Thalassis, p. 97.

MAKING A MODERN ARMY

Democratisation of officer selection methods and modernity often went hand-in-hand, rhetorically. In 1938, Labour MP John Parker stated: 'I believe that unless we have a democratic Army, we cannot have a proper modern Army.'⁷⁴ The 'old' part of the 'old school tie' was seen as problematic, and critics believed that only by rejecting the old methods could a modern war be won.

Britain was compared unfavourably to America and Germany where, it was observed, psychological methods 'have been in use in the German Army and in the American Army for some time.'⁷⁵ America was held up as an example of progress and success, which had long recognised when to use expertise: 'In 1917, as soon as America joined the Allies, the first thing she did was to mobilise her psychologists... what was started by America... Germany has been copying and steadily developing for more than ten years.'⁷⁶ Although critics sought to distance Britain from undemocratic Germany, they recognised that the Nazis had achieved some rapid and impressive early victories in the war because their 'psychologists make effective use of science.'⁷⁷ Authors such as Alan Wood argued that the very sort of British 'code' prized by traditionalists such as Bingham were what made orthodox officer types so unsuitable for modern war. He observed that:

Hitler ignored the hereditary principle and chose his generals from clever go-getters. Our Old Etonian brasshats were as helpless before these German generals in the fields of battle as our Old Etonian diplomats were before a thorough-going crook like Ribbentrop in the fields of diplomacy. For these Germans didn't play the game. They broke the rules taught on the playing fields of Eton.⁷⁸

The idea of 'playing field' war harked back to Henry Newbolt's *Vitai Lampada*, a famous poem that encouraged men to 'play the game' of war. This view was disowned even by the poet himself by 1925, after the disillusionment of the First World War.⁷⁹ The idea of men trained for warfare on the rugby or cricket pitch as they had been in 1892 when Newbolt wrote his poem hinted that the 'brasshats' were woefully out of date, with mindsets mired back in the naïve times of the Boer War. This old 'code,' of sportsmanship, Wood suggested, was out of date in a globalised world where others did not 'play the game.' By doing things differently, it was suggested that Germany and America were both more modern and more successful.

As the character of Blimp suggests, people considered that the Army was led by men who could not fathom how to fight a modern war. Low was apparently inspired to create Blimp after overhearing 'two military men sweating in a Turkish bath talking

74 'Army Estimates, 1938'.

75 'House of Commons Debate: Captain Margesson's Statement', 1942, col. 1928, Hansard, vol 377, cc 1924-99.

76 Cyril Burt, 'Psychology in War-Time', *The Spectator* (London, 20 August 1942), pp. 6-7.

77 'German Army Psychologists Make Effective Use of Science', *The Science News-Letter*, 39.14 (1941), 213.

78 Boomerang (pseud.).

79 Paul Gerhard Buchloh, *Literatur in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* (Englisches Seminar der Universität Kiel, 2003), p. 140.

about how cavalry officers should be able to wear their spurs inside tanks.⁸⁰ This anecdote demonstrates Low's belief in the extreme resistance of the British Army to modernisation even when confronted by significant technological change. Clinging to the cavalry and its accoutrements was one of the features of 'Blimp' officers that was ridiculed by people like Low. A 'modern' Army was one that used cutting edge technology; critics of existing officer selection methods suggested that the sort of men being selected with their 'swagger canes' were too old-fashioned to devise tactics for new weapons. Whilst the idea of 'Blimp' running the Army was a caricature, it reflected widely held views. A Mass Observation study discovered that nearly half of respondents thought that British Army leadership were behind the times and some even believed that 'they'd fight tanks and bren guns with swords and shields, if they had half a chance.'⁸¹ The public echoed the idea that the sort of people leading the Army were impeding the course of the war by resisting new technology.

During the First World War, the adoption of planes and submarines by the military brought about a corresponding adoptance of psychological investigations to choose the people best fitted to operate these devices. Henry Head carried out investigations of sensation in pilots, and at 'HMS Crystal Palace' 'when the submarine menace was at its height and new listening devices for submarine detection were invented,' Bartlett, Charles Myers (who would later co-found the NIIP), T.H. Pear, and others worked in a laboratory for the selection and training of listeners.⁸² These psychologists had helped to establish a precedent for the human sciences being used to improve the waging of technological warfare that both they and their peers at the Tavistock called upon to support their claims to expertise during the Second World War. As the idea of the 'submarine menace' being 'at its height' implies, these claims were often linked with the idea of urgency or desperation, when every drop of capability needed to be wrung from servicemen. Similarly, during the Second World War, it was argued that 'in these critical days there is simply no room for favouritism... the right officer must be found.'⁸³

In the Second World War, the notion that a technological change demanded a human or societal change was prevalent. The argument that modern technology required modern minds to lead men in its efficient use had been accepted by the other forces, who were seen as having 'adapted' to modern 'democratic' warfare far better than the Army. In the build-up to the Second World War, the RAF and the Royal Navy were swift to (re-)establish psychological investigations into who could best operate their high-tech equipment. In 1937, for instance, Bartlett was publishing on the relevance of psychology to 'any military Air Force' in the *Royal Air Force Quarterly*. He first published 'a general survey,' followed by papers on 'interests, temperament,

80 'Century's "Best Cartoonist" on Show', *BBC*, 8 May 2002, section UK Politics <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/1974819.stm> [accessed 4 November 2013].

81 WO 193/423, Mass Observation, Civilian opinion of Army Leadership, 14 Aug. 1941, as quoted in French, p. 1183.

82 Hearnshaw, p. 248.

83 Major-Gen. J. H. Beith, 'Leaders of Men', *Daily Mail* (London, England, 4 February 1941), p. 1, Gale NewsVault.

character,' and 'interviewing and some remarks on training.'⁸⁴

Similarly, in a paper on 'The Mechanization of the Navy,' from 1938, Admiral Sir Reginald H.S. Bacon argued that 'specialist personnel' were a necessity; 'In these days it is difficult to over-estimate the mental equipment desirable in an officer, especially an Admiral. The belief, sound enough in bygone days, that gallantry only was required to win an action is, in these days, a pernicious doctrine.'⁸⁵ Bacon's reference to 'mental equipment' uses a mechanical metaphor that invokes the idea both of mechanized war and of a war in which every possible resource was mobilised, a prevalent strand in the rhetoric of would-be officer selection modernisers. They argued that the 'war machine' needed all of its constituent parts, including the operators of various arms, to be carefully selected and tested.

The success of the Navy and the RAF in promoting modern officers who had the capacity to command modern technology was contrasted with the Army's failures. As one contemporary critic noted:

When Low created his great comic character, he christened him Colonel Blimp: it would have been unthinkable to call him Admiral Blimp or Wing-Commander Blimp. Nobody would laugh at a stupid admiral who was hazy on the principles of modern navigation, and regretted the passing of sailing ships. Or at a wing-commander who did not understand how a machine heavier than air could fly, and thought that balloons would be better. But everybody accepts as a stock figure of fun – and of fact – the colonel... who doesn't want to give Tommy-guns to soldiers anyhow because they can't be taught to do arms drill with them.⁸⁶

The Navy and RAF had publicised their use of psychologists, impartial experts to choose those best suited to technology, and they were seen as more technologically capable. Charles Myers, psychologist with the Navy, warned that 'even the infantry in these days cannot employ the dullest section of the normal population, so rapid has become the pace of the modern army, so highly is it now mechanised.'⁸⁷ If even the other ranks required a certain degree of intelligence, new equipment like tanks and anti-aircraft equipment needed a particularly smart sort of person to command them.

Figures within the Army also suggested that Army leaders should also be chosen based on their ability to conduct modern technological warfare. In an article titled 'Modern War and its Maze of Machines,' Brigadier B.T. Wilson suggested that this 'maze' required men with certain capabilities to navigate.⁸⁸ He argued that 'new tools of great moment... require men of real genius to appreciate how to use them in the right manner and at the right time.' The ability to lead a war being fought with

84 F. C. Bartlett, 'Psychology and the Royal Air Force: I. A General Survey', *Royal Air Force Quarterly*, 8 (1937), 270–76; F. C. Bartlett, 'Psychology and the Royal Air Force: II. Interests, Temperament and Character', *Royal Air Force Quarterly*, 8 (1937), 375–87; F. C. Bartlett, 'Psychology and the Royal Air Force: III. Interviewing and Some Remarks on Training', *Royal Air Force Quarterly*, 9 (1938), 60–68.

85 Admiral Sir Reginald H. S. Bacon, 'The Mechanization of the Navy', *Royal United Services Institution Journal*, 83.530 (1938), 309–24 (p. 322).

86 Boomerang (pseud.), p. 15. The author noted that this comment about clinging to drill was a borrowed joke, but that he had since 'discovered a well-authenticated case of an actual Major who actually made the remark in all seriousness.'

87 Myers.

88 P.S.C. Brigadier B. T. Wilson D.S.O., 'Modern War and Its Maze of Machines', *Royal United Services Institution Journal*, 83.530 (1938), 325–42.

modern technology and tactics had become closely linked with the idea of genius or mental ability. A particular type of genius was required; Wood, an artilleryman, argued that 'the ordinary Old Etonian knows little about science: and this is a scientific war.'⁸⁹ Wood provided a personal anecdote of how officers chosen for their old school ties were unsuited to the 'highly technical science' of modern war (specifically anti-aircraft gunnery):

one of my officers regularly wasted an average of £100 every night he was on duty by simple ignorance: e.g. by firing rounds after the predictor has become unsteady, or after the target was above angle for the locator... or by a multitude of other errors too technical to mention.⁹⁰

References to locators and predictors were already fairly technical; the suggestion that there were other even more technical aspects to modern war suggested that any officer who had not been carefully selected for his knowledge would be hopelessly lost trying to lead troops. This argument about revolutionary technology was also present in Parliamentary discussions of officer selection. Thomas Horabin, for instance highlighted the importance of a leadership comfortable with modernity. He stated that 'our Army leaders have failed to evolve a tactical doctrine based upon the profound changes in military technique brought about by the internal combustion engine and the short wave radio.'⁹¹

As well as 'scientific war' obliging military forces to choose a different sort of officer, Wood hinted that technology determined changes to military leadership in a more agential form too. Technology in the RAF and in the Navy was compared to an 'inexorable intelligence test' that didn't exist in the Army:

An incompetent admiral will run his ship on the rocks. An incompetent squadron-leader will crash his plane... there are no simple natural catastrophes to kill off incompetent colonels.⁹²

This implied a sort of 'survival of the fittest,' where the fittest individuals were those adapted to modern technology and the fittest nation was one which recognised how to structure its military to adapt to a modern world. By contrast to the RAF, which had 'no hampering traditions' and therefore could survive 'where methods of fighting develop from day to day,' the Army had 'traditions deep rooted in the dustiest pages of the past, yet it has to cope with an enemy whose methods are continually changing.'⁹³ Machines were seen as modern and efficient, and as productive of change to which people had to adapt. Consequently, survival (on both the individual and national level) was linked with mental as well as physical fitness. Critics like Wood implied the Army *must* change and, like the other forces, choose officers who could efficiently adapt to whatever new changes were around the corner, or risk extinction.

89 Boomerang (pseud.), p. 49.

90 Boomerang (pseud.).

91 'Captain Margesson's Statement', col. 1924-99.

92 Boomerang (pseud.), p. 15.

93 Boomerang (pseud.), p. 14.

‘MODERN’ PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHIATRY

It was quite straightforward for psychologists to build upon the idea of a modern scientific war as requiring modern, scientific expertise such as theirs. Just as tanks were better than cavalry at fighting battles, they argued, psychology was better than Public Schools at choosing leaders. Cyril Burt, for instance, stated that:

To manufacture or repair a lifeless machine – a motor-car, a microphone, a submarine – expert knowledge is essential. But to follow the workings of the growing mind, to guide its development and correct its faults, for that we imagine, nothing but common sense is needed. No view could be more mistaken.⁹⁴

In equating the human mind with modern technology, Burt called upon the same sort of a metaphor as Bacon when he referred to ‘mental equipment.’ The mind was described as a tool that required experts to fully comprehend its workings. Those working in the psychological sciences laid claim to expertise over the workings of the mind. Rees argued that psychiatrists had experience with how these ‘machine parts’ meshed; he argued that ‘becoming cogs on a large wheel appears to weaken resistance’ to emotional difficulties. Rees suggested that psychiatrists’ expertise with regards to the interface between individuals and the war machine could be used to prevent such difficulties by recommending ‘the wisest employment of these men within the Army machine.’⁹⁵

Psychiatrists from the Tavistock Clinic built up a series of articles linking psychological work with on problems arising from modern society and change, implying that they were ideally placed for ‘modern’ work in the Army. For instance, an article on ‘Neurosis in War Time’ produced by Hugh Crichton-Miller and other eminent psychologists argued that neurosis was a ‘failure of adaptation.’⁹⁶ Just as the Army was having trouble with officers not ‘adapted’ to modern warfare, the psychiatrists argued that the people they had spent years effectively treating were maladapted for modern life. Crichton-Miller went further; speaking about ‘modern war’ he stated that the problem confronting psychiatrists in war was ‘to get individuals to adapt themselves to completely unfamiliar and extremely exacting conditions in the environment.’⁹⁷

Whilst psychology could provide the tests to see who could work the tank in a practical sense, psychiatrists argued that they could find the men with the initiative to command and direct these weapons and devise new tactics. Explicitly addressing the perceptions of the Army as Blimpish, J.R. Rees wrote of how:

There has existed for many years a tradition that men who were were immature or unsatisfactory... could under Army discipline be made into ‘men’... Modern war,

94 Cyril Burt and others, *How the Mind Works*, ed. by Cyril Burt (Woking: Unwin Brothers Ltd., 1934), p. 8.

95 Rees, ‘Three Years of Military Psychiatry in the United Kingdom’, p. 4.

96 ‘Neuroses In War Time: Memorandum For The Medical Profession’, *The British Medical Journal*, 2.4119 (1939), 1199–1201 (p. 1200).

97 ‘Neuroses In War-Time: Lectures At The Tavistock Clinic’, *The British Medical Journal*, 1.4073 (1939), 169–70.

unfortunately, requires a different quality of man.⁹⁸

He noted that the Army ranked in last place in getting to choose candidates and thus their 'mesh' or filter by which they selected men needed to be finely tuned.

Rees colleagues made further reference to the particular demands of modern war and how their work could be applied to selection and ensuring that the filters of selection were suitably calibrated. In a lecture series on Neurosis in War-Time, the Tavistock psychiatrists emphasised their work on individual initiative and linked this with the idea of selection, saying that 'the great lesson to be learned from the study of temperamental adjustment and maladjustment was the careful pre-selection of those who were to be sent into the danger zones.'⁹⁹ It was implied by this that industrial psychologists were not the only ones with expertise in matters of selection. Hugh Crichton-Miller even argued that psychiatric knowledge was more suited to finding those with 'initiative' and not just 'intelligence.' He suggested that the Tavistock's expertise was even more relevant to the choice of officers than the psychological expertise that had been applied to general selection because:

intelligence was not as important as emotional control... In any army the show troops were those who had an adolescent personality in the ranks, individuals completely 'condition-reflexed' to command, who could be relied on to behave in a solid way for so long as they were a solid body. That was totally different from the individual whose self-discipline and control over his emotional life were independent to a great extent of social support and whose initiative and capacity to think rationally were as nearly as possible unconditioned by the situation in which he found himself.¹⁰⁰

Unlike other ranks, Crichton-Miller suggested, the officer was required to use initiative and rational and independent. In this way, the psychiatrists at the Tavistock Clinic argued that their focus on the whole person and developing an individual's strengths made their work particularly suited to officer selection. Rees said that in officer selection 'in which temperamental factors must be assessed... psychology is the handmaid of psychiatry.'¹⁰¹ Because of their focus on the individual compared with psychological focus on group-administered tests, psychiatrists claimed unique insight into personality beyond intelligence, the only trait with an established psychological test.

SEEING THE WAY TO AN EFFICIENT ARMY

Knowing one's resources, both in terms of machines and men, and using them in the most efficient manner required being able to see, understand, and measure them. It was increasingly believed that human resources could not be effectively managed without an understanding of what material was available, and economic arguments became associated with a rhetoric of 'seeing.' Traditionalists argued that only someone with experience of the British Army 'knew what to look for' in prospective offi-

98 Rees, 'Three Years of Military Psychiatry in the United Kingdom', p. 2.

99 'Neuroses In War-Time: Lectures At The Tavistock Clinic', p. 170.

100 'Neuroses In War-Time: Lectures At The Tavistock Clinic', p. 169.

101 Rees, 'Three Years of Military Psychiatry in the United Kingdom', p. 4.

cers. This argument centred on the was turned on its head by would-be modernisers, who argued that far from having a ‘magic eye,’ traditionalists were ‘blind’ to problems and opportunities.

Waste was seen as impeding the British war effort, and William Beveridge was charged by Ernest Bevin with making a survey of available man-power and how it was being used. At the very beginning of his first report, from 1940, Beveridge was categorical: ‘There is a substantial waste of man-power.’¹⁰² Beveridge’s report covered men, women, production (including industry, mining, and farming) and the military, but in the media it was linked with perceptions of waste in the Army. For instance, an article in *The Manchester Guardian* explicitly linked the investigation’s ‘recommendation that better use should be made of the capabilities of younger men’ with the need for a change to officer selection and ‘some experiments into personality tests for potential officers.’¹⁰³

Waste or misallocation was particularly a problem for the Army. It was considered the least attractive force and had to employ men that the Navy and the RAF could reject. Although there were lower casualty rates than the First World War, during the Second:

calls on manpower were insatiable. The Army’s huge new technical arms clamoured for specialist officers; Anti-Aircraft Command sucked in men like a greedy sponge; and thousands of young men... now chose to enter the Royal Air Force, hoping to find there... a more ‘democratic’ outlook. Quite early in 1941 the Army, in the phrase of the time, had begun to scrape the bottom of the dry barrel for its junior officers.¹⁰⁴

It therefore needed to use its limited resources wisely. However, just at a time when the Army most needed able officers to fight its ‘modern’ war, men were being put off from applying: ‘men had to be wheedled to allow their names to go forward for commissions.’¹⁰⁵ This was widely attributed to the ‘magic eye’ interview; men felt that their abilities would not be recognised and it would therefore be both

102 Sir William Beveridge, ‘Man-Power Survey’, 1940, p. 7, The National Archives, Kew, CAB 67/8/84.

103 ‘War Office and Selection Tests: Used for a Fifth of Recruits: Value of the Interview Increased’, *The Manchester Guardian* (Manchester, United Kingdom, 7 February 1942).

104 Turner, p. 299.

105 Turner.

pointless and humiliating for anyone not from the 'right' school to attempt to secure a commission.

The public debate centred on the idea of 'seeing,' with frequent references to blind selectors and good men being 'overlooked.'¹⁰⁶ Criticising poor British performance in the war up to 1942, Labour MP Aneurin Bevan reported that 'it is a taunt on everybody's lips that if Rommel had been in the British Army he would have still been a sergeant.'¹⁰⁷ The 'Desert Fox,' Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, had earned the respect of the Germans and their enemies for the way that he directed his troops. The idea that the British Army could be missing out on such men due to stubbornness suggested a shocking waste of talent. Wood made similar comments in relation to Napoleon: 'If another Napoleon were to enter the British Army to-day as an ordinary conscript, it is quite possible that he would be given a commission – in time. Perhaps after a year.'¹⁰⁸ Wood implied that such a waste of time was unacceptable when all resources needed to be mobilised, urgently.

Not only was the system seen as off-putting to potential suitable candidates, it was found to be hit-and-miss in terms of who it selected. It was widely felt that 'the system was a failure... the average failure rate was 25 per cent and at one OCTU 50 per cent... we could not tolerate this waste of valuable training establishments, and cadets were oppressed by the knowledge that at least a quarter would fail.'¹⁰⁹ Shortages of officer candidates were closely linked with concerns about morale, as the 'waves of crestfallen men Returned to Unit served to discourage further applicants.' The word-of-mouth reports of officer selection from the many candidates who failed only exacerbated the view that it was deeply unfair and failing too many men.

The poor output of the existing officer selection procedures meant that the man in charge of sending out new officers, Brigadier Vinden, said that he 'was unable to provide the Middle East and India with their requirements, let alone those of home units.'¹¹⁰ The possibility that faults in officer selection were damaging morale was problematic to the War Office, but the sheer inability to officer the Army was impossible to ignore. Feeling the need to investigate, Vinden conducted an experiment:

I invited three good presidents of boards to sit together to examine candidates in my presence. They could each ask the candidates as many questions as they wished, and then submit on a piece of paper their opinion of the candidate, which I saw on the way to the recording officer. The diversity of views of three experienced officers after an interview confirmed my opinion that we must devise a new procedure.¹¹¹

106 Hayes.

107 'Attack on the War Cabinet: Mr. A. Bevan and a "Class-Ridden" Army', *The Manchester Guardian* (Manchester, United Kingdom, 3 July 1942).

108 Boomerang (pseud.), p. 53.

109 Turner.

110 F.H. Vinden, 'The Introduction of War Office Selection Boards in the British Army: A Personal Recollection', in *War and Society: A Yearbook of Military History*, ed. by Brian Bond and Ian Roy (Routledge, 1977), II, p. 120.

111 Vinden, p. 120-121

The 'views' of the officers were criticised by the public and by senior officers of the Army.

'EFFICIENT' PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHIATRY

Psychological testing was promoted as an efficient measure by psychologists. Rees argued that the 'efficiency of the Army for the primary purpose of winning the war is the concern of everyone, and from this angle prophylactic measures are infinitely more important than the provision of treatment, valuable and interesting as that is.'¹¹² Rees linked the idea of efficiency with psychiatrists' moral duty, and implied strongly that the best use that could be made of psychiatrists by the Army was in work that made its forces more efficient and prevented waste.

The press picked up on claims of psychological efficiency, for instance in explaining why the Navy had 'gone in' for psychology:

One of the reasons why the quick form of psychological intelligence test is being introduced instead of the far longer and more cumbersome educational examination system is that the rapidly growing Fleet Air Arm badly needs air gunners, and needs them quickly, so that time has become a far more important factor in the entry and training of such men than ever before.¹¹³

It was implied that if psychological tests could be applied on a mass scale, delving into each candidate's educational background would be unnecessary.

Arguments about the efficiency of psychology didn't just convince local commanding officers; they also convinced men such as MP Thomas Horabin, giving a much more prominent platform to psychologists. Horabin argued in the House of Commons in February 1942 that:

What is wrong with the British Army? ... It is not that the British soldier is inferior to the German or the Japanese, man for man. I am certain that this generation of British manhood is as tough, courageous and tenacious as any generation that has gone before. The root cause of our humiliating defeats lies in another direction. I have tried to explain that this is a war of peoples against peoples. All the resources of the nation pitted against the total resources of the enemy. We are attempting to fight this war of peoples—this People's War—by means of a class army. A tactic based on the internal combustion engine and the short wave radio, depends for its success upon the independence and initiative of the private soldier.¹¹⁴

Horabin emphasised that 'independence and initiative' were vital and that existing methods were incapable of elucidating such qualities. This implied that the Army itself was incapable, and needed to make use of 'all the resources' available, using psychological science in the same way that they now used other scientific developments like the combustion engine and the radio. Horabin's statement was followed by a statement by Rees' ally, Dr Francis Fremantle, who explicitly linked German efficiency with psychiatry:

112 Rees, 'Three Years of Military Psychiatry in the United Kingdom', p. 6.

113 Lieut.-Commander Kenneth 'Sunday Times' Naval Correspondent Edwards, 'The Navy Goes in for Psychology', *The Sunday Times* (London, England, 6 August 1939), p. 15, Gale NewsVault.

114 'Captain Margesson's Statement', col. 1924-99.

A great deal more attention has been paid [to psychological selection] in the German Army than in our own... I am told that the higher appointments in the German Army, not only in the medical service but in the rest of that Army, are made on the findings of the psycho-neurotic advisers; and that is the reason why the German Army is commanded by young, promising, active, able heads and chiefs. This science of the understanding of psychology must go a great deal further before we can make proper use of the human material submitted to us.

Fremantle posited psychiatric approaches as the reason for German success and suggested that Britain would continue to be wasteful and inefficient if they did not develop the science of psychology. The idea of an imbalance between the amount of support for physical science and engineering and human science and engineering was accepted by the press: newspaper editorials printed similar ideas that 'weapons and equipment are wasted' because although there had been innovations in technological equipment, 'sufficient corresponding attention has not been paid to the best methods of attaining an equal standard in the human component of the Army.'¹¹⁵

Rees' Army psychiatrists responded to these demands for a human science equal to the physical sciences by using a rhetoric of 'scientific seeing' as a contrast to the existing 'magic eye' technique. Lorraine Daston argues that scientists have historically distinguished themselves from others 'not [by] professional status, but rather the practice of heroic observation, described as at once a talent, a discipline, and a method... Attentive observation was firmly distinguished from mere seeing, and even from remarking upon.'¹¹⁶ Psychologists in twentieth century Britain used this approach. T.J. Newton observed that interwar personnel psychology occupied 'an important 'discursive space' in the work-place through its provision of a theory and techniques for... observation and assessment' of people.¹¹⁷ The expertise of psychology was located in its claims to objective observation:

The discourse 'shines a light' on the 'irrationality' of personnel selection (e.g. selection decisions made on the basis of whim or prejudice), and the consequent 'dangers' of both cost efficiency and unfair discrimination... At the same time, the discourse provides a means of guarding against inefficiency and discrimination through the use of a 'battery' of scientifically validated selection techniques. Central to this power is the supposed ability which such techniques provide in the 'objective' observations of a job candidate.¹¹⁸

This argument was applied to the matter of officer selection, with the scientific gaze trumping the already magic eye and its 'dangers.'

This argument was based on earlier uses of metaphors of sight and observation. For instance, in the interwar period, Philip Vernon compared psychology with the physical sciences, observing that 'all science, it seems, starts out from subjective experience which, as a result of controlled observation, attains a universal and

115 'Army Misfits', *The Times* (London, England, 27 August 1941), p. 2, Gale NewsVault.

116 Lorraine Daston and Fernando Vidal, *The Moral Authority of Nature* (University of Chicago Press, 2010), p. 109.

117 T. J. Newton, 'Discourse and Agency: The Example of Personnel Psychology and "Assessment Centres"', *Organization Studies*, 15.6 (1994), 879-902 (p. 881).

118 Newton, p. 882.

externalised status.’¹¹⁹ At the heart of what scientists did and, Vernon suggested, of what psychological scientists did, was ‘controlled observation’ that transformed their subjective experiences into objective science. Though Vernon suggested that this was a very difficult skill to master, he implied that as a result of their training, the way that he and his colleagues ‘saw’ was superior to non-specialists like the commanding officers of the Army.

The Army psychiatrists themselves likened their observations to other cutting-edge methods of scientific seeing. Their officer selection reports made claims such as: ‘there are indications that the reading of [psychological officer selection] pictures or charts requires as much skill as does the reading of an aerial photograph.’¹²⁰ This aerial view encompassing many details was supplemented by another form of scientific vision, they claimed: the questionnaire ‘may perhaps be likened to the micro-stereoscope which is used to examine details in the aerial photograph.’ The psychiatrists stated that just as trained experts were required to interpret an aerial photograph or a culture on a slide, their scientific expertise was required to really understand what was being seen in the questionnaires and tests they were developing for officer selection. Even psychiatrists, they acknowledged, needed to be careful to ensure that ‘his mental spectacles [were not partially] blocked over,’ and a layperson was unlikely to be able to ‘perceive’ the nuances of a candidate’s personality. This was a self-conscious discourse crafted to compare the Army psychiatrists’ expert sight with that of the commanding officers’ blinkered view.¹²¹ The psychiatrists extended this metaphor of sight beyond the reports aimed only at a small War Office audience to the way that they represented their work to laypeople more broadly. A pamphlet on the methods they would use for officer selection noted that ‘the Psychiatrist is a medical man who has been trained to observe and assess human-beings objectively... he has a knowledge of certain types of character which he has learned to recognise and knows what their possibilities of development are.’¹²² Knowledge and training, the Army psychiatrists argued, made them experts at seeing the potential of officer candidates.

The idea of objective psychological seeing seems to have been generally accepted, particularly in relation to the German use of psychological methods of officer selection. Wartime reports on the German officer selection methods noted how this work had ‘passed unnoticed in the rest of the world.’¹²³ By contrast to this lack of

119 Philip E. Vernon, ‘The American v. the German Methods of Approach to the Study of Temperament and Personality’, *British Journal of Psychology. General Section*, 24.2 (1933), pp. 159–160.

120 Colonel Randall, ‘Research and Training Centre Internal Memorandum No. 13: Ranking and Rating’, 1944, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 205802222.

121 Colonel Randall. The Army psychiatrists’ intentional and self-aware use of this discourse can be seen in Randall’s jocular comment that ‘it would be unwise to carry the analogy too far but it certainly opens up an attractive vista!’

122 ‘WOSB Pamphlet No. I - Finding Officers for the Army’, 1944, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 377625502.

123 ‘German Army Psychologists Make Effective Use of Science’, p. 213; Thomas R. Henry, ‘Sinister Scientist Heads Germany’s Psychology Test’, *The Miami News*, 15 May 1941, p. 13; ‘A German Officer’s Training: From the Ranks to the War Academy’, *The Manchester Guardian* (Manchester, United Kingdom, 12 March 1942).

observation, the German methods were defined by their 'observations noted in detail' and 'comprehensive examination' to 'reveal' the total personality of the candidate, even incorporating the use of a 'hidden film camera.' The superior psychological way of seeing candidates was remarked upon in many reports. The German officers themselves also possessed superior 'sight' according to translations of their work, in which Dr W. Hansen was said to have declared that 'the days of *blind* obedience are gone.'¹²⁴

As well as marking a difference between a commanding officer's magic eye and an objective scientist, the metaphor of sight was also used to distinguish between groups of psychological specialists. Although generally speaking psychologists of all hues collaborated to ensure maximum appreciation of their broadly defined discipline, there was some jostling for position and internal arguments over who was most suited to various tasks, such as officer selection. In the interwar period, even some British psychologists suggested that psychiatrists had a view that might be superior when it came to understanding personalities. Vernon argued that 'the aid of psychiatrists and clinical psychologists should be enlisted' because they could supply a picture of the 'total personality.'¹²⁵ The Army psychiatrists believed that it was impossible to separate out individual traits from the man as a whole, or from the context he was operating in. As a Canadian visitor observed:

While anxious to discover if a candidate has self confidence, alertness, initiative, ... etc. they do not attempt to make an exhaustive list of these qualities and rate him on them. They state that an enumeration of the qualities possessed by successful officers produces an almost illimitable list, and one successful officer may possess very few of the qualities possessed by another, and so 'leadership is a function and not a mathematical sum of qualities.' If a man functions successfully as a leader it is because his total personality gives him effective behaviour.¹²⁶

This idea of the importance of 'seeing the whole person' was central to Tavistock thinking before and during the war. From the 1930s, Hugh Crichton-Miller favoured what he called a 'binocular' approach to the body and mind and criticised 'the difficulty experienced by the average physician in achieving binocular vision' because, like many in society, he considered that they were blinded to psychological ideas by prejudice. Wilfred Bion of the Tavistock also favoured 'binocular vision,' but to Bion this meant seeing both psychological and the social factors.¹²⁷

This rhetoric was was useful to the Army psychiatrists when making claims about officer selection candidates as a point of comparison with the 'class-blinded Blimps.' They claimed to be able to get 'an outline of the man as a person, to see something of the inner man' and not just whether he wore the correct old school tie.¹²⁸ Psychiatrists'

124 'German Army Psychologists Make Effective Use of Science'. My emphasis.

125 Vernon.

126 'Report on Visit of Major E.L. Weaver to England,' National Archives of Canada, as quoted in Hayes.

127 Nuno Torres and R. D. Hinshelwood, *Bion's Sources: The Shaping of His Paradigms* (Routledge, 2013), p. 46.

128 'Chapter 3: The Development of a Testing Programme and the Setting Up of the New Boards', in *Unpublished WOSBs Write-Up MSS*, p. 34.

insight was considered better suited to officer selection than psychologists' due to the psychiatric approach of looking at the whole. Rees and his psychiatrists were thus able to capitalise on the argument that there was a need to 'broaden the perspective' of officer selection procedures. They promoted their expertise by building upon an interwar rhetoric of objective observation and scientific seeing to suggest that they could provide the most efficient method of vetting officer candidates, equal to that of the Germans who were widely seen as so successful.

CONCLUSION

Before the outbreak of the Second World War, it seemed highly unlikely that psychiatrists would ever work with the British Army to choose officers, and particularly unlikely that the psychoanalysts of the Tavistock Clinic would fulfil this role. Though psychology as a field was growing, there was still a great deal of suspicion of psychology and of psychoanalysts in particular, who were connected with taboos. By contrast, the Army was seen as 'hidebound' and run by reactionary 'Colonel Blimps' who were averse to any and all change. This context of strongly contrasting organisations meant that significant pressure was necessary to bring about links between the Army and the Tavistock.

A range of social, political, and economic factors contributed to an increasing interest in 'officer problems.' The problems that critics perceived were that the Army was undemocratic, that it could not keep up with modern innovations, and consequently that it was inefficient and in danger of losing the war. Critics argued that it was hypocritical to claim to be more moral than the Nazis whilst similarly privileging certain bloodlines in the British Army's officer corps. Yet social pressures to create a more meritocratic Army were not sufficient on their own to bring about change, though authors of newspaper editorials and parliamentary orators did their best to embarrass the Army into change. Likewise, commentators suggested that the British Army was 'backwards' because traditional methods were unsuited to choosing officers for modern war and for commanding cutting-edge machines. Whereas Admirals or Squadron Leaders would be 'selected' by their own equipment, in the sense that they would die if they were not smart enough to command, senior officers in the Army were not personally subject to harm through mismanagement; to ensure the survival of the Army, they therefore had to be selected through other modern means. However, the technologically deterministic idea that modern warfare and technology required use of 'modern' methods to find men and a 'new' type of leader was not enough to cause the War Office to make changes. Economic arguments about waste, however, were a powerful motivating factor for the leaders of the government and the Army. Whilst arguments about morality and modernity were abstract, the shortage of officers was a concrete practical problem that the War Office could not ignore. Beveridge's report indicated a widespread misallocation of the human resources in the war machine, which suggested that the potential did exist (it was not simply that the other forces

had taken all of the leader-material) but was not being utilised. The number of candidates that *were* selected but then failed to pass officer training at an OCTU was a waste of money and time spent on training, and also inhibited the flow of candidates as disgruntled men returned to units and complained about the system. It was this problem of numbers which spurred the Army into reassessing its selection procedures, though all of the critiques played a role.

These pressures helped to contribute to a drive for new ways of choosing officers for the British Army, and J.R. Rees and his fellow Tavistock psychiatrists did their best to ensure that their expertise would be considered relevant to these problems and pressures. In the interwar period, the Tavistock Clinic had struggled to capitalise on the increasing credibility of psychological science: during the Second World War, they worked hard to build both their credibility and their relevance in the eyes of the military. Psychiatrists adopted the themes of Army critics, proposing that they could provide objective, modern, and efficient methods. These claims to relevant expertise, combined with large-scale and sustained pressure to change the way officers were chosen, meant that psychiatric ideas and methods began to appear relevant to the British Army by the early 1940s. But the introduction of psychological methods of officer selection was prompted from both high-level ideological and low-level immediate concerns. At the same time that these very public discussions of officers were taking place, behind the scenes senior officers in local Army Commands began to encounter problems with their men, and look for assistance in solving them. From this chapter's macro focus on cultural narratives of problems and solutions, the next chapter moves to a micro-level examination of the local annoyances and personal interests that brought about collaboration between the British Army and the Tavistock psychiatrists in the creation of a science of selection.

CHAPTER TWO: EARLY EXPERIMENTS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the most remarkable, and most overlooked, feature of officer selection in the Second World War British Army: the involvement of psychiatrists. Every other force that used a psychological approach to selection, both in Britain and around the world, used psychologists. Even the British Army even used psychologists to select soldiers for specific roles, yet they used psychiatrists for officer selection. This chapter explores why, by investigating in detail the early experiments that fed into officer selection.

In Britain, there was no pre-existing psychological method of filtering soldiers; instead, a slow process of testing and negotiation took place. Every other armed service in the world and all of the other armed forces in Britain used psychologists to select men for roles: the reason that the WOSBs were the territory of psychiatrists was because psychiatrists made themselves available and approachable for senior officers to consult. The War Office was not interested in the early approaches from psychological staff offering testing. It was only when senior officers sought help from their local experts on human behaviour that Army experiments in psychological testing began. The Consulting Psychiatrist to the British Army, J.R. Rees, had ensured that these local experts were his fellow psychiatrists by sending them out to Army Commands all around Britain.¹ Rees made sure that the 'right' people were situated in the right place to develop a wartime role for psychiatry.

In regional Commands, where senior officers were at a distance from active battle, they had the opportunity to notice problems with their staff, and the opportunity to set off investigations. Consequently, experiments sprang up untidily, with overlapping efforts and numerous participants. Because of this, records of the early work are sparse, but this chapter pieces together details of these investigations, tracing the people, chance meetings, and personal interests that contributed to the British officer selection tests.

As with most histories, histories of the WOSBs have their 'heroes.' Two men receive almost all of the acclaim (or blame, depending on the narrative) for the creation of the WOSBs. In his roles as general officer commanding-in-chief of Northern Command, and then adjutant-general, Sir Ronald Adam is frequently credited in military histories as the champion of the WOSBs.² Most focus on how he introduced the WOSB (single-handedly, they often imply), and situate it in the context of other Army welfare innovations in which he had a hand. Whilst Adam has received most of the credit for the development of the WOSBs, there were several other military men

1 See "Appendix D: Map of Psychiatric Services in Second World War Britain" on page 223 and "Appendix E: Command Psychiatrists & Commanding Officers" on page 224 for locations and names.

2 For instance, Hew Strachan, 'The British Army as a Social Institution', in *The British Army, Manpower, and Society Into the Twenty-First Century* (Frank Cass, 2000), p. 27; Jonathan Fennell, 'Quality of Manpower & Morale', in *Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign: The Eighth Army and the Path to El Alamein* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 95–123 (pp. 113–115, 285).

whose involvement was crucial to the introduction of psychological tests. Men such as Frederick Vinden, Sir Andrew Thorne, F.A.E. Crew and Alick Buchanan-Smith provided the impetus, the authority, the experimental subjects and the physical space for tests. Thorne even provided insight into German psychological methods.

Wilfred Ruprecht Bion is the key figure in management history accounts of the WOSBs. This rebellious soldier-turned-psychiatrist, they suggest, produced revolutionary theories that changed high-level recruitment around the world. However, Bion only became involved in the WOSBs when methods had become formalised and the first WOSB was created; he did not participate in the first tests. Long before anything as formal as a WOSB existed, Eric D. Wittkower, Thomas Ferguson Rodger, and John Mostyn Bowlby investigated dysfunctional officers and conducted experiments to try and find methods that would weed them out, whilst also discovering the hidden potential of others. J.R. Rees ensured that this early work in Salisbury and Scotland was shared amongst the Army psychiatrists.

Far from the two hero narratives, there were an almost bewildering number of people involved in the creation of the British officer selection methods because there was no official system of investigation: no single individual or group were appointed to work in a single place.³ Instead, lots of people contributed their ideas wherever the need was felt. John Rickman remarked that the war

has brought about a greater clarification of ideas among psychiatrists and a greater agreement among them than anyone would have predicted ten years ago. Perhaps because Psychiatrists are working for a common purpose their ways of thinking have through cooperation proved more fruitful than before.⁴

Negotiations between people from a range of psychological and military backgrounds meant that the WOSBs represented a palimpsest of ideas. A range of epistemologies crashed together in the close quarters of the early experiments, from mental hygiene to characterology to military ideals. Military staff were ‘psychologised’ and taught to see things from a psychological point of view, but the psychiatrists were also educated in the values and priorities of the military. This union created a form of selection that was more than simply an application of psychological ideas to military men: the WOSBs were Army psychological tests in theory and form as well as function.

TWO MEN WALK INTO A BAR: A SOLDIER AND A PSYCHIATRIST DISCOVER A MUTUAL INTEREST IN “PROBLEM” OFFICERS

Many histories posit straightforward stages to War Office Selection Boards (WOSBs). First there was no use of psychological methods, then, they state, psychiatrists introduced WOSBs.⁵ However, this is clearly a very simplified narrative. Announcing

³ To help the reader to make sense of the many people involved, the key individuals discussed in this thesis are listed alphabetically in “Appendix B: Who’s Who of Thesis” on page 205

⁴ John Rickman, ‘A Symposium on the Psychiatric Interview in Officer Selection’, 1944, p. 11, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 377625502.

⁵ Examples of such a straightforward narrative of WOSBs can be found in: Strachan; Fennell; Peter Gronn, ‘Accession’, in *The Making of Educational Leaders* (A&C Black, 1999), pp. 125–84; John Adair, *How to Grow Leaders: The Seven Key Principles of Effective Leadership Development* (Kogan Page Publishers, 2009); Jeremy A. Crang, ‘The British Army as a Social Institution, 1939-45’, in *Rethinking*

the new WOSBs in Parliament, Sir Edward Grigg explained:

These tests are being slowly introduced. We have been slow in introducing them for a special reason. They have been in use in the German Army and in the American Army for some time, but we are not Germans or Americans, and we were not sure that the tests of other nations might prove applicable to our own people. We have therefore been carefully testing the tests...⁶

The introduction of psychological testing to help select officers was a very slow process in Britain. Before the war psychiatrists and psychologists had written to the War Office to offer their services as psychological testers.⁷ This offer was ignored. The first tests were only introduced when military men sought help from their local psychological experts. One of the reasons why psychiatrists headed the British Army's officer selection programme was because J.R. Rees, the Consulting Psychiatrist to the British Army at Home, had ensured that his colleagues from the Tavistock Clinic were on hand.

In April 1940, Brigadier J.R. Rees was given approval to appoint Command Psychiatrists to work with the different Army Commands in Britain. He appointed a number of Tavistock colleagues: (George) Ronald Hargreaves was allocated to Northern Command, Thomas Ferguson Rodger to Scottish Command, Leonard Foster Browne to Eastern Command, Wilfred Ruprecht Bion to Western Command, and Henry V. Dicks to London District Command.⁸ The Tavistock staff themselves believed this structure was key to how the war work progressed:

the prominent role of the psychiatrists in... early experiments and in subsequent developments followed from the way in which they had developed their work in the army.⁹

Dispersed to Army commands, and lacking in specific instructions, the psychiatrists were able to investigate whatever problems they or the local commanding officer felt should be prioritised. Bion, for instance, recalled that 'nobody gave me any orders... nobody there knew what to do with me.'¹⁰ Commanding officers were unsure of how to make use of psychiatrists so work developed on an *ad hoc* basis; the early history of the WOSBs is an intimate one. The earliest uses of psychological methods of selection occurred because soldiers and psychological staff alike had an interest in them and whether they were valid (and fast enough) measures of ability and personality. There was no pre-established measure of validity, and ideas of what constituted a 'good' set of methods was formed at the same time as the methods themselves.

History, Dictatorship and War: New Approaches and Interpretations, ed. by Claus-Christian Szejnmann (A&C Black, 2011); 'Chapter Two: Regimental Officers and the Rank and File,' in David French, *Raising Churchill's Army* (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 48–80.

6 'House of Commons Debate: Captain Margesson's Statement', 1942, col. 1928, Hansard, vol 377, cc 1924-99.

7 Robert H. Ahrenfeldt, *Psychiatry in the British Army in the Second World War* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1958), p. 31.

8 (Edward) John Mostyn Bowlby was appointed to Southern Command; he was not a Tavistock staff member at this point, but he later joined the group. See "Appendix E: Command Psychiatrists & Commanding Officers" on page 224 for details of Command Psychiatry.

9 'Chapter 2: Preliminary Experiments and the Formulation of Working Principles', in *Unpublished WOSBs Write-Up MSS*, p. 1.

10 Wilfred R. Bion, *All My Sins Remembered: Another Part of a Life & The Other Side of Genius: Family Letters* (Karnac Books, 2012), sec. 720.

The earliest efforts to develop psychological selection techniques happened in Northern Command, where Sir Ronald Adam supported the research conducted by psychiatrist Ronald Hargreaves and psychologist John C. Raven into tests of mental ability. Hargreaves and Raven aimed these initial experiments toward selecting the rank and file for specific roles in the military, not choosing officers. Other ranks' tests came about earlier and met with less resistance than officer selection tests. They were compared with established industrial psychological methods where workers were allocated to jobs; testing the working classes was far less controversial than testing the sort of men who might apply to be officers because there were precedents. In addition, Hargreaves and Raven's other ranks tests tapped a political concern about 'man-power.' The British government was so worried about manpower that William Beveridge had been appointed to investigate how efficiently men were being allocated to roles.¹¹ Beveridge argued that much more could be done, and the Directorate for the Selection of Personnel was established for the purpose of organising selection of rank and file soldiers in June 1941. A General Service Selection scheme (GSS), based on Hargreaves and Raven's work, followed later that summer. Under this scheme, all new troops were subject to psychological tests to ensure there were no 'square pegs in round holes.'¹²

Accounts of the development of British officer selection tests during the Second World War often suggest that with the growing use of psychological testing in the Army, as represented by the GSS, it was natural that officer tests would follow. Even some of the psychiatrists subsequently said that it was 'only logical' that having introduced the GSS, Adam would 'wish to introduce more adequate methods of assessing the potential officer.'¹³ They credit him with commissioning investigations into officer selection. However, officers were perceived as being very different by both the Army and the psychological staff. Although the War Office had been convinced of the value of psychological testing for the average soldier, it did not automatically follow that it was a valid method of filtering officer candidates. In fact, much work was done to 'test the tests' and ensure that they were valid and acceptable methods of selecting officers before the tests even reached Adam, who had facilitated the GSS, let alone further up the chain of command.

The first officer selection experiments had no links to the tests for other ranks. Hargreaves, a psychiatrist, had initiated the other ranks tests, but a military man instigated the first officer-testing experiments. In mid-1940, after being evacuated from France due to illness, Colonel Frederick Hubert Vinden became the Assistant Adjutant General. Vinden was a soldier not a psychologist, but he had experience of introducing new ideas to the British Army. Before 1940, he had been responsible

11 'Man-Power', 1940, Hansard, Series 5 Vol. 362.

12 For more on other ranks selection, see Jeremy A. Crang, 'Square Pegs and Round Holes: Other Rank Selection in the British Army, 1939-45', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 77.312 (1999), 293-98; and Chapter 7, 'A Citizens' Army' in Geoffrey G. Field, *Blood, Sweat, and Toil: Remaking the British Working Class, 1939-1945* (Oxford University Press, 2011).

13 'Chapter 1: Introduction', in *Unpublished WOSBs Write-Up MSS*, p. 22.

for the introduction of the Bren Gun, and had headed British Intelligence in the Far East where he had instigated training in jungle warfare.¹⁴ Back in Britain, Vinden sought more improvements that could be made to the Army. As the head of 63 regiments he soon discovered that there was a very high failure rate at Officer Cadet Training Units (OCTUs). He began investigating in 1941, visiting all of the OCTUs, and was disappointed with the process of Command Interview Board (CIB) method of selecting potential officers. He considered that there were 'no clear criteria for assessing the ability or personality for effective leadership.'¹⁵ A desire for testing came from those looking to reform the Army's image, but also from a more grass-roots level. Vinden is an example of how commanding officers sought an objective way to examine personalities in the hopes that it might give them better results.

When Vinden finished his tour at a CIB in Edinburgh, he discussed his frustrations with a stranger in a bar, who just happened to be Tavistock psychiatrist Eric Wittkower, recently made a Captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC).¹⁶ Wittkower's research on psychosomatic illness had been brought to an abrupt end by wartime evacuation due to the bombing of London, so when relocated to Edinburgh he embarked upon a study of similar problems in soldiers, investigating how 'certain psychosomatic conditions in soldiers... were becoming more frequent.'¹⁷ These men 'had become manifestly ill,' and therefore because commanding officers could see that they were visibly 'sick,' Wittkower's medical status enabled him to conduct research. Specifically, Wittkower investigated 'problem' officers, focussing on 'the importance of personality' in breakdowns and failure to function.¹⁸ His work was therefore specifically relevant to Vinden's interest in 'problem' officers, personality and ability. Wittkower's investigation found that 'a considerable proportion of these officers were not endowed with ability or qualities of personality adequate to withstand the stresses of their job.'¹⁹ After investigating, Wittkower provided senior officers with 'a reasonably objective... "explanation"' of the problem. Such reports offered the promise of the objective approach to personality that Vinden sought. Vinden and Wittkower believed that if a report were created at the interview stage, it could be prophylactic and prevent senior officers from appointing problem officers rather than simply helping to reallocate them when problems arose.

Wittkower's personal identity as a German-born psychiatrist also made him particularly useful in offering a potential solution to Vinden's officer problem. At the point when the two men began discussing officer problems in the bar in Edinburgh, Wittkower had just been given 'a German document for translation that described

14 B.S.C., 'Brigadier F. H. Vinden', *The Times* (London, England, 10 February 1977), p. 18, Gale NewsVault.

15 Richard Trahair, *Behavior, Technology, and Organizational Development: Eric Trist and the Tavistock Institute* (Transaction Publishers, 2015), p. 100.

16 Trahair, p. 100.

17 H. V. Dicks, *Fifty Years of the Tavistock Clinic* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1970), p. 76; 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 1.

18 H. B. M. Murphy, 'In Memoriam: Eric D. Wittkower 1899-1983', *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 20.2 (1983), 81-86.

19 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', pp. 2-3.

the Wehrmacht's selection method.²⁰ This hints at some clever behind-the-scenes manoeuvring by the head of the Tavistock and of Army psychiatry, J.R. Rees. Henry Dicks was working in London District Command at this time and was also a fluent German-speaker (so much so that he was later assigned to the very secret case of psychologically assessing Rudolph Hess);²¹ it would almost certainly have therefore been easier to give Dicks the document for translation. However, Rees was notorious for his 'genius for "roping in" lay support' so it is likely that he arranged for Wittkower to have the document at just the time that Vinden was ending his CIB tour.²² Following the early success that the Germans had with Blitzkrieg, many commentators (including Rees and his colleagues) had suggested that Britain should copy their approach and adopt scientific methods of selection.²³ The German document offered the potential for Wittkower and Vinden to do so. Thus the two 'tried such tests on themselves.'²⁴ The origin of officer selection were very informal self-experimentation, conducted by men somewhat at a loose end due to sickness and the Blitz, who had no previous background and no apparent previous interest in matters of selection or personality psychology.

SERENDIPITY, SCOTLAND AND THE SCIENCE OF SELECTION

A mixture of luck and Rees' dispersal of his psychiatrist colleagues had led to the meeting between the senior officer determined to change officer selection and the psychiatrist with some ideas of potential methods which could be used. More chance meetings occurred, and place also played a key role in the development of psychological officer tests: up in Edinburgh, far from the active fighting and the political manoeuvrings at the War Office, soldiers and psychiatrists alike had the space and freedom to experiment.

The circle of people in Edinburgh interested in officer selection methods grew over the year of 1941. Tavistock psychiatrist Thomas Ferguson Rodger was also in Edinburgh, and he joined Vinden and Wittkower, and fellow Tavistock psychiatrists A.T.M. Wilson and Ronald Hargreaves, in a discussion of officer problems.²⁵ Unlike Wittkower, Rodger did have experience in the field of personality psychology; he had trained under the renowned psychiatrist Adolf Meyer at Johns Hopkins University in America.²⁶ Meyer was particularly interested in social factors, and one of the earliest figures to work in mental hygiene. He also had a fascination with personality:

20 Trahair, p. 100.

21 Henry V. Dicks, *Case of Rudolph Hess: A Problem in Diagnosis and Forensic Psychiatry, by the Physicians in the Services Who Have Been Concerned with Him from 1941 to 1946*, ed. by John Rawlings Rees (W.W. Norton & Company, Incorporated, 1947).

22 Henry Dicks, 'John Rawlings Rees', *Munk's Roll: Lives of the Fellows* (Royal College of Physicians, 2009), 387 <<http://munksroll.rcplondon.ac.uk/Biography/Details/3726>> [accessed 14 May 2014].

23 See previous chapter for more on this.

24 Trahair, p. 100.

25 Trahair, p. 100.

26 Gerald Timbury, 'Obituary: Thomas Ferguson Rodger', *The Psychiatrist*, 2.10 (1978), 169–70. Unlike the Tavistock psychiatrists, who were psychotherapists working with outpatients who chose to see them, Rodger worked with inpatients and cases of severe breakdown. He was Deputy Superintendent at Glasgow Royal Mental Hospital and Assistant Lecturer in Psychiatry at Glasgow University.

For Meyer and the other progressives with whom he was closely associated, no problem in psychiatry was more pressing than how to create a science of individuals all of whom were conceived to be unique.²⁷

It is easy to see how a protégé of Meyer would be interested in the problem of what made a good officer. Officer selection offered the chance to investigate a science of individual personality. It also involved preventing 'not only the risk of the candidate having a breakdown himself but also being a focus of low morale' and so to the psychiatrists was a form of mental hygiene or prophylaxis.²⁸ In a 1937 talk to the Scottish Association for Mental Welfare, Rodger made some clear pronouncements that further suggest why personality, and officer selection, may have been of interest to him a few years later. He argued against sterilisation of the 'unfit,' arguing that:

It has been said that intellectual gifts in themselves were a neurosis, and that the individual who showed abnormal curiosity in phenomena displayed a divergence from the normal which might be loosely classified as pathological.²⁹

This suggests an interest in idiosyncrasies, intelligence, and character, all of which were the focus of officer selection tests. His involvement in mental hygiene and welfare movements also link with the prophylactic element of selection, whereby fitting 'round pegs' in 'round holes' was thought to prevent breakdown. Furthermore, Rodger warned against the risk of valuing 'the warrior type... to the detriment of the intellectual,' a view echoed by others who felt a more intelligent officer was required due to increasing use of technology and modern tactics.³⁰

Rodger was the Command Psychiatrist for Scottish Command, and worked under Sir Andrew Thorne. With almost unbelievable serendipity, Thorne had been the military attaché to Berlin from 1932 to 1935; he was one of the few foreign first-hand witnesses to the German officer selection procedures.³¹ Thorne himself had taken the traditional route to his Army commission, had himself taken the traditional route to his commission by attending Eton, then Sandhurst, then impressing his seniors during the First World War. His experience in Berlin sparked an interest in the psychological in the military man; on his return from Berlin, Thorne suggested that psychological methods be trialled in the UK. However, his seniors were appalled at the idea, and one even bellowed at him that he was the 'Bloody Freud of the British Army!'³² For a while, Thorne gave up the idea of psychological officer selection. He went to France with the British expeditionary force, helped to defend troops retreating to Dunkirk, and was then responsible for defending the Sussex-Kent coastline. But on 7th May 1941, Thorne was promoted to lieutenant-general and made general officer commanding-in-chief

27 Ruth Leys, 'Types of One: Adolf Meyer's Life Chart and the Representation of Individuality', *Representations*, 1991, 1–28 (p. 2).

28 Rickman, p. 2.

29 'Mental Illness Heredity', *Aberdeen Press and Journal* (Aberdeen, Scotland, 2 February 1937), p. 2, Gale NewsVault.

30 See Chapter One for more on this argument.

31 Christopher Mann, 'Thorne, Sir (Augustus Francis) Andrew Nicol (1885–1970)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2008) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/50362>>. Thorne apparently made quite an impression on Hitler, who had fought in some of the same First World War battles; a translation of an article by Thorne was found in the wreckage of Hitler's bunker.

32 John Rawlings Rees, *The Shaping of Psychiatry by War* (W. W. Norton, Incorporated, 1945), p. 53.

of Scottish Command. His biography laments this move as leaving him 'sidelined' and 'peripheral to the war.'³³ Yet it was here in this 'remote' posting to Edinburgh that Thorne was finally able to return to his interest in psychological methods of officer selection.

In mid-1941, just a couple of months after being posted to Scottish Command, Thorne suggested to Rodger that psychiatrists should provide 'an opinion on a man's personality which could then be used by the senior officer concerned with selection.'³⁴ This was a prophylactic use of the psychiatrist's report, just as Vinden and Wittkower had envisioned. Thorne was a willing patron of the work, Wittkower and Rodger were interested investigators, and they had some ideas of possible methods. The first efforts to create a science of selection still required some officer candidates to study and a place to study them. Adding to the propitious circumstances in Edinburgh in 1941, there was another man in Edinburgh 'who was keenly interested in appraising officers': Lieutenant Colonel Alick Drummond Buchanan-Smith.³⁵ Buchanan-Smith was also based at Edinburgh during the war; he headed the Company Commander's School (CCS) where men selected to be officers by the CIBs were trained for five weeks, at the end of which some would pass and others would be 'Returned to Unit.' He was interested in Rodger and Wittkower's ideas, and he was able to offer them a "laboratory" to experiment in the form of the CCS. The CCS officer candidates' quality was known, so the psychiatrists' tests of officer suitability could be calibrated and validated with these subjects. As well as the access that he provided to candidates, Buchanan-Smith's personal support was important: his 'active interest... went a long way to enlisting the co-operation of his officer students for initial experiments.'³⁶ Psychological tests required a commanding officer and his candidates themselves to engage with the tests; without their interest and support, the experiments would have come to an abrupt end. Buchanan-Smith's interest in the tests was vital: the scene was set for the first tests.

TESTING THE TESTS: THE FIRST TRIALS OF OFFICER SELECTION METHODS

With these circumstances in place, in the summer of 1941, the first tests of tests began. Rodger and Wittkower conducted experiments 'on rather general and exploratory lines' to investigate the value of the German tests, and other methods, to the British Army.³⁷ Adam Arnold-Brown was one of the men at Buchanan-Smith's CCS, and he recalled the 'box of tricks' that constituted the early tests:

For three days, members of the course were put through a variety of tests; snatching at falling sticks at the sound of a bell when blindfold; tracking a metal spiral which if touched by a steel pencil gave one an electric shock; negotiating the hazards of an obstacle course under close scrutiny; and traversing that well-known path which leads from the psychiatrists': 'Do you have nightmares?' to the

33 Mann.

34 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 5.

35 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 6.

36 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 6.

37 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 6.

revolting: 'Do you like most your father or your mother?' ... We were of known calibre and were used as guinea-pigs... I was glad to learn recently that one test was not for long used. In this, the Germans photographed secretly the reactions of officer aspirants left alone for some moments in a room which was 'planted' with books, photographs and papers likely to excite their interest!³⁸

No archival evidence supports Arnold-Brown's rumour about such an 'exciting' test. However the other tests he recalls having actually experienced, an interesting mix of psycho-physiology and psychoanalytic approaches, were all tried. The German methods provided psycho-physiological methods and laboratory tests of strength of character, and Rodger and Wittkower (particularly the latter) brought psychoanalytic interpretations.

Though there was a mix of ideas, there was common ground between the Germans who created the first officer selection tests and the British psychiatrists who adapted them for the Army. The German tests were developed by psychologists Professor Johann Baptist Rieffert and Max Simoneit, whose work was grounded in the theoretical framework of Gestalt psychology and of German characterology.³⁹ Both of these approaches stressed the importance of considering the whole person, so although Rieffert and Simoneit were psychologists, their refusal to break a person down into traits and attempt to measure specific individual aspects of personality made their approach more similar to that of the British psychiatrists than British psychologists. For instance, a British psychologist explained the German approach in 1933, noting that 'impulsiveness is not, for the German experimenter, a uni-dimensional and isolated trait, nor a quantitatively definable set of habits of behaviour.'⁴⁰ By contrast, in 1937 Frederick Bartlett wrote:

the phrase "a good character" is altogether too vague and inclusive. "A good character" may be quick or slow; may show initiative or be extremely conventional; may possess excellent motor co-ordination or be all at sea when complicated muscular behaviour is called for; may be resistant to fatigue or get tired rapidly; may be sociable or prefer a solitary kind of life. For practical purposes, in fact, what is important is that a person should possess those qualities of temperament, or of character, which fit him well for whatever station in life he occupies. It is of little use to discuss the rather vague notions of "good character," or "well-balanced temperament." We need first to know those specific qualities of behaviour that make for success in the particular directions in which we are interested. Then we must be able to distinguish between intellectual and bodily capacities.⁴¹

British psychologists' focus on specific qualities and capacities was almost the complete opposite in approach to the German holistic characterology. By contrast, the psychiatrists involved in officer selection approached the study of personality

38 Adam Arnold-Brown, *Unfolding Character: The Impact of Gordonstoun* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), pp. 60–61.

39 Ulfried Geuter and Richard Holmes, 'Expression Psychology, Characterology, and the Selection of Officers', in *The Professionalization of Psychology in Nazi Germany* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 94–109.

40 Philip E. Vernon, 'The American v. the German Methods of Approach to the Study of Temperament and Personality', *British Journal of Psychology. General Section*, 24.2 (1933), p. 168.

41 F. C. Bartlett, 'Psychology and the Royal Air Force: II. Interests, Temperament and Character', *Royal Air Force Quarterly*, 8 (1937), 375–87 (p. 375).

from a holistic point of view, focussing upon general coping ability and temperament. Psychologists were therefore happy to leave the vague problem of what made a 'good' or 'bad' officer to the psychiatrists. They stated that:

[A] reason for the for the minor rôle of psychology was that officer-suitability appeared to be chiefly a matter of character and personality, and in the absence of objective tests of the desired qualities... techniques which psychiatrists themselves had evolved... constituted the most promising approach.⁴²

British psychologists like Bartlett did not approve of the German psychology, but they could not provide an alternative. The field was therefore open for the psychiatrists to build on and develop methods, and they did: building on the German methods and their own ideas, Wittkower and Rodger followed the following procedure:

1. Written self-description by the Officer.
2. Life-history obtained by interview.
3. Group Intelligence Test.
4. Observation Test.
5. Choice-Reaction Test.
6. Performance under Stress.

The interview was one hour long and conducted by a psychiatrist in contrast to the old CIB which was around 20 minutes and conducted by staff officers.⁴³ In a memorandum on their experiment, Rodger and Wittkower noted:

We anticipated difficulty in making this type of approach and expected resistance to our enquiries into topics of a very personal kind. We found instead ready co-operation from all the Officers examined, and some even expressed a wish for a more prolonged interview; their interest in the matter prompted them to ask for an individual report from which they thought they might derive benefit.⁴⁴

The willing support and even enthusiasm of the CCS officers was not expected by the psychiatrists, though psychiatry was growing in influence and popularity in inter-war Britain.⁴⁵ This early support enabled Thorne, Rodger and Wittkower to carry on with their experiments. From the interviews and life-histories, the psychiatrists picked out five categories of personalities: forceful and active; painstaking and conscientious; emotional instability 'outside the normal range;' inhibited and reserved; and a miscellaneous group.⁴⁶ The interview questions were grouped into categories like 'sociability' and 'scrupulousness' as well as questions intended to uncover neuroses in categories like 'nervous habits' and 'morbid fears.'⁴⁷ Though the psychiatrists did group the candidates, this indicates that they went by general personality types and tendencies: they were interested in the whole personality. Moreover, they did not feel that any particular group, or even form of neurosis, necessarily made

42 Philip Ewart Vernon and John B. Parry, *Personnel Selection in the British Forces* (London: University of London Press, 1949), p. 56.

43 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', pp. 7-8.

44 Eric Wittkower and T. Ferguson Rodger, 'Memorandum on an Experiment in Psychological Testing Applied to the Selection of Officers', 1941, p. 3, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 377625502.

45 See Chapter One for more on this.

46 Wittkower and Rodger, p. 3.

47 'Appendix II,' Wittkower and Rodger.

someone unsuitable to be an officer. Rodger and Wittkower believed that a variety of intersecting factors contributed to a man's officer-suitability.

The intelligence test results were not processed in time for them to be incorporated or assessed, but they were assumed to be useful by all parties nonetheless. The importance of intelligence and assumed difference between other ranks selection and officer selection is evident in the initial choice to use a completely different test from the matrices used for the GSS.⁴⁸ Nafsika Thalassis has argued that this reflected a pervasive view that intelligence was a national problem.⁴⁹ The advisory committee appointed to evaluate the GSS even went beyond their remit to suggest that officers should be chosen exclusively from a pool of those who scored high on intelligence tests and that anyone who did well on these tests should be considered for a commission.⁵⁰

The trait of observation was ruled out, or at least the test for the trait was deemed invalid. In this test, candidates had to spot alterations made to familiar objects by their commanding officer. The commanding officer's direct involvement in the tests differed from the German tests, where pictures were used for the observation tests; this reflected both the interest and willing participation of the Army staff in the work. From the very earliest experiments, the Army were involved in the experiments as experimenters as well as patrons or subjects.⁵¹ They felt that this psychological work was common sense enough that they could get involved, and the psychiatrists encouraged them to do so, as they enjoyed the interest and depended on their support.

The two aspects of the German methods that were later considered the most controversial were tested on the CCS men and rejected: the choice-reaction test and a performance under stress test. The choice-reaction test, where men had to follow different commands in the face of different stimuli, had been reported in America as the product of a 'sinister scientist.'⁵² This was rejected as giving only low positive correlation with psychiatrists' assessments of personality. The performance under stress test was the most controversial in allied reports: it involved shocking the candidate with an electrical current that increased as he pulled a spring (which he had been instructed to pull as hard as he could), all the while watching his face carefully for signs of determination or loss of morale. Calibrations were made so that 'the maximum current flowed at the maximum effort of the individual, no matter

48 For more on the range of intelligence tests that were tried and developed over the course of the WOSBs, see the next chapter.

49 Nafsika Thalassis, 'Treating and Preventing Trauma: British Military Psychiatry during the Second World War' (University of Salford, 2004), pp. 121–123, University of Salford Institutional Repository.

50 A more in-depth analysis of the acceptance of intelligence tests and tests of mental ability in officer selection is located in Chapter Three. For a broader evaluation of shifting conceptualisations of human mental ability, an excellent overview is given in John Carson, 'The Culture of Intelligence', in *The Cambridge History of Science* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

51 The observation test was rejected, but the Leaderless Group test was later adopted and involved close involvement from military staff, as detailed in the next chapter.

52 Thomas R. Henry, 'Sinister Scientist Heads Germany's Psychology Test', *The Miami News*, 15 May 1941, p. 13.

what his strength might be.⁵³ This test was not, however, rejected due to ethical considerations (as was later claimed), but because of:

low positive correlation between estimates of predisposition to anxiety based on life history and a rating based on the amount of current that could be tolerated and signs of anxiety as observed during testing.⁵⁴

The primary reason given for abandoning both of these tests was because they were not compatible with the psychiatrists' own methods: psychiatrists valued the life history over the laboratory test of how a man coped with anxiety.⁵⁵ They believed it revealed more of the 'whole' person by incorporating his interactions with a range of environments, reflecting their interest in the field theory of Kurt Lewin. It also suited the military to abandon these tests: they were time-consuming to construct and calibrate and required types of equipment such as electronics that were in high demand for the war effort.⁵⁶ These parts of the German tests did not fit either with the psychiatrists' epistemologies, or with the Army's interest in efficiency.

The way that the tests were evaluated is a clear demonstration of how officer selection was shaped through collaboration. The psychiatrists' ability to do the job of selection was tested by comparing their judgements with CCS judgements. Each gave a brief statement on the personality of the man and his suitability as a combatant officer. They then assessed together whether their reports were: 'in essential agreement,' 'in substantial agreement or partial disagreement' or 'in essential disagreement.'⁵⁷ Rodger and Wittkower recorded that out of 48 men studied, the reports were in essential agreement in 26 cases, in substantial agreement in 12 cases, and in essential disagreement in 12 cases. Many histories of the WOSBs have assessed the WOSBs on whether they made the officer intake more democratic by drawing men from different classes. However, this form of validating the experiment by comparing reports indicates that the psychiatrists were not necessarily looking for different *types* of candidates, but looking for different *methods* that might show up more men who fit the existing definition of good.⁵⁸ Creating acceptable and efficient methods therefore appears as a greater priority for the experimenters (on both sides) than creating a more 'diverse' class of officer.

The vague notion of a 'good' candidate was never clarified outside of professional groupings; the psychiatrists circulated memoranda amongst themselves about

53 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 8. The maximum current was set to 10 mili-amperes, which was calculated to be enough to be quite painful but not deadly.

54 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 9.

55 This reveals interesting differences in psychological conceptualisations of anxiety. British experimental psychologists viewed it as a nuisance confounding factor that needed to be ruled out from tests of ability (see 'The Psychology Of Skill', *The British Medical Journal*, 1.4511 (1947), 890-91). The German officer selection psychologists viewed anxiety as a quality that should be tested for so that men displaying it could be ruled out. The British psychiatrists viewed anxiety as inevitable and as in some ways constituting the test; those whose life histories showed that they coped well in the past were more likely to do so again, and vice versa.

56 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 13.

57 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 10.

58 It is worth noting, however, that the definition of 'good' which the psychiatrists adopted and worked with was that of Commanding Officers training new Officers, not the (usually retired) men who headed the Command Interview Boards that selected them.

what made a good candidate, but did not attempt to create a detailed definition in conjunction with the senior officers. Though data on correlations was collected, it was rather vague in nature due to the woolly categorisation of judgements as being 'in agreement' or not. The officer candidate was at this point a boundary object: they were the point where psychiatrists and senior officers came into contact and had to share a view of candidates as 'good' or 'bad,' though to each these definitions meant slightly different things.⁵⁹ This vague definition of candidates was necessary so that the military and the psychiatric men could continue collaborating. Anything more specific would require one of the parties to be educated in the technical language and theoretical understanding of the other.

Though neither group completely absorbed the others' epistemology, a mutual education did occur, to an extent. Nine of the cases of essential disagreement occurred because 'the psychiatrist had inferred underlying emotional instability from his reviews of the life history and it was granted that these trends would not be obvious in everyday behaviour.'⁶⁰ The expert's privileged gaze meant that in almost every case of disagreement, their opinion was considered 'correct' and more valid than the commanding officer's because of their ability to see further and make predictions.

When the tests were repeated with another batch of candidates, half of the disagreements were attributed to 'divergent inferences about personality qualities... in some half of these, the School admitted that they had in fact observed indications which would support psychiatric opinion.'⁶¹ Such 'admissions' indicate that the School staff were being brought to 'see' the men from the psychological point of view. This reads as an almost definitive example of psychologisation. Historian Jan De Vos explains psychologisation as being: 'The overflow of the knowledge of psychology into society altering the way in which "man" is present with himself, others and the world.'⁶² In this case, the psychiatrists' knowledge flowed into the commanding officer and altered how he saw the men in his CCS.⁶³ The other half of disagreements were attributed to the commanding officer having to 'estimate' men's intelligence because he did not have access to the psychological tests. This assumption that the officer's estimate could be improved with an 'accurate' test demonstrates that the soldiers had faith in the psychological science and accepted that the tests did what they claimed and measured what they said they did. They believed in the psychological tools. This may have been linked to Buchanan-Smith's scientific background as a geneticist in F.A.E. Crew's department, where men such as J.B.S. Haldane and Lancelot Hogben, who had written about intelligence, were frequent visitors before the war.⁶⁴

59 For more on boundary objects and the 'tacking' between vague and explicit meanings, see Susan Leigh Star, 'This Is Not a Boundary Object: Reflections on the Origin of a Concept', *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 35.5 (2010), 601-17.

60 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 10.

61 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 15.

62 Jan De Vos, 'From Milgram to Zimbardo: The Double Birth of Postwar Psychology/Psychologization', *History of the Human Sciences*, 23.5 (2010), 156-75 (p. 158).

63 The next chapter will explore in more detail how the actual methods of WOSBs were psychologising.

64 On the visits of Haldane, Hogben, and Julian Huxley to Crew, see Lancelot Hogben, 'Francis Albert

The amount of disagreement diminished. In part this was attributed to the psychiatrists having access to intelligence test results, but it was mainly explained by:

the mutual education of the psychiatrists and of the Commanding Officer... psychiatrists learned more of the variety of talents which could be successfully used in officer roles while the Commanding Officer became more aware of the possible psychological significance of certain aspects of a man's performance during the course.⁶⁵

The psychiatrists believed that the psychologisation of the senior officers gave better results. However, this case also complicates the picture of psychologisation. The 'flow' was not mono-directional. At the same time as the commanding officer was learning a psychological approach, the officer's knowledge also informed the psychiatrists' understanding of the task. The experiment was repeated yet again at an Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU). This was another, supposedly tougher, test of validity. The candidates were younger and had not yet had any officer training, so it would be harder for the psychiatrists to spot their potential, but the military view of the candidates was not already fixed as it was at CCS. Both groups could 'improve' their selections as a result of their mutual education. Increasingly shared understanding of candidates was reflected in the results: concordance between the views of the commanding officer and the psychiatrists was recorded as over 80 per cent and the trial was seen as a success. The psychiatrists and the military men now believed that they were looking for the same thing. Though that 'officer quality' remained intangible, they had established some possible methods to find it.

SELECTION IN SOUTHERN COMMAND: BOWLBY'S EXPERIMENTS

At the same time that Rodger, Wittkower, Thorne and Buchanan-Smith were conducting some of their trials in Edinburgh, other experiments with officer candidates were taking place in an OCTU in Southern Command, Wiltshire. The few records on these experiments note that it was a coincidence that they took place concurrently with the Scottish experiments. John Bowlby, who conducted the work in Southern Command, recalled 'I happened to do an experimental venture in officer selection' and archive files from the Tavistock refer to these tests as being done 'quite independently... entirely independent of the Rodger-Wittkower studies.'⁶⁶ This might sound too much of a coincidence to be feasible, that colleagues should work on the same problem without realising. However, Bowlby was not part of the Tavistock group at this point and it is quite possible that he was not in close touch with the Scottish psychiatrists. Bowlby had opted to train at the British Psycho-Analytical Society,

Eley Crew. 1886-1973', *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*, 20 (1974), 135-53. Hogben used intelligence testing whilst at LSE in the 1930s, see Milo Keynes, 'Lancelot Hogben, F.R.S. (1895-1975): A Review of His Autobiography', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, 53.3 (1999), 361-69 (p. 365); Haldane wrote on the likelihood of a slow decline in the mean national intelligence quotient in J.B.S. Haldane, *Heredity and Politics* (Allen, 1938).

65 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 11.

66 Milton Senn, 'John Bowlby Interview with Milton Senn, M.D.', *Beyond the Couch: The Online Journal of the American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work*, 2007 <http://www.beyondthe-couch.org/1207/bowlby_int.htm> [accessed 4 November 2013]; 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 12.

whose leader 'forbade any qualified analyst even to give lectures at the Tavistock' such was his disdain for it, and it was not until the autumn of 1940 that Bowlby joined the RAMC and was sent to Wiltshire (before this he had been in the Emergency Medical Service, splitting his time between London and Cambridge on civilian work).⁶⁷ Bowlby therefore had little time to become familiar with the Tavistock psychiatrists and was geographically remote from them.

Though remote from the Tavistock group in the early years of the war, Bowlby had an extensive military background. His maternal grandfather and his father had both been Army surgeons, and after retiring from the Army as a Major General after the First World War, his father was on the executive committee of the British Red Cross Society as well as being appointed surgeon to King Edward VII and surgeon-in-ordinary to King George V.⁶⁸ John Bowlby himself had been educated at the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, so was familiar with military tradition. It is perhaps for this reason that the senior staff of Southern Command sought his help with their 'officer problem.' They considered many recently commissioned officers unsuitable and the training unit was wrestling with 'a number of unsuitables who lacked either the ability to master the technical training or the degree of leadership required for an armoured regiment.'⁶⁹ The Royal Armoured Corps staff argued that modern, technological warfare required a special type of officer; they were particularly familiar with the new challenges of technological warfare as a division newly formed from Cavalry units switching over to using tanks.⁷⁰ Like Thorne and Vinden, the senior officers in Southern Command believed that new psychological tests might help find men to manage the new technology they encountered.

In response to the Royal Armoured Corps' request for help, Bowlby used interviews and the newly created Raven's Progressive Matrices test (non-verbal tests of mental ability) to rate candidates on the same four point scale that the OCTU used.⁷¹ As with Rodger and Wittkower, he was applying his tests to some men whose worth the Army had already assessed; the Adjutant had selected a 'representative' group. The test was a blind test in the sense that Bowlby did not read existing reports on the candidates. To both the psychiatrist and the local commanding officers, this was a trial of whether the psychiatrist understood what made a good officer. Bowlby passed, with significant disagreement in only two cases out of 36. Bowlby's work, like that of Rodger and Wittkower, was a local project of which the War Office were unaware. It demonstrates that the interest in psychological methods and more technical forms of testing was widespread amongst the mid-level managers of military men. Thorne was not 'the bloody Freud of British Army,' he was one of many would-be amateur psychologists.

67 Senn.

68 D.A. Power and Ian R. Whitehead, 'Bowlby, Sir Anthony Alfred, First Baronet (1855–1929)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2008) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32003>> [accessed 15 June 2014].

69 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 12.

70 See Chapter One of this thesis for more on this argument.

71 Raven's Matrices were the tests of ability used in the GSS, so were in the process of receiving official military approval at this time, and also would likely have been familiar to Bowlby who specialised in Child Psychiatry because they had been developed for use with 'mentally defective children.'

Their interest in, and approval of, the early tests was vital to the creation of a 'science of selection' because without their support the psychiatrists would have remained in the traditional role of alienist. The facilitation of Rodger, Wittkower, and Bowlby's work by local senior officers indicated a widespread interest in the 'officer problem' at a practical level as well as the national level that was the focus of the previous chapter.

“A NEW STYLE OF MILITARY UNIT”: THE WOSBs ARE ESTABLISHED

J.R. Rees ensured that information on the Scottish and Southern Command officer selection experiments was circulated amongst psychiatrists and also reached the attention of the War Office. With psychological and military opinions increasingly correlating, a memorandum was drawn up in September 1941 to report on the experimental work. At this stage, the psychological selection methods were somewhat codified as tests were ruled out and ruled in. The senior officers and psychiatrists had arrived at methods that selected 'good' officers to their satisfaction. From the autumn, they attempted to refine their approach to deal with the broader 'officer problems;' because of the national shortage of officers, they looked to uncover as many marginal candidates as they possibly could, and also retain the military identity of boards in order to placate those worried about change.

The psychiatrists were most certain of the value of the interview and the intelligence tests: 'a psychological interview, provided that the results of an Intelligence Test are taken into account, given an accurate assessment of the qualities of an officer.'⁷² However, they noted that they 'would not be sufficient for making reliable judgements on the substantial proportion of candidates likely to fall in the marginal categories near the threshold of acceptance.'⁷³ The 'officer problem' was not only a problem of quality and assessment, but of shortage; the Army required that the tests were both more accurate at filtering out bad candidates and filtering in good candidates. The psychiatrists were confident in the ability of their trained gaze to distinguish hidden neuroses that might cause a man to fail as an officer, but the task of spotting hidden talents was a new one. Unlike Bartlett and his Cambridge colleagues, their training had focussed on the deviant and damaged, not the skilled. The psychiatrists therefore recommended that laboratory and practical tests should be found to help assess men by providing 'pointers:'

What these tests should be was an open question, but if a way could be found of combining the resources & methods of military personnel such as the Commandant & staff of the CCS and psychiatric and psychological specialists such as those who had taken part in the early experiments - rather than of using one as a criterion for validating the other - a type of selection procedure might be instituted which at one and the same time would be reliable as regards assessing officer quality candidates and acceptable to military opinion.⁷⁴

A collaborative approach to testing was seen to be the fastest, easiest way to establish tests that everyone could agree upon. Tests generally were seen by the psychiatrists

⁷² Wittkower and Rodger, p. 6.

⁷³ 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 16.

⁷⁴ 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 17.

as necessary to the procedure, even though no specifically useful ones had yet been ascertained; like the military staff who had faith in intelligence tests, the psychological staff made assumptions about the inherent value of tests.

On the other hand, the military men connected with these experiments seem to have fewer qualms about the value of the unsupplemented psychiatric interview at this stage than the psychiatrists themselves. Brigadier Rees also recalled the early Army enthusiasm for the experiment: 'it was thought by some of the senior officers that the original work had been so successful that the whole answer could be given by a Psychiatric Interview added to the results of intelligence tests.'⁷⁵ This does reflect acceptance of the methods, but could also be read as impatience in the military men who wanted a fast solution to their officer problems. Military desire to proceed rapidly with any apparently successful and acceptable methods was evident. The report was produced for a meeting to be held in early December with Adjutant General Sir Ronald Adam (responsible for personnel issues in the Army). That the meeting had already been scheduled even before the report was written up suggests favourable word-of-mouth reports of the work had already spread up Army command, and also that the Army had already resolved to have psychiatrists do further work on officer selection.

By the time of the meeting, another informal connection benefited the psychiatrists: Alan Brooke, a close personal friend of Adam. Brooke had been at Staff College and then evacuated from Dunkirk with Adam before being made Chief of Imperial General Staff and Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee in December 1941.⁷⁶ This meant that Brooke was 'effectively the principal strategic adviser to the war cabinet as well as the professional head of the army.' This highly influential figure, with the capability to pronounce changes and allocate resources, attended the meeting in Edinburgh where Rodger and Wittkower demonstrated their tests. At a subsequent discussion, Adam, Rees, Brooke, Thorne, Hargreaves and Rodger, and J.D. Sutherland, another Edinburgh psychiatrist, reached the conclusion that the new methods could be attached to the old CIBs. That way, the new selection methods would be both 'acceptable to military opinion' and 'greater thoroughness would be shown by the presence of [the experts].'⁷⁷ What was *shown* was important because, to the Army, the officer problem was an image problem. Merely bringing in experts sent a signal of intent that could be used to assuage concerns and complaints.

The retention of the old boards in some form demonstrates how careful the discussants were at this stage to secure the acceptance of potentially hostile senior Army figures. This can also be seen in Adam convening a conference of Presidents of the CIBs at which Rodger, Wittkower and Rees were to present:

to review the difficulties in getting good officers and to discuss the creation of

⁷⁵ Rees, pp. 66–67.

⁷⁶ D.W. Fraser, 'Brooke, Alan Francis, First Viscount Alanbrooke (1883–1963)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32091>> [accessed 8 April 2013].

⁷⁷ 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 17.

a new style of military unit for the selection of officers which would introduce scientific methods in the context of a residential procedure.⁷⁸

The presenters 'suggested that the President of the Selection Board should carry the rank of full Colonel, a rank which would strengthen his position in relation to Commanding Officers of units from which candidates would be drawn.'⁷⁹ This can be seen as a clear appeal to the support of the Board members whose authority they threatened; if the CIB Presidents supported the changes, they were almost guaranteeing themselves promotions. The proposals were 'well received' and it was agreed to establish an experimental War Office Selection Board, No. 1 WOSB.⁸⁰ Like the first experiments on officer selection, No. 1 WOSB was located in Edinburgh. Personal contacts were helpful once again; in addition to providing the CCS as a 'laboratory' for initial experimentation, it is highly likely that Buchanan-Smith also facilitated the use of the second selection 'laboratory.' Before the war, he lectured in genetics at Edinburgh, and co-authored works with Professor F.A.E. Crew, the director of the Genetics Institute in the King's Buildings of Edinburgh University. The Institute's buildings were used for No. 1 WOSB. This experimental Board was instructed to refine the selection methods and provide a model organisation that could be rolled out on a large scale to rapidly address the concerns about selection being voiced with increasing frequency in the press and parliament.⁸¹ When the first WOSB's staff assembled in January 1942, psychiatrists and their tests had passed the first test of military acceptability.

The staff of the first Board were carefully chosen. Colonel J.V. Delahaye, a former CIB President, was the first WOSB President. The President had an important symbolic role, as 'in his executive capacity he represents the Army to the candidates and in the eyes of the Army he acts as a guarantee of the procedure.'⁸² In order to be militarily acceptable, the WOSBs needed to be headed by a military man. Adam had carefully considered his choice for the appointment of the first WOSB President. Delahaye was an established military man who had been educated at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich, and awarded not only a DSO in the First World War but also the Military Cross.⁸³ For the early years of the Second World War, he had been President of a CIB and commanded 122 Officer Cadet Training Unit. No-one could criticise Delahaye's active service experience. This was important to the psychiatrists who believed that the President played an important symbolic role for outsiders and candidates.⁸⁴ To the Army, Delahaye showed that the people involved in new selection techniques

78 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 18.

79 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 18.

80 Pearl King, 'Activities of British Psychoanalysts during the Second World War and the Influence of Their Inter-Disciplinary Collaboration on the Development of Psychoanalysis in Great Britain', *International Review of Psycho-Analysis*, 16.15 (1989), 14–33 (p. 24).

81 See Chapter One.

82 J. D. Sutherland and G. A. Fitzpatrick, 'Some Approaches to Group Problems in the British Army', *Sociometry*, 8.3/4 (1945), p. 447.

83 'Colonel J. V. Delahaye', *The Times* (London, England, 8 January 1948), p. 6, Gale NewsVault. Delahaye had also worked for the League of Nations in the interwar period, and attempted to get himself elected as a Labour MP so had political sympathies aligned with Adam and the Tavistock group.

84 Sutherland and Fitzpatrick, p. 447.

understood the institution, and to the candidates Delahaye represented an Army that was embracing new scientific techniques.⁸⁵

Rees continued to court military acceptability by staffing No. 1 WOSB with strategically chosen psychological staff. The quietly practical (but German-born) Wittkower left for other work, as did Rodger. Wilfred Bion from Western Command joined the Board as a replacement psychiatrist. Though a qualified psychiatrist and analyst, Bion had established military credentials; he had led a tank regiment during the First World War and won several awards for gallantry. He was the perfect man to combat the medics' criticisms regarding a lack of active service experience. Bion's military experience was used to soothe suspicious senior officers; he recalled stating 'with emphasis that I did not back the results of a Matrix Test against the seriously considered view of an officer about his own men... [the Colonel] seemed relieved.'⁸⁶ Lord Belhaven, who was unimpressed on the whole with psychiatrists, was also impressed with Bion:

Winchester was fortunate in its psychiatrist, Major Bion, a large, outspoken man, a physician of repute and a fighting soldier, who had won the DSO [Distinguished Service Order] commanding a tank at Cambrai. I asked him to tell me about this new thing, psychiatry.

"The less you know about it the better," he said; "you're daft enough, or you wouldn't be here."⁸⁷

Bion's combination of wry humour and military honours impressed senior officers. Bion himself benefited from the move as 'he was buoyed by the positive response of "hard baked regulars" to his proposals for the reform of officer selection.'⁸⁸ In putting Bion on the Board, Rees had helped to secure the support of these 'hard baked regulars.' He also minimised the risk of Bion, 'the most abrasive and complex of the Tavistock group,' irritating anyone senior by providing a buffer of other psychological staff.⁸⁹ Rees attempted to carefully manage points of intersection between the Army and his psychiatrists.

Joining Delahaye and Bion were military staff chosen from those who had existing connections to the psychiatrists' previous selection work. Sergeant-testers Alex Mitchell and David O'Keefe had been involved in the GSS work. They had 'distinguished themselves in the work of other rank selection where they had been trained in the use of tests of general and special aptitudes and had taken part in various special investigations.'⁹⁰ Captain W.N. Gray was chosen as the first Military

85 In taking this symbolic President role, Delahaye thus acted as a symbolic bridge between the two camps who had been warring over officer selection, those who were against change because they feared that the fundamental character of the Army would be lost, and those who wanted change because they felt the existing form of selection was biased and unfair.

86 Bion, sec. 817.

87 Lord Robert Alexander Benjamin Hamilton Belhaven, *The Uneven Road* (John Murray Ltd, 1955), p. 201.

88 Letter from Bion, 12th July 1942, as quoted in Michael Roper, "The "Spear Head of an Advance": Bion's Wartime Letters to Rickman", *Psychoanalysis and History*, 14.1 (2012), 95-109 (p. 102).

89 Ben Shephard, *A War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Twentieth Century* (Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 190.

90 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 20.

Testing Officer; he was 'one of the officers who had been interviewed [at the CCS].'⁹¹ Gray, Mitchell and O'Keefe played a bridging role. They were soldiers whose qualities had been assessed by both the old methods and the new. The tests had selected them as being talented, and so they were personally invested in the belief that the tests were a good measure of a man.⁹² Documents would later note that the 'original staffs were "brought up" at No.1 WOSB', but in fact their connections with one another and with the Tavistock's psychological approach went further back even than that.⁹³ The men involved in shaping the new selection procedures were therefore invested in the methods; either they had created them, or they had been chosen themselves because of them.

Psychologist Eric Trist joined the first WOSB just as soon as he could. Trist was poached from a furious Tavistock enemy, Aubrey Lewis of the Maudsley; after the Tavistock group approached him, he sneakily volunteered to join the forces in order to escape from his reserved occupation.⁹⁴ The two main things that he brought to the WOSBs at this stage were his expertise in testing, to help find supplementary tests as Rodger and Wittkower's memorandum proposed, and his approach to failed candidates.⁹⁵ The work with failed candidates has rarely been discussed in histories of WOSBs, but with so many of the criticisms of the old CIBs arising from disgruntled failed candidates resenting what they saw as an unfair system, Trist's role was vital. During Rodger and Wittkower's trials, candidates requested and were given the psychiatrist's opinions, and this informative approach continued at No. 1 WOSB. A system was put in place so that 'those who failed or seemed unready for training were counselled for future career moves.'⁹⁶

The attention the WOSB psychiatrists paid to managing the feelings of failed candidates was reflected in the employment of Trist. He had worked with Dr Oscar A. Oeser in St Andrews on a Pilgrim Trust survey of unemployment in Dundee, work that had focussed on the psychological and sociological effects of unemployment. Trist had been particularly interested in building relationships with participants, giving a paper at the 1936 British Association for the Advancement of Science conference with the title 'Functional Penetration of the Social Field' (which he had wanted to call 'some

91 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 20.

92 The link that O'Keefe and Mitchell felt to the WOSBs was apparent decades later; O'Keefe wrote a letter to the Glasgow Herald defending the methods' 'precise and scientific methods' and Alexander Mitchell's obituary proudly remarks on his contribution to the WOSBs (the 'Mitchell vocabulary test') and notes that his wartime experience led him 'to develop his postwar career undertaking early research on the impact of television advertising.' David O'Keefe, 'Stringent Tests for Commission', *The Glasgow Herald* (Glasgow, UK, 14 October 1987), p. 10; Sandra Moody, 'Alex Mitchell', *The Guardian*, 12 July 2007 <<http://www.theguardian.com/news/2007/jul/12/obituaries.mainsection>> [accessed 3 March 2014].

93 'A Critical Review of the Present State of Officer Selection in Relation to the Position and Work of RTC', 1945, p. 6, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 205802222.

94 Eric Trist, "'Guilty of Enthusiasm", from *Management Laureates*, Vol 3, Ed. Arthur G. Bedeian (Jai Press, 1993), *The Modern Times Workplace*, 2008 <<http://www.moderntimesworkplace.com/archives/ericbio/ericbio.html>> [accessed 24 October 2012].

95 Chapter Three of this thesis examines the methods of the WOSBs in detail, including psychological tests.

96 Trahair, p. 102.

ways to establish rapport' but feared this might hide the importance of theory).⁹⁷ This interest in creating a relationship with the members of the group he was studying was a useful background to bring to the work advising failed candidates at the WOSBs. Where Bion and Delahaye's appearances were intended to impress those above, Trist's was intended to placate those below.

The British Army and the psychiatrists opened the first WOSB on February 15th 1942, and the 10 batches of candidates to pass through the experimental board were seemingly satisfied with the procedure, as was the War Office. In April 1942, less than two months after No. 1 WOSB opened, the carefully selected and managed experimental board was deemed a success: Adjutant General Adam ordered Vinden 'to establish the system throughout Great Britain as fast as possible.'⁹⁸ From an informal discussion in a bar, via informal experiments conducted by experts in medico-psychological breakdowns and facilitated by an interested scientist and a soldier with a penchant for reform, a formalised science of selection system had been formed.

CONCLUSION

There were far more people involved in the early officer selection experiments in Britain than is usually acknowledged. The Tavistock psychiatrists discussed problems and experiments, exchanged methods, theories, tacit knowledge and influential connections. There were also psychiatric contributions beyond this group. Bowlby contributed ideas and methods that were incorporated into the officer selection plans at the end of 1941 and data that helped to support the psychiatrists claims to expertise. The early experiments also attest to a more widespread military interest in using psychiatric methods to deal with officer selection than is usually presumed. Adam was not the lone champion of psychiatric approaches; though he was influential, the Armoured Corps, Thorne, Vinden, Buchanan-Smith and Crew were all important nodes in the network that produced the WOSB. Local commanding officers welcomed the possibility of help from the psychiatrists. This was due in large part to the organisation of Army psychiatry; the local Army commands promoted a personal and involved relationship between psychiatrists and local commanding officers.

Officer selection experiments in the British Army that produced the WOSBs were more collaborative and involved a greater meshing of military men with psychological expert than any other form of selection, in any other service. By unpicking those connections and who they formed between, this work answers the question about officer selection that is remarkable but overlooked: why psychiatry rather than psychology? On the surface, psychiatrists and the Army seem an odd couple. Psychologists had established themselves selecting men for industry, but found the

97 Trahair, p. 77.

98 F.H. Vinden, 'The Introduction of War Office Selection Boards in the British Army: A Personal Recollection', in *War and Society: A Yearbook of Military History*, ed. by Brian Bond and Ian Roy (Routledge, 1977), II, p. 126.

military to be problematic partners; after the war, psychologists Vernon and Parry complained that the Army misused psychologists and were reluctant to accept their methods. They concluded that:

Presumably the lesson to be drawn is that psychologists cannot expect a complex institution like the Army to accept novel procedures merely on scientific grounds, that gradual education and infiltration rather than the imposition of technically valid methods are needed.⁹⁹

The extensive 'testing the tests' and slow introduction of psychological methods of officer selection by the Army psychiatrists epitomised this 'general education and infiltration.' Firstly, Rees ensured that psychiatrists were ready to tackle Army problems as they arose. Then psychiatrists were able to 'make sense' of men that perplexed their senior officers, and a relationship between the two began to form. The ways that Wittkower, Rodger, and Bowlby approached officer problems was informed by both their backgrounds and senior officers' needs. The psychiatrists' interests in character, idiosyncracies, intelligence and mental hygiene led to their use of psychological methods to select men in order to pre-empt reallocations of misfits. This interest in character was not shared by their psychologist colleagues. These differences in epistemology, coupled with the small size of the psychological sciences in Britain at this time, meant that the psychologists were happy to leave the matter of officer selection to their psychiatrist colleagues whilst they focussed on allocating other ranks of men to specific roles. Rees organised meetings so that ideas were shared and psychiatrists were ready and able to build on the early experiments at No. 1 WOSB.

The psychotherapeutic orientation of the psychiatrists also affected the way that they went about dealing with the 'officer problem.' They saw this not as a problem for which they needed to supply tests for but as a malady that they needed to work with the army to 'cure.' The Army psychiatrists did not simply accept that there was only 10% disagreement between the commanding officer's opinion of a man and their own. Instead they tried to show their military colleagues how the problem man appeared from an expert psychological view. Psychiatrists hoped that improving officers' 'insight' would reduce disagreement; they actively sought to psychologise their military colleagues. However, it would be a mistake to assume that the passive military men were actively brought round to the psychological point of view. The Army shaped the psychology as well as the psychology shaping the Army. Commanding officers supplied the examples of 'good' and 'bad' officers. There are no records of disagreement over what an officer should be, only whether or not certain men had that potential. As well as supplying the criteria for the psychiatrists to use, the soldiers involved in early officer selection experiments were *actively* involved in the experiments. Rather than setting the psychiatrists to investigate a problem and leaving them to it, Thorne and Vinden asked questions, got involved in tests, attended meetings and discussions, and campaigned for their superiors to take interest in the

⁹⁹ Vernon and Parry, p. 42.

work.

Well before the official War Office sanctioned experimentation, investigations of how to apply psychological ideas to officer problems took place. Psychological science was adapted to organisation ways, and concurrently the military organisation was psychologised, adapting some of the methods and the ways of thinking of the psychological staff. Informal and unofficial exchanges of problems and ideas were formed into a set of principles and tests which had been officially approved, but they were not set in stone. The WOSB was not a static product but a continually changing system; this was the case at the early experiments, and, as the next chapter will demonstrate, it was also the case even after the WOSBs were established and proliferated across Britain.

CHAPTER THREE: THE TECHNOLOGIES OF SELECTION

INTRODUCTION

On the first page of his book on the War Office Selection Boards (WOSBs), Henry Harris summarised the questions facing psychiatrists working for the British Army in the Second World War:

Can leaders be picked and if so, how?¹

The preliminary experiments detailed in the previous chapter had satisfied the Army and the Army Psychiatrists that leaders could be chosen with a greater degree of success than using the old military interview method (measured in officer training pass rates), and a basic idea of test components found. However, the way in which officer candidates should be chosen, and the exact system of tests, was only established after the first WOSB. This chapter examines which methods were used. It traces how they came to be a part of the WOSB battery, as well as how and why some ceased to be used.

A variety of people and influences mingled in the co-production of the WOSB methods.² As the previous chapter demonstrated, both psycho-physiology and psychodynamic theories and methods had informed Wittkower and Rodger's early investigations of how German tests might be adapted. This chapter traces how such collaborations continued in the formation of the WOSBs. Though the WOSB is often discussed as a single object, in fact it comprised several different testing components. There were four main types of tests. Firstly, psychologist John Raven and psychoanalyst John Bowlby developed tests of mental ability, which were different from, but used in conjunction with, intelligence tests. Secondly, there was a 'Leaderless Group test'. This came from an unnamed Military Testing Officer, and had psychological theory grafted to it by Wilfred Bion. Thirdly, there were 'Psychological Pointers' such as Word Association Tests and questionnaires (about candidates' backgrounds and medical health), both of which were intended to provide hints at areas for clarification in interviews. While the 'Pointers' were psychoanalytic tools adapted for use on a larger scale, the development of the questionnaires was shaped by the availability of new technology in the form of card-punch machines. Fourthly, there were interviews in which any questions raised by the rest of the procedure could be followed-up, in the hopes of finding as many marginal candidates as possible. Interviews were the domain of both the Board President, who was a military man, and the Board Psychiatrist; psychiatrist John Rickman was particularly involved in elucidating the psychological theory behind interviewing. Constituted by these four techniques, WOSBs were not simply a psychiatric creation; they were the product of various schools of thought and methods.

1 Henry Harris, *The Group Approach to Leadership-Testing* (Routledge & Paul, 1949), p. 1.

2 Brief biographies of the individuals referred to in this chapter are provided in "Appendix B: Who's Who of Thesis" on page 205

This chapter, then, aims to provide a thorough historical analysis of what actually constituted a WOSB.³ Many historians have argued that the WOSBs prompted resistance from the Army due to being a psychiatric creation.⁴ Yet because of the lack of scrutiny of the methods and theories used, there has been no detailed analysis of why methods might have caused conflict between military and psychological staff. Though the WOSB is often discussed as a single object, in fact it was constituted of several different testing components, each of which held different meanings for those involved. Tests of mental ability were the subject of much psychological pondering but military staff thought of them as quite straightforward. Both the Leaderless Group Test and the 'Pointers' had a 'superficial' military meaning, such as showing whether a man could figure out obstacles or was patriotic, and a 'deeper' psychological meaning, demonstrating how well candidates related to other people. Likewise, the interviews were subject to two alternative epistemologies. To many Board Presidents, an interview was a 'common sense' way to ascertain a man's military bearing, and a continuation of a method used by Command Interview Boards for years. To the psychiatrists, it was a delicate and complex tool to uncover unconscious tendencies, which might benefit or harm candidates depending on how it was applied.

To analyse these components, this chapter discusses the WOSB tests as 'technologies.' One reason for this is that 'technology' was an actors' category: the psychiatrists referred to the WOSBs as both 'applied scientific work' and as a 'social technology' in internal memoranda.⁵ 'Psychological technology' or 'psychotechnology' is moreover a term that has been continually used since by practitioners in the human and psychological sciences.⁶ Historian of technology Thomas P. Hughes defined technology as entailing a 'reordering of the material world to make it more productive of goods and services.'⁷ The WOSBs were intended to categorise people to make officer training more productive. More specifically, Theo Herrmann defines psychological technology as receiving 'its objectives, chances of success, and authentication from

3 Several works were produced very shortly after the war, including: Harris; Philip Ewart Vernon and John B. Parry, *Personnel Selection in the British Forces* (London: University of London Press, 1949); Robert H. Ahrenfeldt, *Psychiatry in the British Army in the Second World War* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1958) However, these works were produced by those with first-hand experience of the methods and lack the historical analysis that this chapter aims to provide.

4 For instance, Jeremy A. Crang, *The British Army and the People's War, 1939-1945* (Manchester University Press, 2000); David French, *Raising Churchill's Army* (Oxford University Press, 2001); Ben Shephard, 'We Can Save Those Boys From Horror', in *A War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Twentieth Century* (Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 187-204. Examples of the resistance to the Army psychiatrists' expertise that these historians have noted are listed for easy reference in "Appendix C: Timeline of Events Related to Tavistock Group & Army Work" on page 212.

5 'A Critical Review of the Present State of Officer Selection in Relation to the Position and Work of RTC', 1945, pp. 10-11, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 205802222 Such terms were particularly used in planning documents from the Control and Development Centre, where staff worked furiously to try and make WOSBs more scientific, see Chapter Four.

6 See for instance: Theo Herrmann, 'What's next?: Continuity and Discontinuity in Psychology', *Zeitschrift Für Psychologie/Journal of Psychology*, Becoming a Science, 217.2 (2009), 95-102; Thomas J. Van De Water, 'Psychology's Entrepreneurs and the Marketing of Industrial Psychology', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, History of Applied Psychology, 82.4 (1997), 486-99; Kenneth J. Gergen and others, 'Psychological Science in Cultural Context', *American Psychologist*, 51.5 (1996), 496-503; George A. Miller, 'Assessment of Psychotechnology', *American Psychologist*, 25.11 (1970), 991-1001.

7 Thomas P. Hughes, 'The Evolution of Large Technological Systems', in Wiebe E. Bijker and others, *The Social Construction of Technological Systems: New Directions in the Sociology and History of Technology* (MIT Press, 2012), pp. 45-76.

problem situation; these do not arise from our science, but would be present even if psychology did not exist.⁸ Again, this definition fits the objectives, criteria of success, and authentication of the WOSBs tests, which were co-constructed with the British Army, to deal with ‘officer problems’ that were initially independent of psychological enquiry, though psychological approaches were soon brought to bear on the matter. This chapter focusses on WOSBs as technology because the WOSBs were first developed as a practical tool; only retrospectively were there efforts to validate and prove the generalisability of the theories and methods.⁹ Herrmann also notes that psychotechnology exists outside of ‘institutionalised, scientifically normalised psychology,’ and this was certainly the case for the WOSBs.¹⁰ The soldiers who used the tests were outside of this definition, but so were even the Tavistock group.¹¹ Though the WOSB tests were grounded in scientific ideas and intended to give a technical reading of an object (in this case, a candidate), they were predominantly used by non-scientists, and in this sense they represented a technology. Like radar, psychological selection tests relied upon the latest scientific thinking, but were operated by non-specialists trained only to understand the reading rather than the underlying theories that supplied this data. In this sense, though they did not employ the term ‘technology’ themselves, the Army treated the tests as technologies.

Conceptualising the tests as technologies enables us to examine the interactions occurring in their creation and use. It enables several questions to be asked. Firstly, what were tests actually intended to do? As Raymond Williams’ discussion of the social history of television emphasises, restoring ‘*intention* to the process of research and development’ helps highlight social forces and processes.¹² For instance, many historians have assumed that the WOSBs were intended to find candidates from the lower classes and ‘democratise’ the Army, because this was a public concern (as the first chapter of this thesis demonstrated). However, this chapter argues that test creators aimed to show up more candidates who would be just acceptable, and thus to increase the supply of officers, for instance by developing more refined mental tests. The intention was to find *more* officers, not different officers: any shift in candidates’ class background was coincidental rather than purposeful. Analysis of how testing technology was put to work thus reveals the intentions of those involved in their creation and use: practical Army concerns trumped public ideals.

Another important question about technology concerns its reflection of the values

8 Herrmann, p. 97.

9 Chapter Four of this thesis returns to the matter of applied science, and examines how the Tavistock group attempted to make the application of their theories fit the expectations of the wider scientific community and thus constitute ‘science.’

10 Herrmann, p. 97. Herrmann also suggests that basic psychological research can be ‘contaminated’ by psychological technology. The idea of practical application as corrupting is returned to in the next chapter, which explores how some in the psychological sciences, such as Frederick Bartlett from the University of Cambridge, refused to compromise their scientific ideals for practical ends, whilst others were more willing to create practical tools first and then consider how they might be explained by theories.

11 See Chapter One.

12 Raymond Williams and Ederyn Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (Psychology Press, 2003), p. 7 Emphasis original.

of those who created and used it. For example, Adrian Forty also explored how electronics company Philips' design of the Ladyshave, which is pink and round, was based on patriarchal values rather than any functional requirement.¹³ Similarly, Word Association tests, though psychoanalytic in origin, were made to appear military in order to be more acceptable to their users.

Thinking of WOSB tests as technology enables us, thirdly, to question how they were used, and whether this usage differed from what their creators intended. Mackay and Gillespie have explored the social appropriation of technologies and how:

People may reject technologies, redefine their functional purpose, customise or even invest idiosyncratic symbolic meanings in them. Indeed they may redefine a technology in a way that defies its original, designed and intended purpose.¹⁴

At various points the Tavistock group attempted to reassert their understanding of tests and how they *should* be used to measure 'officer quality' by creating diagrams to aid interpretation. However, they could not enforce their psychologically derived meanings of the tools, particularly with the Board Presidents.

Because of the different meanings that they held for different groups, the test components of the WOSBs acted as boundary objects. The concept of the boundary object was originally developed by Susan Leigh Star in the context of the sociology of computer and information sciences. It was later applied to exploring relations among different groups intersecting at a Museum of Zoology, and how specimens were objects on the boundary between these groups.¹⁵ She noted three defining features of a boundary object. Firstly, it 'resides between social worlds.'¹⁶ In the case of WOSBs, tests were a link between the Tavistock group of psychiatrists and the soldiers of the British Army, whose very different worlds, one on the boundary of acceptable society, and the other considered by many to be so traditional as to be archaic, were discussed in Chapter One. Secondly, a boundary object is 'worked on by local groups who maintain its vaguer identity as a common object, while making it more specific... and therefore useful for work that is not interdisciplinary.' Within the WOSBs, soldiers and psychiatrists worked together jointly to test candidates' officer suitability, whilst continuing to develop their own intra-group meanings of the tests, such as Rickman's development of the theory behind psychiatric interview. Finally, a boundary object enables groups 'cooperating without consensus [to] tack back-and-forth' between forms of the object. With the Leaderless Group test at WOSBs, for instance, the psychiatrists explicitly acknowledged alternative forms of the test.

13 Adrian Forty, *Objects of Desire* (Pantheon Books, 1986); The way that values shape technologies is also explored in Hughes' chapter in Bijker and others.

14 Hughie Mackay and Gareth Gillespie, 'Extending the Social Shaping of Technology Approach: Ideology and Appropriation', *Social Studies of Science*, 22.4 (1992), 685-716 (pp. 698-699).

15 Susan Leigh Star, 'The Structure of Ill-Structured Solutions: Heterogeneous Problem-Solving, Boundary Objects and Distributed Artificial Intelligence', in *Distributed Artificial Intelligence 2*, ed. by M Huhns and L Gasser (Menlo Park: Morgan Kaufmann, 1989); Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer, 'Institutional Ecology, "Translations" and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39', *Social Studies of Science*, 19.3 (1989), 387-420.

16 Susan Leigh Star, 'This Is Not a Boundary Object: Reflections on the Origin of a Concept', *Science, Technology & Human Values*, 35.5 (2010), 601-17 (pp. 604-605).

As this chapter explores, they called one the 'set' problem (which was the task as presented to the candidates, such as 'build a bridge') and the other the 'real' problem (the psychological test of candidates' cooperation with a group). Both meanings were necessary, but it was not necessary for everyone involved to share the same interpretation. It is thus useful to think of the WOSBs tests as being boundary objects, as this facilitates scrutiny of the various meanings and relationships involved in their creation and use.

Relationships between actors become more apparent when examining strategies of meaning-making for boundary objects. Barley, Leonardi and Bailey built upon the concept of the boundary object by proposing that actors pursue strategies of ambiguity, to maintain cooperation, or clarity, to deal with resistance to ideas.¹⁷ Sometimes the engineers they studied would overlook collaborators' ignorance of what they understood to be the important aspects of a car; for instance, engineers did not explain to the designers every decision of where to locate each screw. This ensured the project's continuation by speeding up proceedings and by smoothing relations between groups. At other times, it was more important for the engineers to assert themselves, because they felt their meaning trumped others, for example that it was more important that the vehicle pass safety tests than win design awards. Each circumstance resulted in a different approach to meaning. In the case of the WOSBs, this chapter explores how and when actors were content to leave objects ambiguous, and the occasions on which they attempted to clarify their own meanings. For instance, mental testing was relatively uncontroversial, so the psychological staff did not bother to educate military staff in the psychological principles behind the tests. By contrast, interviews became highly controversial. When the War Office limited 'intimate' (by which they meant psychiatric) interviews to use in no more than 50% of cases, the psychiatrists circulated memoranda to explicitly clarify their own interpretation of the term 'intimate,' and to explain in minute detail how and why psychiatric interviews should be conducted. They pursued a strategy of clarity to make it impossible for the Boards to overlook what they felt to be an important aspect of the WOSBs. Treating the tests as boundary objects thus highlights points of particular contention between military and psychological staff, such as the interview. Conceptualising the WOSB tests as technologies that functioned as boundary objects therefore enables the tracing of the power dynamics in the WOSBs, and the way that control was asserted, evaded, or shared in this joint military-psychological venture.

A "TYPICAL WOSB", 1942-1944

After No. 1 WOSB was approved in April 1942, other WOSBs were created in its image across Britain and beyond. There were variations in how tests were used and interpreted (resulting in attempts at rulemaking and clarification, explored

17 William C. Barley, Paul M. Leonardi and Diane E. Bailey, 'Engineering Objects for Collaboration: Strategies of Ambiguity and Clarity at Knowledge Boundaries', *Human Communication Research*, 38.3 (2012), 280-308.

in this chapter, and attempts at education, explored in the next chapter), but all WOSBs took a similar form. Boards had a President (Colonel), Deputy President (Lieutenant Colonel), four Military Testing Officers (one Major and three Captains), two Psychiatrists (a specialist, Major in the RAMC and a graded psychiatrist, Captain), a Psychologist (Captain or Lieutenant) and two psychological assistants (Sergeants). There were also military administration staff and Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) staff (women) to conduct clerical work, cooking, and general domestic duties. The Boards were located in large country houses close to train stations. The 'conditions of an officers' mess were aimed at' based on the psychiatrists' belief that personality was affected by the 'field' in which a person was located; officer behaviour would be more apparent in an officer-environment.¹⁸

Each Board ran a three and a half day programme of tests, outlined here and analysed in depth in this chapter. In a typical WOSB, the programme would run as follows:

Day 1

New candidates were greeted by a Major or Sergeant Tester and 'put at their ease' ready for psychological tests. Candidates were then divided into four groups.

After time to settle in and look around, candidates went to the rooms where they would be set written tests. After being given their numbered armband (candidates all became numbers and had to hide ranks to maintain objectivity), they were addressed by the President who told them 'about the aims and method of the Board... and described the role of the individual members of the testing staff.'¹⁹

A break 'for mid-morning tea or cocoa' was followed by the written tests: a life-history questionnaire, three 20-minute intelligence tests, a family-history questionnaire ('marked "Confidential"'), and three psychological projection tests.²⁰ By 5.30pm, candidates were 'free for the evening' and the psychological staff and Sergeant Testers assessed the written tests.

Days 2 and 3

The four groups of candidates participated in interviews with the President and Psychiatrist, and tests led by the Military Testing Officers including discussion groups, 'Command Situations' where candidates had to lead a group, and obstacle courses (which became leaderless group tests).

The battery of tasks were again separated by lunch and tea breaks. Each member of Board staff wrote reports at the end of the day's tests.

Day 4

Any supplementary tests were conducted on the final day, and then the Final Conference was held for Board staff to discuss the candidates and make final decisions.

This programme was common but there were many differences between Boards. There was initial difficulty in staffing and accommodating the Boards; they were located in a variety of country houses in Britain and Board staff had a variety of

18 'A Typical WOSB, 1942-1944', 'Introduction', in *Unpublished WOSBs Write-Up MSS*, p. 13.

19 'Introduction', p. 15. Though they very much liked Vinden and some other individuals, psychological staff were ambivalent about the President's role. On one hand, he introduced their methods and was the public face of all decisions (and thus bestowed respectability and validity on them). On the other, he could overrule "expert" advice and was quite outside of the psychological staff's control; they feared that some Presidents would destroy the validity of the WOSBs.

20 'Introduction', p. 16. To be discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

levels of training and different backgrounds. Each board saw between 80 and 120 candidates per week, and had an acceptance rate of somewhere around 60%, though this rate varied more than the planning staff would have liked.²¹ This was attributed to local variations; although the general programme ran as outlined above, the psychological staff noted that:

Within the general framework developed at the experimental Board, all Boards were allowed freedom to develop their own testing programme and techniques of assessment... the development of concept and techniques varied from Board to Board, depending in particular upon the initiative and technical understanding of the President and the freedoms given to the other members of the testing staff.²²

Though the same staff roles and general order and structure of the WOSB were in place at all the Boards, there was significant variation in how each Board actually ran tests. The above statement made by psychological staff says that they were 'allowed freedom,' but in reality it was simply impossible to impose standardisation (see Chapter Four). The psychological staff attributed variations to the Board Presidents in particular, who 'might exert, quite unwittingly, a particularly important influence' in setting Board values.²³ This reflects a tension between the psychological staff and the Presidents of some Boards which came to a head in the matter of the interview, as this chapter will explore in the section on interviews.

Exacerbating differences further, the Boards were adapted for a number of other purposes after a few months. In 1943, the Boards spread abroad. Three were launched in the Middle East, one of which then moved to Italy and another to North Africa to follow the course of the war. Several Boards were established in India under Brigadier Vinden, who had helped create the first Boards in Britain. From late 1944, a Board was established for 21 Army Group, a collection of soldiers from several nationalities including British, Canadian and Polish troops under the command of General Bernard Montgomery and allocated to Operation Overlord. In addition to the Army Boards, WOSBs were also developed for ATS candidates, Royal Marines and Paratroop Officers, and for selecting untrained adolescents for training as officers after a stint at University or Technical College.²⁴ There were also boards for returned Prisoners of War, which triggered some of the work on resettlement discussed in Chapter Five of this thesis. Selection of Engineers, Psychological Warfare Assignment Boards, Officers for the Palestine Police Mobile Force, the National Fire Service, the RAF, the Organisation and Methods branch of the Treasury, and the India and Burma Civil Service also followed. There is not the scope in this thesis to detail all the different variations of tests that this huge array of Boards employed, or the ways in which they were adapted for other uses after the war. However, I will present a detailed picture of the tests that were developed and used at the British Boards.

21 'Introduction', p. 12.

22 'A Typical WOSB, 1942-1944', 'Introduction', p. 13.

23 'Chapter 1: Introduction', in *Unpublished WOSBs Write-Up MSS*, p. 14.

24 'Developments in Selection 1942/46 and the Work of the Research and Training Centre', Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 205802222.

INTELLIGENCE TESTS AND MENTAL ABILITY

Three tests of mental ability (plus two backup tests used for confirmatory purposes) were used at the WOSBs: Progressive Matrices, a verbal intelligence test, and a reasoning test. As the use of three different forms of test indicates, a great deal of care went into ascertaining a candidate's ability to think and reason. The term 'mental ability' is more appropriate than 'intelligence test,' because the creator of one of the tests was adamant that it was *not* an intelligence test.²⁵ However, the WOSB staff more generally, and publications aimed at a general audience, referred to all of the tests as intelligence tests. The development of this testing battery therefore also indicates the varying perceptions of 'intelligence' in Second World War Britain.

Intelligence testing had an increased profile in 1930s Britain; it 'aroused considerable press interest, most of it enthusiastic.'²⁶ It is perhaps for this reason that psychiatrists such as J.R. Rees, Director of the Tavistock Clinic, had lobbied for its use in the Army, as it offered an acceptable and familiar form of psychological intervention on which to begin a working relationship between psychological science and the Army. He and Alec Rodger of the National Institute of Industrial Psychology (NIIP) had written to the War Office in 1939 to advocate use of psychological testing.²⁷ However, intelligence was not a quality traditionally valued in British soldiers, or even in their officers; a Sandhurst cadet noted in 1935 that 'Independent thinking is frowned on as heresy – no divergence from official view allowed.'²⁸ Initially, 'concepts such as mental age and IQ (intelligence quotient) were rejected as mainly suitable for children.'²⁹ There was thus no interest in Rees and Rodger's early offer of services. Historian Nafsika Thalassis has observed how:

the historiography has assumed that the introduction of intelligence tests was an inevitable, progressive step, following on the work done in America, and that this move had no ideological content beside a desire to increase efficiency and meritocracy.³⁰

In fact, a variety of ideological influences contributed to both the implementation of mental testing of soldiers in general and the sort of mental testing that was specifically developed for use in officer selection.

As the previous two chapters have shown, the specific discourses used to criticise older methods of officer selection (increasing use of technology coupled with moral critiques of class-bias) stimulated an increasing interest in providing 'intelligent' men as leaders. The presence of psychiatrists in regional Army commands meant that they

25 John C. Raven, 'Letters And Notes: Raven's Intelligence Test', *The British Medical Journal*, 1.4510 (1947), 872.

26 Adrian Wooldridge, *Measuring the Mind: Education and Psychology in England c.1860–c.1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 250.

27 Ahrenfeldt, p. 31.

28 Talk with B.F. Ewart, 27 December 1935, Liddell Hart MSS 11/1935/121, as quoted in French, p. 58.

29 Roger Broad, *The Radical General: Sir Ronald Adam and the New Model Army 1941-46* (The History Press, 2013), p. 86.

30 Nafsika Thalassis, 'Treating and Preventing Trauma: British Military Psychiatry during the Second World War' (University of Salford, 2004), p. 105, University of Salford Institutional Repository.

were on-hand to provide their psychological solutions to finding these intelligent men. As John Carson has argued, though, although both psychological experts and the army 'may have used the same term, 'intelligence,' there was no guarantee they meant the same thing.'³¹ The meaning of 'intelligence' as widely accepted by the British Army and War Office underwent a transformation during the Second World War. The established view had been that scrutinising a man's educational history was a sufficient guarantee that his intelligence was officer quality. As Member of Parliament Austin Hopkinson stated: 'Surely if a high level of education does not accompany a correspondingly high level of intelligence, it is time to scrap our educational system?'³² This difference in interpretation of 'intelligence' can be seen in the earliest trials of WOSB methods at the Company Commander's School (CCS) in Edinburgh, where half of the differences in judgements between the School and the experimental programme were attributed 'to differences between the School estimate of the officer's intelligence and that provided by tests.'³³ Despite early differences in judgement, there was no notable quarrel between the psychological and military camps over the meaning of intelligence. The military staff never argued that the tests did not truly measure intelligence or that the test version of intelligence was something different from their own meaning. Intelligence tests were a boundary object that was able to sufficiently support concepts of intelligence both as something that enabled men to produce tactics in modern, technological, chaotic battles, and as a psychological quality of a person; these two meanings were not seen to be in conflict. The psychological staff even believed that:

non-psychological members of a Selection board are especially prone - after a short preliminary period of cynical disbelief - to overestimate the significance of intelligence scores and of relatively small differences in score. It is the duty of the psychological members to correct that tendency.³⁴

The meaning of 'intelligence' to the military staff had transitioned from being something primarily shown by education to something to be located with even more confidence in the results of a test. There was little interest in how these results were obtained. To the military men, and even to military historians writing about their use in the British Army subsequently, intelligence tests were a black boxed technology. Thalassis observes that 'even David French, in his otherwise brilliant account of the war-time British Army, treats the concept of "intelligence" as an unproblematic entity to be as easily determined as the recruits' weight or height.'³⁵

This acceptance of the tests had several roots. The tests solved difficulties for the Army in terms of both image problems and shortage of candidates. Historian Howard Gardner noted that:

31 John Carson, *The Measure of Merit: Talents, Intelligence, and Inequality in the French and American Republics, 1750-1940* (Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 226.

32 Austin Hopkinson 'House of Commons Debate: Communication to Press (Lieut.-Colonel Bingham)', 1941, col. 15-17, Hansard, Series 5 Vol. 368.

33 'Chapter 2: Preliminary Experiments and the Formulation of Working Principles', in *Unpublished WOSBs Write-Up MSS*, p. 15.

34 Harris, p. 7.

35 Thalassis, p. 105.

In one of the most famous – and also most cloying – quips about intelligence testing, the influential Harvard psychologist E.G. Boring declared, “Intelligence is what the tests test.” So long as these tests continued to do what they were supposed to do – that is, yield reasonable predictions about people’s success... it did not seem necessary or prudent to probe too deeply into their meanings.³⁶

With the Edinburgh tests seen as yielding reasonable predictions, and with education becoming an increasingly problematic measure of officer ability, Army leadership became increasingly convinced that intelligence could be independent of schooling and measured by a psychological test. Impatience to get tests in place quickly meant that this straightforward solution to Army problems was not subjected to probing.

Part of the reason that the tests solved such difficulties was because of the nature of the tests. During the early mismatch between the Army and psychological views of intelligence at the CCS experiments, the tests themselves had agency.³⁷ They acted to distance or even remove the psychological staff from the procedure by acting as the providers of the estimate of a man’s ability: the comparison was made between the CCS and the test, not the CCS and the psychological staff. The widespread social acceptance of the intelligence test meant that it was trusted as more valid even than the opinions of the experienced staff. The CCS accepted that the test was an objective measure of potential that they only saw imperfectly. The test thus psychologised the military staff by encouraging them to view intelligence in psychological terms, as something fundamental that could be isolated and demonstrated in a test rather than something inextricable from social processes and education. Little concern was demonstrated for the principles upon which the tests were based or how they worked, but it was rapidly accepted that they did. Soldiers placed even greater faith in them than the psychological staff who had developed them, and saw intelligence as an ‘essential requirement.’³⁸

In the description of the WOSB included in *Picture Post*, the intelligence tests were described as ‘nothing new... they are psychological tests which have been tried out and proved valid over a number of years both here and in America.’³⁹ The tests used at the WOSBs were by and large modified and developed especially for the task of officer selection, but this article demonstrates how validity was borrowed from established tests. A great deal of thought and work went into crafting principles and tests that would be as acceptable as possible both to the British Army and to the psychological community. Whilst there were social factors that helped to encourage the acceptance of the tests, there was also a conscious effort on the part of psychological staff to ensure that their tests addressed social concerns, and this work has remained

36 Howard Gardner, *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century* (Basic Books, 1999), p. 13.

37 As Bruno Latour explains, it’s never entirely clear who and what is ‘acting’ because many factors, including non-human factors, are involved in producing action: ‘it is not a coherent, controlled, well-rounded, and clean-edged affair.’ This means that objects themselves, such as tests, can have agency. Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 46.

38 Thalassis, p. 123.

39 ‘A New Way to Choose Our Army Officers’, *Picture Post* (London, 19 September 1942), pp. 16–20 (p. 18).

unscrutinised. By contrast to the military staff who did not probe into the meaning of the tests, the psychological staff spent a great deal of time asking questions. Like the American psychologists working for the American Army during the First World War, they had internal debates about what constituted mental ability or intelligence, and what the best way to measure such qualities might be.⁴⁰

John C. Raven, who had conducted the most extensive investigations of how to test mental ability in interwar Britain, observed that 'before the outbreak of war large-scale investigations had been confined chiefly to work with children [or those considered mentally defective], and adults tended to cluster rather closely at the upper extreme of the scale.'⁴¹ As with psychiatry, this work had originated at the margins of society, far from the 'elites' such as officer candidates. Consequently, despite the fact that intelligence testing had recently begun to be used in industry and education, in other armed forces, and even in the British Army's GSS, the men creating the WOSBs considered that 'there were in fact very few suitable tests available' for the selection of officers and almost 'nothing available which fulfilled the necessary criteria.'⁴² The tests used for WOSBs were therefore devised especially.

The options of how to proceed were limited because it wasn't only the range of existing tests that were in short supply but also potential testers. There were very few psychologically trained people in Britain in the early 1940s. This had enabled the psychiatrists to become involved in officer selection, because most psychologists were busy in industry, in the Royal Navy or RAF, or in GSS work for the Army. However, it also meant that the staff actually conducting and marking tests would necessarily be inexperienced Sergeant Testers. Because of this, Raven and the other staff organising officer selection argued that it was 'more important to be thoroughly familiar with a few well-chosen tests than to have partial knowledge and casual experience of a large number.'⁴³ As a compromise, a large proportion of Sergeant Testers were teachers who would have a passing acquaintance with testing if not its fundamental principles, but nonetheless the tests had to be black boxed to some extent from the outset; they had to be a technology usable by people with almost no psychological training. A great deal of thought thus went into calculating which tests to use. The established NIIP Group Test 33 was initially used because it was 'well established' and thus had validity for psychological staff and outsiders who might be familiar with it from industry, and because it was seen as a good test of general ability rather than trained skill.⁴⁴ However, this was soon replaced by Verbal Intelligence Test SP15, which was seen as sharing the traits of the former test but also having 'certain advantages, namely [being] easier to administer and to score' and thus fitting the practical requirements

40 For more on the earlier American debates, see Carson, *The Measure of Merit*.

41 John C. Raven, 'Testing the Mental Ability of Adults', *The Lancet*, Originally published as Volume 1, Issue 6178, 239.6178 (1942), 115-17 (p. 116).

42 'Chapter 6: The Written Psychological Tests', in *Unpublished WOSBs Write-Up MSS*, p. 30.

43 Raven, 'Testing the Mental Ability of Adults', p. 117.

44 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 31. When intelligence testing was brought into the First World War American Army, psychologists similarly 'relied on correlation with a known psychological instrument, the Binet scales' to ensure that results were psychologically valid. John Carson, 'Army Alpha, Army Brass, and the Search for Army Intelligence', *Isis*, 84.2 (1993), 278-309 (p. 289).

of WOSBs.⁴⁵

A verbal test alone was not suitable, however, because confident understanding of language was too closely associated with educational background. The use of officer selection testing had only been made possible by the growing belief that educational background no longer provided the requisite information on a man. Firstly, therefore, one of the first conditions which any tests had to meet was that 'the influence of different educational opportunities should be reduced to a minimum so that candidates with relatively little schooling should not be handicapped.'⁴⁶ Psychological staff had to go beyond verbal measures of 'reason' so that the reading ability of candidates would not entirely shape their results. Whereas in America and the GSS non-verbal tests were created to deal with problems of illiteracy and it was irrelevant to their purpose whether they measured 'taught' ability or 'innate' ability, for officer selection it very much mattered what *sort* of intelligence was being measured.⁴⁷ A shortened version of Raven's test, Progressive Matrices 1938, was included because it was non-verbal, thus satisfying the need for a test that did not reflect educational experience.⁴⁸ In a Matrix test, candidates had to look at a pattern with a piece missing, and then figure out from several options which picture fit the missing piece. This test helped the War Office to distance themselves from the controversial question of whether or not ability was linked with education because turning to a test rather than a *curriculum vitae* enabled them to answer 'that is not a question for the War Office.'⁴⁹

Raven's tests were an early and obvious choice for the Tavistock group; they would have been familiar with his non-verbal test's existence before the matter of education became a public furore. In addition to being established in the field of mental testing, Raven had worked as their Acting Psychologist in 1940.⁵⁰ Raven's approach to intelligence was also a good fit with the Tavistock approach to personality in general. The Tavistock psychiatrists viewed personality holistically, believing that much human behaviour was derived from a range of influences. They were particularly interested in Kurt Lewin's Field Theory, which borrowed from the Unified Field Theory of physics an interest in making 'an attempt to describe all fundamental forces and the relationships between elementary particles.'⁵¹ For the Tavistock group, people instead of particles were the focus of investigation which sought to understand *all* the forces upon them. Before the war, Raven had spent a year on

45 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 32.

46 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 29. For more on the meritocratic aims for officer selection, see Chapter One.

47 Carson notes that despite arguments over whether intelligence was context-dependent or static, no efforts to rule out the effects of education were made in developing American tests. John Carson, 'The Culture of Intelligence', in *The Cambridge History of Science* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

48 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 30.

49 Sir Edward Grigg, 'House of Commons Debate: Captain Margesson's Statement', 1942, Hansard, vol 377, cc 1924-99.

50 He had also been working with Eric Trist at Mill Hill where they had been administering psychological tests to men with potential head injuries. Trist joined the Tavistock group to develop psychological Pointer tests at around the same time that Raven was assisting them with tests of mental ability.

51 Christine Sutton, 'Unified Field Theory', *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2015) <<http://www.britannica.com/science/unified-field-theory>> [accessed 24 January 2015].

a Darwin Trust grant investigating Spearman's *Principles of Cognition*. Spearman posited that people possessed an underlying general ability (known as "g") and also more specific abilities, and that there was an 'essential difference between 'eductive' (creative) mental activity and repetitive mental processes.'⁵² This approach, like the psychiatrists' approach to personality, stressed the contingent and situated nature of mental ability. Raven believed that his tests measured eductive ability. He emphasised that his test 'was never intended to be a test of "general intelligence,"' but highlighted that this was in fact a useful quality: it brought to light 'unreliable' performances of ability that might be caused by 'distraction' or 'copying.'⁵³ Complemented by the verbal intelligence test, which was more stable (though also more linked with educational background), the psychological staff of WOSBs argued that the matrix test could therefore reveal how a potential officer's mental ability stood up to pressure and could be deployed in new situations. Even when psychologists had created the tests, the epistemology of the psychiatrists shaped their use.

As well as being particularly acceptable to the psychiatrists, Raven's Matrix tests also had the advantage of being familiar and acceptable to the Army. In 1938 Raven had been working in the garrison town of Colchester where he had persuaded the Adjutant to let him trial his tests on Privates and NCOs. He noted that even 'one or two officers also volunteered to do the test... the first experiment of this kind carried out in

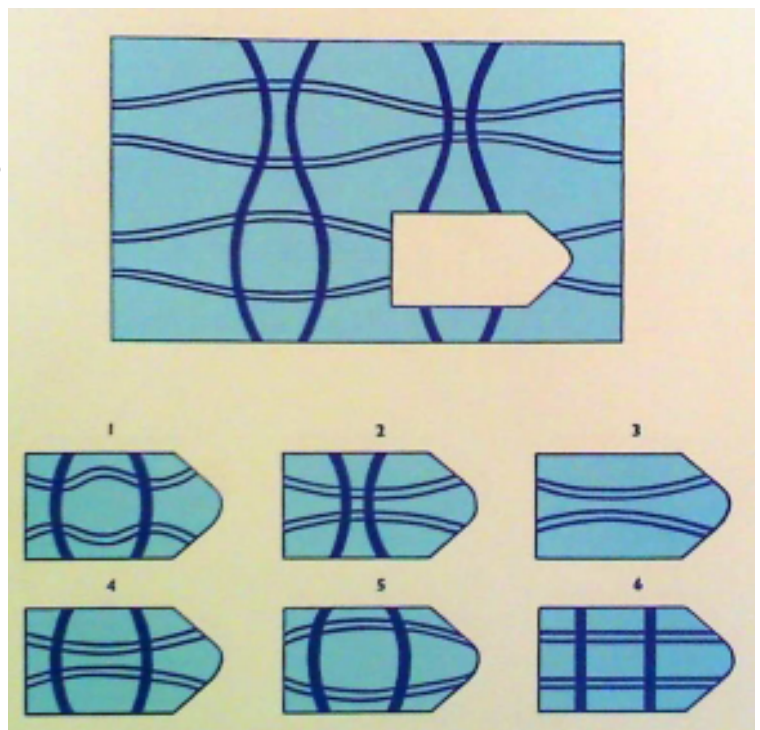


FIGURE 4: Example of one question on Raven's Progressive Matrix test.

the British Army.'⁵⁴ This early intrigue from the officers and willingness of soldiers ranking from the Adjutant to mere Privates indicates what the psychological staff later noted in their records: the test 'had an "appeal" value to those taking it.'⁵⁵ The candidates' preferences directly impacted the tests used; it was necessary to satisfy them or the tests would be rejected and the whole system placed at risk. Raven's early work indicates the extent of the agency of the test subjects; not only did they influence the choice of tests, they also actively participated in the testing before or without instruction from above. Tests were not simply imposed, they were also

52 Raven, 'Testing the Mental Ability of Adults', p. 115.

53 Raven, 'Letters And Notes: Raven's Intelligence Test'; Raven, 'Testing the Mental Ability of Adults', p. 117.

54 John C. Raven, 'Letter to L.S. Hearnshaw', 27 September 1962, p. 1.

55 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 30.

sought out by those who were curious about psychology or wanted 'insight' into themselves. Matrices were also the tests that Ronald Hargreaves and Raven had used in early trials of intelligence tests for other ranks in Northern Command, where Ronald Adam's renewed interest in selection had been piqued. Rees is recorded as having described how the psychiatrists had "sold" the Matrix Test which was simple and effective and had been taken up with enthusiasm by the Army Commander.⁵⁶ The Matrix tests therefore had established military acceptability, and their inclusion in the WOSBs encapsulates how tests of mental ability necessarily had to support multiple meanings, both political (independent of education) and psychological (correlating with established, valid measures), as well as living up to the expectations of the men taking the tests.

Mental testing thus had to fit practical considerations such as who could use tests and whether psychiatrists and soldiers liked them, and political considerations such as whether some sort of basic psychological quality or educational experience was being measured. There were also other questions to be resolved about what sort of qualities constituted 'intelligence.' One existing conception of what made a good officer was so deeply ingrained that it was never in question that the tests must find it. As I noted in the previous chapter of this thesis, intelligence tests had been accepted as a component of officer selection even before results had been available to the psychological staff; they assumed that mental ability was fundamental to effective officer functioning. Both the military and the psychological staff assumed that intelligence was vital because of the increasing use of technology by the armed forces:

Many personality factors enter into [officer] proficiency; but limitations in the relevant cognitive abilities would certainly prevent any individual, no matter how good a personality he had in other respects, from assimilating the technical training and from dealing adequately with the technical problems of the job.⁵⁷

The way that the Matrix test required a candidate to calculate the 'missing piece' required to make something 'work' can thus also be seen as a test that appealed to those (both in the military and psychological staff) who argued that more technical expertise was required in officers themselves.

This sort of ability was accepted as something that the tests simply must find, but were speed and flexibility important? The psychological staff leading the WOSBs deliberated over whether a speed component should be included. In the GSS, due to there being far more men taking tests, there was very limited time available for testing, so this dilemma never arose and the fastest form of testing was adopted. With officer selection, much more time was available for testing in order to ensure that candidates could be carefully chosen and that more time would not be wasted

⁵⁶ Wilfred R. Bion, *All My Sins Remembered: Another Part of a Life & The Other Side of Genius: Family Letters* (Karnac Books, 2012), p. 51. One of the reasons for Adam's enthusiasm for the test was potentially linked with his own experience with them; he had completed the tests with a speed that stunned the psychiatrists and achieved a remarkable score, after which he reportedly said, "It's a good idea, isn't it?" Thomas Main interview with Tom Harrison (1984) as quoted in Ben Shephard, *A War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Twentieth Century* (Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 431.

⁵⁷ 'Chapter 3: The Development of a Testing Programme and the Setting Up of the New Boards', in *Unpublished WOSBs Write-Up MSS*, p. 5.

later in training the wrong candidates for months at Officer Cadet Training Units. The pressure to choose well between candidates and the time available for testing meant that the staff devising tests had a choice between measuring 'power' or complex thinking versus 'efficiency' or quick thinking. A 'powerful' intellect might get more questions right over time, but a more 'efficient' intellect would score better under time pressure. Similarly, the WOSB planners pondered 'whether to use tests which permitted "learning" in the material' by using a standard form, or whether instead 'flexibility' should be the focus and consequently the type of item in the test should vary.⁵⁸ In the end, the tests were matched to the role of the officer:

In the combatant officer's job speed and flexibility of adjustment are of great importance and this fact helped ultimately to determine the form of the test battery.⁵⁹

To deal with the speed issue, a time limit of 20 minutes per test became established procedure. In tests used in Southern Command, John Bowlby had put candidates under intense time pressures to 'sort out more clearly the high scorers.'⁶⁰ However, Raven argued that this was 'an unfounded hope' and his expertise overruled Bowlby's experiment. To address the need for flexibility, patterns in the new 1943 version of the matrices were varied so that the test did not permit 'learning' in the same way as Matrix 1938.⁶¹ The Reasoning Test similarly used 'types of problem... as varied as possible in order that flexibility or "shift," i.e. the ability to change rapidly from one type of problem to another, should be at a maximum.'⁶² This therefore incorporated several of the officer ideals. These officer ideals were not new psychological formulations; they were based on existing conceptions of what constituted an officer. Most important of all the qualities that comprised an officer's intelligence, however, was that it should be greater than his men's. In this respect the Progressive Matrices 1938 test was considered unsuited for the purpose of officer selection: it was 'not an entirely suitable test since its maximum discrimination does not occur in the upper ranges.'⁶³ The psychological staff of the WOSBs considered it very important that the tests 'discriminate effectively at the upper end of the intelligence distribution' in order to discriminate between the highly capable men put forward as officers because they believed that 'the most successful officers had intelligence test scores above the level of the 70th percentile of the general army population.'⁶⁴ This reveals the assumptions held by the psychological staff planning the WOSBs. On one hand there was an ideological belief that intelligent people were good leaders, as reflected in the widespread demand for a more meritocratic form of selection that put the best candidates in charge (which happened also to reflect the psychological staff's

58 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 29.

59 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 29; This approach echoed that of Edward Thorndike in setting up the First World War American tests. To Thorndike, 'the validity [of tests] depended on reflecting the military definition of intelligence.' Carson, *The Measure of Merit*, p. 207.

60 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 13.

61 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 31.

62 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 32.

63 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 30.

64 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 30.

personal prioritisation of knowledge and learning in their own lives). On the other hand this choice was grounded in the common sense notion that a leader should not be outwitted by those in his charge.

In order to ensure that officers met the requirement of being smarter than average, a new Matrix test was constructed by Raven especially for WOSBs. This test was intended to discriminate more effectively between the most able candidates, and Progressive Matrices 1943 replaced 1938.⁶⁵ The items in the test were similar in principle and content to the 1938 test, but began at a more difficult level and got difficult more quickly in order to show more clearly the highest functioning. Another test, the Reasoning Test SP Test 45, was developed by Eric Trist and Alex Mitchell to distinguish at the higher levels of ability. The Reasoning Test was 'based closely on the Shipley Abstraction Test' which was most commonly used 'in clinical practice to measure impairment in the more abstract kinds of thinking.'⁶⁶ It is possible that Trist was familiar with this test from his research into tests of impairments resulting from head injuries at Mill Hill, or possibly it may have derived from clinical practice at the Tavistock. Either way, it fitted the general approach of the Tavistock group because it required the candidate to discover schemata and involved 'the education of relations.'⁶⁷ The Tavistock psychiatrists were strongly influenced by Object Relations theory and many focussed on uncovering links between how a patient related to various people.⁶⁸ Their view on what made a person intelligent and a good leader correlated with what they did themselves.

To fit beliefs about the relationship of an officer's intelligence to other ranks, Officer Intelligence Ratings (OIR) were produced that correlated the two groups' abilities. The OIR ran from 10 (highest) to 1 (lowest) and matched with the percentage of other ranks that would be below this level of ability:

Officer Intelligence Rating (OIR)	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Other Rank Percentile	99.87	99.56	98.88	94.9	89.47	80.59	73.02	64.82	60.32	55.85

OIR ranks 8-10 were above average officer intellect, and OIR 5 and below were below average officer intellect. A man with a ranking of OIR 1-2 was 'not appreciably more intelligent than the average private,' and OIR 0 was less intelligent than even the average private; these men were deemed unacceptable.⁶⁹ Despite this, the intelligence tests were not considered definitive, and borderline and unacceptable men were given further tests, such as the Wechsler Bellevue Adult Intelligence Scale and an adaptation of Koh's Blocks Designs. Cases for concern were referred to the War Office, reflecting the need to maintain military acceptability and to not be seen as usurping military authority, though psychological staff noted that these were 'usually referred by the

65 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 31.

66 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 32.

67 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 32.

68 See David E. Scharff, *Object Relations Theory and Practice: An Introduction* (Rowman & Littlefield, 1996), p. 517; and H. V. Dicks, *Fifty Years of the Tavistock Clinic* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1970), p. 176.

69 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 35.

War Office [back to the psychological staff] to the Research and Training Centre for additional technical advice.⁷⁰ A delicate process was enacted to maintain the tests as a boundary object and a source of collaboration rather than dispute.

This was why even when a man was clearly outside of the officer intelligence criteria this was not sufficient reason to reject him as an officer candidate. Psychological staff observed the need to conduct other tests to compliment mental ability testing in order to identify every possible candidate and to rule out the few intelligent but inept men:

It was found that a candidate whose OIR was below the average of 6 to 8 would not cope easily with officer responsibility unless he could compensate in some way i.e. by unusual experience, drive, persistence, unusually well integrated social personality, etc. With the higher intelligence-provided there was no instability or poor social contact-there was a greater reserve of trainability and educability.⁷¹

Even the intelligence tests, which had significant military and social acceptance (to the extent that results went largely unquestioned) were not as authoritative as the opinion of a WOSB's military President. The ethos that Thomas Ferguson Rodger had emphasised after the first experiments, that based on psychotherapeutic principles one must do things 'with' rather than 'to' others, meant that it was seen as better to attempt to psychologise soldiers into accepting the tests and fail than to set criteria from outside.⁷²

As the number and continued development of tests indicates, although military men and the War Office spoke vaguely of 'intelligence,' to the psychological team devising tests of officer selection, there were a range of possible meanings of intelligence from which they painstakingly chose the forms they felt most suitable. These forms fitted with their own and their patrons' assumptions about what made a good leader and officer, and how personality should be understood. They borrowed widely from different branches of the psychological sciences in finding these tests, from industrial to clinical methods, in order to satisfy political and scientific views of what constituted a valid method. Intelligence was seen as neither entirely fixed nor entirely requisite (though it was seen as highly desirable): it was at all times relative to a military view of the Army's needs and resources.

PSYCHOLOGICAL "POINTERS"

Psychological Pointers were a form of personality projection test, and they held a multiplicity of meanings. On the one hand, they had their roots in psychoanalytic theories and the psychological staff were keen to reinforce the expertise required to interpret them. On the other hand, as they grew in popularity with the military, they were downplayed as "merely" Pointers and less important than the Psychiatric Interview. In addition, almost all of the tests were described by their psychological creators and users as having superficial military meanings and 'real' psychological

70 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 37.

71 Harris, p. 43.

72 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 4.

interpretations. They were boundary objects that made sense to both the military and the psychological staff. The Pointers belie the idea that psychiatry was problematic for the British Army; whilst the tests were sometimes mocked they were never the location of battles for control like the interview. This suggests that it was the psychiatrists themselves, rivalling military authority, that were problematic.⁷³

Although psychological Pointers were seemingly quite psychoanalytic in approach, comprising tests like Word Association (first developed by Carl Jung) they were produced by three psychologists: John Sutherland, Eric Trist, and Isabel Menzies. Jock Sutherland (as he was more commonly known) had studied psychology in Edinburgh before he became an analysand of Ronald Fairbairn and studied medicine at Glasgow University so that he could become a psychiatrist.⁷⁴ Sutherland was qualified as a psychologist and psychiatrist, which meant that he was able to work as the Board psychologist at the first WOSB until Eric Trist could escape from Mill Hill. It was Sutherland who 'prepared a battery of tests for group administration' that were then tested by the psychologists.⁷⁵ Trist's autobiography notes that his job at Mill Hill had been 'to administer personality tests and projective tests including the Rorschach and the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) to cardiac and neurotic patients.'⁷⁶ Trist had been tempted into Army work by the prospect of what he could do developing tests and working on the WOSBs: 'there was very much more scope there than at Mill Hill... I had got stale.'⁷⁷ Trist was not the only one enticed into working on the WOSBs because of the challenge of developing new uses for tests. Isabel Menzies had been Trist's student at St Andrews University where she had achieved a double first in the unusual combination of economics and experimental psychology.⁷⁸ Whilst working as a lecturer in economics at St Andrews, she joined Trist on the Army work as a 'vacation job.'⁷⁹ Henry A. Murray, a psychologist from Harvard University working for the Office of Strategic Services and the joint-creator of the TAT, was apparently also 'most helpful in suggesting various lines of investigation.'⁸⁰ The Pointers were

73 The problem of the psychiatrists' identities will be covered in the section of this chapter on the psychiatric interview, and picked up once more in Chapter 4.

74 Anton Obholzer, 'John Derg Sutherland (25 April 1905–14 June 1991)', *Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy*, 6.2 (1992), 181–82.

75 Eric Trist, 'Working with Bion in the 1940s: The Group Decade', in *Bion and Group Psychotherapy*, ed. by Malcolm Pines (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000), pt. 202.

76 Richard Trahair, *Behavior, Technology, and Organizational Development: Eric Trist and the Tavistock Institute* (Transaction Publishers, 2015), p. 97.

77 Eric Trist, "'Guilty of Enthusiasm'", from *Management Laureates*, Vol 3, Ed. Arthur G. Bedeian (Jai Press, 1993), *The Modern Times Workplace*, 2008 <<http://www.moderntimesworkplace.com/archives/ericbio/ericbio.html>> [accessed 24 October 2012].

78 'Isabel Menzies Lyth', *The Times* (London, United Kingdom, 26 February 2008), section Features, p. 62.

79 Lynn Barnett, 'Isabel Menzies Lyth: Psychoanalyst and Social Scientist', *The Independent* (London, United Kingdom, 4 February 2008), section Obituaries, p. 34.

80 'Development of a Testing Programme and New Boards', p. 11. The OSS was the predecessor of the CIA, and Murray's work there concerned 'selecting undercover agents.' Murray shared many interests with the Tavistock group staff; he had an eclectic background in various fields of medicine and scientific research before he was 'drawn into psychoanalysis while doing research in biochemistry at the Rockefeller Institute' in 1926. Like the Tavistock group, he was not a Freudian but had been analysed by Jung and held a holistic view of character, coining the term 'personology' to describe his study of personality. Glenn Fowler, 'Henry A. Murray Is Dead at 95; Developer of Personality Theory', *The New York Times*, 24 June 1988, section Obituaries <<http://www.nytimes.com/1988/06/24/obituaries/henry-a-murray-is-dead-at-95-developer-of-personality-theory.html>> [accessed 23 August 2015].

therefore developed by staff with an unusual combination of psychological and psychiatric experience, and clinical and experimental backgrounds.

In the traditional psychoanalytic context, 'projection' was the process of 'referral or attributing... one's own repressed emotional trends to others,' which was then interpreted by an analyst who could help their patient see what they were doing and understand themselves better. Outside of the therapeutic setting, 'projection' took on a different meaning:

a "projective" technique is one which aims at exteriorising (i.e. projecting as if on a screen) in spontaneous uttered, written or acted behaviour the characteristic basic interpersonal attitudes – whether group-cohesive, group-disrupted, group-dependent or isolate – of the candidate.⁸¹

At the WOSB behaviour was instead 'projected' onto paper and it was the WOSB President who would be helped to a better understanding of the candidate with the help of the psychological staff. Although developed by psychologists, in the view of the WOSB technical staff the tests retained their sensitive nature. The tests forming the "Pointer Battery" were only to be administered after the intelligence tests and questionnaires: 'when suitably de-tensely relaxed, cajoled and warmed into some degree of spontaneity [the candidate] was given a battery of protection tests.'⁸² The need to ease the candidates into the Pointers alludes to the clinical associations, which the tests retained even into the non-clinical setting.

Though the tests were to help the Board to get a 'preview' of a candidate, they were not made available to everyone at the Board; the psychological staff considered them a specialist instrument.⁸³ The role of expertise in making the data from the psychological Pointers intelligible was central, they argued. The tests, 'expertly interpreted... will give clues to [the candidate's] motives, interests, anxieties, basic interpersonal attitudes and the early object-relationships to parental figures that have determined these attitudes.'⁸⁴ They argued that the tests gave a general picture of the man that would show his officer suitability, but only to those who were suitably trained:

psychological assistants who had a fairly advanced psychological training in their university courses before the war could be trained to interpret the material along psycho-dynamic lines with a reasonable degree of consistency.⁸⁵

Pointers were seen as sensitive projection instruments that required careful handling, unlike the intelligence tests which could be set and assessed by less qualified staff.

Like all of the other tests, the Pointers were subject to time constraints:

group procedures had to be adapted for most of the psychological testing. Individual tests were used to throw light on certain points but these were the exception... Personality tests that were richly informative about the person as a

81 Harris, p. 61.

82 Harris, p. 52.

83 'Development of a Testing Programme and New Boards', p. 29.

84 Harris, p. 52.

85 E. L. Trist and Dr Hugh Murray, *The Social Engagement of Social Science: The Socio-Psychological Perspective* (Free Association Books, 1990), p. 52.

whole and at the same time practicable in regard to the time taken to give and to assess and not requiring a high degree of special knowledge and skill in their use were not available.⁸⁶

Thus the psychologists' early experiments ruled out 'such well known instruments as the Rorschach Test' because they didn't believe that Sergeant Testers could be trusted to interpret them. Trials of the Rorschach test to a group were 'disappointing' because the responses were 'often too impoverished to be of much value' and 'different from those expected under standard conditions.'⁸⁷ It was necessary to rule out what the psychiatrists considered to be a valuable measure of personality because they believed that the technology was one which required specialist interpretation which could not be made to fit the rapid pace and large scale of war. Whilst they were content to 'share' some of their expert tools, in adapted forms, with Military Testing Officers, some remained the privileged property of the expert.

SELF-DESCRIPTION

Unlike the Rorschach, the Self-Description was carried over from the very earliest experiments by Wittkower and Rodger in Edinburgh. They had allocated thirty minutes for a single form of description, of 'the Officer's opinion of himself or, perhaps more often, the picture which he wished to present of himself.'⁸⁸ Wittkower and Rodger had scrutinised this for details such as 'occupational efficiency and stability' and 'the Officer's ability to express himself.' However, the psychologists felt that something more could be obtained from the test, and efficiency and stability gleaned from the questionnaires and self-expression from the Word Association test.

In the modified version used for all WOSBs, developed according to suggestions by Edinburgh psychiatrist W.M. Millar, only fifteen minutes was given in order that the time pressure would trigger more spontaneous responses.⁸⁹ Furthermore, the test was carefully positioned in the overall WOSBs scheme, so that it followed '3-4 hours in which his feelings about himself were put severely to the test' and as a result 'usually gave the impression of a quite serious attempt on the part of the candidate to be objective about themselves.'⁹⁰ A candidate had to write 'a description of himself, firstly as a good friend and secondly as a strong critic would do it.'⁹¹ This turned the self-description into a test of a man's relations. Due to the development of the two outside perspectives, the Self-Description incorporated a social element, suggesting to those interpreting it the candidate's beliefs about other's and 'how he handled hostile or favourable attitudes to himself.'⁹²

86 'Introduction Chapter', p. 13.

87 'Development of a Testing Programme and New Boards', p. 11.

88 Eric Wittkower and T. Ferguson Rodger, 'Memorandum on an Experiment in Psychological Testing Applied to the Selection of Officers', 1941, p. 2, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 377625502.

89 Boris Semeonoff, 'Self-Description as an Instrument in Personality Assessment', *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 35.2 (1962), 165-76 (p. 165).

90 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 52.

91 'WOSB Pamphlet No. I/III - The Technical Department', 1944, p. 1, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 377625502.

92 Trist and Murray, p. 51.

The Self-Description 'was greatly valued' because it revealed not only the candidate's personality and interpersonal relations, as the word association was believed to, but also his 'insight into his strengths and weaknesses, and also of his attitudes.'⁹³ As the psychologists' reference to a candidate being 'objective about themselves' suggests, the psychological staff of the WOSB favoured a candidate who thought about themselves in the way that the psychological staff thought about them. This is even more apparent in the Pointer 'Sample Records' where the 'Outstanding Candidate' uses terms such as 'innate,' 'discipline,' 'pleasure seeking,' and 'self-conscious' in their self description.⁹⁴ The more a candidate could think like a psychologist, the 'better' a candidate he was in the minds of the staff. In a similar way that 'rational minds' were deemed valuable officer traits through intelligence testing, the 'good' candidate was to some extent a psychologist.

WORD ASSOCIATION

Another of the pointers, the Word Association test, also encouraged candidates to reflect upon themselves, though in a far more subtle way. Word Association was already used in a clinical setting. The Word Association test was not only reflective of an analytic background, it was specifically reflective of the diverse influences of the Tavistock group, who were known to embrace 'all the known forms methods of psychotherapy' rather than being strict Freudians. The Word Association test was said to have been created by psychoanalyst Carl Jung.⁹⁵ However the psychologists at the WOSBs adapted the method for use with groups. It was chosen for its 'probable ease of group application and assessment.'⁹⁶ Words, after all, were more straightforward to present to groups of candidates than inkblots.

In their initial use of Word Association, the psychologists used 'three-lettered syllables on large cards' and asked candidates to come up with a word that began with those three letters. They hoped that a man's 'combativeness' might be revealed. For instance, in response to the letters DEF a candidate might write 'DEFY, DEFENCE or DEFER', or to SUB the might write 'SUBDUE, SUBMARINE, or SUBMIT, etc.'⁹⁷ The psychologists felt that there was no 'simple objective way of assessing the response' so this method was dropped in favour of giving entire (specially chosen) words. In the final form of the Word Association test, the candidate was shown a series of words, including words like BEER, CONTROL, PASS and PARTY at brief intervals.⁹⁸ He was to

93 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 51.

94 'Sample Records of Personality Pointers and Reports on WOSB Candidates', p. 9, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 377625502.

95 L.S Hearnshaw, *A Short History of British Psychology 1840-1940*, Methuen's Manuals of Modern Psychology (Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1964), p. 284; 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 40; despite the Tavistock's association of the tests to Jung, the first research using this method was conducted by Francis Galton in 1879: Alan W. Stacy, Susan L. Ames and Jerry L. Grenard, 'Word Association Tests of Associative Memory and Implicit Processes: Theoretical and Assessment Issues', in *Handbook of Implicit Cognition and Addiction*, ed. by R.W. Wiers and Stacy, Alan W. (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications Ltd, 2006), p. 76.

96 'Development of a Testing Programme and New Boards', p. 12.

97 'Development of a Testing Programme and New Boards', p. 12.

98 Appendix B 'The Form of Responses in a Word Association Test - Comparison of Good and Bad Officer Candidates and Existing Officers', 1943, p. 14, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 377625502. For

respond with 'a statement describing what the word calls up to his mind.'⁹⁹ Time was again carefully rationed so that there was 'just enough for him to do this' but limited to 'prevent the use of "book" answers' in order to maintain the validity of the method. Both in military and psychological senses, rumours of cheating could damage the results and the perception of the WOSB.

During the 'early experimental period,' Word Association was given to both candidates at No. 1 WOSB and to existing officers at Buchanan-Smith's Company Commander's School (CCS) in Edinburgh. The psychologists used this to calibrate their tests and to make sure that there was both differentiation between 'Pass' and 'Fail' groups, and that the 'Pass' group matched the CCS candidates who had been approved as being officer quality. A 'fail' would be indicated by 'blocking,' indicated by several blank or stunted answers. A fuller answer, particularly one that indicted 'independence, assertiveness, drive' would indicate a stronger candidate.¹⁰⁰ Again, the tests were calibrated to match existing Army standards. Statistical analysis was applied, unsurprisingly considering the background of Menzies and Trist in particular, and the psychologists wrote-up that they had found statistically significant results.¹⁰¹

Word Association, like tests of mental ability, supported multiple meanings. Whilst for the psychological staff, it was indicative of a person's ability to function socially, it was also constructed in such a way that it was meaningful to the military. Five categories of words were used, the last of which included 'external features of Army life or the officer's job'.¹⁰² Though the results were to be interpreted and straightforward acceptance of content to be avoided, the tests presented a clear link between a man's attitudes and the military, ostensibly establishing the relevance of the test to his officer suitability.

However, although the list of words were initially selected to reveal a candidate's 'war-mindedness,' the psychologists decided that the tests did not actually reveal this quality. They wrote that there was 'little discrimination' between 'Pass' and 'Fail' candidates; the test was not useful for isolating desirable qualities and selecting men.¹⁰³ The very meaning which held most relevance for a military man looking at the test was one that the psychologists believed was not actually valid.

The psychologists thought that the test could be useful in another respect, however. They believed that, having 'freed' the response from the constraint of requesting a single word, they could learn about a man not so much from the content of his answer but from the 'grammatical form' that it took. A blank was the worst possible response, indicating an 'inhibited response.' Single words and non-verbal phrases were also deemed to be a stunted response, whereas verbal phrases (with participles or infinitives) and sentences were what the psychologists interpreted as the strongest

the full list of words, see "Appendix H: Word Association Lists of Words" on page 226.

99 'Technical Department Pamphlet', p. 2.

100 'The Written Psychological Tests', pp. 45-47.

101 'Form of Responses in a Word Association Test'.

102 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 42.

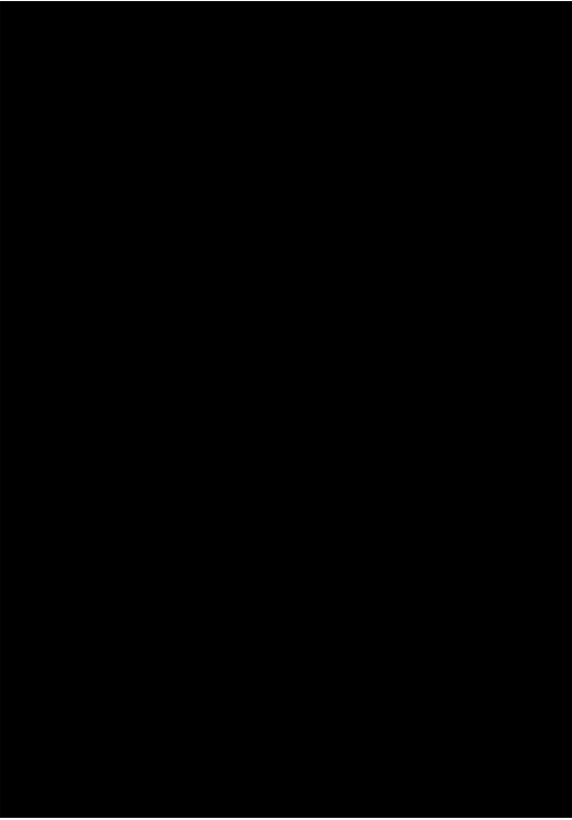
103 'Form of Responses in a Word Association Test', p. 2.

response. On the other hand, any stunted or missing answers were interpreted as “blocking”, indicative of intrusive distracting ideas and feelings that a man was consciously unwilling to put down, or a mental “blankness” arising due to the unconscious inhibiting of ideas and feelings by the super-ego. The presence of ‘three or more blanks... was taken as being strongly suggestive of inner disturbance.’¹⁰⁴

The men were being tested on how they responded to hints and social clues:

According to the instructions the subjects were not asked explicitly to write a sentence. That such a form should be used, however, was implied in the examples given in the explanation of the test.¹⁰⁵

If a candidate could imagine what the psychological staff wanted and provide it, not in content but in quality of answer, he was a ‘good’ candidate. In changing the test’s form to be less a study of war-mindedness and more a study of eloquence of self-expression, the psychological staff were making their ideal psychological subject (one who responded to them) the ideal officer candidate. The definition of an officer was being psychologised.



Once the focus on war-mindedness had been diverted to a focus on expression, the psychologists opted for an approach even more akin to the psychiatrists’ with ‘words designed to be evocative of other aspects of the personality.’¹⁰⁶ Explicitly borrowing from psychiatric discourse, they stated that by using a range of words ‘an impression was gained of a more total personality.’ Not only this, but the focus was very much on social interaction. Even though the test was sat in silence, with an individual writing his personal thoughts on paper, it was still linked to social factors: the value of the test ‘was that it presented the essentials of a series of interpersonal situations in miniature.’¹⁰⁷ The ‘Analysis of Psychological

Form of the Responses’ stressed a focus on whether other people or the candidate himself were referred to in the response. ‘Poorer’ candidates ‘showed a greater degree of general inhibition’ for instance by referring to ‘discreet incidents in an apparently non-emotional way.’¹⁰⁸ To the psychological staff, a candidate who was emotional was a better candidate than one who did not reveal his emotions to them.¹⁰⁹

104 ‘The Written Psychological Tests’, p. 46.

105 ‘Form of Responses in a Word Association Test’, p. 2.

106 ‘Development of a Testing Programme and New Boards’, p. 12.

107 ‘The Written Psychological Tests’, p. 40.

108 ‘Form of Responses in a Word Association Test’, p. 5.

109 Silences in the Psychiatrist’s Interview were viewed in a similar, negative way to blanks or ‘emotionally limited’ responses, as I analyse further into this chapter.

Because of the focus on the 'setting in the total person' and holistic approach of the psychological staff at the WOSB, they were reluctant to attribute too much significance to this individual Pointer: 'inner sources of anxiety [shown by the Word Association] were not in themselves causes for rejection.'¹¹⁰ The validity of the Word Association was questioned even by the psychological staff themselves:

In proceeding to a more analytic consideration, no objective criteria of suitability were available. A comparison of the performance of good officers with good and poor candidates, and of psychiatric breakdowns with good and poor candidates, confirmed some general assumptions... but the aim of establishing certain objective features with weights to indicate their predictive value was not achieved.¹¹¹

The scientific peers of the WOSBs staff would not be impressed by the reliability that the trials indicated the tests had: general assumptions were hardly respectable results. Yet the tests were retained because they were felt to be 'a highly sensitive projective instrument.'¹¹² The psychological staff believed that they could provide valuable information on a candidate if they were carefully handled by someone who would not place too much meaning upon the results (for instance, as it was noted that military staff did with intelligence tests). The test was retained as a Pointer because it was believed to be helpful to the psychiatrist when conducting interviews. Superficially Word Association tested military qualities, and obviously 'military' words like 'MORALE' or 'ARM' or 'DRILL' held meaning for any military visitors who might look in. Yet this was significantly removed from what the psychological staff felt to be the true value of the test. They believed that a subtle hints at relations with others and emotional insight and eloquence were the really important things about a candidate, not how much he claimed to hate Nazis in response to the word 'BREAK.'

THEMATIC APPERCEPTION

Because of the perceived sensitivity of the Word Association tests, Murray's Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) was used 'to get at some of the deeper and more permanent unconscious themes in the person.'¹¹³ The Thematic Apperception Test (TAT), was devised by American psychologist Henry A. Murray (not to be confused with Hugh Murray of the Tavistock) and Christiana Morgan. In addition to Trist being familiar with Murray's TAT from his time at Mill Hill, Murray himself discussed methods of selection with the Tavistock group because he was assigned to select 'undercover agents.'¹¹⁴

The TAT was another example of a social test, 'expected to throw light on unconscious conflicts revolving around officer/men relations, those in authority and those who might be enemies.'¹¹⁵ The test consisted of pictures of people in different situations,

110 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 58.

111 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 45.

112 'Development of a Testing Programme and New Boards', p. 12.

113 'Development of a Testing Programme and New Boards', p. 12.

114 Fowler.

115 Trist and Murray, p. 51.

which the candidate had to interpret by ‘making up a story which indicates what has led up to the situation... what the feelings and thoughts of the characters are, and what the outcome will be.’¹¹⁶ Though the original test consisted of 20 images, it was reduced to six for the WOSBs, which were projected onto a screen. There was also a blank slide; for this slide, men were to imagine their own picture and write about what they had personally visualised. This was considered ‘sufficient for giving a variety of stimuli, and at the same time made the total time required not more than half an hour.’¹¹⁷ The TAT were again a test that encouraged candidates to think like psychologists or psychoanalysts; they had to infer and interpret the emotions of others and create a narrative about that person that ‘made sense.’ Not only this, but they actually co-constructed the test itself by imagining their final image. The test was to be assessed by scrutinising the assumptions the candidate betrayed in his interpretation, which would ‘expose his own personality’ to the “‘X-Ray eye” of the experimenter.’¹¹⁸ Yet it also involved the candidate turning his own view into a psychological “X-Ray.”

The time limit set for the TAT was intended to limit ‘fatigue’ because the paper tests with all their introspection and analysis were seen by their creators as potentially emotionally taxing; the candidates taking the tests affected their form in very concrete ways. Similarly, though psychoanalytic views ‘provided the main grounds for the choice of the pictures,’ this was also mediated by the participants: ‘the pictures had to be reasonably acceptable to the candidates and those pictures too obviously connected with “clinical themes,” e.g. depression, suicide, were therefore excluded.’¹¹⁹ The traditional clinical work of the psychological staff was carefully adapted to their new ‘normal’ field of study, and to make the test acceptable to the military and the men taking it.

Despite this need to modify the tests to fit military views of acceptability, some of the more controversial and taboo aspects of psychoanalysis remained in the tests; the first slide was designed to reveal Oedipal conflicts by presenting a picture of ‘an elderly women with a young man... of similar age to the candidates.’¹²⁰ The third image (‘the well-defined hands of an old and young man’) was intended to reveal the theme of authority; attitudes to authority were considered vital to the officer role.¹²¹ The fourth image, ‘a sketchy figure of an almost naked man clinging to a rope’, suggested escape and was thought to reveal the candidate’s attitude to his ‘inner world’,

116 ‘The Written Psychological Tests’, p. 47.

117 ‘The Written Psychological Tests’, p. 47.

118 ‘The Written Psychological Tests’, p. 47; H. A. Murray, ‘Techniques for a Systematic Investigation of Fantasy’, *Journal of Psychology*, 4 (1937), p. 131. The metaphor of the psychological staff’s ‘insight’ was used and linked with technology, see Chapter One of this thesis for more on the use of such metaphors.

119 ‘The Written Psychological Tests’, p. 49.

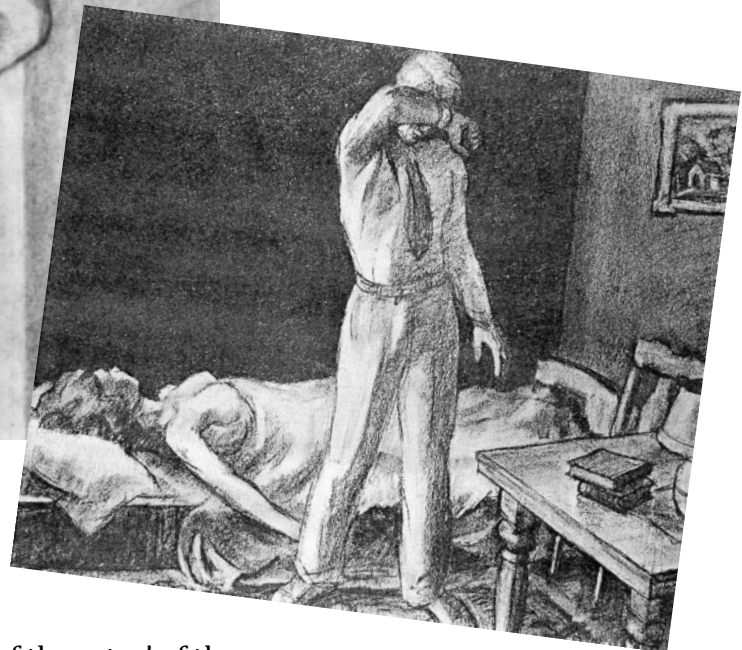
120 ‘The Written Psychological Tests’, p. 49. Notes on the questionnaire also expressed an interest in age differences between men and women: ‘Where a wife was much older than the candidate there might be problems of dependence and insecurity.’ ‘The Written Psychological Tests’, p. 28.

121 ‘The Written Psychological Tests’, p. 50. The idea of authority being problematic to psychologically inhibited men was something that the psychological staff returned to when working on resettlement of prisoners of war, see Chapter Five for more on this.

and 'how much he felt imprisoned by it or freed from its domination.' Picture five provided a clear 'military' link; like the military words used in the Word Association, the psychological staff observed that this picture 'produced the most stereotypical responses' of men giving the answers that they thought were desired of them. This statement implies that the psychologists considered that they were unlikely to obtain psychologically meaningful information from the inclusion of this image, and thus that they strategically included components in the psychological tests that made them

more familiar to the military primarily in order to make the tests more acceptable.

In the sixth picture 'two men of apparently different social classes' were depicted, with 'the better-groomed man in front looking older than the other.'¹²² Although the images were supposed to reflect the views of the candidates, as Kurt Danziger has observed in his history of psychological research,



FIGURES 6 & 7: Examples of images from the Thematic Apperception Test.

psychological tests

also reflected 'attributes of the rater' of the

test.¹²³ The inclusion of such an image, where a more upper-class figure was foregrounded and yet also older than a lower-class figure seems suggestive of the psychological staff's attitudes to society, particularly as it was present at a board designed to institute a meritocratic overhaul of an outdated class-ridden institution.

It could be interpreted as suggesting that the younger man lacking in the advantage of class was closing in on the older fellow.

Although one might expect aggression to be a desired quality in an officer, because of the importance of the officer being a paternal father-figure to his men, the pictures

¹²² 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 50.

¹²³ Kurt Danziger, *Constructing the Subject: Historical Origins of Psychological Research* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 160.

were chosen to give 'considerable scope for phantasies concerning the father,' and any themes of aggression that continued over multiple images were interpreted as demonstrating unresolved conflicts.¹²⁴ Responses from most candidates were expected to 'follow common patterns and to contain a high proportion of stereotypes – the common responses of the well-adjusted group in our society.'¹²⁵ Whereas stereotypical answers were interpreted negatively in the Word Association because that was a measure of his expressiveness, in the TAT Pointer (which more concerned relations) they were seen as a positive indication of a man 'fitting in' to society.

The pointer battery had two functions. It was used to render visible candidates who would be likely to present difficulties, but it was not used to screen them *out*. This linked to the Pointers' other function, as a psychodiagnostic aid 'to throw light on the nature of some of the candidates' main assets and liabilities, and especially by illuminating those forces in his personality which could not be got at easily.'¹²⁶ This meaning was acceptable to many of the military staff at the WOSBs, which was a boon to the psychological staff. However, the psychological members of Boards came to find this problematic when 'Presidents began to ask for pointer reports not only at the Final Board Conference, but before they conducted their own interview.'¹²⁷ As suggested in the use of the term 'forces in his personality,' the psychiatrists considered themselves comparable with physicists who also studied invisible 'forces.'¹²⁸ The President and the other military members lacked the scientific training of the psychological staff, and so to the psychological staff they lacked the ability to use the tests properly; they could not be trusted to interpret scientific data correctly. As tools of experts, unlike the other written tests, the Pointers were exclusive, and were primarily intended to highlight how much further investigation the object (candidate) would require at the Psychiatric Interview. They were deemed only suitable for these select observers because it was only under the psychological staff's expert gaze that the tests' true meanings would be revealed:

Naturally, before one can hope to detect these trends in written material, one must have had considerable experience of the transference relationships of the consulting room and clinic: and no interpretations are safe that are not supervised continuously by someone with such experience.¹²⁹

The danger of outsiders trying to interpret the tests was continually emphasised in an example of boundary work by the psychological staff attempting to shore up the exclusive domain of their knowledge:

It is not a test – so one feels strongly – that can be left unsupervised to anyone whose experience is not grounded in the confidence granted only to the

124 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 50.

125 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 47.

126 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 52.

127 'Interviews by the Psychiatrist & the Psychologist at WOSBs', 1945, p. 2, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 205802222.

128 Trist was hugely impressed by the 'field theory' of Kurt Lewin, which similarly borrowed from physics as a way of understanding and explaining human behaviour. See Kurt Lewin, 'Frontiers in Group Dynamics Concept, Method and Reality in Social Science; Social Equilibria and Social Change', *Human Relations*, 1 (1947), pp. 5–41

129 Harris, p. 63.

psychotherapist in his role as physician. Without such continuous supervision, the quality of the interpretation will fall off very steeply indeed: and will soon become perniciously misleading. That a valuable technique is also a difficult one is of course no argument for neglecting to develop it. It is important that everyone in selection should have some appreciation of psychodynamic factors even though the medical psychologist must provide guidance in their more complex aspects.¹³⁰

The psychiatrists were not totally exclusive about their tests, however. As Harris's comments suggest, with supervision, others could be permitted access to exclusive psychological knowledge. This reflected the necessity of using Sergeant Testers due to a lack of staff, but also the roots of the Tavistock group which 'put particular store on recruiting and training new workers in the field of mental health.'¹³¹ Psychologisation was not simply a tacit process that took place with the candidates, it also involved actively training people in Tavistock group theories and methods to take them to work in new fields. Sergeant Testers took on an increased role as they increased in 'skill and psychological experience': from 'being "backroom" crystal-gazers, psychological tipsters and guessers, they were brought right "into the picture" where they could participate, contribute and learn.'¹³²

Despite this, some of the 'psychological observers' (implicitly the Sergeant Testers) were not considered sufficiently experienced, and the necessity of expert interpretation of the Pointers would come to be seen as problematic. The requirement of interpretation and of possessing a view informed by holistic theories of personality in order to make the tests work led British psychologists to be critical of the Pointers. Vernon and Parry observed that it was this 'side of WOSB procedure which most closely resembled the German counterpart, and which is probably most open to criticism.'¹³³ Analysis of the reasons for this criticism allude to conflict over the boundary between the remit of psychology and psychiatry: Vernon and Parry objected to the way that 'most of the psychologically untrained observers' treated Pointers as tests of specific traits.¹³⁴ Whereas psychologists seemed to accept psychiatrists working on the vague field of the 'whole man,' measures of specific traits and abilities were considered psychologists' territory, and so the lapse of uninformed Testers into this field threatened their authority.

COMMAND SITUATIONS & LEADERLESS GROUPS

The Military Testing Officer (MTO)'s tests were the most successful boundary object in many ways. They included Leaderless Group tests in which no leader was

130 Harris, p. 70.

131 Wooldridge, p. 140; A particularly clear historical account of the need to balance public interest with expert status in the psychological sciences is given in Mathew Thomson, 'The Popular, the Practical and the Professional: Psychological Identities in Britain, 1901-1950', in *Psychology in Britain: Historical Essays and Personal Reflections*, ed. by G. C. Bunn, A. D. Lovie, and G. D. Richards (BPS Books, 2001); and Mathew Thomson, 'Practical Psychology', in *Psychological Subjects* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

132 Harris, p. 54. The metaphor of sight and the idea that psychological staff had a sort of scientific sight superior to the layperson was prevalent in justifications for why psychologists should be involved in officer selection, see Chapter One.

133 Vernon and Parry, p. 64.

134 Vernon and Parry, p. 63.

appointed to a group told to deal with an obstacle, Practical Individual Situations where a candidate had to choose and overcome an obstacle, and Command Situations where a man was appointed to a particular role in a group facing either a physical task or a discussion.

In an article in the popular press about the WOSBs, the same terminology was used to refer to the MTO tests as had been used to describe the German laboratory tests: they were said to be a study of 'men's performance under stress.'¹³⁵ These tests were very different from the German methods though. Whilst both sets relied on a tester observing a man's performance, the new WOSB methods were less concerned with an abstract quality of resilience to strain that the German tests sought to highlight. Instead, the new tests were intended to reveal how a man related to others in a group, how well he could read and understand himself and others.

In the Leaderless Group test, a group was 'left to its own devices in coping with situations.'¹³⁶ These situations usually centred around an obstacle that had to be overcome, or a challenge that needed to be met. Examples included hunting down a spy, crossing a broken bridge, or moving furniture. The Leaderless Group test was the only method that was entirely created for WOSBs, and it strongly reflected both the military and psychological realms.

The Leaderless Group test was brought into WOSBs by a military officer with no psychological training, but this is forgotten in histories of the WOSBs. Histories of science, especially when written by those within the discipline, often select heroes and promote the notion of a 'lone genius revealing the secrets of nature single-handedly in his... basement laboratory,' and the history of Human Relations, limited though it is, has done likewise with regards to the Leaderless Group test.¹³⁷ Most historiographical accounts of the Leaderless Group tests attribute it to Wilfred R. Bion, one of the most notorious members of the Tavistock group.¹³⁸ However, archival sources indicate that in fact, Bion had sidelined this work and its revival and use in WOSBs was the result of a lowly MTO. The unpublished manuscript account of the WOSBs states:

At No. 4 Board, Garston... the military testing officer's group of candidates was given a practical problem and left to its own devices in solving it. This development was largely independent of Bion's work with the leaderless group method with which he had begun to experiment quite early on, but which he did not consider ready yet for general adoption.¹³⁹

Military staff had been involved in testing and experimenting from the first officer

135 'A New Way to Choose Our Army Officers', p. 18.

136 'WOSB Pamphlet No. I/II - The Military Side of Selection Testing', 1944, p. 1, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 377625502.

137 Frank A. J. L. James, 'Editing Faraday', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, 56.3 (2002), 349-52 (p. 350).

138 In a letter to John Rickman, Bion wrote of the suspicion with which other psychologists viewed him: 'AMD II are sufficiently afraid of myself not to spare any pains to discredit me and my work as much as they can.' Bion to Rickman, 7th March 1943, Dimitris Vonofakos and Bob Hinshelwood, 'Wilfred Bion's Letters to John Rickman (1939-1951): Introduction', *Psychoanalysis and History*, 14.1 (2012), 53-64 (p. 79).

139 'Development of a Testing Programme and New Boards', p. 32.

selection experiments in the CCS, and this continued with the creation of new Boards. Their agency forced the psychological staff to work at an accelerated pace.

The military tests began as a decoy, but they were swiftly adapted to being a site of collaborative meaning making. The psychological staff were self-conscious about the role of the MTO in constructing consensus and acceptance of their methods:

[He] was originally introduced as a “cover plan”; he was to apply tests of a military nature which would impress the Army while the real job of selection was undertaken by the technicians.¹⁴⁰

These practical tests offered the perfect object for collaboration; ostensibly military, involving assault courses and demonstrations of physical aptitude, psychological staff adapted them so that their ‘real’ purpose was to highlight psychological qualities.

In addition to conducting ‘cover’ tests, it had initially been hoped that a ‘general impression’ of the personality of candidates might be revealed to the MTO from informal contact at the Boards. However, ‘it was difficult to mix freely with the candidates, for instance in the evenings or at meal times, in a natural way, as candidates were constantly aware of the examiner-examinee relationship.’¹⁴¹

Psychiatrists believed that candidates’ consciousness of the presence of testers affected their behaviour. This was not just the interpretation of the psychiatrists. It was echoed in candidates’ accounts of the WOSBs, who recalled that ‘the members of the Board sat with us. Everybody knew only too well they were all eyes and ears.’¹⁴² Like many psychologists before them, the WOSBs’ psychological staff felt that by deceiving their subjects and concealing the investigator and his intentions, they would get more scientifically valid results.¹⁴³ The MTO and his tests formed the perfect ‘cover’ in several senses; he took the focus away from the psychological tests at the WOSB and also his military identity hid the ‘real’ psychological interpretations that even the military tests were given.

Whilst candidates did not accept the scrutiny of the MTO at mealtimes and acted unnaturally, the Leaderless Group test ‘forced the candidate to reveal [social relations] directly.’¹⁴⁴ Candidates were coerced to perform as psychological subjects and reveal their social relations, which they had resisted permitting the Board access to at non-test sites such as the dinner table. Some required coercion. Duncan Leitch Torrance recalled that ‘if asked by a member of the Board, nothing could be better fun’ though his true opinion was that the group tasks were a ‘form of punishment.’¹⁴⁵ For others, because the Leaderless Group tasks were often formulated as group games, they were

140 John Rawlings Rees, *The Shaping of Psychiatry by War* (W. W. Norton, Incorporated, 1945), p. 67.

141 ‘Development of a Testing Programme and New Boards’, p. 34.

142 Duncan Leitch Torrance, ‘Chapter 3 - War Office Selection Board’, *BBC WW2 People’s War*, 2005 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/25/a6989025.shtml>> [accessed 3 April 2015].

143 For more on psychologists’ belief that deception would secure more valid results, see Michael Pettit, *The Science of Deception: Psychology and Commerce in America* (University of Chicago Press, 2013).

144 ‘Chapter 7: The Work of the MTO, Quasi-Real-Life Situations’, in *Unpublished WOSBs Write-Up MSS*, p. 7.

145 Torrance.

enjoyable. Frank Mee laughingly recalled his experience of the Group tests:

Being an engineering type the mechanical problems of bridging chasms and moving equipment across swamps came easy. Getting the rest of the crew to toe the line and do as I wanted was another story. Staring with ten men and progressing along a rout [sic] carrying out the various tasks I ended up at the other end minus four men. One was left up a tree, one was neck deep in the water after I told the rest not to pull him out as we had to get on (it was against the clock). The last two I deliberately sent on to a mined stump to lay the initial planks.¹⁴⁶

In a report on adaptations of Leaderless Group tests devised to work at Boards in the Middle East and Europe, where equipment was limited, the author noted



FIGURE 8: One form of the Leaderless Group Test, 'Miller's Box Test' from No. 11 WOSB. Tavistock Archives, Box 377625502, 'CTC/RTC Memoranda.'

that 'candidates will not mind if the game is more prolonged because they enjoy it immensely.'¹⁴⁷ The acceptability of the tests to many candidates enabled the WOSBs to continue functioning.

This psychological interpretation, provided by Bion, provided the theory that the psychological staff thought was missing from the method, making it acceptable to military staff, candidates, *and* psychological staff. The work that he 'did not consider ready' involved trials in which 'a group of candidates was left to choose a topic which they were then to discuss.'¹⁴⁸ This undirected discussion format echoed clinical psychoanalytic practices, where a patient would be encouraged to talk freely about their thoughts and feelings so that their analyst could achieve insight into their character. The Leaderless Group test combined elements from the discussion such as its undirected nature and provision of insight into character, but in a more military package. The lack of direction was seen as key to providing insight: groups of men were set a task and not instructed whether they would be measured as a group or as

146 Harold Pollins and Frank Mee, 'Cash-Register Economics & Army Examinations', *BBC WW2 People's War*, 2003 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/04/a1970804.shtml>> [accessed 24 August 2013].

147 GVH and IFW, 'RTC Information Bulletin No. 9 - Some Notes on Military Tests Used by WOSBs Overseas', 1944, p. 2, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 377625502.

148 'Development of a Testing Programme and New Boards', p. 34.

an individual, thereby inducing conflict. The original military task provided by the MTO became the 'quasi-real' problem, and the 'real' problem was the social dilemma of reconciling group purpose with individual aspiration. Though the test appeared to have stayed the same, its method of assessment (and therefore its meaning) had radically altered.

The psychological and military staff also collaboratively created other tests that supplemented the Leaderless Group test to ensure that valid observations had been obtained. Just as Koh's Blocks and the Wechsler Bellevue tests were used to give more information on 'complex' candidates' mental ability, the Practical Individual Situation was used as a way for the MTO to examine 'doubtfuls' more closely.¹⁴⁹ The 'doubtful' might for instance be given selective obstacles, where he was told to complete as many as possible, each worth different point scores. The purpose of this, the psychological staff argued in an explanatory pamphlet, was 'not athletic prowess but how well he chooses his obstacles... his action is spontaneous and the whole burden of making decisions rests on him.'¹⁵⁰ Similarly, the Practical Command Situations were intended to provide more information and 'fill in any gaps in the picture [the Board staff] has already got.'¹⁵¹ In Command Situations, the staff 'jointly select an appropriate role for each candidate' and so the test was an important point of collaboration. This test had been shaped so that multiple meanings were supported, and a candidate's quality as an officer was revealed in terms of both technical military ability and psychological relations: 'the way in which a candidate deals with "persons" and "things" at the same time can be observed.'¹⁵² The reference to a candidate's relationship to persons and things echoes the object relations psychoanalysis that was a firm pillar of the Tavistock group's epistemology.

In addition to the familiar theoretical elements, the Leaderless Group was the method that most clearly demonstrated a new direction for the Tavistock group because it was linked with Kurt Lewin's Field Theory: the Leaderless Group was 'an empirical use of the psychology of social fields.'¹⁵³ The group provided the field, where various forces affected the subjects causing leaders and followers to emerge. Rather than observing who demonstrated physical prowess or who appeared to have taken charge, the observers were to watch for 'less adequate reactions' to forces, such as:

[T]he frankly anxious who react with aimless and restless activity, fidgety mannerisms, a tense expression, nervous facetiousness, automatic and unintended truculence etc: the "compensators" who thrust, bluff, boast, exhibitionistically seek the spotlight or in some similar way seek to mask their insecurity: the depressives who apologise, seem mortified and blame themselves for everything; the "projectiles" or "blimps" who paranoidly blame the materials, the nature of the task, other members - anything but themselves: the hysterics who express their insecurity in irrelevant acrobatics or pressure of speech which

149 'Military Side of Selection Testing Pamphlet', p. 3.

150 'Military Side of Selection Testing Pamphlet', p. 2.

151 'Military Side of Selection Testing Pamphlet', p. 2.

152 'Military Side of Selection Testing Pamphlet', p. 2.

153 Nuno Torres and R. D. Hinshelwood, *Bion's Sources: The Shaping of His Paradigms* (Routledge, 2013), p. 69.

contribute nothing to the task.¹⁵⁴

As well as ideas from Field Theory, psychoanalytic language can be seen in this description in terms such as ‘depressives’ and ‘hysterics,’ demonstrating the links that Bion had created between a military task and a psychiatric diagnosis of character flaws. The Leaderless Group test concealed a combination of psychological theories and psychoanalytic principles beneath a military façade, thus linking varied approaches to personality and what a ‘good’ or ‘bad’ officer material was.

The Leaderless Group test was an especially effective boundary object because of such linking together of ideas. It was used to remedy a form of psychological-military conflict. Eric Trist recalled that before the Leaderless Groups came in, there was ‘much disagreement and rising tension between the military and technical sides.’¹⁵⁵ Trist even went to far as to say that this single test ‘changed the entire character of the WOSB’ by creating what he called a ‘learning community.’¹⁵⁶ He argued that the tests impressed the Commanding Officers who came to see the experimental work and were:

decisive in securing military acceptance of the Boards... [the tests] convinced them that decisions were being made by the army and not by “shrinks” over-influencing bewildered Board Presidents... because of their increased confidence they were prepared to accept greater technical assistance.¹⁵⁷

The joint-observation aspect of the Leaderless Groups was considered almost more important than the method itself in creating acceptability and creating consensus between the psychological and military staff.

Bion and the psychological staff might have given an alternative, psychological meaning to the tests, but the importance of the collaborative aspect of the test meant that they had not completely seized control of them. Wilfred Bion had expressed caution about efforts to modify the test very early on in the life of the Leaderless Group:

it is important that attempts should not be made to “improve” or “develop” the tests; the technique must be mastered first. This point must be stressed as there is a danger that alterations may be made that have already been tried and found poor. Furthermore, it makes mastering of the technique difficult if to start with the procedure is not fairly rigidly adhered to.¹⁵⁸

The training of military staff in psychological principles was considered an important part of the WOSBs system. As well as educating the military staff so that tests would

154 Harris, p. 36. It is notable that the term ‘blimp’ was used to describe a negative type of candidate. As discussed in Chapter One, blimp was a term used to describe the establishment figures in the Army who were resistant to change, such as the introduction of WOSBs. Implicitly, in the psychological staff’s minds those who were resistant to WOSBs were ‘bad’ officer material.

155 Trist, ‘Working with Bion in the 1940s: The Group Decade’, sec. 208.

156 Trist, ‘Working with Bion in the 1940s: The Group Decade’, sec. 237.

157 Trist, ‘Working with Bion in the 1940s: The Group Decade’, sec. 224. This accusation was raised by influential men who wanted to get rid of the experts and the new Boards, as discussed in Chapter Four, so the importance of shaping an acceptable appearance to the WOSBs via the test components was vital to the continuation of the psychological staff’s work.

158 Wilfred R. Bion, ‘Technical Memorandum No. 3 CDC - “Leaderless Group Tests”’, 1942, p. 1, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 377625502.

be interpreted in a psychological way, instructions were also used by technical staff to reinforce a psychological meaning to the tests. The MTO's authority to pronounce on a candidate was limited, as the psychological staff argued that 'it is not possible to place much reliance on such tests if the results of the written tests... are not known and taken into consideration for interpretation.'¹⁵⁹

Even in the Leaderless Group test, the psychological staff guided the MTO's judgement. Various instructions were issued on 'what to watch in the Leaderless Group Tests,' how to 'rank' and 'rate' candidates, or how to record their performance in a way that captured the psychological group situation on paper.¹⁶⁰ In writing up the Leaderless Group Project, Bion even wrote that 'if the testing officers watch what they are meant to watch they have no difficulty... nearly all mistakes arise through failure to keep the selecting officers mindful, throughout all the tests, of the very simple basic principles.'¹⁶¹ These basic principles were the psychological principles that had been grafted onto the military test, and were described as being the 'real' problem that the candidate faced and merely disguised by the superficial 'set' problem.

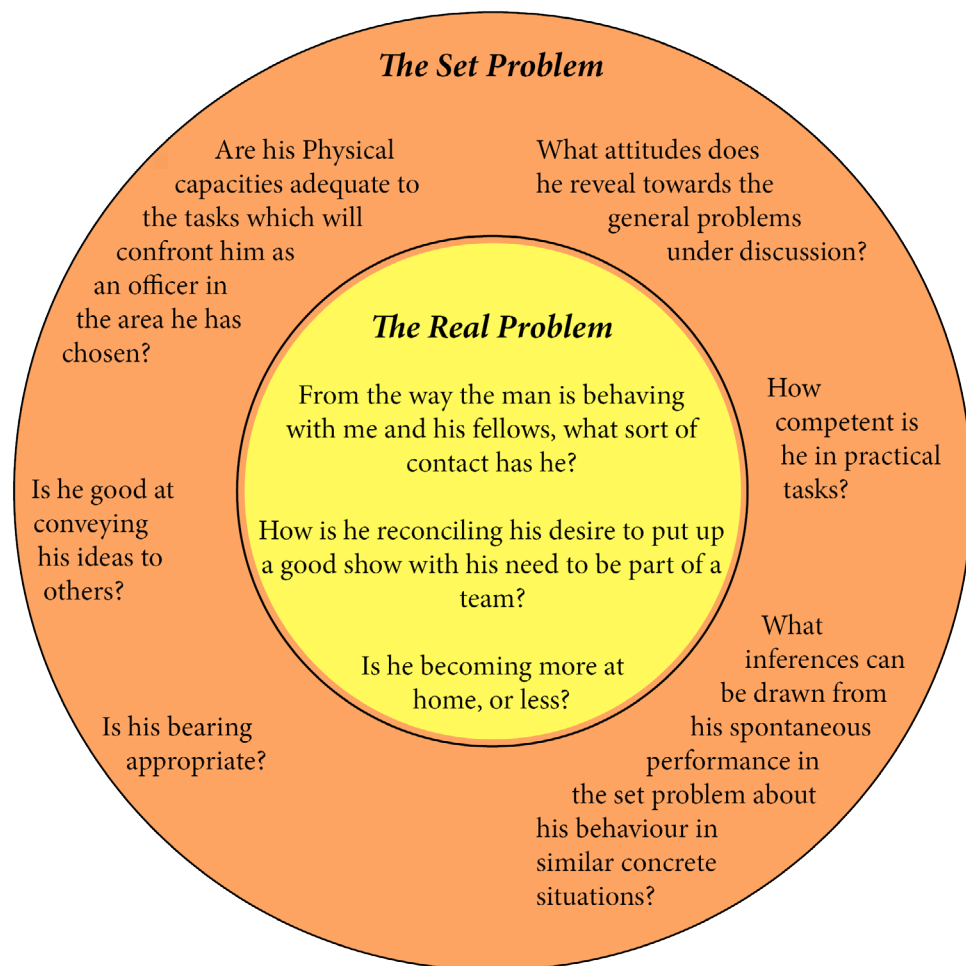


FIGURE 9: The 'Real' and 'Set' Problems of the Leaderless Group Tests. Tavistock Archives, Box 377625502, RTC Technical Memorandum No. 5 - The Work of the MTO at a WOSB Part 2

159 'Military Side of Selection Testing Pamphlet', p. 2.

160 'RTC Technical Memorandum No. 5 - The Work of the MTO at a WOSB (Part 2)', 1944, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 377625502; 'Military Side of Selection Testing Pamphlet'; 'Chapter X: How to Conduct, Interpret, Evaluate and Report the Leaderless Group,' Harris.

161 Wilfred R. Bion, 'The Leaderless Group Project', *Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*, 10 (1946), 77-81; as quoted in Trist, 'Working with Bion in the 1940s: The Group Decade', sec. 237.

A diagram of the 'real' problem compared with the 'set' problem was even supplied to make it clear to MTOs that the psychological relations of a candidate were central. Psychological questions were literally central on the diagram, with superficial questions on the periphery to show that they were relatively less important (see above).

However, many examples of memoranda sent around Boards indicate that modification of the methods continued at many Boards. The Leaderless Group tests were ones which military members of the Boards had a particular enthusiasm for, likely because they were familiar. Thus the military staff could (and did) devise their own varieties. At No. 14 WOSB, the psychological department worked in collaboration with the MTOs to assess tests by measuring a variety of things from candidate speed to 'fantasy projection rating.' The report on this work noted that the 'team work between psychologist and MTO which made this experiment possible is an indication of the type of useful contribution which such co-operation can make in WOSB work.'¹⁶² Another bulletin sent around all Boards in May 1943 featured a report from a Board President that began 'I have recently been trying an experiment in Officer Selection' and from a Senior MTO writing about the 'inter-personal relationships of the group.'¹⁶³ The circulation of such memoranda amongst the psychological members of the Boards indicated that in fact, they valued these collaborative contributions to the WOSBs. They symbolised experimentation and a positive and successful collaboration between the Army and psychological staff. This was seen as an especially important element of the Leaderless Group test.

The Leaderless Groups were even invoked in parliamentary discussions to reassure those who were concerned about the new methods that they were still a legitimate military test:

The fourth test, the hardest of all, is a test of toughness of fibre, moral and physical, and it is being carried out by trained psychologists. Hon. Members will realise that a man may have all other qualifications but not be of a type to stand up to the actual conditions of battle. Everybody who has been in a battle knows of such cases, and medical Members in particular will appreciate the importance of this test. It is being carried out by trained men to make sure that these candidates will be able to sustain their warlike capabilities in the stress of battle.¹⁶⁴

Whereas Bion focussed on psychoanalytic traits that might be revealed, the Secretary of State for War instead highlighted 'toughness of fibre' and 'warlike capabilities.' The Leaderless Group test can therefore be seen as the most effective boundary object of WOSBs, able to support both kinds of meaning. The meaning in this statement was a specifically military, not psychological, one, however the allusion to 'medical Members in particular' and 'trained psychologists' subtly reaffirmed that expertise played a role and that people with a specific form of training would be more appreciative of and get

162 'Research and Training Centre Internal Memorandum No. 17: Report on Practical Ability Tests at No. 14 Board', 1944, p. 2, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 205802222.

163 President, No. 12 WOSB, Senior MTO, No. 15 WOSB and Psychiatrist, No. 10 WOSB, 'Technical Bulletin No. 1 CDC - Some Suggestions from the Boards on Leaderless Group Tests', 1943, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 377625502.

164 Sir Edward Grigg 'Captain Margesson's Statement'.

more from the Leaderless Group tests. As Trist noted, the test's military appearance made technical acceptance more acceptable and more able to pass unnoticed.

The Leaderless Group tests were particularly important to the WOSBs because of their collaborative nature and the way they worked as a boundary object. Yet the psychological staff pursued a strategy of clarification to take a greater portion of control over that object. They attempted to 'educate' military staff in the 'real' psychological meaning of the tests. The Leaderless Group test, psychological staff claimed, 'indicated to each member of the team some of the prejudices and biases they all held.'¹⁶⁵ Though this quote suggests a mutual education, the educative aspect of the Leaderless Groups was particularly and deliberately aimed towards the military members of the Board. The psychological staff worked to redefine the meaning of the tests and reinterpret them as fundamentally psychological.

Though the psychological staff attempted to graft a psychological meaning onto the Leaderless Group test, and though this was to some extent accepted by the military staff who eagerly thought-up new versions and used the rating forms, the psychological meaning was frail. At some Boards, the joint-observation enabled Presidents to reject psychological interpretations of what they were seeing based on their own observations. For instance, Lord Belhaven recalled an exchange between military staff and the local Board Psychiatrist:

"Quite hopeless, I'm afraid, sir - A strong mother-complex." [said the psychiatrist]

"Meanin' he can't do a thing without Mummy?"

"Exactly, sir."

"Well, doc., I watched him do his obstacle course and I never saw the old lady anywhere. Did you see her, Hamilton?"

"Not a sign of her."

"Then I'm puttin' him down for a commission, and to hell with Mummy."¹⁶⁶

In some cases such as this, military members were able to resist efforts to graft psychological meaning onto a test they saw as military; they asserted their authority over what they felt to be theirs. Because of the principle that things must be done 'with not to' the Army, the psychiatrist was merely and advisor. In order to make the WOSB more acceptable to the psychological staff's patrons, the President's decision was final. Such assertions of military authority and resistance to psychological interpretations proved even more difficult for the psychological staff to deal with in relation to Board Interviews, discussed later in this chapter.

It was not only the military Board staff who resisted a psychological interpretation of the Leaderless Group at the WOSBs. The greatest advancement of the Tavistock's science of selection was one of the most questioned by contemporaries in the psychological community. Most accepted that, theoretically, its output was what the

165 'Development of a Testing Programme and New Boards', p. 35.

166 Lord Robert Alexander Benjamin Hamilton Belhaven, *The Uneven Road* (John Murray Ltd, 1955), pp. 60-61.

Tavistock proposed, but argued that in practice because staff shortages meant that the operator was usually a military man not versed in psychological thinking, it was usually interpreted poorly.¹⁶⁷

Other psychologists accepted and echoed the view that the military Board members and their inability to grasp 'basic principles' undermined the test's effectiveness as a psychological instrument. In his investigation of the historical origins of psychological research, Danziger observed that psychologists got around the problem of ambiguous meanings in personality assessment 'by stipulating at the outset that the results of personality ratings were to be interpreted as reflecting attributes of the target person rather than attributes of the rater.'¹⁶⁸ However, other psychologists refused to buy into the idea that the Leaderless Group reflected the target and focussed on the rater. NIIP psychologist Philip E. Vernon argued that the test 'yields, not scores or measurements, but subjective ratings by the observer of the candidate's personality as a whole. Hence it depends enormously on the skill and experience of the observers.'¹⁶⁹

The Leaderless Group test demonstrates how psychological theories were interwoven with military methods. Military involvement in shaping the tests continued throughout the war, to the eventual criticism of the scientific community who felt that a psychological instrument was being misused. However, the Leaderless Group test was retained into the post-war period, even after psychiatrists were removed from Boards. Attempts to create a psychological meaning for the tests were seen as successful in the pages of journals, but this meaning was not secure or stable. Despite psychological staff's best efforts to educate military staff in 'basic principles,' the principles became detached from the test in its actual application.

QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS

QUESTIONNAIRES

The questionnaires were part of the Pointer battery, but were more closely theoretically linked to the interview, which will be discussed in detail shortly. Questionnaires were designed to help with interviewing by opening lines of enquiry and hinting at specific questions, whereas the other Pointers were believed to indicate general personality traits or tendencies. The questionnaires were seen as closely linked with the interview, and they asked very similar questions, but the form of the questionnaire rendered questions more acceptable. The questionnaire method thus remained ambiguous whilst battle broke out over the interview that it paralleled.

The psychological staff at WOSBs saw the questionnaire as a sort of preliminary interview. Like the Pointers, the questionnaires aimed to reveal information about candidates in advance of a face-to-face investigation. All of the paper tests, including

167 For instance, see Vernon and Parry; Bernard Ungerson, 'Mr Morris on Officer Selection', *Occupational Psychology*, 24.1 (1950), 54–57.

168 Danziger, p. 160.

169 Philip E. Vernon, *Personality Tests and Assessments (Psychology Revivals)* (Routledge, 2014), p. 98.

the questionnaires, were intended to identify unambiguous cases that didn't appear to need much clarification: 'in the case of the apparent "top and tails" the interview could be shortened considerably without loss of efficiency.'¹⁷⁰ Interview time could then be focussed on contentious cases, which were the most important because the officer shortage meant that there was a perceived need to supply as many candidates as possible, differentiating between the borderline cases as well as skimming the best men.

The psychological staff believed that the questionnaires issued on the first day were a warm-up for the interview:

[T]he questionnaire [was] in essence an interview, to which answers are given in writing... it requires the same skilful formulation of questions, the same tact, as does an interview. While some informants are suspicious of this impersonal instrument and reveal themselves more willingly in the face-to-face interview situation, others are "bad interviewees" who may be more frank in a questionnaire.

The psychological staff believed that the 'instrument' of the interview increased their scope; they could quickly supply information, on more candidates – even shy ones. As this explanation suggests, from the psychological point of view the questionnaire was as apt to be problematic as the interview.

The questionnaires were intended to garner 'salient features... of an objective kind in a readily assimilable form for the interview.'¹⁷¹ As this quote suggests, the questionnaires helped to convert a candidate's subjective life and transform it into objective 'data.' This meant that even information that had very recently been highly controversial, such as a candidate's educational background, could be asked because the paper format of the questionnaire removed the 'human hand... from the production of social facts.'¹⁷² It had been seen as a problem when a blustering retired Colonel asked a man about whether they might attend the same clubs or have been at the same school, but when the question was posed on a form it was seen quite differently.¹⁷³ As with the tests of mental ability this was not down to coincidence. A great deal of planning went into ensuring that the questionnaire would be acceptable: at a conference of psychological staff a question was raised about where to position the questions on education and 'a long discussion ensued.'¹⁷⁴ The criticisms of officer selection fell away even though the same questions were in fact still being asked in part because the psychological staff spent a long time thinking about how to ask the question tactfully.

As well as questions on life history, the questionnaires were designed to probe into a candidate's medical history. Questions about past achievement and a candidate's

170 'Interviews by the Psychiatrist & the Psychologist at WOSBs', p. 1.

171 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 9.

172 Jon Agar, 'What Difference Did Computers Make?', *Social Studies of Science*, 36.6 (2006), 869–907 (p. 881).

173 For more on this, see Chapter One of this thesis.

174 'Minutes of Conference Held in Hobart House', 1943, p. 1, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 205802222.

hopes for where in the Army they would end up were asked to allow 'opportunities to be envisaged.'¹⁷⁵ Medical questions aimed to demonstrate proneness to psychosomatic disorder and therefore reveal 'sources of potential weakness' that might prevent a man from functioning successfully as officers under stress.¹⁷⁶ To the psychological staff, the form brought together the past, present and future versions of the candidates.

However, although both questionnaires were intended to help the technical staff to make predictions about a person based on 'data', there was an important difference between the type of 'data' sought by each questionnaire. Questionnaire I covered education, occupation and hobbies and was for both the President and Psychiatrist to consult, but Questionnaire II investigated medical family history, and so 'was restricted to the confidential use of the psychological department' where only psychologists and psychiatrists could access it.¹⁷⁷ The psychiatrists called upon their medical status to justify the exclusivity, labelling the form 'Confidential for Medical Use.' This medical identity was emphasised as key to the psychiatrist's role at the WOSB:

The psychiatrist's main role as a board member was that of a medical examiner carrying out a special examination to assess in some measure the capacity to stand up to the special stresses of the officer's job.¹⁷⁸

The reference the psychiatrists made to 'stresses' created a continuity between their traditional role of dealing with neurosis and their role in officer selection. In the WOSBs pamphlets the medical identity was also prioritised: 'the Psychiatrist is a medical man who has been trained to observe and assess human beings objectively.'¹⁷⁹ Questionnaire II relied upon the idea of doctor-patient confidentiality in order to get the candidates to disclose more private information, although even for this questionnaire the psychiatrists noted that there were limits to what it was 'reasonable to expect that the candidates would be willing and able to record accurately without the stimulation and privacy of the interview situation.'¹⁸⁰

Just as the medic was implied to be on the side of the individual soldier and safeguarding his health, the questionnaire was explained to candidates as a tool that worked in their favour, allowing their unique qualities to be made apparent. The standard introduction to the questionnaire that was given to the candidates stated that it was given so that:

knowing something about you already [the President and Psychiatrist] will be able to develop the interview more profitably both from your point of view and theirs. No two people have the same history so there is no correct answer to any of the questions. The most useful answers are those that are accurate, concise and comprehensive.¹⁸¹

175 'The Written Psychological Tests', pp. 12-13.

176 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 23.

177 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 10.

178 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 22.

179 'Technical Department Pamphlet', p. 1.

180 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 9.

181 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 12.

The psychological staff designed this introduction to reassure candidates of the differences between the new WOSBs and the 'old school tie' Command Interview Boards that were so problematic (see Chapter One). The emphasis upon the idea that there was no 'right' answers hinted at a change from when the only way to a commission was to say that one had attended the 'right' school. The staff designing the questionnaire suggested that the new dynamic was one of collaboration, with two points of view. This was based on the psychological principle that men had to feel some benefit from providing the information requested. Information was seen as a form of currency: 'in our society... these facts are felt to belong to the subject's private world' and would only be exchanged as part of a procedure 'intended to help him as in a confidential interview with a professional adviser such as the doctor or solicitor.'¹⁸² The 'confidential' stamp was intended to communicate just such a professional exchange, as was the next part of the instructions which implied the provision of services in exchange for information: 'the psychiatrist is a doctor and he will be glad to see anyone at any time during the course if there is any point he wishes to raise.'¹⁸³ The psychological staff's careful efforts to construct complicity demonstrates the extent to which officer candidates were powerful actors in the creation of the WOSBs. Their disapproval or refusal would prevent the Board from working, and so the psychiatrists had to carefully shape their tests to be acceptable to the men as well as to the military.

Although the questionnaire sought individual (and to some degree rather personal) information about a candidate, the information had to be carefully shaped to make it useful. A specimen completed questionnaire was provided for demonstration purposes, implying that there might not be a single 'ideal' type of officer, but there certainly was an ideal type of psychological subject who completed their forms tidily and comprehensively. The forms were also carefully standardised:

To be serviceable as an aid to interview, salient facts had to stand out clearly and to be efficient as a basis for statistical record the information had to be given in a standard form which would permit of rapid coding.¹⁸⁴

The information had to permit rapid coding because the Army had provided access to Hollerith machines, a sort of 'precursor to computers' that worked with hole-punched cards, to tabulate data on men.¹⁸⁵ As with earlier uses of machines to conduct censuses, the use of the Hollerith at WOSBs meant that large amounts of data could be collected, but the identity of the entry was retained. This was the case at WOSBs, where the officer candidates were 'treated as "numbers" during their period at the board,' and it was in the questionnaire that the neutral number and the 'real' candidate were brought together. Jon Agar argued that 'as the human hand was, apparently, lifted from the production of social facts, so the administrative users of the

182 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 24.

183 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 25.

184 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 11.

185 Jon Agar, *The Government Machine: A Revolutionary History of the Computer* (MIT Press, 2003), p. 146.

facts could claim the virtues of mechanical objectivity for themselves.¹⁸⁶ This apparent mechanical objectivity can be seen at WOSBs, where the objective appearance of the standardised form meant that men could “trust” it with their identifying information though this was hidden from the Board staff.

Candidates did not simply give their details to the Hollerith, they were actively involved in shaping information for the punched card machines. Officer candidates were unique to the British Forces in the degree to which they were required to collaborate with selection tests, both with each other and with the selection staff. The trust relationship between scientist and subject was notably reciprocal. By ‘permitting candidates to code certain information themselves,’ the psychological staff were demonstrating a trust that officer candidates would behave as proto-psychologists.¹⁸⁷ Officer candidates were trusted to think of themselves in terms of abstract categories, translating their subjective self to objective criteria, and to transcribe this in psychological form by coding themselves. The level of trust placed in officer candidates, who took on psychological roles by coding themselves, can be compared to other ranks, for whom ‘the answers given to many items are so unreliable that it is better to substitute tests wherever possible.’¹⁸⁸ Psychologists guided the candidates in this psychologizing process: ‘to assist the correct completion of certain fields and to ensure correct coding each candidate was provided with an Individual Instruction Sheet.’¹⁸⁹ Moreover, psychological staff were advised to ‘keep moving about the room dealing with questions... this would develop a much closer link between the candidate and the psychologist.’ Not only was trust required to make the questionnaires work, the psychological staff also felt that trust was built up or promoted by the test themselves and the way the psychologists helped men to complete the form.

The ‘machine’ of officer selection was accepted as trustworthy by candidates who provided sensitive information, psychological staff, who trusted them to fill-in answers, and the military and government officers, who permitted the use of expensive equipment in limited supply.¹⁹⁰ The Hollerith reveals the relationship of trust that was constructed between psychological staff and officer candidate subjects, but also elucidates the relationship of trust between the Army authorities and the psychological staff. It is remarkable that a Hollerith was provided for officer selection work because other military and government applications to use the machines were being delayed until after the war due to the ‘apparent scarcity of the machines’,

186 Agar, ‘What Difference Did Computers Make?’, p. 881. Though the psychological staff were very excited to get their hands on the new technology, it did result in problems. One clerk recalled that the Hollerith machine had meant that 1000 Pioneer Corps men were transferred to Northern Command to be trained as infantrymen. However, ‘all, or most, or some of them were not medical category A1 but (if I remember correctly) AX1... that meant nothing to us until someone looked it up. AX1, or whatever it was, meant something like ‘psychologically incapable of holding or using a rifle.’ Harold Pollins, ‘Unfit to Hold a Rifle’, *BBC WW2 People’s War*, 2003 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar/stories/90/a2127890.shtml>> [accessed 18 March 2013].

187 ‘The Written Psychological Tests’, p. 11.

188 Vernon and Parry, p. 137.

189 ‘The Written Psychological Tests’, p. 12.

190 C. M. MacLachlan, ‘Officer Selection’, *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, 94 (1949).

including aeronautical research.¹⁹¹ It is unclear how the WOSBs obtained access to the machines. But as one archive file from during the war refers to 'an experimental month in which information collected from WOSBs would be treated by Hollerith methods', and a later document looking back on the period describes the Individual Instruction Sheet as a standard piece of equipment at Boards, it appears that the experiment became a prolonged one.

This experiment was as much measuring the psychological staff as the candidates themselves. The Hollerith was intended to 'raise the standard of officer records in the Army' and provided 'so that the executive could have a clear picture of what was happening in the field of officer selection,' and thus was useful to the army.¹⁹² 'Full identification particulars' of candidates were required in order to validate date by follow-up, and in this sense the use of the Hollerith echoed other uses of punched card machines that made it 'possible therefore... to obtain a complete check of the workers' accuracy.'¹⁹³ It was less that the candidates were governed through the collection of data in Hollerith form, than that the social scientists governed themselves using machines. Because of this, though the incorporation of Hollerith into the WOSBs was seen as a way of capturing 'a picture of WOSBs as a whole', it also changed them. For one thing, they became more bureaucratic, requiring extra clerical help from women from the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS).¹⁹⁴ Also, the punched card machine made it possible for psychological work to be validated on a larger scale and therefore shaped working practices: 'Captain Morris mentioned the necessity to devise special forms to record data relating to special groups – Officers for Regular Commissions, Misfits, technical and civilian candidates [etc.]'.¹⁹⁵ The machine also influenced the design of the WOSBs because 'a compromise had to be made' so that questionnaires would both provide information for Personality Pointers and 'provide data for the Hollerith.'¹⁹⁶ Psychological practices and interests were subordinated to the interests and practices of bureaucracy, and some nuance was lost. For instance, Trist asked whether the psychologists should continue with the established common practice of raising the recorded level of educational standard when a man did really well in tests of mental ability. Psychologist Major Bernard Ungerson (from the NIIP) said that this practice should not apply to WOSB candidates.

However, though computers were used to validate work, generate statistics and provide the Army with manageable data, psychological staff argued that candidates retained their complications. At the conference on the use of the Hollerith, they argued that some pieces of information that simply did not fit the forms and required notes to be attached to files so that 'queries would be dealt with... before

191 Agar, *The Government Machine*, p. 235.

192 'Minutes of Conference Held in Hobart House', p. 2.

193 Agar, *The Government Machine*, p. 151.

194 In another example of selection *for* selection, the ATS staff were chosen for this role using psychological selection techniques.

195 'Minutes of Conference Held in Hobart House', p. 2.

196 'Minutes of Conference Held in Hobart House', p. 1.

the forms went to Hollerith.¹⁹⁷ Where a man had worked in several different jobs, or attended a variety of schools, he resisted simple identification and failed to fit the forms, requiring intervention and further work by the WOSBs staff. Essentially, the candidates resisted easy digestion by the WOSBs machine, and the psychological staff resisted the idea that the information that they drew out with their science could be obtained without them. They implied that the WOSB was a scientific instrument that needed experts to operate it, not a black boxed technology where form data could be input and decisions spat out by a Hollerith. For instance, they contended that questions about a candidate's preferred branch of the Army 'gave some additional indication of the candidate's general attitude to military service,' but only if analysed by an expert. They saw the 'simple' questions and answers of the questionnaires as generating 'complex' questions for the interviews.

Ultimately, the psychological staff compromised and made their data fit the forms in most cases because, though it presented a challenge by questioning the validity of their work, the Hollerith was also seen as an opportunity for growth of their discipline. The psychological staff had 'been granted' access to the machine by the Army, and Eric Trist and Ben Morris spoke of the opportunities it presented them. Trist 'stressed... the importance of obtaining analytical material... and the value of such information in broad fields' and he mentioned 'the possibility of Hollerith being used to do item analyses of new tests and questionnaires.'¹⁹⁸ The eventual compromise between the needs of the military for quantification and the needs of psychiatrists to add interpretation and nuance (but still get their hands on the new technology) were exemplified in 'Form 31 (Revised) Report on a WOSB Candidate by a Psychiatrist.'¹⁹⁹ This form was produced a few months after the Hobart House conference on the Hollerith. Beside questions such as 'He will be slow on the uptake' or 'He will be on the lookout for a cushy job' were three columns for the Board Psychiatrist to use in answering: Column 1, Yes; Column 2, No; and Column 3 where the Psychiatrist could mark "Q." A Q indicated a query, which could then be noted elsewhere. The form thus satisfied the needs for both simple and for developed measures of the candidate. For many of the psychological staff, this was their first experience of big science and working on a huge scale project with many coworkers (scientific and otherwise), with vast amounts of data, and with expensive new equipment supplied by the military-industrial complex. Their response to the Hollerith demonstrates their intention to derive as much professional and intellectual benefit from the opportunity as possible. The psychological staff wanted to use this new technology to test their own new technologies, and seemed excited to use the Hollerith computer in order to calibrate their tests and questionnaires.

197 'Minutes of Conference Held in Hobart House', p. 2.

198 'Minutes of Conference Held in Hobart House', p. 2.

199 'Form 31 (WOSB) Revised - Report on a WOSB Candidate by Psychiatrist', 1943, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 377625502, 'Folder 6: Follow-Up'.

THE INTERVIEW

The Hollerith was exciting new technology, and the interview was a faithful old tried-and-tested method. The interview was one of the key features of the WOSB. In the impatient early days of experimenting with procedures, the Army pressed to go ahead with a system that added just an intelligence test and a Psychiatric Interview to the original Command Interview Board (CIB). The many other tests comprising the WOSB system were developed largely to provide information for interviews, so that they could be more focussed and shorter. Yet though the interview was considered by the psychiatrists to be the most refined filter of men, and the other tests merely intended to calibrate it, the interview that was the most contentious element of the WOSBs. Other histories suggest that the WOSBs psychiatrists were problematic to the Army, but in fact the interview specifically was the contentious element of WOSBs. Whilst there were scuffles over who had most authority over other tests like the Leaderless Groups, the interview was a full-on battlefield.

This sort of interpretation and questioning of the questionnaires reinforces how the psychiatrists conceptualised the earlier tests as an extension of the interview rather than a separate entity. Rickman noted that 'the Interview is an integral part of a wider testing procedure with a special responsibility for answering specific questions about personality.'²⁰⁰ Rickman had worked as a medic in Russia during the First World War and then had analysis with Freud in 1920 and with Sándor Ferenczi in the late 1920s. From 1938 until the interruption of war, he was Bion's training analyst. Rickman had extensive and respected history as a psychoanalyst in a clinical setting, and became the authority on how to conduct interviews. Though all of the psychiatrists were familiar with the interview method from clinical practice, John Rickman was considered the expert. He edited the document 'A Symposium on the Psychiatric Interview in Officer Selection,' which was composed from the ideas of 12 Board psychiatrists and circulated to all psychological staff, and he wrote a number of articles also shared around all staff.²⁰¹ He was also featured in a film made by Shell, demonstrating and explaining the interview, in preparation for which he produced five drafts, the fifth numbering 27 pages.²⁰²

The Psychiatric Interview came almost at the end of the WOSB programme, concurrent with the President's Interview and just before the final Board meeting to discuss the candidate. This meant that all of the data from all of the tests could be used to shape the interview, covering basic topics so that there was already a degree of information available. The tests represented the beginning of a conversation that

200 John Rickman, 'A Symposium on the Psychiatric Interview in Officer Selection', 1944, p. 2, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 377625502.

201 Rickman, 'A Symposium on the Psychiatric Interview in Officer Selection'; John Rickman, 'The Influence of the "Social Field" on Behaviour in the Interview Situation (1943)', in *No Ordinary Psychoanalyst: The Exceptional Contributions of John Rickman*, ed. by Pearl King (Karnac Books, 2003); John Rickman, 'The Psychiatric Interview in the Social Setting of a War Office Selection Board (1943)', in *No Ordinary Psychoanalyst: The Exceptional Contributions of John Rickman*, ed. by Pearl King (Karnac Books, 2003).

202 John Rickman, *No Ordinary Psychoanalyst: The Exceptional Contributions of John Rickman*, ed. by Pearl King (Karnac Books, 2003), p. 63.

changed in form with the interview. The introduction to the WOSB interview was carefully considered in order to show that the interview had been reinvented. The interview method was carried over from the CIB, and a great deal of effort was made by both the Army personnel and psychological staff to emphasise the break from the old, controversial Boards. The CIBs had been tainted by a perception that they were overly focussed on selecting a traditional type of officer based on class background rather than ability (though some argued that these were inextricably linked, see Chapter One). At the arrival of a new intake of candidates, the President of the Board introduced the psychiatrist and asked him to say a few words to the men. He told candidates that 'if their notion of a psychiatrist is simply to get mental defectives out of the Army and neurotics into and out of hospital, then they have something new to learn.'²⁰³ One batch of candidates at a time, psychiatrists were working to push back the boundaries and reshape the perceptions of their discipline. Although psychiatrists had claimed the authority of the medic in order to access sensitive information, they also emphasised that they were no longer limited to treating "sick" individuals. Efforts were made to persuade the candidates that the interview and the psychiatrist were both different from what they might expect.

Rickman and the other technical staff organising the WOSBs recommended that the beginning of the conversation between psychiatrists and candidates should be produced through 'an informal "cocktail party" type of meeting with the candidates... [where] interviewers would make a point of exchanging at least a few words with each candidate they would be interviewing.'²⁰⁴ This setting was very different from that which the psychiatrist had previously been confined to: the clinic or asylum. The psychiatrist exposed candidates to his presence in this 'normal' (or even privileged) social situation, reaffirming the idea that the interview really was just a conversation and that he was no longer a figure who operated on the periphery, dealing in the taboo. In addition, the cocktail party was intended to link the interview with the other components of the board 'so that the common tensions of the waiting period prior to interview were minimised.'²⁰⁵ Rickman and his colleagues even made recommendations to fellow psychiatrists on how to appear normal:

To remove the bogey-man concept of the psychiatrist the interview may start with a conversational opening about the train journey, or even with a joke.²⁰⁶

Such efforts to familiarise the candidates with the figure of the psychiatrist represented an attempt to integrate both the procedure of the Psychiatric Interview into the WOSB as a whole and to integrate the psychiatrist into mainstream society.

Psychiatric Interviews began with a degree of familiarity between the candidates and the Board psychiatrist. As well as helping the image of the psychiatrist generally, Rickman stressed that this was also the ideal for a thorough 'scientific inquiry'

203 Rickman, 'The Psychiatric Interview in the Social Setting of a War Office Selection Board (1943)', p. 150.

204 'Chapter 5: Chapter on Interviews', in *Unpublished WOSBs Write-Up MSS*, p. 6.

205 'Chapter on Interviews', p. 6.

206 Rickman, 'A Symposium on the Psychiatric Interview in Officer Selection', p. 3.

because 'if rapport is good and the observer unbiased the data will be of high validity.'²⁰⁷ After this scientific preparation, the interview, like the questionnaire, began with a man's recent experience (the Army), and proceeded back through his life via education and hobbies. This design was given 'considerable thought... Several drafts were tried out in practice before the final form was arrived at,' and the structure was crafted to make the psychiatrists' work seem less alien.²⁰⁸ The process of looking back and forth over a candidate's life was a micro-replication of the psychoanalytical method. It was 'modelled on the way in which anyone learns about himself and on the way in which he learns and talk about other people.'²⁰⁹ Because the candidate also participated in this pendulum-view of his life, it was also considered that he might benefit from it; 'through experiencing it... the candidate for his part increased his insight.'²¹⁰ Rickman and the psychiatrists emphasised how the candidate should benefit from the interview, just like they believed a client would from a discussion with an analyst in clinical practice.

The familiar instrument of the interview was considered the ultimate tool of the Psychiatrist, building upon the earlier tests to provide a detailed insight into a man. Psychological staff said that 'personality studies are inspections in depth, intelligence tests a measurement in span... all may need an integrating idea which the Psychiatrist alone can give.'²¹¹ They saw the other tests as sort of technologies providing snippets of data that required the 'scientific inquiries' in the interview to make sense of it all. This was the root of the psychiatrists' claims to authority. Initially, it was due to the perceived nuance possible in the interview practice that their techniques were deemed more suited for the task of officer selection than psychologists:

[One] reason for the for the minor role of psychology was that officer-suitability appeared to be chiefly a matter of character and personality, and in the absence of objective tests of the desired qualities, interview techniques which psychiatrists themselves had evolved successfully at Edinburgh constituted the most promising approach.²¹²

As General Thorne put it, he feared 'an over emphasis on tests might lead to the undervaluing of the man with unusual gifts of perhaps a rather specific nature and the army could not afford to be deprived of its "eccentrics."²¹³ The psychiatrists agreed that an unusual or slightly troubled personality did not need not prevent a man from making a skilled officer. Rickman advised 'it is not the severity of the neurosis but the manner in which the candidate tackles it.'²¹⁴ He did not see neurosis as necessarily problematic. However, it was not long before association with neurosis and deviance became problematic for the psychiatrists themselves.

The psychiatrists came to regret even the term Psychiatric Interview, 'for with

207 Rickman, 'A Symposium on the Psychiatric Interview in Officer Selection', p. 5.

208 'The Written Psychological Tests', p. 11.

209 'Interviews by the Psychiatrist & the Psychologist at WOSBs', p. 8.

210 'Interviews by the Psychiatrist & the Psychologist at WOSBs', p. 8.

211 Rickman, 'A Symposium on the Psychiatric Interview in Officer Selection', p. 1.

212 Vernon and Parry, p. 56.

213 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 18.

214 Rickman, 'A Symposium on the Psychiatric Interview in Officer Selection', p. 7.

this familiar usage the idea developed that all interviews by psychiatrists were of necessity of the same peculiarly intimate and personal character that they have in a clinical setting.²¹⁵ The tension around the Interview method resulted from questions; those that the psychiatrist might ask, and those that surrounded the psychiatrist's identity. Yet the fear of 'the kind of questions in which the psychiatrists specialise' was unfounded, at least in terms of the official guidelines for the Psychiatric Interview.²¹⁶ The psychological staff explained that the Psychiatric Interview should proceed along lines very similar to that of the President's Interview. It was not intended to differ notably in content or scope, though it focussed slightly more on pre-war experience where the President's focussed slightly more on wartime. Rickman's guidelines advised 'quickly sheering away from any topics likely to arouse antagonism and defence mechanisms' both because they might hurt the image of psychiatrists and WOSBs and because they would damage rapport and hinder the gathering of good data.²¹⁷ The difference between the interviews lay, the psychiatrists argued, in 'technical interpretation' of the interview. This was seen to distinguish it; 'the appreciation of the life history in terms of a general theory of the development of personality and against a background of experience of the developmental patterns of various kinds of person' made it possible to make a 'prediction regarding a future stability.'²¹⁸ Rickman put it that the 'bird's eye view' of the psychiatrist enabled him to say 'what sort of fellow this is' compared with others who could only say 'what sort of things he has done.' The psychiatrist's scientific view was linked with an ability to make predictions, and Rickman claimed that this was what made psychiatrists and their interview valuable.

Some disagreed that the psychiatric interview had this unique quality and value though. From the establishment of No. 1 WOSB the interview was associated with both president and psychiatrist, who 'had their own distinctive method, the interview, already available.'²¹⁹ The contradiction in the idea that both had a distinctive method in the interview proved the crux of conflict, as possession of the interview method was battled over. Each group sought to clarify the meaning of what an interview was, what should be asked, and how it should be interpreted and why (and in doing so reinforce their own authority).

Psychiatrists were dissatisfied with the President's Interview. The President's Interview had been carried over from the original Command Interview Boards; they were a site of military authority, a practice in which many Board Presidents considered they had a degree of expertise. Yet psychiatrists wanted to improve the Presidents' practices, suggesting that a President might 'be given assistance in improving the methods that he himself used in reaching an opinion.'²²⁰ This

215 'Chapter on Interviews', p. 10.

216 Winston S. Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate: The Second World War* (Rosetta Books, 2010), p. 814.

217 Rickman, 'A Symposium on the Psychiatric Interview in Officer Selection', p. 4.

218 'Chapter on Interviews', p. 12.

219 'Development of a Testing Programme and New Boards', p. 8.

220 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 17.

'improvement' was a more scientific form of interview informed by psychological theory; the expertise of the psychiatrist was in direct competition for legitimacy with the President's approach. Churchill himself saw these two forms of authority as competing, writing to his Secretary of State for War that he considered the commanding officer was the best judge of potential officers, and that if he was not a good judge he was 'scarcely fit for his position.'²²¹ However, the psychiatrists were explicit about turning the gaze of their profession onto the President, who would have 'the technique of his interview investigated.'²²² Investigating candidates who were not yet officers was one thing, which had been controversial enough and needed delicate curation of acceptance (see Chapter 2). Applying psychological investigation to commanding officers as well was, to many, one step too far. Psychiatrists' efforts to psychologise the President's interview and to establish their own interview as more important to selection were interpreted by some as efforts to usurp military authority and replace it with psychological expertise.

By contrast, the psychiatrists appear to have felt that their own expertise was under threat from the President's Interview. This feeling appears to have been crystallised by a visit by Lieutenant Colonel Howard from the Canadian Army. The Canadian colleagues who had visited WOSBs contrasted the poor shortened British interviews with 'the exceptionally careful and systematic life-history interviews given to all candidates' in the Canadian forces.²²³ The British psychiatrists agreed that 'interviews by the President and Deputy President become more systematic in approach, wider in scope and longer in duration.'²²⁴ They felt that whilst their own interviews had been cut down, military interviews had expanded; the battle over interviews was seen as a zero-sum game. The interview can be considered as such a problematic object because it was not sufficiently polysemous: it could not support both the meaning the military men attributed to it and that which the psychiatric staff understood it to have. Because these meanings could not co-exist and were in opposition, 'the problem of the Army versus the technician was intensified.'²²⁵

Gains in authority for one side were seen as losses for the other. Efforts to restore military authority were focussed into a backlash against the psychiatrists, specifically directed at their interview. In 1943 a ruling was passed which forbade any questions regarding sex or religion. The psychiatrists were frustrated by this, feeling that it should have been apparent

to all but the most prejudiced, that it was of the greatest importance... to enquire in appropriate cases into so significant an aspect of the human mind, behaviour and social adaptation as sexual adjustment. Similarly, it should have been obvious that [where the question of religion arose, psychiatrists] were attempting a fundamentally sociological evaluation of a man's attitude to established authority.²²⁶

221 Winston Churchill, 'Prime Minister's Personal Minute', 1942, The National Archives, WO 259/75.

222 'Preliminary Experiments and Formulation of Working Principles', p. 17.

223 'Interviews by the Psychiatrist & the Psychologist at WOSBs', p. 4.

224 'Interviews by the Psychiatrist & the Psychologist at WOSBs', p. 5.

225 Vernon and Parry, p. 54.

226 Ahrenfeldt, p. 64.

The psychiatrists felt that this was 'prejudiced' and arose due to a lack of understanding of their science and misconceptions about psychiatrists. Undoubtedly, there were suspicions about psychiatrists, but from the point of view of the Army this can be seen as an equalising measure. There were questions that the President could not ask (for him education was also off-limits) and the ruling in a sense prevented the psychiatrist from having greater scope than the President.

Later that year, what became known as 'the 50% rule' did cut back psychiatrists' authority to interview to far less than the Presidents'. It recommended that psychiatrists 'will probably not need to interview intimately more than 50% of the candidates at normal Boards' and insisted that Presidents must write to the War Office to justify where this was exceeded.²²⁷ Psychologists noted that there were practical reasons for limiting the Psychiatric Interview, due to limited number of psychiatrists available to do the interviewing. However, they also recognised that 'an additional reason for this was the manifest desire of Army authorities to reduce his rôle to a minimum.'²²⁸ Distrust of the figure of the psychiatrist resulted in efforts to curb their influence at the WOSB. Rees noted that this decision was a regression of psychiatric authority, demoting him from medical examiner of all candidates back to the traditional role of alienist. He noted with concern that this had the effect of encouraging the view that psychiatrists only saw 'abnormals,' and therefore made Psychiatric Interview something to be dreaded; through the military authorities' instruction, psychiatrists saw the risk that this perception psychiatrists would become widespread amongst candidates too. Not only this, but the War Office ruling also undermined the relationship between Board Psychiatrists and Presidents. Where the psychiatrists in the early officer selection had gained respect and authority because they had helped to cut down on paperwork and problems (see Chapter 2), with the 50% rule they were potentially the cause of paperwork and problems.

Accordingly, the psychiatrists fought back, doing their utmost to combat the rulings. Whilst histories of WOSBs note the setback posed by the limiting rules to the psychiatrists, none address their response. Because of concerns about misunderstanding their work and the questions they asked, psychiatrists took active steps to clarify the meaning of the Psychiatric Interview. Barley et al observed that the engineers that they studied performed analyses not for themselves,

but to provide additional data for their objects. Engineers viewed these analyses as additional work because they were already confident of the design implications the analyses would support. The analyses were important, however, for their ability to provide extra supporting data in the objects; the engineers believed that, by having multiple sources of information, the object would more clearly support their designs.²²⁹

Likewise, the psychiatrists of WOSBs were confident that their interview was important, and like the engineers they took extra steps to try to clarify the object

227 'Interviews by the Psychiatrist & the Psychologist at WOSBs', p. 2.

228 Vernon and Parry, p. 58.

229 Barley, Leonardi and Bailey, p. 297.

of the interview which they feared had become misinterpreted. They took steps to familiarise the military with their methods and clarify the interview and their role at WOSBs further.²³⁰ They manipulated what was *not* said in the instructions about interviews to allow them to carry on conducting many interviews by ensuring that they were brief and therefore not 'intimate' (according to their own definition).²³¹ This form of interview thus survived at many boards until the psychiatrists were removed from WOSBs entirely at the end of the war, and to some extent therefore represented a successful clarification of the interview in order to support the psychiatrists' meanings. To prevent any accusations of taboo questions, Rickman and his colleagues sent out more instructions to their psychiatrist colleagues working at the WOSBs on how to conduct interviews properly. For instance, memoranda were issued saying that 'it was generally considered wise to [avoid] negative suggestions i.e. that secret microphones or other spying devices were not used to observe [candidate's] behaviour.'²³² The content of the interview was increasingly limited by regulation and guidance from within the psychological profession as well as from without: 'there was a progressive adoption of work-sheets for all judges' toward the end of the war, for instance.²³³

Even with all the regulation and systematisation, the Psychiatrist's Interview did not survive. In 1946, psychiatrists were removed from Boards, despite 'the objections of the Director of Army Psychiatry, and the Director-General Army Medical Services, that the scientific procedures could only be carried out properly by experts.'²³⁴ Whilst the technical staff saw the interview as a scientific procedure, however, the Army men saw it as a military one. Even attempts to make changes to modify each interview to make them more acceptable did not improve the situation. The interview simply could not support both meanings; unlike the Leaderless Group test and even the Pointers and intelligence tests, it did not work as a boundary object between the military and psychological groups.

CONCLUSION

The production of WOSBs methods was significant for both the British Army (and many other institutions subsequently), for whom they represented a significant change in approach, and for the psychological staff, who learned about the challenges and opportunities of working with large organisations, as well as developing theories and methods. Tom Harrison suggests that the methods developed for WOSBs 'significantly influenced' another controversial military-psychological scheme: the psychiatrists' work at Northfield military hospital. There, he argues, Rickman and Bion reproduced 'the passivity and receptiveness of the observer/psychiatrist... [and] took this a stage further by experimenting with ways of intervening to enhance

230 Vernon and Parry, p. 58. See Chapter Four for more on this.

231 Alice White, 'Silence and Selection: The "Trick Cyclist" at the War Office Selection Boards', in *The Silences of Science*, by Felicity Mellor and Stephen Webster (Ashgate, Forthcoming).

232 Harris, p. 51.

233 'Chapter on Interviews', p. 7.

234 Crang, p. 38.

individuals' understanding.'²³⁵ The Northfield experiments have become famous as innovative examples of 'therapeutic communities' where individuals were seen and treated in relation to a wider group. This group-focus can be seen in the earlier methods of the WOSBs, where even the ostensibly individual paper tests were designed to uncover a person's attitudes and relations to others. Moreover, such 'enhancing of understanding' via psychologisation already existed at the WOSBs, though not for therapeutic purposes. The close analysis of the development of methods and theories in this chapter offers opportunities to situate WOSBs in relation to the more notorious Northfield work.

The WOSBs were, like Northfield, centres of conflict as well as collaboration and creation. With regards to the WOSBs, this was partly rooted in the differing priorities of the groups involved in producing the new scheme of officer selection. In devising methods for the WOSBs, the psychological staff aimed to create a science of selection that could be applied in a wide range of situations and that held validity across a range of variables such as age and location. They were concerned with acceptability on two fronts: to their military colleagues and to the scrutiny of their scientific peers. The Army, by contrast, desired a technology of testing that could be applied to 'fix' the problems of officer selection quickly and efficiently. It was not their concern *how* this remedy worked.

In some ways, psychiatrists can be seen as victims of their own success. Psychiatric authority was under threat from psychological staff's own testing technologies: 'interest attaching to the novelty of these new techniques has undoubtedly led to a neglect of the interview,' they wrote.²³⁶ This interest in the tests was an important aspect of the WOSBs; the tests were not psychological creations, they were co-produced by military and psychological staff working together. Military staff and even candidates at the Boards had an agency in shaping the tests that has hitherto been overlooked. Whereas tests used for other ranks or for the Navy were adapted from industrial psychology (such as the intelligence tests), the WOSBs tests had been carefully crafted especially for the WOSBs, and this meant that they functioned as boundary objects that had different meanings for the different groups. The psychological staff saw them as expert instruments and the military staff saw them as technologies that revealed a man's qualities. Whilst they might not have agreed on the definitions of things like 'intelligence,' or even whether a test was mainly to measure 'war-mindedness' or 'social relations,' they did generally agree that the tests were useful methods of finding officers. Some of the methods were seen as so effective that they became black-boxed. Acceptability coincided with whether they appeared to be more 'technological' or more 'psychological;' tests that used technologies like Hollerith cards, paper tests, and Leaderless Group Apparatus were all more likely to become black-boxed than ones where the psychiatrists interfaced

235 Tom Harrison, *Bion, Rickman, Foulkes, and the Northfield Experiments: Advancing on a Different Front* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000), p. 92.

236 'Interviews by the Psychiatrist & the Psychologist at WOSBs', p. 4.

directly with military personnel. The theories that explained how the tests worked were not considered important to the military staff because they trusted that the tests helped them to find officers. This agreement was never reached with the interview. Psychiatrists were keen to emphasise that the tests were supplements and not substitutes for the Psychiatric interview, and that the superficial written answers from tests required probing at interview in order to reveal the 'real' character of a candidate. However, too many senior military figures refused to accept this meaning. In a spat in the pages of *Occupational Psychology*, Tavistock man Ben Morris argued that the WOSBs achieved a 'high degree of acceptability' but psychologist Bernard Ungerson countered that 'the psychologist and psychiatrist component in the Boards... was never properly accepted by all senior officers, nor, as is now well known, were we able to persuade the Army that such members were essential.'²³⁷ Although Ungerson was trying to disagree with Morris, both of these statements are true. The WOSBs themselves were accepted, including many of the technical components. As this chapter has shown, more methods were rejected by the psychological staff in testing than by the military subsequently. But the technical staff themselves were not accepted. Acceptance of the 'confidential' questionnaire that used the same questions as the interview demonstrates that it was not the questions or methods that mattered, but the people involved, who were rivals to the power of military men like the Board President. Control over the WOSBs was a continual battle. It was not only waged at the level of the Boards themselves, or between psychological and military personnel, as this chapter has investigated, but also at a more symbolic level. The next chapter therefore explores how rival authorities fought over the 'science of selection,' and scrutinises the battles that took place *within* the human sciences.

²³⁷ Ben Morris, 'Officer Selection in the British Army 1942-1945', *Occupational Psychology*, 23 (1949), 219-34; Ungerson.

CHAPTER FOUR: EXPERTS & EVALUATIONS OF THE WOSBS

INTRODUCTION

By the autumn of 1942, the new War Office Selection Boards (WOSBs) devised by the psychiatrists of the Tavistock had spread across Britain. They had secured highly favourable ratings and reports from candidates, and seemed to have resolved the Army's shortage of officers. But not everyone was impressed with the WOSBs. For example, Churchill's dislike for the psychiatrists is mentioned in almost every history that discusses the WOSBs themselves.¹ The narrative is usually one of a battle between military men and psychiatrists, where high ranking soldiers disapproved of changes to the Army, questioned the value of the new methods, or were just generally worried about what the 'trick cyclists' with their strange ways might be up to. The concerns of the Army psychiatrists are not addressed. So what was it that the Tavistock group hoped for from the WOSBs work? In early Spring, 1945, they wrote about their hopes and fears for their 'scientific endeavour.'² They expressed a desire and to be treated like their peers in other scientific fields, for their work to be recognised as scientific. It was through application to 'problems' that 'psychological knowledge and expertise first began to establish its claims for scientific credibility, professional status and social importance.'³ Consequently, it was important to the psychological creators that their work was respected by the communities who could confer such status. The Tavistock were concerned not only about what the Army thought about their work, but whether it would 'withstand impartial scrutiny... by scientists.'⁴ This chapter situates the 'science of selection' and its creators in this wider context of science and expertise. It examines efforts to define and situate the science of selection: from a tussle for authority between psychologists and medics; to bureaucratic negotiations between service psychologists and outsider 'experts;' and the work of the Tavistock group to validate their work and their role.

The conflict over WOSBs was not simply a battle between the military 'blimps' and the Tavistock 'trick cyclists,' and this chapter explores resistance to WOSBs as resistance to the expansion of a scientific domain, and changing professional hierarchies. Some of the first attempts to put Army psychiatrists back in their place came not from the Army but from their colleagues in the medical and psychological sciences. Medics and neurologists attacked the WOSBs work and the Tavistock, whom they saw as both rivals for authority and funding, and as symbolic of shifts taking place that threatened to erode traditional disciplinary structures and systems of patronage. In particular,

1 For instance, see Ben Shephard, *A War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Twentieth Century* (Harvard University Press, 2001), p. 195; Jeremy A. Crang, *The British Army and the People's War, 1939-1945* (Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 16; Roger Broad, *Conscription in Britain, 1939-1964: The Militarisation of a Generation* (Taylor & Francis, 2006), p. 166.

2 'A Critical Review of the Present State of Officer Selection in Relation to the Position and Work of RTC', 1945, p. 9, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 205802222.

3 Nikolas Rose, *The Psychological Complex: Psychology, Politics and Society in England 1869-1939* (London, United Kingdom: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), p. 226.

4 'A Critical Review of the Present State of Officer Selection', p. 11.

there was a neurological-psychological rift. Neurologists like Colonel George Riddoch and medics like Lord Horder attempted to undermine the psychiatrists by manipulating networks, writing letters and creating doubt in the minds of influential figures; for instance, Churchill's concerns were stimulated by Horder. The Tavistock group made use of their own connections to intercept and resist these attacks, in some cases by trying to win over the denigrator and in others by repudiating their arguments.

Churchill could not be placated by the psychiatrists or their allies, and he established an Expert Committee on the Work of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services to investigate their work. Experts from outside the military were asked to assess military-psychological work, and particularly whether the psychiatrists were overusing questionable methods. The Committee is usually viewed (and was almost certainly intended) as an attack on the psychological staff working for the military, particularly the Army psychiatrists. The psychiatrists themselves were initially 'up in arms' as they felt it was 'an attempt to place psychology under the doctors.'⁵ However, the Committee was a key site of negotiation between experts. Psychological staff working for the Army, Navy, and Air Force resisted outside authority and sought to establish their own definition of their work. This was despite differences in the approaches that each group favoured.⁶ There was mutual support between groups that one might expect to be rivals, such as the psychologists of the National Institute of Industrial Psychology, who had been working on selection for years, and the Army psychiatrists who were newcomers to the field. This reveals how psychological staff found opportunities in potential adversity and highlights the often-overlooked links between different practitioners from different institutions, specialisms, and services. In debates over selection, there were collaborations as well as conflicts.

Whilst a few representatives of Army psychiatry were negotiating the place of their work in a wider context of experts and approaches to selection, the Tavistock group were trying to get the WOSBs under control. In September 1942, a Control and Development Centre (CDC) was established just outside Watford. Some of the staff who had helped to create the WOSBs, such as John Bowlby, Wilfred Bion, and Eric Trist, were joined by others whose expertise was relevant to validation of the work. The group bonded and saw themselves as an 'invisible college': a scientific community.⁷ The difference between Army and scientific conceptions of 'control' quickly became apparent. The Tavistock group wanted a rigorous system of training so that the staff would have the internal control of experts, rather than the external control of inspections which they felt to be 'authoritarian' and ineffective. The group's desire to conduct research was also the source of much frustration; their patrons in the Army were satisfied with the WOSBs as they were, and were primarily interested in control (of Boards' reputations, if not of their actual practices), whereas the

5 Sir Ronald Adam, as quoted in Shephard, p. 195.

6 For an indication of the wide variety of approaches of the psychological staff that conducted selection work, see "Appendix G: Diagram of Vocational Psychology" on page 225.

7 H. V. Dicks, *Fifty Years of the Tavistock Clinic* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1970), p. 107.

Tavistock group wanted to experiment further. CDC staff saw the matters of training and of experimentation as central to being a proper science: they wanted the WOSBs to 'fulfil the original promise of a sound social technology' and to control the scientific quality of the work.⁸

The CDC represents a lacuna in the history of WOSBs. Only one early history mentions it, and then only briefly. However, the CDC was where the aims and priorities of the psychological staff were clearly expressed, and where they attempted to secure scientific credibility. The work of the CDC staff highlights the unwritten rules of acceptance by the scientific community to which they attempted to adhere. The CDC, the arguments at the Expert Committee, and the 'off the record' manoeuvring of eminent scientists and medics (and counter-moves of the Tavistock group), demonstrate how selection science was shaped by other experts as well as by its military patrons and psychological creators.

A QUESTIONABLE PROCESS: WHO OBJECTED TO THE CHANGING ROLE OF ARMY PSYCHIATRISTS & WHY?

The acceptance of the WOSBs and the psychiatrists who created them by so many soldiers was considered remarkable even by the psychiatrists themselves, who had 'anticipated difficulty... and expected resistance.'⁹ Rank and file soldiers and officer candidates approved of the new officer selection scheme; Brigadier Vinden, a military man instrumental in the creation of the WOSBs, observed that questionnaire responses were overwhelmingly positive and complaints from 'parents of candidates, headmasters of schools, and commanding officers of units alleging unfairness of rejections... dwindled to zero.'¹⁰ As the previous two chapters have demonstrated, this was not a matter of chance; the makers of the WOSBs carefully tailored the methods to be as acceptable as possible to the participants. From the earliest experiments, military staff had 'admitted' that they could see the psychiatrists' points once they had been explained.¹¹ After this, the psychiatrists and their military allies had tried to educate others into supporting their work. J.R. Rees, Consulting Psychiatrist to the British Army, his psychiatrist colleagues appointed to work in the WOSBs, and the Adjutant-General Sir Ronald Adam, who was supportive of their work, attempted to communicate the selection science more broadly to win over sceptics. For instance, they held conferences for commanding officers, which included demonstrations and explanations of the history and methods of the WOSBs.¹² They also used an informal approach; Vinden 'invited anyone who he heard through the grape-vine as being

8 'A Critical Review of the Present State of Officer Selection', p. 11.

9 Eric Wittkower and T. Ferguson Rodger, 'Memorandum on an Experiment in Psychological Testing Applied to the Selection of Officers', 1941, p. 3, Box 377625502, Tavistock Institute Archives.

10 F.H. Vinden, 'The Introduction of War Office Selection Boards in the British Army: A Personal Recollection', in *War and Society: A Yearbook of Military History*, ed. by Brian Bond and Ian Roy (Routledge, 1977), II,

11 'Chapter 2: Preliminary Experiments and the Formulation of Working Principles', in *Unpublished WOSBs Write-Up MSS*, p. 15. As discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

12 'Chapter 3: The Development of a Testing Programme and the Setting Up of the New Boards', in *Unpublished WOSBs Write-Up MSS*, p. 40.

critical to witness the new methods at first-hand.¹³ Many of these visitors were medics ‘who appeared to be the most “sticky” in failing to understand what was going on.’¹⁴ The WOSBs staff felt that they could win support if they could train others to think more like psychologists.

WOSBs staff were careful to ensure that their tests were acceptable to candidates and commanding officers who were closely interacting with them, and to military figures who questioned their role, but they did not court their fellow experts. Historian Nafsika Thalassis cites a story from *The Fighting Services* in which two officers cheerfully noted that the ‘trickcyclist’ had ‘got rid of old Blimp for us’ and was now mainly after ‘office wallahs.’¹⁵ Thalassis uses this example to discuss how psychiatrists were perceived by the common soldiers. Yet she does not explore the distinction portrayed between the officers, who did not feel threatened by the psychiatrists, and the ‘office wallah’ whose ‘superficial smartness did not delude the psychological sleuth.’ Rival forms of ‘smartness’ were in conflict or competition: resistance to the Army psychiatrists’ changing role came from other experts who felt threatened by the new direction taken by the psychiatrists.

Some of the Tavistock group’s relationships were distant or strained before the war and this was only exacerbated by the changing role of Army psychiatrists. The rift was primarily between the Army psychiatrists (with the Tavistock at the centre) and the neurologists. For instance, the Maudsley Hospital, which pursued cures of mental pathology ‘through biochemistry and electrophysiology,’ was frequently in conflict with the Tavistock Clinic, which used psychoanalytical approaches. The Director of the Maudsley, Edward Mapother, had ‘resisted all attempts by Rees to gain academic recognition for the Tavistock as a post-graduate institution.’¹⁶ Mapother did not agree with the Tavistock’s approach, and thus impeded their inter war efforts to achieve university accreditation, a symbol of academic acceptance. The psychoanalysts at the Tavistock felt that this meant that they were ‘no part of “established institutions,” but an upstart, a cuckoo in the nest.’¹⁷ By blocking the Tavistock’s efforts to become a post-graduate training institution, Mapother was also blocking them from becoming legitimately scientific.

The reason for the rivalry was not just due to differences of opinion on theory; it was also pragmatic. Whilst Mapother and J.R. Rees were on friendly personal terms, Mapother noted that ‘we are both trying to tap the same financial resources, and in so far as the supply forthcoming from these sources is necessarily limited, we are rivals.’¹⁸

13 Vinden.

14 Tom Harrison, *Bion, Rickman, Foulkes, and the Northfield Experiments: Advancing on a Different Front* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000), p. 219

15 F Ambroso, ‘The Trick-Cyclist’, *The Fighting Services*, 1942, 156–58; as referenced in Nafsika Thalassis, ‘Treating and Preventing Trauma: British Military Psychiatry during the Second World War’ (University of Salford, 2004), p. 97, University of Salford Institutional Repository.

16 Edgar Jones, ‘Aubrey Lewis, Edward Mapother and the Maudsley’, *Medical History*, 47. Supplement S22 (2003), 3–38 (p. 23).

17 They were also self-conscious of their lack of beds and ‘large pile of bricks and mortar,’ both traditional symbols of acceptability in medicine. Dicks, p. 63.

18 Bethlem Royal Hospital Archives, C12/4, Mapother Box 14, E Mapother to J R Rees, letter, 18 May

Specifically, the two organisations were rivals for Rockefeller funding.¹⁹ Mapother had written to Alan Gregg of the Rockefeller in a bid for funding to extend the Maudsley premises to enable more research and training; his letter ‘was as critical of the Tavistock as it was supportive of the Maudsley.’²⁰ Frustratingly for the Maudsley, Gregg ‘was receptive to psychoanalytic ideas.’²¹

The war only made the Maudsley staff more worried about the Tavistock; Aubrey Lewis ‘was concerned lest the kudos and influence [the Tavistock] gained should undermine the Maudsley’s leading role’ and decided to ensure that his staff took ‘prominent roles in the armed forces’ to try and keep up.²² The rivalry persisted and was exacerbated by the WOSBs: in 1942, when the first WOSB was established, psychologist Eric Trist was poached from a furious Lewis by Tavistock staff who wanted him to work on officer selection.²³ Lewis considered Trist’s leaving ‘treason’ as he had departed for a group the Maudsley had long considered their ‘intellectual poor relation’ and funding rival.²⁴

Psychiatrists John Bowlby and Kenneth Soddy also encountered the neurological-psychological rift. At the beginning of the war, they worked for the Emergency Medical Services at Fazakerly Hospital, Liverpool. They believed that many patients were suffering from anxiety and depression, and required psychological treatment, but the hospital’s neurologist director, William Johnson, disparaged psychological methods and insisted on ‘referring to patients as “scrimshankers.”’²⁵ When Bowlby and Soddy filed a report of complaint, the Consultant Neurologist Dr Gordon Holmes visited the hospital. Holmes was ‘a powerful ally and supporter’ of the Maudsley, and ‘profoundly disagreed’ with the Tavistock’s J.R. Rees.²⁶ He made it plain to the patients that he also ‘regarded them as cowards’ and berated Soddy and Bowlby. They promptly resigned and joined the Army and the more like-minded Tavistock camp.

What was ostensibly a disagreement over methods was also a power struggle between disciplines, with neurologists and medics pitted against psychoanalysts. In December 1941, just at the time that official approval had been granted for the first WOSB, Major-General David Turnbull Richardson and Colonel George Riddoch made

1931, as quoted in Jones, p. 24.

19 Edgar Jones and Shahina Rahman, ‘The Maudsley Hospital and the Rockefeller Foundation: The Impact of Philanthropy on Research and Training’, *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 64.3 (2009), 273–99.

20 Jones and Rahman, p. 289.

21 Jones and Rahman, p. 289.

22 Jones, p. 25; Alan Gregg had been very keen to serve in the First World War, though he had been persuaded to finish medical school before joining the Royal Army Medical Corps. Military service was obviously important to the man who allocated Rockefeller funding in Britain, which may have been a contributing factor to Lewis’s interest in military involvement. ‘The Alan Gregg Papers’, *Profiles in Science: National Library of Medicine* <<http://profiles.nlm.nih.gov/ps/retrieve/Narrative/FS/>> [accessed 3 June 2014].

23 Rhodri Hayward, ‘Germany and the Making of “English” Psychiatry: The Maudsley Hospital, 1908–1939’, in *International Relations in Psychiatry* (Boydell & Brewer, 2010), p. 73.

24 Eric Trist, “‘Guilty of Enthusiasm”, from *Management Laureates*, Vol 3, Ed. Arthur G. Bedeian (Jai Press, 1993), *The Modern Times Workplace*, 2008 <<http://www.moderntimesworkplace.com/archives/ericbio/ericbio.html>> [accessed 24 October 2012]; Jones and Rahman, p. 289.

25 Shephard, pp. 171–2.

26 Jones, p. 25.

an attack on the increased status of the psychiatrists. Riddoch was a neurologist Army consultant, of equivalent rank to J.R. Rees, and was 'adviser to two Ministries.'²⁷ Richardson was the Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) Director of Hygiene and had 'held various appointments in at the War Office' from 1935 after years of teaching at the Army Medical College.²⁸ Richardson was also Honorary Surgeon to the King from 1941. The psychiatrists' rapid establishment of a 'secure power base' in the form of AMD11 (the Directorate of Army Psychiatry) affronted and threatened these already established Army medical experts.²⁹ Like many medics, Richardson had found success in the 'patrician' structures of medicine characterised by 'privilege, deference, tradition' and powerful patrons, which were threatened during the interwar period by a shift towards 'meritocratic' scientific management and 'expert opinion.'³⁰ The Army psychiatrists' work on scientific selection was not only threatening to Richardson as a rival form of human science expertise, it also symbolised the 'challenge [to] clinical autonomy and its associated genteel status.'³¹

Richardson and Riddoch thus responded with a sharp critique of the new developments in Army psychiatry. Tavistock psychiatrist Wilfred Bion recalled seeing an 'egregious document... so deadly secret that I gather neither [his Tavistock and Army colleague] Hargreaves nor myself are supposed to have seen it.' In this document, Bion wrote to his analyst and friend John Rickman, Richardson and Riddoch had:

deplored the activities of the psychiatrists "many of whom are without active service experience". They asked, now that two psychiatrists were attached to the DSP [Directorate for Selection of Personnel] "Who was responsible for the mental health of the army?" and repudiated any suggestion that they were; they also repudiated any responsibility for the effects, good or ill, that might follow from the intervention of the psychiatrists in army affairs... and suggested a committee... to enquire into our activities.³²

This document was an attempt by Richardson and Riddoch to draw the line between their established expertise (active service experience) and the newcomer psychiatrists who they felt did not know their place and duties. The medics 'repudiated' mental health work, which they considered at the very least outside of their remit, if not downright beneath them. The document represents an effort to re-emphasise disciplinary hierarchies.

Richardson and Riddoch's worried report also hints at the medics' fear that their own reputation in the Army might be contaminated by outré psychiatrists' schemes.

27 'George Riddoch, M.D., F.R.C.P. Physician To The London Hospital', *The British Medical Journal*, 2.4530 (1947), 711-12.

28 'D. T. Richardson, C.B., M.C., M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.', *British Medical Journal*, 2.5048 (1957), 832.

29 Shephard, p. 189.

30 C Lawrence, 'A Tale of Two Sciences: Bedside and Bench in Twentieth-Century Britain', *Medical History*, 43.4 (1999), 421-49 (p. 421).

31 Christopher Lawrence, 'Still Incommunicable: Clinical Holists & Medical Knowledge in Interwar Britain', in *Greater Than the Parts: Holism in Biomedicine, 1920-1950* (Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 94-111.

32 Letter from Bion to John Rickman, 14th December 1941, as quoted in Dimitris Vonofakos and Bob Hinshelwood, 'Wilfred Bion's Letters to John Rickman (1939-1951): Introduction', *Psychoanalysis and History*, 14.1 (2012), 53-64 (p. 73).

Medics' relationship with the Army was not so established that they could feel secure: as three psychiatrists noted, 'there was a time... when even surgeons were among the "camp-followers" (and the RAMC as such dates only from 1898).'³³ The relationship of medics to the Army was not so secure that they could risk their image being contaminated by negative views of Army psychiatrists. Some of the more unconventional work the psychiatrists did unnerved even their colleagues; Bion noted that Rees was worried that 'either we should blow up the Military Training Scheme (and the whole of Army Psychiatry), or one of the Big Guns would fire at us.'³⁴ At a time when the psychiatry involved in organisational work and selection was relatively new, it was important to the medics to clarify the distinction between themselves and those taking risks.

At least five of the Tavistock group (Bion, Rickman, Hargreaves, Wilson, and Rees) knew about the 'egregious document,' and this enabled them to deal with the attack. Bion wrote that in response to Richardson and Riddoch's critical document he had supplied 'ammunition' for his colleagues in the form of counterarguments.³⁵ Rees recalled a time when psychiatrists were criticised in the medical press but 'allowed no reply in those pages.'³⁶ The psychiatrists were keen to make reply to their medical critics now that they had the opportunity. For the Army psychiatrists to even maintain their position required much behind-the-scenes work, using networks of affiliation and support to learn of and respond to criticisms.

Another medic who, like Richardson and Riddoch, deeply distrusted the psychiatrists and their officer selection work, was Sir Charles Wilson (shortly to become Lord Moran). Adam received a warning from Sir James Grigg, Secretary of State for War, that:

the President of the Royal College of Physicians Sir Charles Wilson is distrustful of some of our psychological tests. I suspect he is thinking of those designated for [officer training] candidates, but you had better get hold of him quickly and find out. You will remember that as the PM's doctor he has free access to No. 10 Downing Street.³⁷

As Grigg's letter suggests, Wilson was the personal physician of Sir Winston Churchill and the President of the Royal College of Physicians, so could have been a dangerously influential enemy. Grigg's warning to Adam, like the psychiatrists' awareness of Riddoch and Richardson's memorandum, indicates how the connections of the Tavistock circle enabled them to counter threats by preparing responses. In his reply, Adam noted that Wilson 'considers himself an authority of [sic] morale... I am taking him to an OCTU selection unit' and will send 'my consultant psychology [sic] to talk to him.' Adam and the psychiatrists used visits and explanations widely to try and win

33 R. H. Ahrenfeldt, Richard G. M. Keeling and Robert Thompson, 'Service Psychiatrists', *The British Medical Journal*, 2.5155 (1959), 822-23 (p. 822).

34 Wilfred R. Bion, *All My Sins Remembered: Another Part of a Life & The Other Side of Genius: Family Letters* (Karnac Books, 2012), p. 58.

35 Vonofakos and Hinshelwood, p. 74.

36 John Rawlings Rees, *The Shaping of Psychiatry by War* (W. W. Norton, Incorporated, 1945), p. 28.

37 Minute by P.J. Grigg to the AG, 10 May 1942, WO 32/11519, as quoted in Roger Broad, *The Radical General: Sir Ronald Adam and the New Model Army 1941-46* (The History Press, 2013), p. 109.

over those who were suspicious or hostile to the methods.³⁸ Wilson was ‘distrustful’ rather than outright critical, and was also a very influential man. He was therefore the subject of an educational campaign rather than subject to counterarguments like the mental hygienist and the neurologist, Riddoch and Richardson.

From his time serving in the RAMC during the First World War, Wilson had been ‘fascinated with factors that seemed to determine whether men carried on or broke down’ and had lectured on ‘The mind in war’ during the 1930s, so it is unsurprising that he considered himself an authority of morale by 1942.³⁹ Like Richardson and Riddoch, Wilson considered the psychiatrists working in officer selection to be rivals to his own expertise. Though Wilson could have ‘possessive obsession... about his work,’ his own ideas were in many ways sympathetic with the psychiatrists’. As the Dean of St Mary’s Medical School, Wilson had ‘emphasised the importance in the selection of medical students of a general assessment of personality, character, and ability, rather than of judging solely by academic achievements.’⁴⁰ It was possible, therefore, that he might be persuaded around to the Army psychiatrists’ point of view about Army selection. Though historians have described him as the psychiatrists’ ‘enemy,’ when Wilson had the chance to attack the psychiatrists running officer selection, he merely ‘observed that it would be necessary... to consider the question of validation, and to examine the evidence of the reliability of the tests.’⁴¹ A couple of years later, in 1945, Wilfred Bion referred to Wilson’s work on courage in a *British Medical Journal* editorial, noting that ‘there is no doubt of the accuracy of this.’⁴² In 1948, in a discussion about applying WOSB methods to Civil Service selection, though Wilson returned to the question of validation, he warned his colleagues that:

it will not be wise, in this very difficult matter of the measurement of men, to reject out of hand any aid to precision, even when it comes from quarters that seem rather suspect. I think we ought to guard carefully against the conservative instinct which is in all of us—even in the bosoms of your Lordships opposite—and which is rather affronted by anything new.⁴³

The relationship between Wilson and the Army psychiatrist appears to have developed into one of cautious respect. By 1945, Wilson was too sympathetic to psychiatry for Churchill’s liking; the Prime Minister refused to write a preface to Wilson’s book *The Anatomy of Courage* because he had ‘no patience with all the “damned psychological nonsense”’ that he believed it contained.⁴⁴

38 Robert H. Ahrenfeldt, *Psychiatry in the British Army in the Second World War* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1958), p. 65.

39 R.R.H. Lovell, ‘Wilson, Charles McMoran, First Baron Moran (1882-1977)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/31843>> [accessed 12 September 2014].

40 T.C. Hunt, ‘Wilson, (Charles McMoran), Baron Moran of Manton’, *Munk’s Roll: Lives of the Fellows* (Royal College of Physicians, 2009), 407 <munksroll.rcplondon.ac.uk/Biography/Details/3182> [accessed 15 September 2014].

41 Meeting of 17th November 1942, ‘Minutes of the Expert Committee on the Work of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services’, 1942, p. 6, The National Archives, Kew, CAB 98/25.

42 ‘Return From Stalag’, *The British Medical Journal*, 1.4406 (1945), 844–45 (p. 844).

43 ‘House of Lords Debate: The Civil Service’, 1948, col. 1050, Hansard, cc 1034-95.

44 Richard Robert Haynes Lovell, *Churchill’s Doctor: A Biography of Lord Moran* (Royal Society of Medicine Services, 1992), p. 213.

Churchill was particularly suspicious of the Army psychiatrists. He felt that their work 'might easily degenerate into charlatany... the tightest hand should be kept over them.'⁴⁵ This view that there was not a clear distinction between genuine scientific study of the mind and fraudsters or fakes was something which psychologists also were concerned about during the interwar period, and had attempted to control themselves.⁴⁶ Churchill, however, did not trust the psychiatrists to self-regulate and wanted the 'hand' kept over them to be a military one. This was linked with his opinion that the psychiatrists' association with the taboo might prove harmful to 'normal' service personnel and therefore that it was 'very wrong to disturb large numbers of healthy normal men and women by asking the kind of odd questions in which the psychiatrists specialise.'⁴⁷

Churchill's concerns were encouraged by his own experts. As well as his physician, Wilson (Lord Moran), about whom Grigg and Adam had corresponded, 'Churchill's personal assistant,' the scientist Lord Cherwell, was 'convinced that psychiatry was worthless and harmful, and that [psychiatrists] were charlatans.'⁴⁸ Another influential expert, Lord Horder, was physician to the royal family, served the Minister of Health's Advisory Committee before the war and an air-raid shelter committee and the Ministry of Food during the war.⁴⁹ He also repeatedly made accusations about the Army psychiatrists to Churchill. This is evident from Churchill's letter to the Secretary of State for War (Sir James Grigg) in which he expressed criticisms of both the psychiatrists and Sir Ronald Adam:

Lord Horder informed me that when the present Adjutant General held the Northern Command there were many times more cases of discharge for psychical neurosis than in any other part of the Army... Generally speaking, I am informed that the Adjutant General has an altogether abnormal fad for this questionable process [of psychiatry]... I have already drawn your attention to the disadvantage of having an artillery officer, who cannot possibly understand the ordinary feelings of battalion officers, in the position of Adjutant General. Some other employment could no doubt be found for Sir Ronald Adam.⁵⁰

Churchill (and Horder) implied that both Adam and his psychiatrists were overly technical, and therefore unable to understand how the traditional Army should work. Neither man objected to experts or even 'questionable' science generally.⁵¹ However,

45 Winston S. Churchill, *The Hinge of Fate: The Second World War* (Rosetta Books, 2010), p. 815.

46 Mathew Thomson, 'The Popular, the Practical and the Professional: Psychological Identities in Britain, 1901-1950', in *Psychology in Britain: Historical Essays and Personal Reflections*, ed. by G. C. Bunn, A. D. Lovie, and G. D. Richards (BPS Books, 2001).

47 Churchill, p. 815.

48 Robert Blake, 'Lindemann, Frederick Alexander, Viscount Cherwell (1886-1957)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34533>> [accessed 4 September 2015]; Ahrenfeldt, Keeling and Thompson, p. 822.

49 Arthur MacNalty, 'Lord Horder, G.C.V.O.', *Nature*, 4480 (1955), 489; Horder also vehemently opposed the National Health Service after the war: 'Lord Horder', *The Times* (London, England, 15 August 1955), p. 11.

50 Churchill to Grigg, 13 March 1943, WO 259/77, as quoted in Paul Addison, *Churchill on the Home Front, 1900-1955* (Faber & Faber, 2013), p. 354.

51 Blake; Some of the interesting projects that Churchill supported are explored in Taylor Downing, *Churchill's War Lab: Codebreakers, Scientists, and the the Mavericks Churchill Led to Victory* (The Overlook Press, 2011); Horder supported investigations of an electronic reaction machine that most of the medical profession believed to be 'outright quackery,' see C Lawrence.

the psychiatrists were deemed to be problematic. Other experts placed emphasis on psychiatrists' connections with abnormality, fads, and questionable methods to support their claims to concern. As the first chapter of this thesis highlighted, these three connections had all dogged psychiatry before the war, and during the war they were exploited by the psychiatrists' 'enemies' in efforts to undermine their authority. Once again, networks prevailed and enabled the psychiatrists to reply; Grigg wrote back that:

both of Lord Horder's statements are untrue... one of them he has made before and withdrawn publicly promising never to make it again... Adam would like your permission to see Horder himself and discuss these questions in order to remove as many misconceptions as possible.⁵²

He added that after Churchill had complained about wastage rates, Adam and the psychiatrists had 'cut them in half.' Though Churchill had ostensibly been criticising the practical application of psychiatry and discharge numbers, in reality he was concerned with its less tangible effects. Churchill believed that psychiatrists were a threat to Army authority and undermined Commanding Officers' views of their men, and Horder and his fellow experts felt their own expertise concerning a man's ability to be under threat. Thus the rationally grounded defence from the Secretary of State for War was still not sufficient to quell their anxiety, and concerns remained.

Historians who discuss the work of Army psychiatrists during the Second World War identify a military-psychological split. Occasionally, they address the involvement of prominent men like Horder in this split. The division between different 'office wallahs' is not acknowledged. Yet splits existed between medics invested in the existing systems of patronage and psychological men advocating a division of labour. There was also competition over the domain of the human mind (and the funding for research in this field) between neurologists and psychiatrists. These professional rivalries became apparent in criticisms of the Army psychiatrists' involvement in selection work, when both sides used unofficial channels of networks and patrons to further their interests. However, with Churchill's involvement, the dispute over Army psychiatrists' role escalated and became a matter of official concern and investigation rather than an informal letter-writing campaign.

NEGOTIATIONS OF EXPERTISE AT THE EXPERT COMMITTEE

In June 1942, months after the WOSBs were established, the War Cabinet raised the possibility that 'there might be a tendency to use the psycho-analytic tendency too extensively' and that this overuse 'might encourage the very tendencies it was hoped to combat.'⁵³ In other words, psychiatrists might be psychologically damaging men with their questionable practices. As a result of high-level concerns about what psychiatrists were doing and how much power they had, an 'Expert Committee on

⁵² Addison, p. 354.

⁵³ Stafford Cripps and others, 'The Use of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services', 1942, The National Archives, Kew.

the Work of Psychologists and Psychiatrists' was established to investigate their work. Experts had questioned the value of the psychiatrists' work, and experts were appointed to formally investigate it.

Historians such as Jeremy Crang, Ben Shephard and Thalassis have argued that the Expert Committee, established by Churchill to root out questionable practices, represented an attack on the psychiatrists.⁵⁴ However, the supporters of psychological selection found opportunities to defend and even expand selection work using the Committee. Though the committee was primarily formed to investigate the 'psycho-analytic tendency,' it was an investigation of the work of psychiatrists *and* psychologists. As the first chapter of this thesis demonstrated, to the wider public and to men like Churchill, there was not always a clear distinction between them. Each force had its own psychological experts from different backgrounds: the Army had the (mostly Tavistock) psychiatrists, the Navy mainly relied upon the staff of the National Institute of Industrial Psychology, and the Air Force had used Bartlett and his experimental psychologists from the University of Cambridge (until a squabble led to their appointment of a Canadian, Professor E.A. Bott).⁵⁵ Critiques of selection were therefore not only a threat to the Tavistock psychiatrists; there were several parties who had interests in defending the science of selection.

There were deliberations over which 'experts' should staff the Expert Committee and judge these psychologists and psychiatrists. The Army psychiatrists themselves were not members of the committee. At times they were called to advise or submit memoranda, but mostly they were to be represented by the Director General of the Army Medical Service, Sir Alexander Hood.⁵⁶ Representatives from the other forces were also to attend, but the composition of the Expert Committee 'experts' had to be negotiated. Shephard has detailed the 'sly' manoeuvring of Adam to ensure that the people investigating the psychiatrists' work would be sympathetic.⁵⁷ First, Adam flattered Sir Stafford Cripps, who had been appointed to investigate but considered declining the role. Adam argued that Cripps would be the only person objective enough to take on the task, because medics either 'dislike psychologists and will do anything to stop their use [or were] psychologists themselves to some extent.'⁵⁸ The appeal worked, and Cripps agreed to personally investigate a WOSB. Adam and the psychiatrists ensured that on Cripps' visit he was provided with 'special quantities of carrots' to cater for his vegetarianism and encouraged to participate in some of the tests and activities. Whether or not it was due to this campaign to win him over,

54 Crang; Shephard; Thalassis.

55 "Appendix G: Diagram of Vocational Psychology" on page 225 demonstrates the range of backgrounds from which selection psychologists were drawn. For more on the different experts and their approaches to military selection, see Alice White, 'Governing the Science of Selection: The Psychological Sciences, 1921-1945', in *Scientific Governance in Britain, 1914-1979*, ed. by Charlotte Sleight and Don Leggett (Manchester University Press, 2016).

56 Dicks, p. 106.

57 See the chapter 'We Can Save Those Boys From Horror' in Shephard, pp. 187-204.

58 Letter from Adam to Cripps, Stafford Cripps, 'Use of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services - Enquiry by Lord Privy Seal', 1942, The National Archives, Kew.

Cripps declared himself 'completely satisfied' with the WOSBs.⁵⁹ Adam also then attempted to influence who comprised the Expert Committee. He warned against some potential committee members, including Cambridge psychologist F.C. Bartlett who was 'regarded with the greatest suspicion by all the services' and Aubrey Lewis of the Maudsley, from whom the Tavistock group had poached Trist.⁶⁰

The Expert Committee that was formed was relatively balanced in terms of friends and foes to the Army psychiatrists. Both Bartlett and Lewis were on the Committee, but were joined by the psychiatrists' 'notable friend' Lieutenant-General Alexander Hood.⁶¹ The Chair of the Committee, chief medical officer Sir Wilson Jameson, was esteemed for his work on hygiene and public health, and 'made a major contribution to the planned reorganisation of medical education' as a member of the Goodenough committee.⁶² He thus represented what historians Steve Sturdy and Roger Cooter have described as an interwar move towards scientific management of medicine. Unlike traditionalists who were reliant on providing for all of their patron's needs to maintain their status, Jameson favoured division of labour and use of expert advisers. Therefore, although Jameson was a medic, he was likely to be more sympathetic to selection science than many of his peers.⁶³

From the outset, there were indications that Jameson was sympathetic to the psychologists and psychiatrists that he was tasked with investigating. His first priority was a study of the co-ordination of psychological work in the services.⁶⁴ The Committee had been tasked with assessing whether there might be a tendency to over-use psychoanalysis. In his approach to this question Jameson ordered a job analysis; he had interpreted 'over-use' in terms of overlapping work, rather than a use of psychological ideas where they should not be. Jameson's thinking was more aligned with the psychologists and psychiatrists whom he investigated, as not only did he interpret the term 'over-use' in their favour, he also initiated a job analysis as part of his investigation. He asked for an analysis of what they were supposed to do, how well they did it, and whether efficiency might be improved by rooting out duplication of work due to poor communication between the services' experts.⁶⁵ This was what the psychologists themselves were doing in each of the forces in order to select and allocate men: Jameson initiated an investigation of selection science using the psychologists' own tools.

Jameson instigated an interdisciplinary dialogue and permitted those who conducted

59 Stafford Cripps and others, 'Use of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services: Joint Memorandum by the Lord Privy Seal, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Secretary of State for War and the Secretary of State for Air', 1942, p. 8, The National Archives, Kew.

60 As quoted in Shephard, p. 195.

61 Dicks, p. 106.

62 George E. Godber, 'Jameson, Sir (William) Wilson (1885-1962)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34156>> [accessed 13 September 2014].

63 Roger Cooter and Steve Sturdy, 'Science, Scientific Management, and the Transformation of Medicine in Britain C. 1870-1950', *History of Science*, 36.114 (1999), 421-66.

64 Wilson Jameson, 'Note by the Chairman to the Expert Committee on the Work of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services', 1942, The National Archives, CAB 98/25.

65 Jameson.

the work to have a voice on the Committee. Setting forth his plan of work, he stated:

I look to my colleagues as experts either in the field of psychology or psychiatry or in the medical practice and requirements of the Services, to make suggestions regarding the way in which we set to work... I think we should welcome the submission of factual reports... by any member of the Services who considers that his experience is of value to his profession as a whole, or to his colleagues in his own and other Services.⁶⁶

In bringing to the fore the matter of the relationship between experts, and in issuing such a wide invitation to contributions, Jameson created a forum at the Committee for various experts to negotiate the place of psychological selection. The troubled relations between the medics and the psychologically oriented can be seen in the minutes from the second meeting of the Expert Committee. Jameson suggested that 'the Royal College of Physicians should be associated with the work of the Committee... the President of the College should be invited to become a member.'⁶⁷ In response:

Doubts were expressed lest this step, which would further increase the number of medical men on the Committee, might have the result that the Committee as a whole would find itself lending support to the mistaken view that the place of psychology was subordinate to that of medicine.

Again, the issue of which 'experts' had the expertise to judge the selection work had arisen, and the psychological staff had attempted to influence how their work was viewed. Jameson had little sympathy for their 'fears' and firmly stated that he did not expect 'any cleavage between medical and psychological points of view to develop.' Nonetheless, many of the psychological staff working for the military were concerned about the positioning of selection science in a disciplinary nexus, and particularly how it was related to medicine. They were determined not to be placed under medical control. As well as fearing that the medics' lack of support might stifle their work, there was a risk that this would relegate them to working only with small problem groups rather than larger 'normal' populations.⁶⁸

The psychological groups used the Committee to attempt to direct how and by whom their work should be validated. At the same meeting that Jameson suggested involving the Royal College of Physicians, Brigadier Kenneth McLean (who was at that point in charge of the DSP) and Alec Rodger (the NIIP man leading Navy selection) made an appeal for the Ministry of Labour and Board of Education to have representatives on the Committee. They argued that selection science was 'concerned with industrial and educational problems even more perhaps than with medical problems.'⁶⁹ They thus specified what audience they intended their work for and attempted to define it as an applied science rather than a branch of medicine. Jameson ruled that it was more

66 Jameson.

67 Minutes of 2nd Meeting, 10th October, 1942 'Minutes of the Expert Committee on the Work of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services', p. 2.

68 The psychiatrists in particular worried that they would be put back into the role of 'alienist,' which would both limit who they could work with and damage their reputation by reaffirming a link between psychiatrists and 'abnormals.' See Crang, pp. 35-36.

69 Minutes of 2nd Meeting 'Minutes of the Expert Committee on the Work of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services', p. 3.

urgent to answer the Privy Council's concerns than to consider future applications. By the Committee's sixth meeting only two months later, though, the agenda was largely concerned with other possible applications of selection science, with points on its usefulness to both the Civil Service and Ministry of Labour. On hearing that the Committee Secretary Dr Cohen had 'found the officials of the Ministry of Labour not wholly sympathetic to the work of psychologists and psychiatrists,' the Committee agreed to invite representatives to a future meeting 'to discuss the possibilities of a closer understanding.'⁷⁰ The Expert Committee shifted their view of selection to coincide with the practitioners, gradually moving in the direction of viewing it as an applied science whose understanding they should facilitate. The Committee had become advisers on experts as much as expert advisers. The role of the Committee as a place where opportunities for networking and communication of work might take place has been largely overlooked by histories that view it as a simple challenge to those working on military selection. However, the psychological staff conducting selection in the forces did have voices, if not votes, on the Expert Committee.

In later meetings, the psychological staff again banded together to resist others' definitions of their work. The Committee were asked about selection by the Civil Service representative Percival Waterfield. Professor Henderson, one of the expert outsiders on the committee who was an eminent psychiatrist but did not himself work on selection, believed that 'psychiatry was not so much a specialty but the other half of medicine.'⁷¹ He suggested that a psychiatrist could probably not contribute much to the 'experienced layman.'⁷² Henderson was the Superintendent of a psychiatric hospital and Professor at Edinburgh University; he operated successfully within the established disciplinary boundaries of psychiatry and did not feel the need to extend the limits of psychological work to include selection except to prevent breakdown in war.⁷³ By contrast, Rodger, Brigadier Hugh Sandiford (Director of Army Psychiatry), Professor E.A. Bott (a Canadian psychologist drafted in to take charge of selection for the RAF), and Lieutenant-Colonel J.G.W. Davies (Rodger's colleague from the NIIP who had 'played a leading role in the development of WOSB' and was Chief Psychologist at the DSP⁷⁴) argued that psychological staff could be very valuable to employers, including the Civil Service.

At the same meeting Davies and Rodger worked together to defend selection science against another expert outsider. Bartlett had submitted a memorandum with some suggestions for military selection work.⁷⁵ Like Henderson, Bartlett had established

70 Minutes of 6th Meeting, 5th December, 1942 'Minutes of the Expert Committee on the Work of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services'.

71 Richard R. Trail, 'David Kennedy (Sir) Henderson', *Munk's Roll: Lives of the Fellows* (Royal College of Physicians, 2009), 188 <munksroll.rcplondon.ac.uk/Biography/Details/2147> [accessed 13 September 2014].

72 Minutes of 7th Meeting, 19 December, 1942, 'Minutes of the Expert Committee on the Work of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services', p. 2.

73 Trail.

74 'J. G. W. Davies', *The Times* (London, England, 14 November 1992), p. 21, Gale NewsVault.

75 F.C. Bartlett, 'Memorandum for the Expert Committee on the Work of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services: The Selection of Personnel for RAF Operations Rooms', 1942, The National

himself via traditional routes and was the first professor of experimental psychology at the University of Cambridge. His memorandum was essentially an account of his own work on human performance and machine design for the Air Council in early 1941. He noted that 'the problems and methods of approach indicated in this memorandum differ decisively' from those used widely in the services, which the Committee were investigating, because his work had focussed on 'key men' only.⁷⁶ Bartlett's had used laboratory tests and examined how individuals did particular (and usually highly specialised) jobs, such as fly a plane when taking amphetamines or operate radar screens.⁷⁷ Bartlett by his own admission was 'unhampered by hasty demands for immediate results' and so had pursued 'as great a loyalty to exact laboratory control as is possible.'⁷⁸

Rodger and Davies questioned Bartlett's authority to judge their work. Rodger stated that Bartlett 'did less than justice to group methods' and criticised Bartlett's use of 'wastage' numbers to measure their validity.⁷⁹ Bartlett stated that he 'knew no criterion other than wastage,' which was relevant to his own research, following men through the entire process of selection and training. But Rodger felt this measure 'did not contribute to our knowledge of testing since it was impossible to tell where precisely the improvement lay in tests, in recruitment, or in training.' The psychologists and psychiatrists whose work the Expert Committee studied did not have the authority to make appointments, and were not involved in testing. Their remit only included selection testing, and they suggested that Bartlett was criticising their work based on waste that was caused by military rather than psychological practices. Both Rodger and Davies pointed out that Bartlett had also overlooked the purpose of their work, which was not to 'deal with key men' or 'specialised groups' but concerned general ability and personality; success or failure was therefore, they argued, harder to ascertain than in cases where a man either could or could not perform a required task.

This discussion established relative priorities and was an implicit dividing up of territories. Bartlett had quit his work with the Air Ministry in 1941 after his expertise was questioned and proof of the military usefulness of his work demanded.⁸⁰ For Bartlett, scientific standards and his own scientific reputation came above all other

Archives, CAB 98/25.

76 Bartlett, 'The Selection of Personnel for RAF Operations Rooms', p. 5.

77 D. E. Broadbent, 'Bartlett, Sir Frederic Charles (1886–1969)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30628>> [accessed 15 January 2014]; Alberto Rosa, 'Sir Fredrick Bartlett (1886 - 1969): An Intellectual Biography' (University of Cambridge, 2012) <<http://www.bartlett.psychol.cam.ac.uk/Intellectual%20Biography.htm>> [accessed 14 April 2014].

78 Bartlett, 'The Selection of Personnel for RAF Operations Rooms', p. 5.

79 Minutes of 7th Meeting 'Minutes of the Expert Committee on the Work of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services', p. 4.

80 Allan English, 'Canadian Psychologists and the Aerodrome of Democracy', *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie Canadienne*, 33.4 (1992), 663–74 (p. 665) Bartlett's resignation had led to Bott's appointment and the adoption of group selection methods borrowed from WOSBs in the RAF. This event is diplomatically passed over in official biographies and obituaries, which jump to his work for the Applied Psychology Unit founded in 1944, indicating that Bartlett and his admirers were somewhat sensitive about this insult to his expertise.

considerations. By contrast, the other psychologists were, to a degree, willing to sacrifice scientific validity to military demands for speed or scale and create a 'practical psychology.'⁸¹ Rodger and Davies made it clear that their work did not concern specific types of perception and detailed laboratory tests of ability, and were therefore not intruding on Bartlett's field of experimental psychology. However, they emphasised that Bartlett was not an authority in their field of group methods and personality psychology. They suggested that his critiques and suggestions were rooted in his own expertise and not relevant to the work that they were conducting. The Army and Navy psychological personnel worked together to defend their work against Bartlett's attempt to exert authority and define their work in relation to his. Bartlett subsequently qualified his ideas:

[He] stressed that the implication of his Memorandum was wholly post-war, and that he wished now in no way to criticise present service methods, though he had in fact disagreed with the approach first made to the problem.⁸²

This further reinforces the idea that the discussion was a way of establishing boundaries, as Bartlett was concerned with post-war opportunities in psychological work. He and the other psychological advisers to the committee were concerned with establishing the distinctiveness and value of their own work. Bartlett's statement that he had disagreed with the 'approach first made' acknowledged that he and the military psychological staff held different epistemologies. It also hinted that to a degree, the different spheres of influence had been established and that he no longer disagreed with the application of ideas he did not share, as they were being applied to a problem in which he had no interest: he no longer viewed the other psychologists as a threat.

Psychological staff like Rodger, McLean, Davies, Bott, and Sandiford used the Expert Committee to negotiate their positions amongst other experts. Though they represented different psychological schools and worked on different methods for different branches of the armed forces, they worked together to defend selection science as a field. The committee was a place where the staff conducting selection work for the services collaborated in efforts to define their work as neither medical nor experimental but applied psychological science, and in the process secure their autonomy from medics and established authorities like Bartlett and Henderson. In less than a year, the terms of the arguments in the Expert Committee shifted from whether psychologists and psychiatrists should be used, to how they should be used to maximise the benefits for the military, post-war society, and themselves.

CONTROL & DEVELOPMENT VERSUS RESEARCH & TRAINING: THE CONFLICT

81 Adrian Stephen, statement made during a Business Meeting of the British Psycho-Analytical Society (1943) as quoted in Pearl King, 'Activities of British Psychoanalysts during the Second World War and the Influence of Their Inter-Disciplinary Collaboration on the Development of Psychoanalysis in Great Britain', *International Review of Psycho-Analysis*, 16.15 (1989), 14–33 (p. 17).

82 Minutes of 7th Meeting 'Minutes of the Expert Committee on the Work of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services', p. 4.

OVER ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF MANAGING THE WOSBs

Whilst the Expert Committee sought a general identification of the structure, purpose and value of psychological selection, the staff who had created the WOSBs were attempting to pin down the practices, principles and value of their particular version of a 'science of selection.'⁸³ In August 1942, six months after the first WOSBs had seen its first batch of candidates, the War Office announced plans for a WOSBs Control and Development Centre (CDC) to coordinate the many Boards that had rapidly sprung up all over Britain and beyond. The CDC opened one month after the War Office announcement, in a country house owned by Pierpont Morgan just outside Watford called Wall Hall.⁸⁴ Like the Expert Committee, it had been set up to manage and control psychological staff. Also like the Expert Committee, it was used by technical staff to explicitly set out their identity and battle against alternative understandings of their role, to educate others in their approach, and to consider post-war opportunities for psychological staff and their work. The CDC's work to evaluate and coordinate the work of the WOSBs was clearly shaped by the wider scientific community of which they sought to be a recognised part. The documents and memoranda pertaining to the CDC indicate their efforts to adhere to the expectations of their researcher-peers by establishing formal training programmes, continuing research, and validating work by community standards.

The CDC was staffed by the selection staff from No. 1 WOSB. Psychological staff included Wilfred Bion, Eric Trist, Isabel Menzies, and Jock Sutherland. Commanding Officer Colonel Vinden was made a Deputy Director for the Selection of Personnel in charge of officers. They were joined by John Bowlby (who had conducted early officer intelligence experiments in Southern Command), Harold Bridger and, when Vinden went to head up the selection programme in India, by Colonel Rowan Scrope Rait Kerr. Harold Bridger was a maths teacher before the war, and had then served in the Royal Artillery as a Major before being chosen to represent the Army in the WOSBs.⁸⁵ Rait Kerr was very important in the world of cricket before the war, and during the war he had headed one of the early WOSBs that was particularly 'concerned with the selection of officers for the technical arms.'⁸⁶ The Tavistock group considered him an "intellectual" soldier' who was 'quick to grasp essentials and to evolve ways of surmounting difficulties' and he was known as a 'red colonel' because of his views on Army welfare.⁸⁷ Bridger and Rait Kerr were military men rather than psychological staff, but sympathetic in outlook to the Army psychiatrists. They joined the 'invisible college,' as the Tavistock group called themselves; the CDC reinforced this group's

83 'A Critical Review of the Present State of Officer Selection', p. 5.

84 Dicks, p. 106.

85 Lisl Klein, 'Harold Bridger: Founding Member of the Tavistock Institute', *The Independent* (London, United Kingdom, 2 June 2005), section Obituaries, p. 53. Bridger became one of the 12 founder members of the Tavistock Institute after the war.

86 J. D. Sutherland, 'Col. R. S. Rait Kerr', *The Times* (London), 5 April 1961, p. 15.

87 Dicks, p. 106; Sutherland; Richard Trahair, *Behavior, Technology, and Organizational Development: Eric Trist and the Tavistock Institute* (Transaction Publishers, 2015), p. 105. After the war, Rait Kerr became the first Chairman of the Council of the Tavistock Institute.

increasing closeness.⁸⁸ Whilst the WOSBs were expanding and Boards were popping up across Britain and abroad, this small group became closer as they worked to codify the principles and methods of their new work.

The Tavistock group used the CDC as an opportunity to reflect on their work, evaluate existing practices, and consider new applications for the 'science of selection.'⁸⁹ They asked themselves whether they had made the most of the opportunities and new avenues for psychological work that had been presented by the war:

How far will the fate of WOSBs within the Army fulfil the original promise of a sound social technology? How far will the promise be attenuated and a façade only remain of what was certainly intended to be worked out as a fully embodied social technique?⁹⁰

For the Tavistock group, as for many other scientists, the war had given them unprecedented opportunities for developing their science through access to money, machines, staff, and subjects. The selection work was one of the few Tavistock wartime projects that was public knowledge, and was their only example of work with 'normal' populations.⁹¹ It was thus the only example to show others what they had made of the wartime opportunities. The group at the CDC believed that they needed to be careful in how they handled the WOSBs project to ensure that their work was seen to be 'sound social technology,' and that they themselves were seen as true scientific practitioners rather than charlatans.

The CDC staff saw their role as trying to fulfil the WOSBs' 'original promise.' However, they feared that their 'social technique' might remain largely theoretical and never be fully realised due to a variety of practical concerns, which can be grouped into two general categories.⁹² First they were concerned about the validity of the existing science of selection, and how this might be affected by various elements they felt were out of control, particularly staff members who were not properly adhering to their principles. Secondly, they were frustrated by impediments to further research, and felt that new developments and improvements to the existing techniques and ideas had been curtailed.

⁸⁸ Dicks, pp. 106–107.

⁸⁹ It is beyond the scope of this thesis to address all of the new applications of the WOSBs methods, but they included: WOSBs for ATS Candidates; WOSBs for Overseas; selection of Royal Marines and Paratroop Officers; Selection Boards for University Courses (for picking potential officers from school-boys); Joint Naval and Military Selection Boards for Engineering Cadetships; boards for reallocating surplus officers; Psychological Warfare Assignment Boards; selection of Officers for the Palestine Police Mobile Force; selection of NCOs in the RAMC; assessment of Anti Aircraft officers; selection for the British National Fire Service; selection for the Royal Air Force; selection for the Organisation and Methods branch of the treasury; and selection for the India and Burma Civil Service. As listed in Eric Trist and others, 'Officer Selection in the British Army, 1942-1945', Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 205802222, Folder 7. (POWs).

⁹⁰ 'A Critical Review of the Present State of Officer Selection', p. 11.

⁹¹ The other large wartime project, work with returned POWs, is discussed in the next chapter, which discusses why psychological involvement was concealed and therefore not something on which judgements of the Tavistock could be based. Other war work included Eric Wittkower's research on morale and venereal disease, and Rees and Henry Dicks' assignment to observe the captured high-ranking Nazi, Rudolph Hess (see 'Chapter VI: The Tavistock in War' Dicks, pp. 94–120). It was not possible for the Tavistock to share this work that involved matters of national security or potential military embarrassment, so their reputation was dependent on establishing the value of the WOSBs.

⁹² For the CDC staff's full list of concerns, see "Appendix I: CDC List of Concerns about WOSBs" on page 227, which is derived from 'A Critical Review of the Present State of Officer Selection', pp. 1–2.

VALIDATION

The first task of the CDC was to assess whether the WOSBs used a valid method to select potential officers. Trist, Menzies, Bowlby and Bridger, who were all experienced in the application of mathematics and statistics, were set the task of measuring the Boards' effectiveness. Trist recalled that 'the pace of work had been frenetic' as they endeavoured to follow-up the WOSBs work and see how candidates chosen by the WOSBs were measuring up at officer training units.⁹³

The CDC staff felt that there was no suitable existing measure of success, and that 'wastage' was too blunt a measure, as Rodger and Davies had argued at the Expert Committee. Trist and his colleagues noted that 'a socially complex process such as this experiment' had many variables that had to be accounted for in experimental design, including variations between the cadet training units, variations within the units (between instructors or courses), and variations in selection boards.⁹⁴ Because the role of officer was a general one and not tied up with a specific task like the Morse code operator or radar screen reader, a man could be a success or failure in a variety of ways. They therefore had to devise rating scales and other methods of assessment. The measure, and the criteria for success or failure, had to be decided by the CDC staff.

The CDC evaluation group decided that Commanding Officers should be the ones to rate the candidates' quality. But laymen were not trusted by the expert staff to conduct a properly scientific evaluation without guidance. Official ratings awarded by the training units were deemed 'quite unsuitable as a proficiency criterion' and so a field worker was dispensed with questionnaires for instructors to answer.⁹⁵ An 'essential part' of the evaluation was that neither the field worker nor the instructor knew whether candidates had been through a CIB or a WOSB. Blind reporting was increasingly an accepted part of 'modern experimentation' and had the potential to make their work appear more 'fully valid.'⁹⁶ The CDC staff also sought multiple reporting wherever possible in addition to 'statistical check[s] on the internal consistency of each report.'⁹⁷ The care taken over the evaluation indicates how important the initial validation of the WOSBs as a system was to the staff that had created them. The CDC staff's anxiety about the evaluation was evident when Trist and Ronald Adam stayed up 'most of the night' before a military conference to present research into the value of the WOSBs.⁹⁸

The extent of their work and worry was not necessary merely to secure military approval. Considering that military men who distrusted psychological staff had

93 Trahair, p. 102.

94 'Comparative Proficiency of Officer Cadets Selected by WOSBs and by Command Interview Boards', 1942, pp. 2-3, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 205802222.

95 'Comparative Proficiency of Officer Cadets Selected by WOSBs and by Command Interview Boards', p. 4.

96 Ted J. Kaptchuk, 'Intentional Ignorance: A History of Blind Assessment and Placebo Controls in Medicine', *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 72.3 (1998), 389-433 (pp. 426-427).

97 'Comparative Proficiency of Officer Cadets Selected by WOSBs and by Command Interview Boards', pp. 5-6.

98 Trahair, p. 104.

criticised 'their technical knowledge and ability to present evidence,' the statistics and checks on internal consistency were not necessarily going to impress the Army sceptics.⁹⁹ Churchill had also already demonstrated a disinterest in responses to his concerns that attempted to use data to persuade him of the value of psychiatry. Military critics were not interested in scientific validation. Even those in the military who were interested in WOSBs methods were not necessarily interested in a thorough scientific evaluation. Trist and his colleagues had been given the task of validating the methods despite having an interest in their success, just as the Expert Committee was 'suitably packed with friendly figures.'¹⁰⁰ This can partly be attributed to a sheer lack of experts in the field in wartime Britain who were considered qualified to judge the work.¹⁰¹ Yet it can also be seen as a pragmatic move on the part of the War Office. 'Proof' that the WOSBs worked would enable the War Office to report that their 'officer problems' had been fixed.

Satisfying military patrons was thus not the only or even the primary reason why the CDC staff went to such lengths to validate their work. Instead of directing their work towards the military, the CDC concerned themselves with what other patrons and colleagues in the social sciences might think. Staff with considerable experience in statistics like Menzies, Trist, Bowlby and Bridger, had been appointed to the CDC, and had worked on creating refined rather than 'blunt' checks because the invisible college sought acceptance within these communities. In one of his memoranda to the Expert Committee, for instance, Bartlett had argued that:

The only type of validation of Selection Tests which is likely to be – or should be – widely accepted requires the official acceptance of objectively determined standards of performance... There may be instances in which objectively determined measures of skill and ability cannot possibly be obtained... Validation may this have to rest partly on a comparison of test results with assessments made at training centre... based directly on an expert opinion of a candidate's performance. If this method is to have any value whatever, considerable uniformity both of the period and of the course of training must be guaranteed.¹⁰²

Though he disparaged anything that could not be objectively quantified, Bartlett was just about willing to accept an expert measure, if the circumstances and variables were carefully controlled for. This explains the extensive work of the CDC staff to validate the WOSBs according to the highest psychological standards that they were able to achieve, such as double blinds and filtering the expert Commanding Officers' assessments through the psychological tool of the questionnaire. Though the military selection staff had resisted Bartlett's prescriptions of how their work should be assessed by the Committee, outside of that bureaucratic setting they sought to live up to his standards as far as possible. New potential patrons and established psychologists who already had voices in industry, government, or on the boards of

⁹⁹ Crang, p. 35.

¹⁰⁰ Shephard, p. 195.

¹⁰¹ After Bartlett had quit work for the Air Force, Air Marshal Garrod was left 'scratching through the 'colonies' to find someone to replace [him],' hence the appointment of the Canadian Professor Bott. English, p. 665.

¹⁰² F.C. Bartlett, 'Memorandum for the Expert Committee on the Work of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services: An Experiment in Validation', 1942, pp. 4–5, The National Archives, CAB 98/25.

funding bodies, would be likely to scrutinise statistics and data. The only assessment of his own work that Bartlett recognised was 'criticism informed mainly by a full knowledge of scientific standards' and he was likely to hold other psychologists to similar standards himself.¹⁰³ It was 'fundamental' for the CDC group to validate the work thoroughly to help to secure their reputations as scientists and thus improve the opportunities for funding and new work once the war ended.

TRAINING

Whilst Trist, Menzies, Bowlby and Bridger concluded that the WOSBs had a satisfactory rate of success, they still had misgivings about the validity of the WOSBs in practice. The new Boards had sprung up at such a rate that the CDC staff feared that there was too much variation at different Boards due to differences in staff experience and training, and that this might jeopardise opinions of the work overall. This was based on both short and long-term interests. As well as feeling that it would be 'unfortunate if it became known in the army that it was easier to get a commission by attendance at certain boards than at others,' there was also pressure from established psychologists to conform to expectations about selection staff training.¹⁰⁴ The CDC staff therefore wanted to establish a training programme and have formally qualified staff. They noted that:

When scientific services, e.g. the medical services, are performed by experts, their qualifications are in large measure a guarantee of efficiency. External "control" is virtually unnecessary because their training creates an "internal" control.¹⁰⁵

The CDC staff believed that a staff member's knowledge of fundamental scientific principles was vital to the quality and efficiency of their work. They also believed that their work should be treated akin to that of other scientists, and they felt that such training was a form of scientific quality control. This echoed Bartlett's memorandum for the Expert Committee, in which he had boasted that his staff:

have been trained not simply to become machines for giving tests, but to have as much knowledge as possible of psychological principles, and methods, and the use of statistical tools. They have therefore known not only what they have to do, but as fully as possible why they had to do it.¹⁰⁶

Bartlett was arguably the most eminent psychologist in Britain at the time, and he believed that it was 'certain' that the success of his work was due to the quality of his staff's training. The Tavistock group at the CDC hoped that by emulating their expert peers in terms of training, they might also emulate their scientific success.

They had some insight into the principles of other 'Expert' psychologists due to their involvement in the Expert Committee. The Army psychiatrists were undoubtedly aware that Bartlett believed that 'the only way to secure any consistency in expert assessments is to secure either centralised training with a stable staff, or at least

103 Bartlett, 'The Selection of Personnel for RAF Operations Rooms', p. 5.

104 'Development of a Testing Programme and New Boards', p. 43.

105 'A Critical Review of the Present State of Officer Selection', p. 10.

106 Bartlett, 'The Selection of Personnel for RAF Operations Rooms', p. 6.

a centralised control of training, and a stable staff.¹⁰⁷ He had acknowledged that 'Both of these general conditions seem very hard indeed to secure in the Services,' and so they proved for the invisible college. The CDC did not have a working Board at which to offer centralised training, so they attempted to implement centralised control of training and to create a more uniform staff. The military WOSBs staff, and especially the Presidents, were seen as particularly 'unstable' because they were not psychologically trained. In addition, due to the structure of the WOSBs, Presidents could override any other Board member's view based on their own opinion. Due to their own principle that soldiers should lead any scheme developed, the psychological staff were outranked by the wayward Presidents, who could not be removed if they were inadequate. The CDC staff complained that:

the work of a WOSB can only be regarded as technical. A technical arm contains both experts of various kinds and non-experts. These non-experts, without being called upon themselves to be "professionals" in any of the sciences on which their technical work depends (e.g. physics, radio engineering, etc.) are certainly expected to be sufficiently well grounded in first principles... [Presidents] have not yet either understood or accepted the fact that, though they are not Psychiatrists or psychologists, they are, nevertheless, technical officers and must, therefore as a condition of their efficiency, both absorb, and depend on, the general principles of a "science" of selection.¹⁰⁸

If Presidents were too wilful, and overrode technical members of the Boards, the invisible college feared that this might result in only the 'façade' of the social technique remaining. They clearly felt put out that, unlike their fellow experts in other fields, they had to contend with such amateurs. However, it was too late to implement a training scheme for their superiors, and as senior board staff could not be dismissed, the CDC staff simply proposed that in future, there should be 'more stringent selection' of Presidents.¹⁰⁹ This had the added bonus, they felt, that those who had undergone scientific selection 'will be prone to be serious about it when selecting others.' The military staff were to be educated in psychological principles by personally experiencing their application; they were to be psychologised by first looking at themselves through the psychological perspective, then turning this gaze onto others.

Vicarious education in psychology was acceptable for the military Board members, who were non-experts, but the Tavistock group wanted a more rigorous scheme for expert psychological staff. However, the creators of the WOSBs working at the CDC believed that the Centre's design hindered their education of new psychological staff. The psychological staff also argued that the science of selection involved many tacit skills that could only be learned *in situ*. They argued that 'officer selection is a type of applied scientific work, for which, and this is probably unique in the Army, no systematic initial instruction is given to those who undertake it.'¹¹⁰ There was no working Board at the CDC, so tacit skills and initial 'on the job' instruction could not

107 Bartlett, 'An Experiment in Validation', p. 5.

108 'A Critical Review of the Present State of Officer Selection', p. 5.

109 'A Critical Review of the Present State of Officer Selection', p. 8.

110 'A Critical Review of the Present State of Officer Selection', p. 10.

be provided to new psychological staff. Instead, the WOSBs staff were making do with a collection of memoranda advising on various aspects of the procedures.

Even the circulation of scientific ideas, the Tavistock group believed, was hindered by the structure of the CDC. They felt that Boards were less willing to participate in scientific exchange due the very name of the centre: they bemoaned how 'its title included the word "control" and its commanding officer was made a Deputy Director for the Selection of Personnel in charge of Officers.'¹¹¹ What could be conceived of as signs of prestige (and quite possibly were by the Army who bestowed them) were seen as disastrous by the Tavistock group because they replaced the appearance of free exchange amongst peers with a one of 'non-educative' and 'nominal or authoritarian' reporting to superiors.¹¹² Echoing the psychoanalytic belief that an analysand could only learn about themselves in an atmosphere of trust, the CDC group believed that only in a democratic 'serious experimental atmosphere' could cause Board staff's 'active gropings for guidance to come to the surface freely.'¹¹³ They did not believe that it was possible for a person to learn and to have their behaviour controlled.

The matter of training was so important to the Tavistock group because it was a matter of achieving scientific respectability through recognised and established channels. Before the war, the Tavistock group had tried hard to establish an officially accredited training programme with the University of London. Henry Dicks recalled that the interwar Tavistock wanted 'official recognition of what we did... to be part of the University scene.'¹¹⁴ Part of the reason why the the CDC wanted a training programme was because that would represent 'official recognition' and demonstrate that those involved in officer selection were a serious, respectable group that was capable and trusted to self-regulate. When the CDC staff noted that they were 'probably unique,' they expressed their fear that they were at a disadvantage to their peers. They knew from the Expert Committee memoranda, for instance, that Bartlett had been able to establish a thorough training programme. They somewhat jealously observed that the Army psychologists' expertise was also better respected:

The contrast is striking between this state of affairs and that obtaining in Other Rank Selection where [Personnel Selection Officers] PSOs are required to undergo a five weeks course and to pass this course.¹¹⁵

Both medics and psychologists on other work seemed to the WOSBs staff to have a far better situation in terms of deriving personal and disciplinary benefits from their military work. The Tavistock group were concerned about being left behind and not making the most of the wartime opportunities for gains in scientific legitimacy.

111 'Development of a Testing Programme and New Boards', p. 44.

112 'A Critical Review of the Present State of Officer Selection', p. 6.

113 'A Critical Review of the Present State of Officer Selection', p. 5.

114 Dicks, p. 83.

115 'A Critical Review of the Present State of Officer Selection', p. 10.

RESEARCH

The Tavistock group at the CDC were also concerned that they might not be making the most of wartime opportunities to experiment and research. They were frustrated at the lack of a working Board at the CDC because they felt that it made new research impossible. This in turn, they believed, made it impossible to test and improve the scientific quality of their work. The WOSB 'veterans' of the Invisible College jokingly referred to the Wall Hall centre as 'Valhalla,' but this reference to the resting place of old warriors was uncomfortably close to the CDC's true nature, which was largely quiet administrative retirement rather than battling to break new ground.¹¹⁶

Bartlett strove for 'as great a loyalty to exact laboratory control as is possible,' and had even quit his work with the Air Ministry when they pushed him for results.¹¹⁷ By contrast, the Tavistock group felt that the applied nature of their work was crucial, and were also unable to return to an experimental 'home' like Bartlett if they terminated their military work.¹¹⁸ But they felt that it was due to the importance of their work being applied Army work that they experienced particular problems conducting research:

The conditions necessary for the evolution of techniques in Officer Selection... differ from those in many other scientific endeavours. They cannot be secured in a "laboratory" wherein the problems can be studied apart from the "field." The problems are those of a real situation and they can be attacked only in the real situation of selecting officers. That is to say, a "laboratory" for officer selection cannot be other than a working Board.¹¹⁹

Like the representatives speaking to the Expert Committee, the Tavistock group implied that their work was an applied science whose value as well as whose development lay in its practical application and utility. Like Rodger and Davies, they distanced themselves from the laboratory test approach of Bartlett, and argued that all of their valuable work had been conducted 'in the field' at No. 1 WOSB. They threatened that it was 'impossible' to make any more developments or contributions without a working Board.

This indicates the discordance of assumptions between patrons and practitioners: the psychological staff assumed that developments and improvements should be made to the WOSBs. The War Office, on the other hand, appear to have been satisfied with the system that was developed and expressed no interest in developments. After the initial validation study, the War Office did not prevent the CDC staff from trying to prove the validity of their work by conducting investigation after investigation, but the CDC staff felt that the War Office did not enable them to *improve* the validity of the work.¹²⁰ Likewise, Bartlett noted of his 1941 work for the Air Force that his

116 Dicks, p. 106.

117 Bartlett, 'The Selection of Personnel for RAF Operations Rooms', p. 5.

118 The Tavistock Clinic had been evacuated due to the Blitz, and their clients scattered. At the neurosis centre where some Tavistock staff had been working, at one point there were more than 40 personnel to three patients; unsurprisingly, it closed 'for lack of work.' See Dicks, pp. 94–98.

119 'A Critical Review of the Present State of Officer Selection', p. 9.

120 Other reports on validation included in the archive which there is not the scope for this thesis to analyse include: 'Comparative Proficiency of WOSB & CIB Officers (Officer Follow-Up)', 1945, Tavistock

military colleagues 'thought the tests good, not because they did what could not be done without special tests by experienced experts, but because they did this in less time and with less difficulty.'¹²¹ The military wanted a rapid development of fast, straightforward methods that appeared to work. They were not interested in developing methods once they were in place, as this would counteract the saved time and trouble.

Bion in particular was 'in gloom and anger' because he 'could not, as he had wanted, have a Board under his own control... to develop pilot projects as new problems arose.'¹²² Bion was so frustrated that he asked for a transfer to join John Rickman in work at Northfield Military Hospital. Many of the CDC staff who remained shared Bion's frustrations that there was no Board to test out ideas, and the relationship with the other Boards were not close enough either physically or otherwise to conduct experiments elsewhere. They noted that:

Sound scientific procedures for application in any work field are achieved by two processes. The first concerns their development... Techniques are worked out by experiment on the basis of careful theoretical analysis of the problems in hand. The important aspect of this process is that which underlies the words "worked out," for by that is meant the essential interaction of theory and practice.¹²³

To the CDC staff, one of the essential processes for making their work scientific was lacking because at the CDC itself they could only theorise and could not conduct experiments. 'Working out' was a concept carried over from the psychoanalytic epistemology shared by many of those involved in creating the WOSBs. They viewed the institution of the Army as their patient, believing that 'therapeutic procedures [should be] applicable to the institution as a whole' and argued that 'what characterizes effective analytic treatment is the active participation of the patient in working out its rationale.'¹²⁴ Worryingly, it seemed to them that their 'patient' was attempting to 'treat' themselves without expert guidance and supervision, which theoretical ignorance risked the erosion of efficacy and the attenuation of the scientific quality of the WOSBs.

Impediments to the WOSB creators' continued experimentation and 'working out' was also a snub to their authority; it suggested that their expertise was not appreciated. As with the training of staff, experimentation was associated with freedom, control, and expert status:

The technical freedom of the expert consists not in a freedom to do his work in any manner he likes, but in applying his highly controlled techniques to whichever

Institute Archives, Box 205802222; 'RTC Technical Report No. 114: An Analysis of Pre-OCTU and OCTU RTU of Apr - Sept 1943', 1943, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 205802222; BSM/LW/IW, 'RTC Technical Report No. 129: Officer Follow-Up in the Mediterranean Theatre 1943-44', 1945, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 205802222; 'The Relation of WOSB Assessments to Officer Proficiency Ratings - The Discriminating (Predictive) Efficiency of WOSBs', 1945, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 205802222.

121 Bartlett, 'An Experiment in Validation', p. 1.

122 Eric Trist, 'Working with Bion in the 1940s: The Group Decade', in *Bion and Group Psychotherapy*, ed. by Malcolm Pines (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000), sec. 280.

123 'A Critical Review of the Present State of Officer Selection', p. 9.

124 J. D. Sutherland and G. A. Fitzpatrick, 'Some Approaches to Group Problems in the British Army', *Sociometry*, 8.3/4 (1945), p. 444.

problems he chooses, or to create new techniques the scientific status of which his training enables him to assess.¹²⁵

The Tavistock group at the CDC felt that their freedom was curtailed because, with no active Board at Wall Hall, they could not apply their techniques to any problems, or create new techniques. They suggested that this reflected poorly on them; they had not been accorded the trust that other experts had, which cast aspersions on their expertise.

Their frustrations led the Tavistock Group to make 'strong representations' to the War Office to change the identity of the CDC as an institution. To placate the complaining CDC staff, the War Office agreed at the end of 1942 for the CDC to be renamed the Research and Training Centre (RTC) and moved to Hampstead, where it could be in closer contact with the War Office.¹²⁶ It largely shed the controversial role of 'controlling' the Boards, which became the responsibility of the Directorate for Selection of Personnel. Despite the new name, however, the Centre never gained its own active Board for training and experimentation. For experimental selection work, the Tavistock group had to make do with new applications of the WOSBs for other groups such as the Civil Service. Just as the group felt stuck in a rut with the WOSBs, a new form of 'officer problem' hove onto the horizon and the possibilities arose of a new wartime project. This project, and the way that the Tavistock built on or changed the ways of working developed at the WOSBs, forms the subject of the next chapter.

CONCLUSION

Writing about the First World War introduction of intelligence testing in America, John Carson wrote that:

One of the most significant features of psychology's entry into the American military is that it involved persuasion across community boundaries. Because psychologists desired to persuade the military – a group with its own distinct norms and practices – that psychological expertise could be of value, they were forced to acknowledge this outside audience and to make accommodations to its needs and mores. There were definite limits to this process of adaptation, however, because the standards and practices of their own profession bound the psychologists as well.¹²⁷

This chapter has illustrated how this was also the case for psychiatrists and psychologists conducting selection work for the British military in the Second World War. Professional rivalries, epistemologies, and standards carried over into wartime, but these influences are often lost as historians seek to address how effectively psychology integrated into the war machine.

Other experts could be a source of conflict. Rivalries for authority and funding which

125 'Comparative Proficiency of Officer Cadets Selected by WOSBs and by Command Interview Boards', p. 10.

126 'Developments in Selection 1942/46 and the Work of the Research and Training Centre', Tavistock Institute Archives, Folder 12, Officer Selection in the British Army, 1942-1945 (Unpublished Manuscript Draft), Box 205802222.

127 John Carson, 'Army Alpha, Army Brass, and the Search for Army Intelligence', *Isis*, 84.2 (1993), 278-309 (p. 279).

already existed before the war continued, as demonstrated by the case of neurologists such as Richardson and Riddoch, and also medics such as Lord Horder. These conflicts were waged via patrons and personal networks, in the pages of letters. The claims made by either side in these missives were less important than what they said about the parties involved; rather than undermining methods, they were attempts to undermine the people themselves as being suspicious or disingenuous.

Suspensions attached to the Army psychiatrists led to the formation of the Expert Committee on the Work of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services, so this is often referred to only in terms of the attack it represented to the psychiatrists or as an example of the limitations that were placed upon their work. However, the psychological staff there were able to assert their own standards and practices in many instances. Distinctions were drawn between how the selection psychologists worked compared with Bartlett, the experimental psychologist or Henderson, the university psychiatrist. In this way, the official discussions that were minuted in the meetings were underpinned by unspoken negotiations of spheres of expertise. Bartlett was reassured that others would not encroach on his work on perception and training. In turn, they made it clear to him that they did not accept his authority over their work on personality or group methods. The psychological staff from the different services with a shared interest in selection thus worked together to define the purpose and the appropriate measures of their work. They were even able to use the committee to discuss and probe new outlets for their work, such as with the Civil Service.

The staff at the CDC also had the future in mind when they scrutinised the WOSBs. At the CDC, they worried about the validity of their work, and struggled to establish a proper system of education for staff, and became exasperated at the lack of opportunities for new research. The reason that all of these things were so frustrating was because they were all central to others recognising the scientific identity of the 'invisible college' group. The group's anxieties about their fellow experts' opinions are evident from the concerns that they listed and the methods with which they aimed to deal with them, which largely concerned statistics and principles rather than satisfying soldiers. The Tavistock, were trying to create a 'science of selection,' and to do so they tried to follow established scientific norms. As the discussions at the Expert Committee indicate, even in 1942 those working on selection science were mindful of possible post-war opportunities for themselves and their work; military links were unlikely to outlast the contingencies of war, so the people that those creating a science of selection were looking to impress were not their military patrons. They looked instead to other experts who might have influence over funds, and the sort of people who prided themselves on their own technical proficiency and cutting-edge modernity (like Cripps). They looked, therefore, to make the most of their scientific identity.

CHAPTER FIVE: SETTLING DOWN IN CIVVY STREET

INTRODUCTION

Early in the war, the Tavistock group drew attention to the potential problems and research possibilities of returned prisoners of war (POWs). This chapter analyses the factors that eventually led to psychiatric work on rehabilitation and resettlement, and the influences that shaped this work when it did take place. As with officer selection, also a new object for the psychological gaze, a shift in perceptions was required before POWs were considered an appropriate group for psychological intervention. In this case, the psychological community reassessed whether imprisonment caused harm. In addition, the public came to view POWs as symbolic of how all citizens would be treated after the war and the Army found it necessary to 'recycle' returned staff and problem men.

Civil Resettlement Units (CRUs), the bodies formed to deal with returning prisoners of war, were ostensibly nothing to do with psychological science, and their psychological underpinnings are rarely acknowledged.¹ However, CRUs were created and managed by the Tavistock group, most of whom were psychoanalysts, and were grounded in psychological principles and practices. The creators of the CRUs took steps to ensure that these psychological roots were hidden from view for a variety of reasons explored in this chapter, including fears that it would prevent participation because of the taboo of psychiatry and the lack of pre-existing supporting psychological scholarship to discuss. The most influential factor, though, was that a medical narrative of the 'normality' of the POW behaviour developed, whereby men were seen as undergoing a 'normal' process of adjustment rather than psychologically damaged.

The Tavistock group's work on CRUs not only provided the psychological staff with a new focus as the work on WOSBs wound down, it also further expanded the focus of their psychological gaze.² If the WOSBs had been used to make the case that leadership was a social construction and not a set of traits that could be observed at a remove from society, then the CRUs were used to make the case that anything less than optimum behaviour in returning soldiers was a product of society rather than of the individuals concerned. It could therefore only be 'cured,' they argued, by methods that dealt rationally with the relationships between people. This chapter traces the process by which such methods were worked out and how, simultaneously, plans were made for a resettlement scheme on an unprecedented scale.

It was not only the POWs 'getting back to civvy street.' There was also an Army

1 Notable works on Second World War British prisoners-of-war, which omit mention of psychologists or psychology, include Barbara Hatley-Broad, *War and Welfare: British Prisoner of War Families, 1939-45* (Manchester University Press, 2010); Arieh J. Kochavi, *Confronting Captivity: Britain and the United States and Their POWs in Nazi Germany* (University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Neville Wylie, *Barbed Wire Diplomacy: Britain, Germany, and the Politics of Prisoners of War 1939-1945* (OUP Oxford, 2010); One of the few that mentions the psychological roots of the POW resettlement is Jonathan Toms, *Mental Hygiene and Psychiatry in Modern Britain* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

2 The individuals who played important roles in the creation of CRUs are listed in "Appendix B: Who's Who of Thesis" on page 205.

winding down, a Ministry of Labour preparing for immense changes to the workforce, a government trying to 'win the peace' and a group of psychologically minded individuals beginning to establish themselves. This chapter explores the involvement of cooperating ministries, private industry, and the media in shaping the CRU. Despite the scale of both the CRU scheme itself and the communication campaign, the CRUs have received little attention from historians: this chapter takes steps to address this lacuna. Creation of the CRUs was a continual process of communication, negotiation, and mediation. Britons viewed POWs in psychological terms, but this was not simply a case of scientific ideas being watered down for the public; the ideas were originally expressed by non-specialists in letters and popular periodicals before being taken up by the psychiatrists. Nor was communication one-way. The idea of POW 'normality' was translated back and forth, transmuted slightly with each new adaptation, from the popular press to technical psychological memoranda, and back again into newspaper publications.

POWs' PSYCHOLOGY BECOMES A PROBLEM: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF CHANGING CONCEPTIONS

In 1929, the Geneva Convention significantly changed how POWs were to be dealt with, and created the prospect of a new avenue of wartime research for Army psychiatrists. Article three of the Convention made provision for the exchange and repatriation of non-combatant troops, such as medical staff, and those who were seriously unwell. For the first time, groups of POWs might be returned to their home nations before the end of a conflict, whereas in previous wars the advance party had only consisted of handfuls of escapees. The Consulting Psychiatrist to the British Army, J.R. Rees, and his colleagues from the Tavistock group foresaw the possibility of conducting research.³ Those repatriated under article three might provide a sample from which general information on POWs could be deduced, unlike escapees from whose 'special cases' few generalisations could be made. Psychiatrists felt they could have a preview of what was to come upon the return of thousands of prisoners at the end of the war, and devise in advance a scheme to ease their transition back into civil society.

However, before the psychiatrists could investigate the problems of POWs, it had to be ascertained that there *were* problems. In his 1958 record of *Psychiatry in the British Army in the Second World War*, Robert Ahrenfeldt stated that:

Experience in the First World War had already demonstrated that prisoners of war showed, after their release, evidence of psychological instability and maladjustment, and difficulties in resocialisation and reintegration into the community.⁴

More recent studies have demonstrated that, before the Second World War, the idea

³ Robert H. Ahrenfeldt, *Psychiatry in the British Army in the Second World War* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1958), p. 226.

⁴ Ahrenfeldt, p. 226. This account, with its foreword by J.R. Rees, is the closest thing to an 'official' account of the period.

that POWs might experience psychological difficulties and have trouble returning home was not widespread. In an article that provides a long chronological sweep, historians Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely describe attitudes to the psychological impact of imprisonment. They note that during the First World War and shortly thereafter, psychologists including Freud himself argued that soldiers who had been evacuated from the front lines or imprisoned were 'virtually immune' from psychological disorders because they were at a safe distance from battle and 'did not need a neurosis.'⁵ This prevailing view meant that by the Second World War, Army psychiatrists themselves remarked in planning memoranda on the 'scanty literature' from the last war on POWs' psychological issues.⁶ Where POWs' psychology had been discussed at all, it was in terms of their being protected from physical harm, and consequently also mental harm. There was not a precedent for psychiatrists working with POWs.

The view of neurosis as a route to safety or gain, and therefore 'unnecessary' to POWs, persisted; on the eve of war in mid-1939, the Horder Committee had decreed that, in order to remove an incentive for those susceptible to breakdown, no pensions would be awarded for psychiatric maladies.⁷ Likewise, when the expected number of breakdowns due to aerial bombing failed to materialise, the explanation provided was that 'breakdown did not provide a civilian an escape from danger or a claim for compensation.'⁸ The view widely accepted by British officialdom up until the early 1940s was that neurosis offered benefits to those diagnosed (whether they were consciously aware of them or not); since POWs were believed to have an 'easier life' safely away from the danger of the front, they were not seen as vulnerable to neurosis. Ahrenfeldt's suggestion that the Second World War psychiatrists were building on existing foundations is therefore a tenuous one. Consequently, it is necessary to examine how psychiatrists communicated and justified the need for work in the field of repatriating POWs.

Around the time of the Second World War, as Jones and Wessely observe, the attitude that POWs were safe from psychological harm gave way to a 'paradigm of vulnerability.'⁹ There were several reasons for the reassessment of POWs' mental state, and the decision to take steps to actively reintegrate them into British society. One, which Jones and Wessely's work focusses upon, was the changing view within the psychological community. In the interwar period, a small number of psychiatrists

5 Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely, 'A Paradigm Shift in the Conceptualization of Psychological Trauma in the 20th Century', *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*, Challenges to the PTSD Construct and its Database, 21.2 (2007), 164–75 (p. 168). It was easy to extrapolate from this that those who did break down were cowardly, the view held by Bowlby's neurologist superior in the Emergency Medical Services, which had so incensed Bowlby that he had resigned.

6 'An Introduction to Special Problems of Repatriation (Draft for Discussion)', p. 1, Tavistock Institute Archives, CRUs (PsOW): Papers/Talks/Contributions, Box 377625502.

7 'The Lessons of Shell Shock,' Ben Shephard, *A War of Nerves: Soldiers and Psychiatrists in the Twentieth Century* (Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 161–168.

8 Jones and Wessely, 'A Paradigm Shift in the Conceptualization of Psychological Trauma in the 20th Century', p. 169.

9 Edgar Jones and Simon Wessely, 'British Prisoners-of-War: From Resilience to Psychological Vulnerability: Reality or Perception', *Twentieth Century British History*, 21.2 (2010), 163–83 (p. 183).

and psychologists, including Millais Culpin and Adolf Vischer, had argued that POWs were susceptible to psychological harm; Vischer termed this susceptibility 'barbed-wire disease.'¹⁰ In the Second World War, such claims were taken up by psychiatrists and others pushing for a reassessment of the POW's problems. From 1940, when J.R. Rees had been able to appoint psychiatrists to work with Home Commands (different branches of the Army around Britain), he and his colleagues had agitated to conduct work on the problems of repatriated POWs. Over the next few years,

they repeatedly drew attention to the situation which would arise with the return of over 100,000 men from Germany... and urged that this question be given careful and sympathetic consideration by the appropriate authorities.¹¹

Psychiatrists were proactive: they claimed that they had expertise relevant to POWs, and argued for the value of applying their work on a large scale.

The influence of psychological practitioners was not the only reason for a reassessment of POWs' mentality. Jones and Wessely credit early experiments, enabled by regulatory changes like the Geneva Convention, with 'significant impact on thinking about the psychological effects of imprisonment.'¹² Yet these experiments themselves were only made possible because there had already been a shift in how POWs and the issue of repatriation were viewed in Britain. The Tavistock group expressed an interest in work on POW problems at around the same time they began to discuss personnel selection in local Commands. Whilst the 'officer problem' was considered urgent, and psychological investigation of the field began in a matter of months, the 'POW problem' was not considered pressing, and work did not begin until autumn 1943.¹³ This illustrates the limits to the agency of the psychiatrists, and the importance of pressures from the Army and from British society more broadly in providing an impetus for new work. As with selection work discussed in previous chapters, the psychiatrists had to wait for a mandate to experiment on civil resettlement.

By the end of summer, 1943, several factors coincided that brought about greater interest in POWs across British society. For years, governments had been engaged in 'seemingly endless negotiations' over the return of POWs as per the Geneva Convention.¹⁴ In 1941, a planned exchange was cancelled at the very last minute when German authorities realised that they would only get back one tenth of the number of men they were returning to Britain.¹⁵ In April 1942, 340 Italian POWs were returned

10 Mary d'Eimar de Jabrun, 'Culpin, Millais (1874–1952)', in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Online Edition (Canberra: National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, 2005) <<http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/culpin-millais-12872>> [accessed 26 September 2015]; A.L. Vischer, 'Barbed Wire Disease' (Bale & Danielsson, 1919).

11 Ahrenfeldt, p. 226.

12 Jones and Wessely, 'British Prisoners-of-War: From Resilience to Psychological Vulnerability: Reality or Perception', p. 168.

13 For more on the public and political perceptions of the 'officer problem' in selection, see Chapter 1 of this thesis, as well as Jeremy A. Crang, *The British Army and the People's War, 1939-1945* (Manchester University Press, 2000); and Shephard.

14 Joan Beaumont, 'Review: Prisoners of War in the Second World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 42.3 (2007), 535–44 (p. 537).

15 R. H. C, 'Abandonment of Prisoners Repatriation Scheme: Statement by British War Minister', *The Manchester Guardian* (Manchester, United Kingdom, 8 October 1941), p. 6; Charles H. Murphy, 'Prison-

to Italy and 60 British POWs were repatriated to Britain. A follow-up survey of a small group indicated that returning POWs might prove difficult for the Army to deal with, as it revealed the 'difficulties experienced in rehabilitating and successfully employing these men.'¹⁶ However, no immediate action was taken as plans for further exchanges stalled. By 1943, though, plans for an exchange with Germany finally seemed likely to reach fruition. There was thus finally the prospect of a 'test case' of repatriation, but also the threat of a wave of disorderly conduct, if the early survey was to be believed.

One of the reasons that there was unprecedented interest in POWs was because for the first time, the return of prisoners was an independent event in itself. Before the Geneva Convention, the return of prisoners had been one of many forms of demobilisation at the end of a war; in 1943, the POWs' homecoming was singular. The repatriation of POWs therefore received a great deal of attention, not least because it was seen as symbolic of how the later full-scale demobilisation might proceed:

[The public] appeared to regard the handling of repatriates as a test case of the intentions and capacities for the authorities responsible for demobilization, and even reconstruction. For this reason, the post-war public attitude to the Army was directly involved, and it might be suggested that the problem concerning prisoners of war had an importance out of all proportion to their actual numbers.¹⁷

People wanted to know what they could expect for themselves at the end of the war, and handling of POWs was a way that they felt they might be able to gauge this. This new avenue for psychiatric work was tapped into broader cultural anxieties. Selection of officers had been symbolically linked with ideals of democratic government and the morality of war with the Nazis (see Chapter 1), and the return of POWs was linked with conceptions of post-war society.

Many had low expectations of how the government would manage the POWs and demobilisation. Paul Fussell famously argued that a culture of disillusionment was ushered in by the First World War.¹⁸ Whilst historians argue about whether this happened as early as Fussell claimed, many agree that disillusionment 'became the dominant historical view of the war because it was embraced by those who came after... [as] a product of the late 1920s and early 1930s.'¹⁹ POWs in particular were believed to have been 'betrayed' by the British government, because on their return they were tempted into signing away their rights to a pension in return for a quick payoff and release from the military.²⁰ A disillusioned view also characterised the 1940s view of Britain's scheme for general demobilisation after the First World War, which was seen as having been 'developed through the simple expedient of trial and

ers of War: Repatriation or Internment in Wartime; American and Allied Experience, 1775 to Present', *Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service*, 1971.

16 Ahrenfeldt, p. 227.

17 Ahrenfeldt, pp. 231–2.

18 Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

19 Janet S. K. Watson, *Fighting Different Wars: Experience, Memory, and the First World War in Britain* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 308.

20 John Lewis-Stempel, 'Home, Unsweet Home: Return and Aftermath', in *The War Behind the Wire: The Life, Death and Glory of British Prisoners of War, 1914-18* (Hachette UK, 2014).

error... [and] in practice [having] proved unworkable.’²¹ This had not been forgotten by the Second World War; the author of a letter arguing for a POW repatriation scheme made implicit criticisms of the handling of POWS during the First World War, demanding that ‘*this time* some sympathetic action will be taken.’²²

The perception that returns had been mismanaged was compounded by the view that ex-soldiers had not properly returned to civilisation. Jon Lawrence argued that:

Britain after the First World War was a nation haunted by the fear that violence had slipped its chains – by the fear that the ex-servicemen, the general public, the state, or perhaps all three, had been irrevocably “brutalized”... towns and cities across Britain were gripped by a series of bloody riots in which soldiers and ex-servicemen appeared to play a prominent part. The press... was full of stories of violent crimes, many of them supposedly committed by former soldiers.²³

Lawrence emphasises that whether or not this brutalization really existed, there was a strong perception that it did, which had social and political consequences. The narrative of the dangerous or subversive repatriate also had consequences during the Second World War; it resurfaced in justifications for resettlement schemes. For instance, the Tavistock psychiatrists described how:

The returned soldier is regarded by the civilian community in a way which indicates a great affection and interest in him, and at the same time shows the awe which we regard someone who has been concerned in killing other people, for fears of the “lawlessness” and aggressivity of the returned soldier to some extent find their explanation in the fact that one of the basic changes which occurs in the citizen turned soldier is the temporary abandonment of the deep-seated taboo on taking human life. It is not difficult to see how this can arouse anxiety in a civilian community.²⁴

The civilian community, with its anxieties, was as much a target of Tavistock interest as the returning POW.

Public concerns that the government might once again fail to develop a satisfactory scheme for demobilisation and repatriation was evident in Mass Observation research project *The Journey Home*, published in January 1944. This survey sought to ‘relate the anxieties, fears and hopes of these millions to their probable behaviour when the

21 Stephen Richards Graubard, ‘Military Demobilization in Great Britain Following the First World War’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 19.4 (1947), 297–311 (p. 311).

22 D. L. Charters, ‘Prisoner-Of-War Mentality’, *The British Medical Journal*, 1.4383 (1945), 24; John Harkness, ‘Prisoner-of-War Mentality’, *The British Medical Journal*, 1.4346 (1944), 568–568 (my emphasis).

23 Jon Lawrence, ‘Forging a Peaceable Kingdom: War, Violence, and Fear of Brutalization in Post-First World War Britain’, *The Journal of Modern History*, 75.3 (2003), 557–89 (p. 557).

24 A.T.M. Wilson, ‘Some Psychological Aspects of Resettlement: An Address by Lt.Col. A.T. Macbeth Wilson to the Ministry of Production: Harrow District Mutual Aid Organisation, Report of 15th Inter-Group Meeting’, 1945, p. 12, Tavistock Institute Archives, CRUs (PsOW): Papers/Talks/Contributions, Box 377625502. The Tavistock group were particularly aware of such taboos; several of them had refused to take up arms due to their beliefs. For instance, J.R. Rees and John Rickman served with the Friends Ambulance service during the First World War and their friend from WOSBs, John Raven, was a conscientious objector. Henry Dicks, ‘John Rawlings Rees’, *Munk’s Roll: Lives of the Fellows* (Royal College of Physicians, 2009), 387 <<http://munksroll.rcplondon.ac.uk/Biography/Details/3726>> [accessed 14 May 2014]; John Rickman, *No Ordinary Psychoanalyst: The Exceptional Contributions of John Rickman*, ed. by Pearl King (Karnac Books, 2003); Sebastian Kraemer, ‘“The Dangers of This Atmosphere”: A Quaker Connection in the Tavistock Clinic’s Development’, *History of the Human Sciences*, 24.2 (2011), 82–102.

time for demobilisation arrives.’²⁵ One of the conclusions that this research drew was that there was a widespread mistrust that people’s best interests would be taken into consideration after the war:

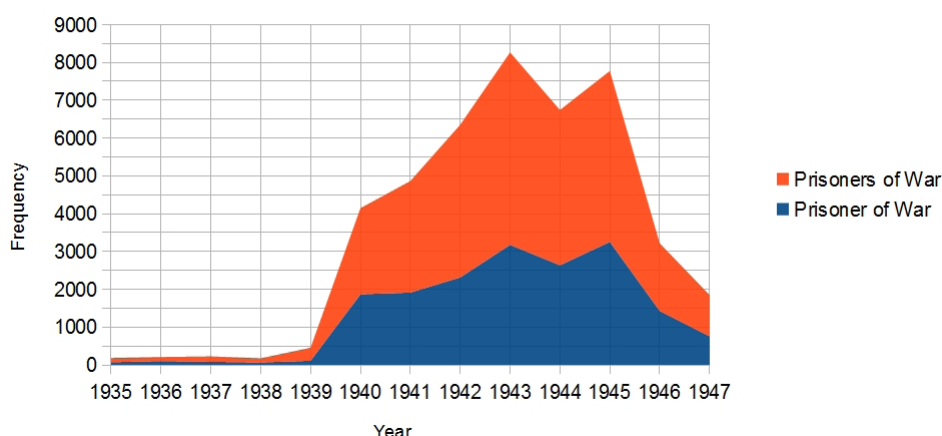
Asked whether they know if the Government had announced any policy of post-war reconstruction, only 16% thought it had (November 1943). Two years previously, a larger proportion thought that some policy of post-war reconstruction had been announced... the desire for reconstruction or reconstruction planning to start now has steadily increased... in September 1943 65% thought it should start now... [People] need to know where everyone is going, what is going to happen to mankind.²⁶

Public trust had declined, and the survey’s authors argued that this was because people needed a sign that something was being done to facilitate a return to peaceful civilisation.²⁷ Returning POWs could provide such a symbolic example. Discussions about returning POWs took place in the Army, amongst medics, and amongst a wider public; there was an ‘unusual public interest and sensitivity in the matter, reflected in parliamentary questions, and similar phenomena.’²⁸ References to prisoners of war in newspapers leapt during 1942 and then again in 1943 (see graph below).

The Tavistock psychiatrists used such concerns about restlessness or brutalization to justify the need for their services in designing a programme of rehabilitation. Specifically calling upon cultural memory to legitimate their claims to useful knowledge, they noted that:

As the literature of post-war periods clearly shows, it is but a short step for troops engaged in battle, on either side, to ascribe all their troubles to the machinations of this vaguely comprehended power, which they usually identify with “armchair”

Frequency of Newspaper Mentions of POWs (Artemis Primary Sources Database)



politicians at home, or with the government.²⁹

They also claimed that POWs might be particularly dangerous, as ‘while suffering imprisonment his aggression may seek to expand itself

FIGURE 10: Graph of frequency of mentions of “prisoners of war” or “prisoner of war” in British Newspapers, 1935-1947. Artemis Primary Sources - Term Frequency’ <gdc.galegroup.com/gdc/artemis/nGramViewer> [accessed 4 June 2015].

25 Cover page, ‘The Journey Home (Mass Observation File Report)’ (The Curwen Press Ltd, 1944), Mass Observation Online, University of Sussex.

26 ‘The Journey Home’, p. 123.

27 The Tavistock group would have been aware of this research and those conclusions, because psychiatrist A.T.M. Wilson was associated with Charles Madge and Tom Harrison, the founders of Mass Observation. See James Hinton, *The Mass Observers: A History, 1937-1949* (OUP Oxford, 2013), p. 336.

28 ‘Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda’, p. 11, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 377625502.

29 ‘Directorate of Army Psychiatry, Technical Memorandum No. 13, “The Prisoner of War Comes Home”, 1944, p. 15, The National Archives, WO 241/14.

in several ways... [his] frustrated aggression will attack anything it can remotely associate with his desperate plight.³⁰ The authorities who had made the plans for war that resulted in defeats (and captures) like Dunkirk and Singapore, the psychiatrists implied, would be associated with the POW's plight and under threat from his subsequent aggression. They argued that the morale of the men at the point of their capture left a 'vintage mark' and caused 'inevitable... suspicion of authority.'³¹ The Army was directly implicated in the level of a man's problem with authority, as its performance at the time of their capture affected their psychology.

There was also a growing demand for the British Army to deal with POWs. For one thing, the image of the Army might be harmed if POWs were not dealt with, and the Army was seen as having a moral obligation towards them. The psychiatrists suggested to the War Office that the Army 'had been responsible for getting [prisoners] into "the bag"; it had now to accept responsibility for getting them out of it in as good shape as when they went in.'³² Public sensitivity placed pressure on the War Office and the British Army to act.

More pressing than that, however, were practical concerns. As well as the 1942 survey which hinted at trouble, there were increases in disciplinary problems and difficulties 'rehabilitating and successfully employing these men,' especially the officers who had been back for a number of months and returned to duty.³³ Most prisoners, according to Tavistock group member Eric Trist, 'had been elite troops;' the idea that even such men with their 'previously excellent' records could be damaged by their experiences as prisoners provided impetus for the Army to take action.³⁴ As the second chapter of this thesis explored, the psychiatrists' first work in the Army had involved helping to reallocate 'problem men' in local Commands; they had established their ability to help make difficult men productive members of the Army back in 1940.

In addition, the basic problem of manpower which had pushed the Army to consult psychiatrists over WOSBs had resurfaced. Psychiatrists' work with POWs was prompted as much by practical matters as by an abstract sense of national obligation or fears over social breakdown: the Army's shortage of men meant that its 'culture changed, and it began to value and trust repatriates [and] consider their welfare.'³⁵ Returning men to a 'productive civilian life' was, for the War Office, a useful corollary of an intervention initiated to deal with a more immediate need for more troops. With the continual concern that Britain had fewer men than other nations and could not

30 'The Prisoner of War Comes Home', pp. 16–17.

31 'Lecture to Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force POW Executive Officers' Course', 1944, p. 3, Tavistock Institute Archives, CRUs (PsOW): Papers/Talks/Contributions, Box 377625502.

32 Eric Trist, 'Working with Bion in the 1940s: The Group Decade', in *Bion and Group Psychotherapy*, ed. by Malcolm Pines (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000), p. 23.

33 Ahrenfeldt, p. 227; Moreover, POWs represented an 'officer problem' because it was believed that the segregation of officers from common men left the other ranks lawless, demonstrating 'even dishonesty.' P. H. Newman, 'The Prisoner-Of-War Mentality: Its Effect After Repatriation', *The British Medical Journal*, 1.4330 (1944), 8–10 (p. 17).

34 Malcolm Pines, *Bion and Group Psychotherapy* (Jessica Kingsley, 2000), p. 23; Ahrenfeldt, p. 227.

35 Richard Trahair, *Behavior, Technology, and Organizational Development: Eric Trist and the Tavistock Institute* (Transaction Publishers, 2015), p. 107.

afford to waste any, all men, even POWs, had to be returned to duty where possible. It was considered more economical to make use of already-trained men, and the war 'had reached a phase where the reclassification and redeployment of officers and their attendant rehabilitation had become more important than their selection.'³⁶ The potential shortage of officers was once again an issue that prompted the Army to turn to the psychiatrists, who had worked on selecting officers via the WOSBs.

The POW was construed as a new variant of the 'officer problem,' an area in which the Army psychiatrists could claim expertise, because of this need to make use of any qualified officer capable of continued service in the role, and also because of the particular problems of *officer* POWs. Articles focussed on the difficulties of repatriation on the officer POW:

for two obvious reasons – first, the contrast between his normal life and his prison life is greater; and, secondly, during internment he remains unemployed and therefore he has to rely on his own resources to dispose of his time.³⁷

This echoed the problem that had initiated the WOSBs, where 'common' non-public school boys needed to be converted into officers. POWs presented the problem of officers who had been subject to unpleasant surroundings and needed to be 'restored' to civilisation. In both cases, difficulties concerned civility and passing from what was thought of as a harsher environment into one seen as superior. There was also a popular perception that the lack of activity was as much, if not more, of a problem than the unpleasant environment. The Geneva Convention, which facilitated the early return of some POWs, stated that officers should not be put to work, though lower ranks could be given tasks. Officers' subsequent passivity was seen as a risk factor; they were seen as having more intelligent minds that were less occupied and therefore more susceptible to harm.³⁸ POWs with restless minds causing trouble all too easily linked back to memories of the early 1920s and the troubles that cultural memory had affiliated with unemployed ex-servicemen.³⁹

The psychiatrists' interests in the 'POW problem' were thus supported by a wider culture of concern about returning POWs. There were some problems for which there were early indicators, though many more were imagined based on the cultural memory of the First World War. The Secretary of State for War, Sir James Grigg, resolved to make preparations for the return of the prisoners, noting that:

there will be a considerable public demand that the Government should undertake the task of correcting, so far as possible, those specifically psychological disabilities which inevitably arise from prolonged captivity in enemy hands.⁴⁰

36 Trist, p. 19.

37 Newman, p. 8.

38 Passivity had been previously linked with psychological disorders such as hysteria and shell shock. For instance, see Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980* (Pantheon, 1985); and Joanna Bourke, 'Effeminacy, Ethnicity and the End of Trauma: The Sufferings of "Shell-Shocked" Men in Great Britain and Ireland, 1914-39', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35.1 (2000), 57-69.

39 Lawrence.

40 James Grigg, Memorandum WP44456, as quoted in 'Notes on the Origin and Development of the Civil Resettlement Scheme', p. 1, Tavistock Institute Archives, CRUs (PsOW): Planning Memoranda, Box 377625502.

From the idea that POWs were somehow insulated from harm, it had become accepted that psychological problems were 'inevitable.' Before many POWs had returned, it had already been established that they were a problem that must be dealt with, both as a gesture and to improve efficiency, in the interest of the government and the War Office as well as the POWs themselves.

RIP VAN WINKLE, THE BENDS, & CREAKY MACHINERY: POW PSYCHOLOGY IS INVESTIGATED AND FOUND "NORMAL"

Once the return of POWs seemed possible and was perceived as potentially problematic, thoughts turned to what specific problems they might present. Psychiatrists made suggestions of how best to smooth POWs' return psychologically and help them to become 'useful' again. In September 1943, the month before the planned prisoner swap with Germany, Lieutenant General Sir Alexander Hood, the Director General of Army Medical Services, convened a meeting to discuss repatriation. The meeting was held at the London offices of the Directorate of Army Psychiatry (DAP). The venue for the meeting suggests that the Army's belief in POWs' resilience had already given way to a belief in their psychological vulnerability, otherwise the meeting would not have been held in the domain of the psychiatrists. Though Jones and Wessely have described the DAP as a 'fledgling organisation seeking to justify its role' the DAP's hosting of the meeting implies that it was already justified.⁴¹ Unlike the matter of officer selection, where early discussions and work was ad hoc and conducted out of sight of the War Office (see Chapter 2), the beginnings of the Tavistock group's work on civil resettlement was officially sanctioned, demonstrating a change in their status. By this time, Stafford Cripps and the Expert Committee had approved the work of psychiatrists and psychologists in the services.⁴² The POWs problems were described as bearing similarities to the 'officer problem' that the WOSBs, by this time in full swing, had seemingly resolved. Also, Hood was seen by the Tavistock group as one of the 'quite exceptional senior Regular Officers on our side.'⁴³ Patronage shaped the opportunities the psychiatrists had, as the personal good relations they had developed over the course of the war enhanced their visibility. The meeting was therefore being held not to discuss whether there would be problems or who should deal with them, but instead of what nature would they be and how could they be managed using psychological expertise.

At the meeting, J.R. Rees argued that problems of repatriation were likely to be more serious than they appeared from those who had returned, who were either escapees or medics who had been able to continue working during their period of captivity; normal soldiers 'might show even greater signs of abnormal reaction on returning home.'⁴⁴ Only shortly after people began to be concerned that POWs might be at risk

41 Jones and Wessely, 'British Prisoners-of-War: From Resilience to Psychological Vulnerability: Reality or Perception', p. 169.

42 For more on the establishment of the WOSBs, see Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis. For more on Cripps and the Expert Committee, see Chapter 4 of this thesis.

43 H. V. Dicks, *Fifty Years of the Tavistock Clinic* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1970), p. 106.

44 'Rehabilitation of Repatriated Prisoners of War, Minutes of Meeting', 1943, The National Archives,

of psychological harm, Rees suggested that the harm could be more widespread than anyone had anticipated, making the case for the value of psychological expertise. The participants at the meeting expressed support for psychologists taking action to manage the return of POWs. However, what that action should entail was unclear. From the outset, those involved were reluctant to label the problematic POWs as categorically 'sick.' The Ministry of Labour representative was the sole person to even mention what the repatriates might be suffering from, noting that it might do harm to rush men with 'depression and apathy' into employment.⁴⁵ Those present concluded that some 'scheme' must be developed, but the specific problems and action to be taken were left unresolved: the Tavistock group was given the opportunity to set out the problems of resettlement and their solution.⁴⁶

There were several branches of early Tavistock group work on the return of POWs. The POWs most obviously experiencing difficulties on repatriation, those diagnosed with psychological maladjustment, were treated at Northfield Military Hospital under the care of Major Whiles and Alfred Torrie, who noted that their patients were often 'markedly resentful of everyone and everything.'⁴⁷ However, those who were not formally diagnosed as being psychologically disturbed were also the subject of study by the Tavistock group. The links between problem POWs and problem officers meant that the psychiatrists considered using their established way of dealing with officers, via selection. At No. 21 WOSB, Selsdon Court Hotel, Surrey, psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion and psychologist Eric Trist attempted to adapt the existing WOSB system to select officer POWs who might be able to return to service. The officer reception unit was to 'provide them with advice on military retraining and re-employment, and on other problems' and to act as an experimental space for psychiatrists investigating the problems of repatriation.⁴⁸ A larger group of repatriated medics was also studied at No. 1 Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC) Depot, Boyce Barracks, Crookham (near Aldershot), where Bion's Tavistock colleague A.T.M. "Tommy" Wilson headed an investigation. Between November 1943 and February 1944, a batch of 1200 POWs passed through what the psychiatrists referred to as 'the Crookham experiment.'⁴⁹ They underwent a four week programme of rehabilitation and training and were observed by Wilson and his colleagues.⁵⁰ Wilson noted that in the group there was:

a relatively large sick parade; minor psychological disturbance in at least 60%; a poor prognosis of effective social readaptation in at least 20%; "brittle" individual morale; widespread passive attitudes covering latent hostility; a widespread

WO 32/11125; Ahrenfeldt, p. 229.

45 'Rehabilitation of Repatriated Prisoners of War'.

46 'Notes on the Origin and Development of the Civil Resettlement Scheme', p. 1; Jones and Wessely, 'British Prisoners-of-War: From Resilience to Psychological Vulnerability: Reality or Perception', p. 169.

47 Tom Harrison, *Bion, Rickman, Foulkes, and the Northfield Experiments: Advancing on a Different Front* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000), p. 192-193

48 Ahrenfeldt, p. 232.

49 Ahrenfeldt, p. 230.

50 The Army's pre-existing rules for dealing with soldiers was once again blamed for limiting the scientific quality of psychological investigations: as with the WOSBs work, the technical staff argued that there were many confounding variables, and results were 'very difficult to interpret as a result of serious difficulties over pay and promotion and Christmas leave.' 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda', p. 16.

desire for discharge from the Service; uneasiness about possible future foreign service; and a relatively high absenteeism rate.⁵¹

Whilst Wilson was uncovering the problems of British POWs and Bion was focussing on Officers, their colleague from the Tavistock psychoanalyst Henry Dicks was investigating German POWs to uncover the 'psychology of Nazis' and whether or not national socialism was a full-fledged mental disorder.⁵² He also had the care of one very high-profile prisoner, Hitler's deputy, Rudolf Hess.⁵³ Dicks contributed ideas of how *not* to manage people, in order that such extreme politics would not trouble post-war Britain. The preliminary work on British and enemy POWs was put to two main uses; it was used as the theoretical and practical base of future rehabilitation work, and it was used as justification for further psychological intervention.

Early conclusions from the experiments with repatriated British POWs were published in Spring 1944, in 'DAP Technical Memorandum No. 13, The Prisoner of War Comes Home.' This memorandum, a summary of the work for a military or Ministry audience, communicated what problems POWs presented and how best to deal with them. Four previous works were also referred to: Vischer's 1919 book on 'barbed wire disease;' Col. T.W. Salmon's notes from December 1918 on the psychological effect of the end to serious physical danger; and more recent Second World War articles by Captain George Francis Collie and by Philip Harker Newman. The psychiatrists selected these works to bolster their own arguments that psychological intervention was required, and to support their argument that POWs were not mentally ill but maladjusted.

Salmon's work dealt generally with demobilisation, rather than specific POW issues; it was used by the British Army psychiatrists to suggest that the American Army had valued psychiatrists' help with returning men since the First World War. Vischer's First World War study also suggested a long-standing recognition that POWs needed expert help, as well as being harvested of 'two extremely important comments of great present day value' according to the British Army psychiatrists.⁵⁴ One was that barbed-wire disease was 'not cured by mere release from imprisonment,' which set the precedent that active intervention was required rather than simply helping men to get back to their homes. The other was an anecdote from an old General who visited his men in Switzerland and reportedly said 'I believed that I knew my officers and men and that I understood them... now I have visited my interned comrades but I confess that I cannot understand them.' The psychiatrists' use of this quote implied that even seasoned military men were not capable of dealing with the POW's

51 Ahrenfeldt, p. 231.

52 Henry V. Dicks, 'National Socialism as a Psychological Problem' (AMD 11, 1945), Wellcome Library, Henry Dicks Papers (PPHVD); Henry V. Dicks, 'Personality Traits and National Socialist Ideology A War-Time Study of German Prisoners of War', *Human Relations*, 3.2 (1950), 111-54.

53 Henry V. Dicks, *Case of Rudolph Hess: A Problem in Diagnosis and Forensic Psychiatry, by the Physicians in the Services Who Have Been Concerned with Him from 1941 to 1946*, ed. by John Rawlings Rees (W.W. Norton & Company, Incorporated, 1947); Daniel Pick, *The Pursuit of the Nazi Mind: Hitler, Hess, and the Analysts* (OUP Oxford, 2012).

54 'The Prisoner of War Comes Home', p. 3.

problems, and thus psychiatrists' expertise was required. The comments that the the DAP deemed valuable were ones which could be used to support the value of their expertise.

The articles by Collie and Newman would quite likely already have reached the audience addressed by 'The Prisoner of War Comes Home.' As well as being more recent, both had initiated discussions on POWs. In popular magazine *The Fortnightly*, Captain Collie initiated a 'lively public debate' which 'brought to a head' the question of rehabilitating POWs.⁵⁵ Collie asserted that there was a 'Rip Van Winkle' effect due to changes during a prisoner's absence to his home society and also to the man himself, who 'fails to realise in what way and to what extent he has changed.'⁵⁶ As well as the confusion suffered by the returning POW himself, stress was placed on the failure of society and the authorities to understand the POW. This supported Rees' arguments about social anxiety being as problematic as the psychological issues of the POW himself. Newman's article had been published in the *British Medical Journal*, where it had prompted lively discussion in the letters pages.⁵⁷ He compared the POW's woes to 'caisson disease' (more commonly known as 'the bends') an ailment suffered by resurfacing deep-sea divers adjusting to pressure changes. Newman implied that the extreme pressure of the POW camp might produce symptoms in some men on their return to the normal pressures of home society.

Newman and Collie possessed qualities that made their articles and opinions particularly influential. Both were professionals; Collie was a lawyer and Newman was a doctor.⁵⁸ They were also both former POWs; Newman even privileged this first-hand experience over his expert status, noting that 'I wish to give an impression not of a doctor examining his patients but that of a prisoner of war himself.'⁵⁹ Yet as POWs they represented unusual cases as both were escapees. Newman 'hid under floorboards' and eventually escaped back to Britain in May 1942, and in August of the same year Collie had escaped a hospital in Paris and returned to Britain via the Pyrenees and Spain. Both were decorated for the intelligence that they supplied on their return. As escapees they were war heroes, not tainted by having waited out the war in safety. Thus when they admitted to psychological difficulties, their difficulties could not quietly be attributed to poor character or cowardice as neuroses often had been. Collie and Newman's personal backgrounds supported their claims that the cause of POW problems was due to the experiences of unusual environments. This suggested that the scale of the problem could possibly be huge because many

55 George F. Collie, 'Returned Prisoners: A Suggested Scheme for Rehabilitation', *The Fortnightly*, June 1943; Ahrenfeldt, p. 229.

56 Collie; as quoted in 'The Prisoner of War Comes Home'; In the original story, Rip Van Winkle fell into an enchanted sleep, missing the American Revolution and awaking to find himself old and everything different: Washington Irving, 'Rip Van Winkle', in *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon* (Philadelphia: Carey & Lea, 1835).

57 Newman.

58 J.I.P. James, 'P.H. Newman', *British Medical Journal*, 310 (1995), 1528; 'Philip Newman', *The Times* (London, England, 13 January 1995), p. 19, Gale NewsVault; Graeme Smith, 'George Collie', *Herald Scotland*, 16 November 1995, Online Edition edition, section News <http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/12061093.George_Collie/> [accessed 24 June 2014].

59 Newman, p. 8.

thousands of men had experienced POW camps. The Secretary of State for War noted that 'it is difficult to give even an estimate of the numbers' of POWs, but that something 'of the order of 35,000' could be expected during the 12 months following the defeat of Germany.⁶⁰ The studies to which the psychiatrists referred were all used to imply that a large-scale programme of psychological intervention was necessary.

Unlike Vischer and Salmon, Collie and Newman were not psychiatrists, but their ideas were adopted by the Army psychiatrists and formed an important foundation for technical theories and methods. Like the Leaderless Group test at WOSBs (see Chapter 3), laypeople influenced psychiatric thinking as well as vice versa. Newman and Collie's articles emphasised two features of the POW problems that the Army psychiatrists built upon. Bion and Wilson both echoed Collie and Newman's assertions that problems in returned POWs were 'normal' rather than unusual or deviant. Like those who had attended the DAP meeting, they were reluctant to label anyone as 'sick.' Newman, for instance, argued that problems 'persist on the prisoner's return to conditions to which he was normally accustomed' and was emphatic that problems were normal:

This response of a normal body to the process of recovery from exposure to an abnormal external environment is wrongly called a disease. It is the change-over from an adaptation to abnormal external influences.⁶¹

Difficulties were caused by the odd environment from which the POW was transitioning, rather than any oddness on the part of the POW himself, Newman stressed. Similarly, he distinguished between 'abnormal *reactions* [which] are common; in fact, probably all prisoners of long standing will present symptoms' and the POW himself who should 'not be regarded as abnormal.'⁶² Newman used the biological metaphor of caisson disease to suggest that a POW's difficulties might occur in anyone and were normal reactions rather than something to be feared as odd or extreme.

Newman was concerned that 'public acknowledgement of mental abnormality... must be at all costs avoided.'⁶³ Whilst he did not explain why, the letters in response to his article make clear what the medical community feared about such an acknowledgement. In the outpouring of responses to Newman's letter, the matter of a POW's psychological 'normality' was a central concern. For instance, Major D.L. Charters, RAMC, insisted that the repatriate 'will not have a peculiar mentality.'⁶⁴ He was concerned that to say otherwise would harm repatriate's employment prospects:

Above all, let us avoid discussing their "mentality" in the lay press... "the powerful advocacy of the Press" would hardly be sound psychological treatment for the prisoner; nor would it encourage employers to select him as a worker.

Charters suggested that any benefits to repatriates to be gained from psychological

60 James Grigg, Memorandum 44456, 'Notes on the Origin and Development of the Civil Resettlement Scheme', p. 1.

61 Newman, p. 8.

62 Newman, p. 9, my emphasis.

63 Newman, p. 8.

64 Charters.

treatment would be outweighed by the harm that would be done if people thought that they were 'peculiar.' Likewise, the medical officer at Crookham, Captain J.C.B. Nesfield, described the early repatriates he saw there as a 'fit and robust group.'⁶⁵ He noted that whilst 20 'frankly neurotic' cases were referred to Hollymoor Military Hospital (Northfield) for psychiatric treatment, 'the majority of men were perfectly normal.'⁶⁶ Medics like Charters and Nesfield were concerned about the public perception of psychiatry and psychoanalysis, and the stigma attached to being a psychiatric patient or 'mental case.'

On the other hand, psychiatrist Millais Culpin battled against the idea of basing a diagnosis on what was socially acceptable. He mocked how the discussion on POWs 'reminds us of, "He's not mental, doctor; it's his nerves,"' implying that doctors were lowering themselves to the superstitious denial of the layperson.⁶⁷ Culpin even suggested that the term 'neurosis' was a 'thought-stifling witch word' because it made psychological conditions sound neurological in order to reduce stigma, but impeded treatment. Culpin suggested that this denial was ridiculous, that men were sick and there was no shame in seeking treatment. The solution, he proposed, was 'to remove the stigma from "mental."'

The pre-war Tavistock Clinic had made arrangements aligned with Culpin's view, that is, that there should be a movement to de-stigmatise mental illness. For instance, in May 1939, the Minister of Health gave a speech at the Clinic's annual luncheon celebrating 'the fact that the stigma attached to mental illness appeared to be diminishing.'⁶⁸ However, the wartime Tavistock group had short-term pragmatic aims; efforts to eliminate stigma were deferred as they concentrated on simply dealing with problems. As Army psychiatrists, they felt that their patient was the Army, which was experiencing 'considerable anxiety' about the POWs, and the Army was aware of the diagnosis and participating in resolving psychological problems even if individual men were not.⁶⁹ Claims, such as those made by medics like Charters and Nesfield, that repatriated POWs were not sick may appear to be a threat to the authority of the Tavistock group to deal with them. But even the Army psychiatrists themselves were emphatic that the repatriates were *not* (by and large) mentally ill: Tommy Wilson argued that they were 'not ill in the usual psychiatric or clinical sense.'⁷⁰ Rather than engaging with a public relations battle on behalf of all psychiatry, they shifted the

65 Captain J.C.B. Nesfield, 'Some Observations of the Protected Personnel Recently Repatriated to the Country', 1944, p. 1, The National Archives, Kew, WO 32/10950; as quoted in Jones and Wessely, 'British Prisoners-of-War: From Resilience to Psychological Vulnerability: Reality or Perception', p. 170.

66 Northfield was also staffed by the Tavistock group, and was the venue where the First and Second Northfield Experiments took place, which have become legendary in the Tavistock's history as the crucible for the development of the 'therapeutic community.' For more on this, see Tom Harrison, *Bion, Rickman, Foulkes, and the Northfield Experiments: Advancing on a Different Front* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000).

67 Millais Culpin, 'Returned Prisoners Of War', *The British Medical Journal*, 1.4334 (1944), 158-59.

68 'The Tavistock Clinic: Minister Of Health At Luncheon', *The British Medical Journal*, 1.4090 (1939), 1092.

69 Ahrenfeldt, p. 227.

70 Present Psychiatric Knowledge: Conclusions from Recent Work, in 'The Prisoner of War Comes Home', p. 11.

terms of what it was they were dealing with.

Wilson and his colleagues had never before worked on rehabilitating returned POWs, and yet they actively denied that this group of people were comparable to those disturbed individuals whom they had treated in clinical practice before the war. Furthermore, they went so far as to assert that:

Where there is a good deal of anxiety or other emotional tension, it is very easy for the strangeness to be regarded as something “queer,” perhaps related to ill will or to illness. Nothing could be further from the truth.⁷¹

Though returning POWs might have problems, the psychiatrists argued that these were very much normal and not strange. The Tavistock group were careful to specify what the problems of repatriated POWs were *not*. They argued that the problems of POWs were very unlikely to be related to experiences of war, due to ‘the frequent occurrence of the disease among civilian prisoners.’⁷² This distanced the POWs’ problems from ‘shell-shock’ (a term Army psychiatrists were banned from using in 1939 by the Horder Committee) and other such visibly psychological casualties of the previous war. As well as being contrasted with other military psychological casualties, POWs were also contrasted with others who might traditionally be viewed as the psychiatrists’ objects of study. The POW, according to the Tavistock psychiatrists, was unlike any other sort of prisoner because he had ‘neither a fanatical – or at least an adequate – political belief, nor a psychopathic temperament to support him during his imprisonment.’⁷³ Rather than implying that existing mental abnormality caused vulnerability to psychological harm, psychiatrists argued the opposite: that most POWs’ lack of obsession or deviancy rendered them more at risk of harm from the monotony of camp life. Bion argued that it was a ‘great step forward’ that the POWs were under regimental rather than medical control at No. 21 WOSB, and therefore ‘no one had to be labelled neurotic or normal or think of himself as suffering from a “disease.”’⁷⁴ The insistence that POWs were not sick had implications for how they were dealt with; any scheme had to be voluntary ‘helping’ rather than mandatory ‘treatment.’ A sane man could not be committed for treatment, but remained a member of the community. The Tavistock group sought to reconstruct the POW as a normal, sympathetic, autonomous figure who had experienced extreme circumstances, and as someone to whom ‘normal’ people could relate.

This fitted within a broader trend in Army psychiatry to redefine neurosis and normality. As a result of the 1939 Horder Committee decision that no pensions would be awarded for psychiatric war injuries, there was nothing to be gained from a diagnosis of mental illness – only great stigma attached to the label. Wherever possible, soldiers were diagnosed as suffering from ‘exhaustion’ and relocated to different roles rather than being invalided out of the service.⁷⁵ Other Second World

71 ‘An Introduction to Special Problems of Repatriation (Draft for Discussion)’, p. 1.

72 ‘The Prisoner of War Comes Home’, p. 3.

73 ‘The Prisoner of War Comes Home’, p. 15.

74 Trist, p. 20.

75 Jones and Wessely, ‘A Paradigm Shift in the Conceptualization of Psychological Trauma in the 20th Century’, p. 169. Jones and Wessely fail to acknowledge how this also helped to assuage Army concerns

War euphemisms for psychological injury as a form of weariness that could implicitly be resolved through rest included the idea that every person had a 'breaking point' and Lord Moran's reference to men expending all of their reserves of 'spirit' or courage.⁷⁶ Only those repatriates for whom the diagnosis of psychiatric illness was unavoidable were sent to Northfield. Frequent reference to 'problems' or 'symptoms' rather than specific diagnoses can be seen as a response to these trends: the Tavistock group aimed to avoid 'the stigma of a patient being *sick*.'⁷⁷ One of Wilson's conclusions was that 'all [of the POWs] show degrees of depression.' The word 'degrees' importantly differentiated the POWs from the diagnosed clinically depressed. Wilson noted that despite not being clinically sick, the men he saw 'showed very clearly... emotional problems.'⁷⁸ The psychiatrists operated in the space between disorder and formal diagnosis, a space they were only able to occupy by virtue of their pre-existing military framework.

Psychiatrists did not take the opportunity to draw former POWs into their disciplinary remit by labelling them as psychiatrically disturbed, or even by comparing them to groups that psychiatrists had traditionally dealt with like shell-shock sufferers, obsessives, psychopaths, or egoists. Instead, in 'The Prisoner of War Comes Home,' they argued that:

The emotional problems of the repatriate are but one form of the chronic human problems of adaptation to changing circumstances. In one form or another these problems affect all of us, and not only those who have served overseas or been prisoners of war.⁷⁹

Rather than incorporate POWs into an existing sphere for expertise (insanity and deviance), the Tavistock group used their work with POWs to reinforce claims to a larger territory ('normal' society) in which they could legitimately work and be considered experts.

As well as fitting changes in psychiatric thought, and the Tavistock's pursuit of a broader focus, the insistence that the POW was not in need of full-fledged psychiatric or psychoanalytic treatment was linked with practical concerns. The guilt that the psychiatrists believed was a significant cause of difficulties could theoretically have been dealt with psychoanalytically; the Tavistock group certainly understood it in psychoanalytic terms. However, they noted that:

this important feature is, as a rule, partly or completely unrecognised by repatriates... Direct questioning in consequence does not reveal the extent of this feeling... It should either be tackled fully (i.e. Psychotherapeutically) or left

about manpower shortages and the need to place anyone passed medically fit, see Chapter 1 of this thesis.

76 Jones and Wessely, 'A Paradigm Shift in the Conceptualization of Psychological Trauma in the 20th Century', p. 169; T.C. Hunt, 'Wilson, (Charles McMoran), Baron Moran of Manton', *Munk's Roll: Lives of the Fellows* (Royal College of Physicians, 2009), 407 <munksroll.rcplondon.ac.uk/Biography/Details/3182> [accessed 15 September 2014].

77 Amy Louise Fraher, *A History of Group Study and Psychodynamic Organizations* (Free Association Books, 2004), p. 58.

78 'The Prisoner of War Comes Home', p. 11.

79 'The Prisoner of War Comes Home', p. 13.

severely alone.⁸⁰

They believed that an incomplete analysis could be more damaging than no analysis. Furthermore, they argued that even making a diagnosis was a challenge, as it was easy to 'overestimate a relatively benign depressive situation or, alternatively, to fail in recognising the depressive features behind a superficial screen of cheerfulness.'⁸¹ There were simply not enough trained psychotherapists to see all of the returning POWs, and since the Tavistock group did not feel that their therapeutic skills could be quickly trained in others (Bion had been in psychotherapeutic training for the rather staggering period of seven years), they considered it better not to attempt any form of psychoanalysis on returning POWs.⁸² Instead, they noted the important influence of the community in rehabilitating its own: in this sense, Tom Harrison argues that the Army resettlement work represented a continuation of the Northfield Experiments where group participation or "therapeutic communities" were used as a form of therapy.⁸³ Based on his work at Northfield, and with officer POWs at WOSBs, Bion insisted that a unit for POWs should not be a place that someone was sent to, for a fixed amount of time; instead, it was 'to be a "depot ship" where men that men might come and go from, dipping into the civilian and military communities that they needed to participate in.'⁸⁴ He believed that this would prevent the POWs from feeling constrained and from responding with negative behaviour or feelings. It also fitted the psychiatrists' belief that 'it is not easy to do things psychologically to people... [the psychiatrist's] role has to be that of someone who helps the person to see himself more fully... [the psychiatrist] can only do things with him.'⁸⁵

There was also the practical risk that a programme that was too 'psychiatric' in appearance would be rejected:

[POWs] have not been exposed to three years of development in medical procedures, and in particular are unfamiliar with the scope and methods of Army Psychiatry and of Personnel Selection... In addition, such out of date attitudes to psychiatry as complaints that "I'm not batty" should be anticipated by explanation early in psychiatric interview. There is some reason to believe that the resistance to acknowledging a psychiatric problem may be stronger and deeper-seated in the repatriated than others.⁸⁶

Throughout the war, the Tavistock group had been fearful of how others might react to them and how stereotypes of psychiatry might affect their work. They had worried that very young men at WOSBs specially developed for school-leavers 'would not appreciate the function of the Psychiatrist.' Therefore, to prevent negative reactions, they had concealed their identity in these particular WOSBs and the psychiatric

80 'The Prisoner of War Comes Home', p. 12.

81 'The Prisoner of War Comes Home', p. 20.

82 Ahrenfeldt, p. 241; Trist, p. 3.

83 Tom Harrison and D. Clarke, 'The Northfield Experiments.', *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 160.5 (1992), p. 698 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1192/bjp.160.5.698>>.

84 Trist, p. 20.

85 'Chapter 2: Preliminary Experiments and the Formulation of Working Principles', in *Unpublished WOSBs Write-Up MSS*, p. 4.

86 'The Prisoner of War Comes Home', p. 21.

interview was 'termed a "medical check-up."'87 They now planned to act similarly with POWs. They feared that otherwise, the assumptions about psychiatry made by the POW might prevent him from seeking help they believed that he needed.

This was attributed to a general reluctance to seek help on the part of the POW which in itself was attributed to psychodynamic causes, as the 'anxiety-based drive to "normality"' caused a 'tendency to deny or disregard difficulties and change.'88 The psychiatrists were keen to point out that POWs had an aversion to *all* medics:

One group of doctors who examined a large number of repatriated men said, "Even when they have a very real illness they seem somehow to be much more reticent about it than the ordinary soldier in this country. They seem somehow to be cowed."89

Newman and Collie, POWs themselves, had argued that POWs did not want a fuss to be made of them. The Tavistock psychiatrists confirmed in their interviews that repatriated POWs had a 'sensitivity over being a "damaged" person in need of "help."'90 They found that where there was what the POW felt to be an undue effort on their part, this 'aroused his suspicion that he was being offered merely "bread and circuses," a superficial appeasement that belied any sincere concern.

The Tavistock's military supporter, Sir Ronald Adam, found it necessary to issue official instructions on terminology:

Experience has shown that the word "rehabilitation" ...is frequently taken to connote a process of mental or physical reconditioning made necessary as the prisoner of war is looked on as abnormal or even a "mental case" ... The Adjutant General has given instructions that the expression "mental rehabilitation" or these words separately shall not be used in conversation or in writing. The expressions "resettlement" or "resettlement training" will be employed instead.91

Similarly, 'readjustment' or 'reorientation' were acceptable but Adam repeated that 'under no circumstances' was the term 'mental' to be used. In an editorial in the *British Medical Journal*, Bion pithily explained that resettlement should 'be employing psychiatric machinery; but the machinery need not cause irritation by creaking.'92 The conscious decision to mask the psychological roots of the plans for returning POWs thus came from the psychiatrists, based upon what had been written in the popular press, the psychiatrists' fears about how they were perceived, and initial interviews with some of the first POWs. The Army personnel were thought to be more prone to lapse into using psychological terms or to mention POWs' psychiatric states. From a plea in a magazine article, the idea that POWs should be treated as a 'normal' person

87 'Interviews by the Psychiatrist & the Psychologist at WOSBs', 1945, p. 3, Tavistock Institute Archives, Box 205802222.

88 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda: V An Outline of the Work of the Pilot CRU at Derby', 1945, p. 5, Tavistock Institute Archives, CRUs (PsOW): Planning Memoranda, Box 377625502.

89 'The Prisoner of War Comes Home', p. 21.

90 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda: II Recognition of the Special Problems of Repatriation and Early Military Experiments in Rehabilitation of Repatriates', 1945, p. 3, Tavistock Institute Archives, CRUs (PsOW): Planning Memoranda, Box 377625502.

91 'Memorandum Signed by Lt. Col. Headly for the Director of Prisoners of War', 1945, The National Archives, WO 32/11125; as quoted in John Nichol and Tony Rennell, *The Last Escape: The Untold Story of Allied Prisoners of War in Germany 1944-1945* (Penguin UK, 2003), p. 539.

92 'Return From Stalag', *The British Medical Journal*, 1.4406 (1945), 844-45 (p. 845).

had become official policy of the British Army, and formed the core of early research conclusions and plans for bigger schemes.

A SCHEME IS (SPEEDILY) DEVELOPED

Bion's and Wilson's research projects were both seen as providing valuable conclusions, such as concerning the importance of treating the POW as normal. Both were written up in a Planning Memorandum, 'Recognition of the Special Problems of Repatriation and Early Military Experiments in Rehabilitation of Repatriates;' as well as 'The Prisoner of War Comes Home;' and in their own articles written to disseminate their ideas to their peers.⁹³ However, in January 1944, Bion wrote to fellow psychiatrist John Rickman to say that the 'Prisoner of War business here fell through.'⁹⁴ No. 21 WOSB was no longer under his control, he explained:

They put a prisoner of war Colonel into the job and took it out of the hands of the WOSB altogether; so beyond making amiable remarks to them and picking up what one could in mess [sic] and that sort of thing one has not had much to do with them.⁹⁵

The steps to hide the psychiatrist from the POW's view had perhaps gone further than Bion could have anticipated. Bion's colleagues were fascinated by his ideas, and shortly after his 'demotion,' Wilson, Ronald Hargreaves and Thomas Ferguson Rodger 'had a sort of confab' to get his advice. But, in a pattern that had dogged Bion through the war, his superiors felt that he was not suitable to continue leading experiments further.⁹⁶ When the War Office agreed in February 1944 to a general scheme of tackling POW problems based on the reports of the psychiatrists' work, the 'engaging and encouraging' Wilson was the man Rees chose to lead rather than the 'powerful and colourful personality,' Bion.⁹⁷

Wilson greatly admired Bion, and wanted to base the POW work on some of the ideas about 'therapeutic communities' that Bion had developed at Northfield Military Hospital. Bion did not approve of the direction the work had taken; though he gave his views to Wilson, Bion explained in a letter to his colleague and analyst John Rickman

93 'Return From Stalag' (though unsigned, this was authored by Bion); A.T.M. Wilson, 'The Serviceman Comes Home', ed. by Charles Madge, *Pilot Papers: Social Essays and Documents*, 1.2 (1946).

94 'Wilfred Bion's Letters to John Rickman (1939-1951): The Letters', ed. by Dimitris Vonofakos and Bob Hinshelwood, *Psychoanalysis and History*, 14.1 (2012), 64-94 (p. 81).

95 Vonofakos and Hinshelwood, p. 81.

96 A regimental nomination scheme he developed was shut down after 'accusations of encouraging and development of Soviets' in the Army. Bion had been removed from Northfield military hospital; depending on the account, this was either when the War Office began to be concerned about 'anarchy and chaos' or when mess accounts were amiss and Rees 'did not trust Bion, who was rather strict about regimental conduct, to handle the matter with the discretion he thought necessary.' Then Bion had been moved to the CDC where he felt he could not continue WOSBs experimentation, after which he began work with 21 Army Group in the field, before being called back to Britain with the shocking news of his wife's death. In his autobiography, Bion acknowledged his propensity to attract disapproval from on high: 'Rees did not need any telling' that either Bion would 'blow up... the whole of Army psychiatry... or one of the Big Guns would fire at us.' Trahair, p. 103; Trist, p. 13; Patrick B. de Maré, 'Major Bion', in *Bion and Group Psychotherapy*, ed. by Malcolm Pines (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000), p. 110; Wilfred R. Bion, *All My Sins Remembered: Another Part of a Life & The Other Side of Genius: Family Letters* (Karnac Books, 2012), p. 58.

97 'Obituary: Prof A. T. M. Wilson', *The Times (London)*, 23 September 1978, p. 14; 'Dr Wilfred Bion', *The Times (London)*, 15 November 1979, p. 18.

that he found it 'difficult to do':

I think he fails to realise the nature of resentment that exists amongst the repatriates and therefore hardly gets to the point of seeing the cure, or even the preliminary steps in that direction... At the end of his memo he makes the rather rash suggestion that... these men should be dealt with on principles suggested by recent work... at Northfield.⁹⁸

Bion might well have agreed with psychoanalyst Adrian Stephen's opinion that his colleagues at the Tavistock had 'no profound grasp of psycho-pathology.'⁹⁹ But perhaps Bion failed to recognise what Stephen saw as the value of their abilities 'in the way of practical psychology... in the tactful handling of negotiations.' Though Bion felt that his colleague was rushing under-developed work through, Wilson was keeping pace with social and practical influences. The Mass Observation research, conducted by friends of Wilson, indicated a demand for visible steps to be taken to deal with POWs. It was becoming apparent that international negotiations were progressing and POWs would return in a matter of months whether or not 'the cure' for their ills was as complete as Bion wanted. Moreover, though Wilson might have failed to understand what Bion saw as 'the cure,' he was seemingly more direct in embracing Bion's concept that 'the psychiatrist's job was to create conditions which would enable him largely to leave the scene and allow the ordinary resources of the society to do their work.'¹⁰⁰ Whilst Bion had felt sidelined by the arrival of a POW Colonel, Wilson's personal involvement with the POWs at Crookham had not been so intimate and he was more content to play the role of administrator.¹⁰¹

Wilson's rapid and arms-length approach was in step with government thinking. In Spring 1944, the Ministry of Pensions held an Inter-Departmental meeting and the three Services Departments (Army, Navy, and Air Force) 'agreed to accept responsibility for the "rehabilitation" of their own repatriates.'¹⁰² The Army agreed that the scheme 'would need to be a voluntary one,' and also agreed to the DAP report's suggestions that an 'experimental centre' be created: in November 1944, a pilot unit, No. 10 Special Reception and Training Unit (SRTU), was set up in Derby, with Wilson in charge. He had two months to set up, train staff, and prepare for the arrival of around 60 repatriated POWs. The programme was to involve a few days of settling in, followed by a general reorientation, and then time for individuals to plan for the future. Other features had been described somewhat pre-emptively by Earl Fortescue, who announced a resettlement scheme in Parliament in July 1944 before one had been actually formulated:

Careful and special attention is given to the mental condition of prisoners of war. All repatriated prisoners on return to this country undergo a special rehabilitation course to fit them as efficiently and happily as possible into their

98 Bion, letter to Rickman from January 1944, as quoted in Vonofakos and Hinshelwood, p. 82.

99 Adrian Stephen, statement made during a Business Meeting of the British Psycho-Analytical Society (1943) as quoted in Pearl King, 'Activities of British Psychoanalysts during the Second World War and the Influence of Their Inter-Disciplinary Collaboration on the Development of Psychoanalysis in Great Britain', *International Review of Psycho-Analysis*, 16.15 (1989), 14-33 (p. 17).

100 Trist, p. 24.

101 Trist, p. 23.

102 'Notes on the Origin and Development of the Civil Resettlement Scheme', p. 1.

new environment. This course consists of careful medical examination, lectures, discussions, demonstrations and films designed to attune them once more to life in this country. Care is also taken to ensure as far as possible that the men are found suitable employment.¹⁰³

To run this programme, Wilson invited Eric Trist, who had been at No. 21 WOSB with Bion, to work with him. Trist 'brought the Sanderstead model to this task,' so both experiments were represented, as well as numerous other staff. He recalled:

The first person I asked for was Harold Bridger, who brought the model of Northfield II. We then secured the services of Col. R. M. Rendel, one of the most insightful [sic] of the WOSB Presidents, as Commanding Officer, and two former MTOs, Ian Dawson, who had special gifts as a policy-planner, and Dick Braund, a regular soldier who was a natural clinician.¹⁰⁴

Once again the CRUs built on the WOSBs, using the officer selection scheme as the 'main source of non-medical professionals.'¹⁰⁵ Bridger, a mathematician, had worked on validation of the WOSBs and was valuable where planning required many calculations to direct the scheme depending on how many men actually volunteered. Rendel was a WOSB President who got along with his Board Psychiatrist and actively engaged with psychological ideas. The policy-planning skills of Dawson were intended to address possible involvement from various government ministries and businesses, and the shortage of actual psychiatrists meant that any sympathetic 'natural clinicians' were welcome to help spread first principles to other non-psychologist staff. The staff were therefore all suited to the SRTU work for various reasons usually linked with being sympathetic to psychiatric thinking. Many of them were members of the 'invisible college' that had formed around the WOSBs and the evaluations of selection where, as the previous chapter detailed, the principles, methods, and long-term aims of the Tavistock were explicitly set out.

SRTU was not quite what the planning group had in mind for a prototype unit: the men were not volunteers though they were due for discharge or release on completion of the course; the staff had not been chosen using a technical selection procedure; and the 'hutted camp' was not ideal because it 'bore a certain resemblance to a stalag, particularly in the wintry weather.'¹⁰⁶ However, SRTU was seen as a success that provided useful insights. Though the physical space of the unit was considered a poor choice, the psychiatrists felt that the location was perfect; on the periphery of a sizeable town with 'a mixed industrial element and rural agricultural surroundings,' it catered for all men's tastes.¹⁰⁷ Wilson felt that it was the perfect 'bridge' between the Army and civil life, where the men and their communities could be reintroduced.

Wilson encountered some unexpected reactions to the programme of events, which led to changes being proposed before the design of the units was finalised. For one thing, it was reduced from six weeks to four. The 'lectures, talks and even discussions'

103 Harry Nathan and Hugh Fortescue, 'Repatriated RAMC Personnel', 1944, Hansard, vol. 132, c. 1179.

104 Trist, p. 23.

105 Trist, p. 23.

106 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda V', p. 1.

107 'An Introduction to Special Problems of Repatriation (Draft for Discussion)', p. 2.

were somewhat hindered by difficulties in concentration and memory, and whilst films were 'moderately popular' the 'unexpected popularity of "small shop" visits provided food for thought.'¹⁰⁸ Many men were eager to visit workshops and try new types of practical skills which could become a hobby or career. Subsequently, greater engagement with the Ministry of Labour and local businesses was pursued, and fewer lectures were scheduled. Civilian clothes were 'a great source of satisfaction' after some initial unease, and 'food occupied a significant place in the order of things,' so it was necessary to have staff to wait on men, since queuing for meals raised 'Stalag memories and characteristic anxieties.'¹⁰⁹ The recommendations of the men who had passed through the SRTU therefore shaped it in many small ways, and though some tweaks were required the programme was considered successful. There would never be another 'SRTU,' however, as one of the recommendations noted that 'I would not call it a Special Training Unit to any man... I think the word "training" should be changed.'¹¹⁰ As with Collie and Newman and the focus on the POW being 'normal' rather than labelled with a diagnosis, public recommendations shaped how the psychological staff presented their work and helped to make it more acceptable. Thus it was, and in March 1945 the War Office agreed to proceed with the creation of 20 'Civil Resettlement Units' (CRUs).

COMMUNICATION & THE CRU

Just over a year after the preliminary investigations of POWs had begun at Crookham and No. 21 WOSB, an official scheme was approved and the Tavistock group had to prepare for the task of reintegrating thousands of POWs into civilian communities. They negotiated with government ministries, explained the CRUs to POWs and entice them into engaging with the voluntary scheme, and obtained the support of local communities and businesses so that the programme of events could work as planned, and the therapeutic 'bridge' they believed was necessary could be constructed.¹¹¹ The WOSBs had encountered many difficulties that the Tavistock group believed had stemmed from misunderstandings of their work, and they were determined that the CRUs would be different. Any misunderstandings might put off one of the many groups that Wilson and his colleagues had planned to draw together; communication was vital to the success of the CRUs. Moreover, all this communication had to happen at break-neck speed: Wilson and his group were engaged in a race to ready themselves for the first wave of POWs.

By the very beginning of April 1945, Wilson, Rendel, and the CRU organisers were making frantic calculations about possible numbers and how to manage them:

Negotiations are well advanced for taking over Hatfield House, Hatfield, which will require relatively slight alteration, to hold the planning staff and an attached

108 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda V', p. 5.

109 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda V', p. 6.

110 'Volunteering for CRUs: Notes for Military Advisory Officers', p. 5, Tavistock Institute Archives, CRUs (PsOW): Papers/Talks/Contributions, Box 377625502.

111 'Settling Down in Civvy Street' (The War Office, 1945), p. 4, Tavistock Institute Archives, CRUs (PsOW): Papers/Talks/Contributions, Box 377625502.

CRU. It is just possible that the requisite staff can be selected and trained, and the essential local contacts can be made in six weeks; and that the necessary alterations can be made and equipment installed also in that time.¹¹²

Places, people, and supporters all had to be found, and as with the WOSBs the War Office were more interested in expediency than more experimentation to develop psychological principles and methods. This time, the psychiatrists set up a unit that was to satisfy both the Army's desire for control and their own interest in research: Hatfield was headquarters but also host to No. 1 CRU. This avoided the problems (discussed in the previous chapter) of the lead technical staff having their training or research limited by lack of a local 'field' to work in, as had been the case at the Control and Development Centre for the WOSBs. CRUs were designed to be similar to the active unit of the headquarters, No. 1 CRU, which meant that new findings at the research unit could be applied elsewhere. They were located near to the homes of repatriates as calculated from census figures, as 'one of the strongest factors in the repatriate's decision to volunteer or not is his dislike of going away from home.'¹¹³ They were in proximity to a large town (over 100,000 inhabitants), though not close to a bomb-damaged area, which might be psychologically harmful.

The location on the edge of a large town meant that the CRU was physically and metaphorically on the boundary between a military life and a civilian one. Since Crookham, Wilson had been concerned about the waiting civilians as much as the returning soldiers; he had proposed 'a survey of the public attitude to the returned soldier... and public education in the matter based on this.'¹¹⁴ He felt that the 'process of resettlement is a reciprocal readaptation and reintegration of split families and split communities.'¹¹⁵ By locating the unit near to towns, the civilians and the soldiers could, under the expert staffs' supervision, adapt to one another once more. It enabled the psychiatrists to carry out their plans to bring civilians to the CRUs as well as easing men out into the towns. Units held regular social evenings 'to harness the good will and interest of civilians in the neighbourhood.'¹¹⁶ The returning POWs and the 'anxious' communities that had awaited their return were 'treated' together in a 'therapeutic community.'¹¹⁷

Units were, where possible, located in country houses as WOSBs had been. As with WOSBs, the use of country houses was also attributed to the need to accommodate large numbers of staff and men. As well as this practical reason, there was a psychological reason for using country houses. At the WOSBs, the country house setting suggested that the most able might overcome class limitations to become

112 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda: IV The Rate of Formation of CRUs', 1945, p. 1, Tavistock Institute Archives, CRUs (PsOW): Planning Memoranda, Box 377625502.

113 'Volunteering for CRUs: Notes for Military Advisory Officers', p. 6.

114 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda: III The Formation and Work of the Planning Staff', 1945, p. 2, Tavistock Institute Archives, CRUs (PsOW): Planning Memoranda, Box 377625502.

115 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda V', p. 2.

116 'An Introduction to Special Problems of Repatriation (Draft for Discussion)', p. 3.

117 For more on the links between the CRUs and the earlier Northfield Experiments (which Bion denied would be relevant, but nonetheless formed a theoretical basis for some of Wilson's work), see Harrison.

officers, just as they had crossed the threshold into the upper-class house. Similarly, with the CRUs, country houses were chosen to present the 'most agreeable surroundings;' they acted as a promise of the culture and wealth that active participation in post-war democratic society might offer repatriates.¹¹⁸

Each unit had a Commanding Officer, second-in-command, adjutant, medical officer, vocational officer, technical officer (responsible for putting on workshops), and four officers to lead each 'syndicate' of 60 men who arrived weekly. There was also a Ministry of Labour Liaison Officer and a Civil Liaison Officer (CLO). Psychiatrists were in short supply, so came and went as part-time 'associates.'¹¹⁹ Unlike the WOSBs, where the psychiatrists' involvement was clear and contentious, at CRUs they were presented as auxiliary staff; the threat of their 'dominating' procedures was not evident from the CRU itself.

After the dissatisfaction with WOSBs' staff's lack of 'first principles' when the scheme expanded (see previous chapter), it was important to the CRU planners that they found an effective way of communicating ideas amongst the staff at CRUs. To this end, familiar faces were brought in. Isabel Menzies, a lecturer in economics at St Andrews, had worked during the university holidays with Trist attempting to validate the WOSBs; in the summer of 1945, she resigned her lectureship and 'quickly, Trist got her into a CRU at Hatfield.'¹²⁰ Other staff were drawn from the DSP, and primarily from WOSBs, as time was 'too pressing to permit key staff to start from scratch' and the experienced staff drawn from the Tavistock group were 'already finding it difficult to keep pace with events.'¹²¹ Most staff were drawn from WOSBs and therefore shared a common pool of ideas, theories and practices. Whilst many senior figures had found the WOSBs staff's psychological background problematic, there was no outcry over the CRUs staffing or design. The work to emphasise the 'normality' of the POWs had benefits for the psychiatrists too, with the same staff as WOSBs working under far less scrutiny.

By using known staff, Wilson and Rendel also intended for a 'budding off' effect, whereby traditions and principles would be spread by "apprenticeship" to a working unit.'¹²² As the previous chapter suggested, training was very important to the Tavistock because they felt that a thorough psychological expertise could only be achieved through a long education in first principles, and they believed that it was important to have their expertise recognised through accreditation. However, the importance of being recognised as experts was balanced by the importance of developing support for psychological ideas and interesting others in their work.¹²³

118 'Volunteering for CRUs: Notes for Military Advisory Officers', p. 7.

119 Ahrenfeldt, pp. 240-241.

120 Trahair, p. 107.

121 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda III', p. 1.

122 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda III', p. 3.

123 For more on this dichotomy, see Mathew Thomson, 'The Popular, the Practical and the Professional: Psychological Identities in Britain, 1901-1950', in *Psychology in Britain: Historical Essays and Personal Reflections*, ed. by G. C. Bunn, A. D. Lovie, and G. D. Richards (BPS Books, 2001).

Consequently, regimental officers 'were trained to handle group discussions.'¹²⁴ The Tavistock group planning the CRUs felt that, given carefully planned training, limited work based upon psychoanalytic foundations could be entrusted to others.

This surrender of psychological methods was balanced by supervision and centralised control. Part of the reason why it was considered possible to devolve so much responsibility to non-psychological staff, and a significant difference in how the CRUs operated compared with the WOSBs, was that the headquarters was 'designed to grow into a control headquarters.' Wilson and his associates at Hatfield dealt with any queries, and set out the rules to *all* staff rather than only issuing memoranda to psychiatric staff, as had the staff coordinating the WOSBs. In a 15 page guide, staff were instructed: 'if you have any [difficulties], ring us up at once... if there is anything about CRUs that you cannot answer from your own knowledge... ring up Civil Resettlement HQ straightaway.'¹²⁵ The psychiatrists saw such referrals to headquarters as serving another purpose in addition to helping them to ensure that their methods were used properly. Referring to headquarters' expertise and the 'proper authority,' they suggested, had a 'most remarkable effect in building up confidence in the minds of repatriates.' The hierarchy was important to those who planned the CRUs because it was responsible for maintaining clear and accurate communications, and therefore trust. Trust and the responsibility of the authority-figure to communicate clearly was central to the relationship between analyst and analysand, and Wilson brought the same attitude to the organisation of the CRU.¹²⁶

To Wilson, Rendel, and the planners, the careful selection and training of staff was also important because of the sensitive nature of resettlement work. Wilson believed that selection by 'technical methods' was a 'necessary safeguard' to employ in choosing staff for CRUs for the protection of the sensitive POWs and the staff themselves.¹²⁷ Not only did the POWs need very careful handling, the staff themselves had to withstand 'the emotional stresses involved in work which involves overcoming suspicion or hostility.'¹²⁸ They had to be, in this sense, 'amateur psychiatrists.'¹²⁹ The guidelines for sensitive interviewing technique and managing group discussions that had been developed at WOSBs were therefore adapted for use with the repatriates, who were considered sensitive and as having many problems of a sensitive nature.¹³⁰

Women and sex were very sensitive topics for the POWs, according to the group's early research, so staff were carefully selected in this respect. A large proportion of CRU staff were Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS) staff, whose womanly presence

124 Trist, p. 24.

125 'Volunteering for CRUs: Notes for Military Advisory Officers', p. 3.

126 This echoed the importance of the analyst communicating clearly with their analysand.

127 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda III', p. 2.

128 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda III', p. 3.

129 Major P.G.S. Johnson, 'Family Guidance', p. 1, Tavistock Institute Archives, CRUs (PsOW): Papers/Talks/Contributions, Box 377625502.

130 'Civil Resettlement - Training Notes 1-8 - Principle of Counselling for Regimental Officers', 1947, Tavistock Institute Archives, CRUs (PsOW): Notes for Vocational Staff, Box 377625502; 'Notes for Vocational Staff: No. 5 Group Discussions', Tavistock Institute Archives, CRUs (PsOW): Notes for Vocational Staff, Box 377625502.

was deliberately planned so that 'by the friendly and non-threatening way they interacted with the repatriates in carrying out their ordinary duties', they might help repatriates to become more comfortable in mixed company.¹³¹ A large number of WOSB staff were ATS personnel, who processed the psychological test data as well as doing administrative and domestic duties; they were therefore familiar with the psychiatrists' principles, as well as able to carry out the variety of functions required to run a CRU such as cleaning, waiting tables, and administration. Wilson and his team believed that by simply being present and female, yet professional, the ATS staff were helping the POWs back to civilisation.

To deal with the next step of a POW's resumption of his traditional gender role, the return to heterosexual romantic relationships, the organisers of WOSBs staffed each unit with a Civil Liaison Officer (CLO), a social worker trained in psychological methods and principles. This officer had individual and group discussions in an effort to resolve problems using 'specialist advice.'¹³² The CLO of Civil Resettlement Headquarters at Hatfield, Mrs A.D. Brown, noted that the social worker was a familiar face from civil society, as 'there were few of the men who, at one time or another, had not received help or counsel from social workers in some sphere, and they were prepared to come to us.'¹³³ Whereas POWs experiencing difficulties (and, implicitly, anyone else who could avoid it) were seen as unlikely to approach a psychiatrist for help, the CLO offered psychologically trained experience in a more acceptable form.

Brown noted that many problems had emerged from men being disoriented by their spouse being so efficient and coping without them, leading to men becoming 'morose,' 'throwing his weight about,' or going out 'to find himself a girl-friend.'¹³⁴ Part of her job, Brown felt, was to help husband and wife 'in the interpretation of the one to the other.' Essentially, she was passing on her psychologised conception of the situation, educating others in 'interpreting' situations in a psychological way. Brown worked to help men to adjust to social change and to more independent women, however she observed that the social disparity of the British patriarchy meant that women social workers were in fact more suited to the task of accomplishing this, as POWs 'found they could discuss [a problem] with a woman where as [sic] they would have felt diminished in their fellow-men's estimation by the fact that they could not or had not handled it themselves.'¹³⁵ Not only was a CLO less threatening than a psychiatrist, a woman was less threatening than a man; psychiatric ideas were repackaged into the most acceptable form and coordinated rather than delivered personally by the CRU psychiatrists.

Another particularly sensitive topic the CRU planning staff felt it their duty to help the POW with was that of physical sexual relations. In a planning memorandum

131 Trist, p. 24.

132 'Volunteering for CRUs: Notes for Military Advisory Officers', p. 8.

133 A.D. Brown, 'The Work of the Social Service Officer', 1947, p. 1, Tavistock Institute Archives, CRUs (PsOW): Notes for Vocational Staff, Box 377625502.

134 Brown, p. 3.

135 Brown, p. 2.

marked 'confidential' in large, bold letters, the CRU staff noted that recovery from impotence was 'a prime factor in the resettlement of the repatriate.'¹³⁶ They believed that as many as 80% of repatriates experienced sexual impotence. It was believed to be important that men could literally return to being productive citizens, in order that they could also settle socially and economically. The taboo of sex was discussed by the CRU planners in the same exasperated tone that Culpin had used when discussing the taboo of psychiatry; they suggested that it was ridiculous that people were still so 'hush-hush' about it, but that they could not effect social change overnight, so resigned themselves to handling the situation with delicacy. Thus the topic of impotence was to be treated with the same sort of care that the POW himself was given according to psychiatric principles: 'one must not make it a special problem.'¹³⁷ It was to be mentioned in the Medical Officer's Introductory Talk (the MO was to be a psychiatrist wherever possible), and then discussed further in a discussion group, though not 'singled out from a string of other symptoms... such as sweating easily, indigestion, loss of memory, lack of concentration, crying in the pictures, rheumatic pains, etc.'¹³⁸ The CRUs aimed to treat the POW as a normal person, and impotence as a normal problem, in order to make seeking help more acceptable.

YES MINISTERS: SECURING THE PARTICIPATION OF THE MINISTRIES OF LABOUR AND PRODUCTION

Based on Wilson's work at Derby, the involvement of several other groups was believed by the CRU planners to be as vital as a carefully selected staff. Consequently, the process of communicating with others began straight away:

as soon as they have moved into Headquarters, they will need to receive guests, on a considerable scale, for after-dinner discussions on the problems it is proposed to tackle. These guests - with whom some contact has already been made - will be representatives of:-

- a) Ministry of Labour
- b) industrial federations, trades associations, etc.
- c) national social organisations (e.g. Nat. Council of Social Services).
- d) representatives of the general public, of the press, film, radio, etc.¹³⁹

It was partly in the self-interest of the many of these groups to be involved, as demonstrated by Ministry of Labour Deputy Regional Controller Mr O.N. Taylor's statement at the Deputy Adjutant-General's Meeting of March 1st 1945 when the CRUs were first approved:

[the Ministry of Labour] might help on the man power side by regarding part of the personnel concerned in the work... as a Ministry of Labour responsibility... on the understanding that from a national point of view the task of the units were predominantly to help maintain our civil labour resources.¹⁴⁰

However, a vague sense that there might be a benefit in the long run might not be

136 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda: X Impotence in Repatriated Prisoners of War', 1945, p. 1, Tavistock Institute Archives, CRUs (PsOW): Planning Memoranda, Box 377625502.

137 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda X', p. 4.

138 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda X', p. 4.

139 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda III', p. 3.

140 'Notes on the Origin and Development of the Civil Resettlement Scheme', p. 2.

enough. In order for the CRU planning staff to guarantee the cooperation of the various groups they wanted to be involved in the CRUs, they carefully tailored communications about their work to each group.

Wilson set to work trying to engage the industrial federations and trades associations. He had delivered an address to the Ministry of Production on the 28th March at Kodak Hall, Wealdstone, which was attended by the Regional Controller of the Ministry of Labour and his deputy, managers of Employment Exchanges, members of the staff of Ministry of Production Regional and District Offices, and around 200 Liaison Officers, as well as the Medical Officer from Glacier Metal Co. and the Works Manager of Murex Limited. The general theme of the meeting was on rehabilitating physically disabled persons, but Wilson noted that 'the psychological aspects of resettlement in civil life may suggest a background to the more specific matters with which others are to deal.'¹⁴¹ At the very beginning of his talk, he claimed that he and his colleagues' work had relevance for everyone. Wilson then made the problems of resettlement even more relevant to his audience:

Officers who return from some years of overseas duty, not to an uncertain future, but as a rule to a better position with an assured future, not infrequently complain that a period of months usually elapses before they find it possible to settle down to an environment which was once familiar but now seems strange. Their complaints are of serious difficulty and it is, therefore, clear that even if we could anticipate no social or economic problems in the post war period, and even if everyone were to return to an assured position in the home community, there would still remain psychological problems of resettlement which are of a very real type, and which can in no way be avoided.¹⁴²

Using the 'ideal repatriate' that Collie and Newman represented as officers with admirable work ethics, Wilson warned that even in the most ideal situation there would be psychological problems and hinted that they might be far more significant depending on the economic and employment situation at the end of the war. The psychological problems, though, were described in terms of 'strangeness,' 'bitterness,' 'cynicism,' and 'mistrust of impersonal authority.' Concordant with the experiments and planning, there was no mention of psychiatric diagnosis, only 'normal' but undesirable behaviour.

Wilson offered the promise of a simple and inexpensive way to deal with such problems. He called attention to the Hawthorne experiment conducted near Chicago between 1924-32, where output had increased and increased no matter what changes researchers implemented. This was explained as being because workers 'were encouraged – and who among us would not be – by the conviction that their management was trying to understand.'¹⁴³ Wilson suggested that his audience might achieve similar results with 'a meal, or a cup of tea in the canteen.' The approach to resettlement and the resolution of workplace conflict that Wilson endorsed was grounded in psychological thinking and studies, but based on a logic that the

141 Wilson, 'Some Psychological Aspects of Resettlement', p. 1.

142 Wilson, 'Some Psychological Aspects of Resettlement', p. 2.

143 Wilson, 'Some Psychological Aspects of Resettlement', p. 14.

businessmen in the audience could appreciate, and with a low price-tag that was appealing. Wilson concluded with a 'last word,' in which he declared:

There can by now be little reason to doubt that good personnel management is not a humanitarian affair but is satisfactorily reflected in the annual reports of companies.

To the inevitable cynic much of what I have said many appear to be the very words of an impractical and starry-eyed idealist. Nothing could be further from the truth. If there are any doubt this, I can only ask them to consider the history of the post-war phase of 1918 to 1921 as recorded in the records of their firms, and the memories of their executives. There is no doubt about it. This time, if we are to survive, we must learn from experience.¹⁴⁴

Wilson made an appeal to the businessmen and the ministers present by calling upon their morals, their business sense, their knowledge of history and of society after the previous World War.

Smooth relations and clear communications with the bureaucratic behemoths of the Ministry of Production and the Ministry of Labour were important, as any misunderstanding might result in a delay to the very tight schedule of creating the CRUs. Communications with the Ministry of Labour illuminate just how rapidly the work on the CRUs had to progress; preliminary meetings with the Ministry to discuss its role in the scheme began in late April, and the first Unit opened its doors on May 31st. To ensure Ministry goodwill, the CRU leaders ensured that the Ministry staff were made to feel that their role was a vital one. At a later meeting, for instance, Rendel emphasised how he and his colleagues wanted to work 'hand in glove' with the Ministry to overcome the 'considerable difficulties in civil-military liaison' on such a scale as well as the problems of the POWs themselves.¹⁴⁵ Rendel was a particularly effective front for the psychiatrists in dealing with these other groups: he had a 'deceptive military bearing, including a monocle,' behind which he concealed 'a close connection with "the Bloomsbury Group," [and] a delightful[ly] intellectual left-wing character.'¹⁴⁶ He thus appealed to both traditionalists and reformers, communicating the approach of the CRUs in a palatable package. In response to Rendel's proposals, the Ministry's staff stated that they 'quite understood' that their staff's duties at the CRU 'would have to be worked out by experimentation' and stressed the importance of selecting the right people for the role.¹⁴⁷ They bonded with the Army group over an interest in technical selection.

As Taylor's statement from the earlier meeting indicated, the Ministry of Labour's

144 Wilson, 'Some Psychological Aspects of Resettlement', p. 15.

145 'Minutes of a Meeting with Ministry of Labour Regional Controllers at CRU Planning HQ, Hatfield', 1945, pp. 1-2, The National Archives, LAB 12/352.

146 H. V. Dicks, p. 107. The Bloomsbury connection was through family as well as friends; Rendel's uncle was Lytton Strachey, and his sister-in-law was the diarist Frances Partridge. Rendel was also connected to the scientific left; his son was friends with Lionel Penrose, the geneticist, and was one of a tiny minority who could claim to be J.B.S. Haldane's PhD students. James Rendel nearly died working with Haldane during the war on submarine experiments. See: Ian Franklin, Geoff Grigg and Oliver Mayo, 'James Meadows Rendel', *Historical Records of Australian Science*, 15.2 (2004), 269-84 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1071/HR04011>>.

147 'Minutes of a Meeting with Ministry of Labour Regional Controllers at CRU Planning HQ, Hatfield', p. 3.

ready willingness to participate in the CRU was linked with their own concerns with 'problem men;' they had 'already' had 'human problems' recruiting from the Army.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, the Ministry's Controller for London Region touched upon the Ministry's more abstract challenges: there was an 'unfortunate association of the Ministry of Labour and National Service with unemployment and [a] need to replace this by more friendly and constructive relations.'¹⁴⁹ By this stage, the experimental work at WOSBs had dealt with the officer problem and improved the image of the British Army, and Ministry felt that the CRUs might do the same for them.¹⁵⁰

Colonel Rendel closed the meeting between the CRU representatives and the Ministry of Labour by expressing a hope 'that all present at the conference would appreciate that they were at the beginning of a new experiment in social development.'¹⁵¹ He made the CRUs sound modern, cutting-edge, and yet paternalistic.¹⁵² Later that day, the Ministry circulated a memorandum to their staff, demonstrating their intention to participate and outlining how a CRU worked:

From the vocational point of view it has been explained that the first stage ("therapeutic") will consist of getting the men into groups... to enable them to relieve their minds of preconceptions of the jobs they wish to undertake and to give them the opportunity of asking questions... of the CRU experts.¹⁵³

Once the repatriates had been settled by the 'experts,' they would be passed to the Placing Officer from the Ministry. As the statement indicates, the Ministry of Labour were aware of the therapeutic foundations of the CRU staff's expertise. That they appeared unconcerned by these psychoanalytic roots indicates the success of Rendel and Wilson's mission to ensure that POWs appeared 'normal' and yet also as requiring psychological help. The term 'experts' was frequently used in references to the CRU staff in the Ministry of Labour files, also indicating an acceptance that the psychological staff had relevant specialist knowledge.

In the letter that accompanied the memorandum, Ministry of Labour representative J.H. Harmer observed that the 'War Office people attach considerable importance' to POWs visiting local Ministry offices as 'apparently the experiment at Derby has proved the value of this beyond doubt.'¹⁵⁴ Rendel, Wilson and Trist had persuaded the

148 'Minutes of a Meeting with Ministry of Labour Regional Controllers at CRU Planning HQ, Hatfield', p. 3.

149 'Minutes of a Meeting with Ministry of Labour Regional Controllers at CRU Planning HQ, Hatfield', p. 3.

150 As far as the public were concerned, WOSBs were a great success in this regard, as related in one of the few popular publications on the WOSBs: 'A New Way to Choose Our Army Officers', *Picture Post* (London, 19 September 1942), pp. 16–20.

151 'Minutes of a Meeting with Ministry of Labour Regional Controllers at CRU Planning HQ, Hatfield', p. 3.

152 Some business historians have suggested that this is how many British firms of the mid-twentieth century wanted to see themselves. See Kevin Whitston, 'Scientific Management Practice in Britain: A History' (unpublished PhD, University of Warwick, 1995); and Bernard Burnes and Bill Cooke, 'The Tavistock's 1945 Invention of Organization Development: Early British Business and Management Applications of Social Psychiatry', *Business History*, 55.5 (2013), 768–89.

153 'R1191: Civil Resettlement Units for Army Personnel', 1945, p. 2, The National Archives, LAB 12/352.

154 J.H. Harmer, 'Letter to All Regional Controllers: Civil Resettlement Units for Ex-Prisoners of War', 10 May 1945, p. 1, The National Archives, LAB 12/352.

Ministry of the value of CRU experiments, their own credentials, and the benefit of the work to the Ministry, who noted that 'we feel sure that any assistance we can give as a Department in this venture may well save us considerable trouble and difficulties later.'¹⁵⁵

The Ministry of Labour's ready cooperation had not been inevitable, despite the CRUs in some ways working in their interests. This was clearly illustrated in an incident from later in May 1945, which presented a strong contrast to the good relations between the Army group and the Ministry. Mr D. Milne from the Newcastle branch of the Ministry advised the London headquarters that he had been involved in discussions about an air force version of the CRU, to be established in Scarborough, and an allocation centre in Catterick, 'to be the only RAF establishment of its kind in the country.'¹⁵⁶ Milne wanted his man Mr Hodson to take on a role there. Milne was reprimanded in no uncertain terms by Mr J.G. Robertson from Ministry Headquarters:

We have not as yet heard anything of the Allocation Centre from Air Ministry headquarters and our view is that, in the absence of a lead from headquarters, assistance on the lines described... should not be provided. It would be appropriate for Air Ministry to contact our headquarters on this question and for O&E department to be consulted, and we should want to have fuller information about the whole scheme before undertaking to give the amount of assistance suggested.¹⁵⁷

The men in charge of the Air Ministry's resettlement programme had transgressed the proper protocol and therefore were to receive no further co-operation until they had done so, despite 'having gone so far' with the Newcastle branch office. This highlights by contrast how effectively Rendel had strategically approached the right people and understood the importance of hierarchies of government in shaping the CRUs.

PERSUADING POWS AND CIVILIANS TO PARTICIPATE

All of this effort to staff the CRUs and ensure the cooperation of the Ministry of Labour and local businesses was for nothing if the returning POWs did not choose to attend the voluntary units. Because of this, the CRU planners wanted to engage repatriates' active participation from the earliest possible moment. The urgent plans to have 'representatives of the general public, of the press, film, radio, etc.' to dinner at Hatfield demonstrates their conscious efforts to communicate their work far and wide.¹⁵⁸ This was far a more ambitious programme than WOSBs, where the Tavistock group had films made to show men what Boards were like and had an article published in the *Picture Post*. It was a concerted effort to systematically engage with POWs and their families from before they left camps, right up to the time when they might finally attend a Unit.

155 Harmer, p. 1.

156 D. Milne, 'Letter to J.G. Robertson, Esq., Headquarters, London', 15 May 1945, The National Archives, LAB 12/352.

157 J.G. Robertson, 'Letter to D. Milne, Esq., Regional Office, Newcastle-on-Tyne', 22 May 1945, The National Archives, LAB 12/352.

158 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda III', p. 3.

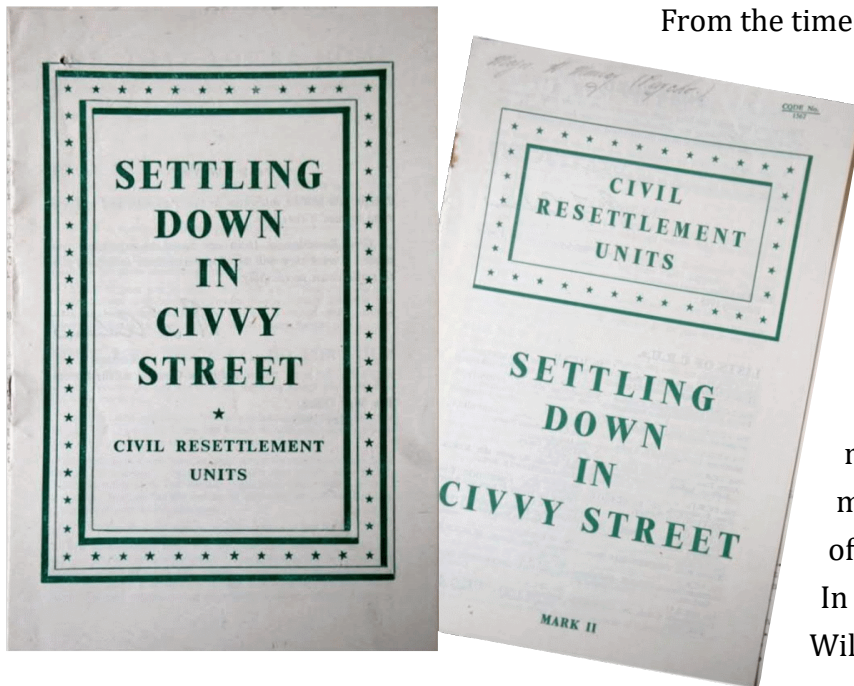


FIGURE 11: *Settling Down in Civvy Street* Pamphlets on CRUs, Mark I & Mark II. Tavistock Archives, Box 377625502.

From the time of the Crookham

Experiment, Wilson had believed that 'immediate efforts might, with advantage, be made to keep men fully informed, through the Red Cross, with regard to... the aims, methods and results of "rehabilitation."¹⁵⁹

In planning the CRUs, Wilson and his colleagues carefully considered how to make men aware of the

CRUs, even at times when they might

not be interested, so that they would know where to go if and when they became interested in help. Lectures and notes were prepared for the officers who were going to camps and those who would see the POWs at medical boards on their discharge from the Army. Communication was not a one-way process even at this stage: as well as communicating information about the CRUs to the POWs, these officers were also to communicate information about the POWs to the CRU staff so that they could continually revise and improve their work.¹⁶⁰

The officers were to be more than form distributors; Wilson felt that if POWs were to 'merely sign a form without understanding it, they may possibly change their minds and fail to turn up,' which would be a disaster for those trying to anticipate numbers and, in Wilson's view, for the man himself.¹⁶¹ Officers had to be active communicators on behalf of the CRUs, so the CRU staff tried to train them for this role. This verbal approach was important to the psychiatrists, who thought that in the chaos of repatriation 'the printed word and the formal command will carry little weight... full and detailed discussion – however repetitive and wearisome – is the only way.'¹⁶² Guidance on what should be said to POWs was provided in notes, including sections on 'reassurance' and counterarguments for use when a man said he did not want to go to a CRU.¹⁶³

The important role that the officers had to play was emphasised in their instructions. These set out expectations of the results officers 'ought to get' and placed a weighty

159 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda III', p. 2.

160 'Volunteering for CRUs: Notes for Military Advisory Officers', p. 3.

161 'Volunteering for CRUs: Notes for Military Advisory Officers', p. 1.

162 'Lecture to SHAEF Officers' Course', p. 4.

163 'Volunteering for CRUs: Notes for Military Advisory Officers', pp. 6–7 Counterarguments included examples like: "My wife is against it." The wife is the strongest competitor for the repatriate's time and attention; but what will wives say if repatriates get into the wrong job?'

moral responsibility on their shoulders by advising them that their job was to prevent 'misery and unhappiness in repatriated men and their families.'¹⁶⁴ The high stakes and responsibility of the officer were also expressed at a Lecture to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force Executive Officers:

The work you are going to do in relation to repatriation from Germany is no routine job. It offers, at one and the same time, prospects of resounding success and drastic failure, either of which will have very considerable repercussions both within and without the Army. For there is something about prisoners of war which appears to excite the best and the worst in all of us.¹⁶⁵

To avoid the worst, the principles developed from Newman and Collie's articles and from the early experiments were outlined for the officers, with instructions not to 'regard these chaps as slightly "peculiar people"... they are not in need of sympathy or pity and will bitterly resent it if it is offered them.'¹⁶⁶ The officers were warned, using a psychological example, about the consequences of forgetting what might seem to be fussy orders about terminology and behaviour to use with POWs:

Notice that in the prison camps the military authority concerned with the unpleasant state of things is that of the despised and hated Germans. The benevolent authority concerned with food and welfare is democratic and non-military. These are further reasons why it is fatally easy for you by impersonal and apparently useless orders, to become confused with the Germans in the minds of POWs.¹⁶⁷

The CRU planners warned that the dire consequences of failing to follow their guidance would result in soldiers subconsciously associating senior officers with the enemy Nazis. By such rousing speeches and dire warnings, a group of officers were trained to 'sell' the CRUs.

The information the officers were trained to provide was reinforced when the POWs reached home. Before the CRU staff had even reached Hatfield, they had submitted a pamphlet for printing, which was to be sent to repatriates a fortnight after they began their leave to tell them all about CRUs. This would maintain communications at a time when perhaps the repatriate had begun to experience difficulties settling. Such was the worry that there might not be information for interested repatriates that, whilst the pamphlet was being printed, plans were made to have stencilled versions made available in Record Offices.¹⁶⁸ There were also plans to supplement the pamphlet with a poster, for which 'suitable designs should be produced as soon as possible.'¹⁶⁹

The pamphlet was duly printed, and went into a second edition six months later.¹⁷⁰ It expressed the aspects of the CRUs that the early research had specified as important, focussing on personal choice by regularly employing conditionals like 'if' and advising men that they could arrange their own time. This reflected the idea that people must

164 'Volunteering for CRUs: Notes for Military Advisory Officers', p. 1.

165 'Lecture to SHAEF Officers' Course', p. 1.

166 'Volunteering for CRUs: Notes for Military Advisory Officers', p. 3.

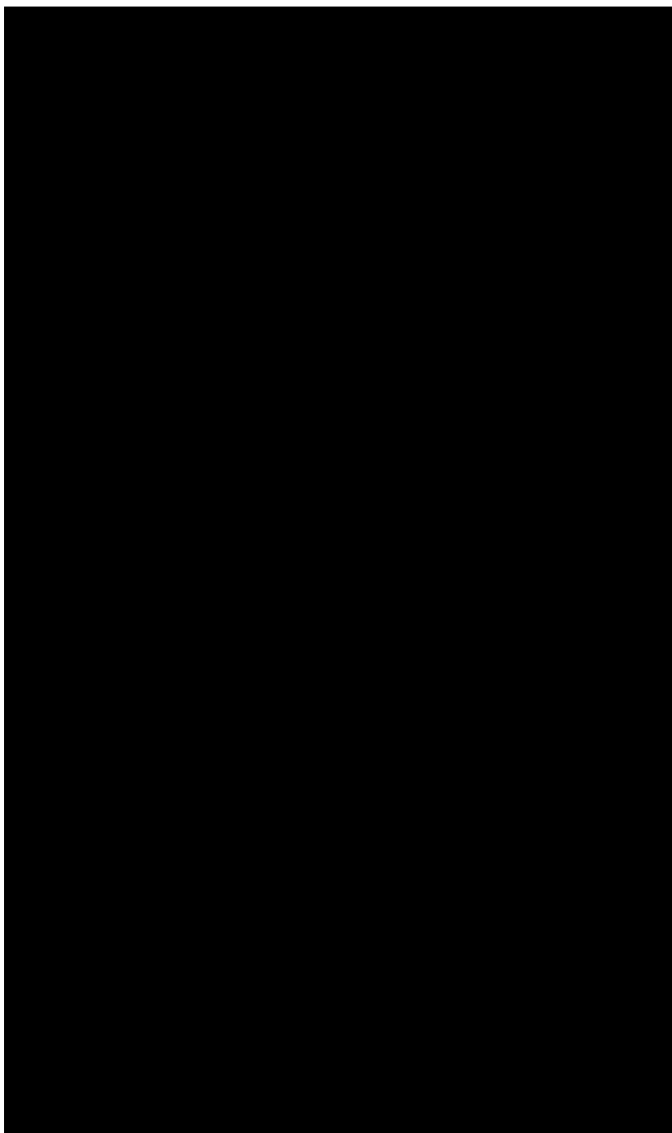
167 'Lecture to SHAEF Officers' Course', p. 2.

168 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda III', p. 5.

169 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda III', p. 5.

170 'Settling Down in Civvy Street'; 'Settling Down in Civvy Street: Mark II' (The War Office, 1946), Tavistock Institute Archives, CRUs (PsOW): Papers/Talks/Contributions, Box 377625502.

opt-in for rehabilitation to be successful. Frequent references to 'qualified experts,' 'specially trained' personnel, and 'specialist' staff addressed the need highlighted by



the Mass Observation research on *The Journey Home* to show people that careful thought was being given to the process of demobilisation and to post-war planning. The pamphlet was strategically planned to make these plans seem as attractive as possible and to 'bring out the features which, from experience of the Derby Unit, are known to make strongest appeal to repatriates.'¹⁷¹ Wilson and his team implied that they were not necessarily the same features that were most important from a psychological perspective, but that the priority was to get men to CRUs rather than to educate them about the psychological value of the programme.

As well as Army personnel and official publications, the media were also used to try and reach the POWs and get them to volunteer

for CRUs. Wilson and Rendel waged an enormous communication campaign to bring their work to the attention of the masses. In their plans, Wilson, Rendel, and their colleagues noted that the 'special case of the press, film and radio will require great forethought.'¹⁷² They felt that they could tie in publicity for the CRUs with wider discussions of demobilisation in order to treat the POW as normal rather than a special case:

an effective lead in outlining the problems of resettlement would inevitably start just these discussions we desire to see between, on the one hand, resettled service men and their families, and on the other, the next-of-kin of those who will shortly leave the Army. In this way the problems of the repatriated prisoner of war can be dealt with as part of a larger problem without singling them out in a way which is often open to misinterpretation.¹⁷³

In 1945, press coverage of POWs spiked again (see graph, above); discussions were initiated by carefully planned news coverage.

171 'Volunteering for CRUs: Notes for Military Advisory Officers', p. 6.

172 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda III', p. 4.

173 'Civil Resettlement Planning Memoranda III', p. 4.

Many articles were published in local and national newspapers to trumpet the development of the CRUs and the opening of units. In fact, the first newspaper story on CRUs ran in April 1945, the same month that Planning Headquarters were established and before the first unit had even opened to repatriates. *The Times* article on CRU Camps, 'Helping Repatriated Prisoners,' was in press even before the Ministry of Labour had circulated information outside of their headquarters, which prompted Harmer to write to his colleagues that 'the scheme is yet in its infancy but there has been some publicity about its work... and I think it right to give you as comprehensive a picture... as possible.'¹⁷⁴ The article itself had obviously come from the CRU headquarters, as had another published in *The Manchester Guardian* the same month. They echoed the terms CRU planners used, for instance regurgitating their phrase 'bridge the gap' and referring to the psychological underpinnings of the scheme by noting that repatriation 'calls for a complex readjustment in the mind of the man who makes it.'¹⁷⁵ The newspapers even reported that CRUs would:

act, as it were, as psychological decompression chambers between the supercharged atmosphere of military service and the deceptive normality of everyday life... such an opportunity to get acclimatised... will save many a puzzled repatriate from what might be called a mental attack of "the bends."¹⁷⁶

This clearly echoed Newman's article in the *British Medical Journal*, which had so influenced Wilson.

Other articles followed in rapid succession, and were carefully tailored to make the CRUs as appealing as possible to the publications' readerships. They commonly featured details such as the specialist training and expertise of the staff, the comfort of the accommodation, and the freedom in respect of work and activities. They also almost all mentioned that there were to be 'brains trusts,' groups to discuss how things should be run, alluding to the democratic nature of the CRUs.¹⁷⁷ Articles often also included quotes from CRU presidents encouraging participation from local communities, often in local publications.

On Thursday, 12th July, the CRUs achieved a great coup that generated many column inches: a royal visit at Hatfield.¹⁷⁸ Each publication covered the event in its own style: *The Times* particularly focussed on the country house location and luxurious accommodation, describing how the King and Queen toured 'the lovely Jacobean home of the Marquess of Salisbury', where 'repatriated prisoners of war, in the serene atmosphere of one of England's most lovely country houses and estates, are learning

174 'C.R.U. Camps', *The Times*, 26 April 1945, p. 2; Harmer.

175 'Breaking It Gently', *The Manchester Guardian* (Manchester, United Kingdom, 26 April 1945).

176 'Breaking It Gently'.

177 'Brains Trust, N.', *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2014). In its reference to 'brains trust', the *Oxford English Dictionary* quotes Richmal Crompton's book *William & the Brains Trust* (1945): 'It was the time when the Brains Trust movement, so rashly started by the BBC, was sweeping England. Every town, every village, every parish, every street had its Brains Trust, at whose meetings earnest seekers after knowledge discussed the scientific, political or economic problems of the day.' The CRU planners certainly appear to have been swept up in this trend.

178 It is possible, though not possible to prove, that the Tavistock group may have had a hand in arranging the visit. The Clinic had a royal patron, the Duke of Kent, who had died on RAF service on 29th August 1942, after which his wife Princess Marina 'very quickly assumed the Presidency of the Clinic in his stead.' H. V. Dicks, pp. 110-111.

how to become civilians again.¹⁷⁹ It described massed school children welcoming the visit 'some of them smaller than the union jacks they waved'. This joyful tone continued throughout the article, which described the afternoon:

The King and Queen took luncheon with Lord and Lady Salisbury, and in the next room at Hatfield House, in an all ranks restaurant, waited upon by cheerful ATS girls, men from the prison camps of Germany lunched with members of the staff of the centre and instructors.¹⁸⁰

The very civilised nature of the boards demonstrated, the article moved on to again refer to the explanations of the scheme provided by Rendel, 'who is in charge of this imaginative War Office scheme.' The article culminated with reference to an already long list of volunteers for the scheme and the many locations of forthcoming units.

The Manchester Guardian reported that the King 'in field marshal's uniform, and the Queen, in pale blue, walked through the grounds, where a knot of ex-Stalag men stood at ease against the mellow red brick of the building and under the mulberry tree.'¹⁸¹ This was followed by a trip into the workshops, where the Queen interviewed repatriates, including Private B. Heslop (who was conveniently from Moss Side, Manchester), who said 'that the unit helps to break down the shyness which many prisoners of war have felt on returning to normal life.'¹⁸² Rendel's explanations of the scheme were précised in the article in several places. The article culminated with a reference to the imminent opening of some seven or eight other units, including specifically the most local to readers, at Peover Hall in Cheshire.

The Yorkshire Post article on the visit was similarly well-timed to coincide with the CRU at Ilkley, which it duly noted.¹⁸³ It reported Rendel's explanations of men's anxieties and the four phases of resettlement into the 'brave new world' of post-war civil society.¹⁸⁴ His role and the work of the Planning Headquarters staff in supervising the organisation 'throughout the country' were mentioned, as were volunteers at Hatfield who were originally from the North, with notes on the workshops they were enjoying. The article culminated in the glowing testimonial that '[l]arge numbers of other ranks and some officers are waiting to enter these units. If Hatfield provides any guidance they will not want to leave them quickly.'¹⁸⁵

Each of the articles on the royal visit enthusiastically advertised the CRUs in a form that would best engage their readership, employing references to locals to attract attention and making much of the luxury, the opportunities presented by the scheme, and the expert staff. Colonel Rendel was clearly a highly effective spokesperson for

179 'The King and Queen with Ex-Prisoners: Visit to Civil Resettlement Unit', *The Yorkshire Post and Leeds Mercury* (United Kingdom, 13 July 1945), p. 3, UK Press Online.

180 'Resettling War Prisoners: Aids to Civil Life: The King and Queen at Hatfield', *The Times* (London, England, 13 July 1945), p. 4.

181 'Army's Civil Resettlement: King and Queen Visit Hatfield House Centre', *The Manchester Guardian* (Manchester, United Kingdom, 13 July 1945), p. 3, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

182 'Army's Civil Resettlement: King and Queen Visit Hatfield House Centre', *The Manchester Guardian* (Manchester, United Kingdom, 13 July 1945), p. 3, ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

183 'The King and Queen with Ex-Prisoners'.

184 'The King and Queen with Ex-Prisoners'.

185 'The King and Queen with Ex-Prisoners'.

resettlement, as well as being a key advocate for the CRU scheme at policy level. With such a versatile ally as Rendel, it is perhaps unsurprising that, from the royalists to the republicans, everyone appeared to report positively on the CRUs: even the *Daily Worker* published a positive article on the scheme in August 1945.¹⁸⁶ The Unit in Twickenham was described as a 'Halfway House' where men could get 'advice and guidance.' The *Daily Worker* particularly stressed the community aspect of the CRU, noting that 'men are encouraged to invite their wives and relatives to visit the unit.' Under the subheading 'Civilians Can Help,' Lieutenant-Colonel Christie was reported as welcoming visits:

local clubs, etc., may be interested and will bring in teams during the week to play the chaps at billiards, darts, table-tennis and so on. They will be more than welcome and will be doing the chaps a very good turn.¹⁸⁷

This emphasised the role of the CRU as a 'bridge' between civilians and the military, and promoted Wilson's intention that civilians would go to CRUs as well as volunteers from CRUs enter the local community.

The various articles demonstrate how concepts about POWs had moved from articles written by POWs themselves into the planning literature of the psychological planning staff, and then back into the public domain. The concepts were slightly transformed each time. The normality that Newman and Collie emphasised was not necessary to dwell on by the time of the newspaper reports on CRUs opening, because it was self-evident that the interviewed men from around the corner from the newspapers' readers must be normal. The psychologists careful policing of terminology and phrasing had been effective. Nonetheless, POWs and their home communities had become psychologised, with references to their 'anxieties,' mental 'adjustment' and preparing 'psychologically for a new start.' Like the WOSBs, the scale of the psychological operation that the British people had been involved in via the CRUs was unprecedented. The speed at which it had been put together was also remarkable. There was just time, before demobilisation was complete, for one final small act of rebellion by the Tavistock group. Following the early end to the war caused by the dropping of the atom bomb on Japan, the War Office had planned to switch all CRUs over to accept only Far East POWs; Wilson and Rendel manoeuvred to keep the scheme open to European POWs too. They 'turned orders inside out' to strategically ignore the ruling that European POWs were no longer to attend CRUs and to make space for both groups.¹⁸⁸ By the end of March, 1947, more than 19,000 European POWs and around 4500 FEPOWs had attended a CRU, and Rendel and Wilson had been fired for subverting their orders.

CONCLUSION: WINNING THE PEACE?

At the beginning of the Second World War, it did not appear likely that thousands of

186 Ben Francis, 'Halfway House to Civvy Street', *Daily Worker* (London, 22 August 1945), p. 3, UK Press Online.

187 Francis.

188 Trist, p. 24.

POWs would go through a scheme of psychological rehabilitation. POWs were not seen as a vulnerable or problematic group; there was no perceived need to intervene in their homecoming. Psychiatrists were keen to become involved in work with returning POWs, but they had little agency in transforming how people thought about them. This transformation was shaped by a cultural memory of post-war let-down and consequent anti-social behaviour and political unrest, by new rules that made POWs more conspicuous than ever and turned them into symbols of all Britons, and by the British Army's manpower concerns. The psychiatrists shaped their arguments for the value of their work to fit around these existing anxieties.

Other anxieties also shaped how POWs were dealt with: the fear of associations with insanity meant that psychiatric involvement in the resettlement schemes were hidden from view. Over the course of the Second World War, POWs were transformed from one form of 'normal' to another. Though POWs remained 'normal,' after 1943 they were no longer unproblematic. Former POWs insisted publicly that they had experienced problems, which were also reflected in Army research. The high-status of those having problems motivated the Army to take action. The Army psychiatrists, who had dealt with problem officers and difficult repatriated personnel at WOSBs and Northfield, were seen by the Army as having relevant expertise to deal with the POWs, and instructed to investigate. In the course of their research, they borrowed staff and principles from their previous Army work whilst also making changes based on the problems with perception and control that they had experienced via the WOSBs Control and Development Centre.

To create the Army's resettlement scheme, the Tavistock group incorporated ideas from the lay-public on the nature of the POWs' difficulties into their own psychoanalytical theories. Ideas about POW problems and how to handle them were communicated back and forth across boundaries of expertise. Ideas first expressed in popular journals or newspapers, such as the comparison of repatriation with the bends, mingled with psychoanalytic approaches such as the idea of therapeutic communities developed at the Northfield Experiments. The idea of a POW's normality passed from the public sphere to the psychological. The creators of the CRUs did not battle for recognition of the new 'normal' direction their work had taken over the course of the war. Instead they disguised the psychological thinking that shaped the CRUs, arguing that the POWs could not be expected to catch up, and that their problems also blinded them to the value of expert help. Normality was reinterpreted as a 'drive' that had to be carefully managed. The 'machinery' constructed from psychological ideas to deal with POW problems was carefully disguised so that it would not 'creak' and give away the psychiatric involvement. This process of intermingling ideas and concealing of the theories underpinning the CRU methods has masked the significance of the CRUs in the history of psychological science. Although CRUs have not become 'myths' like Northfield, they were a remarkable and innovative psychological scheme: Tom Harrison even goes so far as to say that the CRUs were

'probably one of the first controlled studies carried out in social psychology in the United Kingdom.'¹⁸⁹

Whilst the concealment of the psychological principles of CRUs meant that the scheme has not become a part of the Tavistock's (and psychiatry's) fabled past, the group did derive benefits from this approach. In accepting that the POWs were psychologically normal, if not necessarily well-adjusted, the Tavistock group claimed a wider relevance for their work. If POWs were 'normal,' and yet required psychological intervention, then this implied that psychological intervention was therefore relevant to *all* normal people. The Tavistock group argued that both the POW and the wider community had anxieties and required readjustment. They set about trying to communicate their work to draw everyone together. The extensive efforts to communicate the work of the CRUs took many forms, and was addressed to many different audiences. However, the message that the Tavistock were tried to communicate remained essentially the same: psychiatry can be used to manage change amongst normal people, to create a better society. The Ministries of Labour and Production, various private businesses, and many POWs and civilians bought into such claims when they trusted the psychiatrists to help them to 'get back to civvy street' via the CRUs.

189 Tom Harrison, *Bion, Rickman, Foulkes, and the Northfield Experiments: Advancing on a Different Front* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000), p. 267

CONCLUSION

This thesis told the story of the Tavistock group's work on projects of officer selection and POW rehabilitation for the British Army during the Second World War. It centred upon three questions: how and why did psychiatric knowledge come to be used for War Office Selection Boards (WOSBs) and Civil Resettlement Units (CRUs)? What *were* those WOSBs and CRUs – what methods did they use and why, and how did they work? And, linked with these questions about psychological knowledge and methods, how did the Tavistock group go about trying to shape a *science* studying the relations between people?

In answering those questions, this research showed how the Tavistock group persuaded others of the relevance of their expertise by linking their claims to bigger contemporary concerns; how, through manipulation of networks, informal experiments in Edinburgh began and eventually affected thousands of British soldiers; how a technology of testing was co-produced by many people, including both psychological and military staff who contributed ideas and methods; how psychiatrists and soldiers worked together, but also against each other, depending on whether they could concurrently maintain their own authority; how different groups all interested in the science of the mind worked together in committees, or against each other behind the scenes, to further their own interests; and how ideas passed back and forth between psychological experts and the wider British public through the pages of the press. At the same time, this work has touched upon many broader themes: the relation between people and the state; how being at the periphery can provide opportunities; the relationship between science and psychological science; how 'normality' is shaped; and the process of science-building.

One of the most interesting things to emerge from an examination of the WOSBs and CRUs was the answer to the question: why psychiatry? The British Army was the only military force, not only in Britain, but in the world, to seek the advice of psychiatrists on officer selection. Why did psychiatrists rather than psychologists conduct this work in Britain? Moreover, POWs were, by expert and governmental consensus, believed to be insulated from psychiatric harm right up to the 1940s, and so beyond the psychiatrists' remit. It is remarkable that psychiatrists in Britain worked on officer selection and the rehabilitation of prisoners of war, and on huge British Army schemes dealing with thousands of men – but that until now the question of why and how this collaboration came about has not been addressed.

The first of this thesis's research questions, dealing with how military-psychological collaboration came about, has prompted a new and closer examination of who was involved in creating the WOSBs and the CRUs. As Steven Shapin has argued, '*Science as people think of it and as they use it is every bit as historically important as science as scientists conceive of it.*'¹ Chapter One and the first part of Chapter Five therefore

1 Steven Shapin and Arnold Thackray, 'Prosopography as a Research Tool in History of Science: The British Scientific Community 1700-1900', *History of Science*, 12.1 (1974), 1-28 (p. 21).

expanded the traditional cast of characters by showing how the British public, by writing to newspapers and periodicals, expressed their views on officers and POWs. These chapters also examined two different subjects, officers and POWs, who were both different from the clinical patients psychiatrists traditionally worked with. In so doing, this research uncovered three interlinked reasons why British people favoured adopting psychological approaches in more and more spheres of their lives. The seemingly specific problems of officer selection and POW rehabilitation actually echoed wider concerns about the demands of modernity, the nature of a state's duty to its citizens, and economic waste and efficiency. 'Elite' officers and 'normal' POWs were recast as problematic, and as requiring intervention like the 'problem' populations who constituted the usual subjects of the psychiatrists. Uncertainty did not centre upon the people themselves, but rather 'the mass society of the machine age,' to which people had to adapt, which fascinated psychiatrists and worried politicians and the public.² People believed that whilst politicians and generals were 'blinded' to problems by tradition, experts could solve these problems through their objective scientific insight: psychiatrists had a new way of looking at new problems. It was partly because they were *not* established authorities that they were seen as suitable figures to conduct the work.

This research demonstrated that the change of perspective that increasingly problematised the 'normal' was not imposed from above, by the War Office, or from outside, by the psychiatrists; senior officers and officers in training, POWs and their relatives all participated in creating a culture of intervention. The shaping of military-psychological schemes as a local practice, strongly influenced by and contingent upon individuals, was the main focus of Chapter Two, and recurred in Chapter Five. Thinking about the groups involved in biographical and prosopographical terms enabled the tracing of links between context and action. It set the WOSBs and CRUs in the context of the existing interests of those who created them, the specific problems and opportunities they experienced at the time, and the places people occupied in various networks. Military men with general interests in innovation worked with psychiatrists who were interested in people from a holistic perspective and as they constituted a part of a wider social field. This union shaped and was shaped by the specific problems that unpredictable officer candidates and unruly POWs caused their local senior officers, and by the opportunity to use German methods or WOSBs to deal with these problems. The freedom of the periphery became evident; it was not a coincidence that so much work developed in Edinburgh, where senior officers had the time and freedom to enquire and experiment. Networks also facilitated the creation of these projects, as the small size and the dispersed structure of Army psychiatry enabled the sharing of information and trials of different approaches before a formalised programme was settled upon.

The local context and the role of numerous individuals remained important when

2 Andrew Hull, 'Glasgow's "sick Society"?' James Halliday, *Psychosocial Medicine and Medical Holism in Britain c.1920-48*, *History of the Human Sciences*, 25.5 (2012), 73-90 (p. 75).

considering the second research question, which asked ‘what were the WOSBs and CRUs?’ In Chapters Two and Five, thinking about the features common to those who participated in the development of the WOSBs and CRUs helped to elucidate the ‘influence of local patronage and the local audience on scientists’ problem-selection, [and] modes of enquiry.’³ Whilst the public were clamouring for action on the same problems in the national press, it was the senior officers and soldiers in local Army Commands that provided the immediate impetus for work on the problems of officer selection and returning POWs. Both the WOSBs and the CRUs developed as a form of prophylaxis; they began with senior officers requesting psychiatrists’ reports ‘making sense’ of problem soldiers, and developed into efforts to prevent such problems from arising. Modes of enquiry were equally shaped by the intimacy of local commands; any psychological experimentation required the cooperation of both senior officers and their men. Thus, from the outset psychiatrists had to build features into their schemes that would make them acceptable to these groups. The WOSBs had roles for military and psychological staff, and the final decision about candidates were made by the military President. Similarly, the CRUs explicitly insisted upon the normality of the POW’s mental state and all psychological underpinnings were concealed. On some occasions, soldiers forced the hands of the psychiatrists, such as when an MTO implemented a leaderless group activity and Bion was made to fast-track the application of a theory about social fields that he had been mulling over.⁴ This is not to understate the importance and the influence of the psychiatric staff; all of the methods developed were grounded in psychological theory, whether they were borrowed from German psychologists, proposed by psychiatrists, or initially prompted by military staff.

Multiple influences continued to shape officer selection even after the WOSBs scheme was developed. Chapter Three demonstrated that the WOSBs were far from a ‘finished product.’ Both across space and time, the methods used by Boards and the knowledge that underpinned their use varied a great deal. This thesis used an analytical framework put forward by Susan Leigh Star, and developed by William Barley, Paul Leonardi and Diane Bailey, to explore how the various test components functioned (or failed to function) as boundary objects.⁵ Employing this approach opened up new questions and led to new insights about how networks shape technologies and technologies shape networks. Tests of mental ability (like intelligence tests) successfully functioned as a boundary object, and military and psychological staff were each able to sustain their own understanding of them. The Leaderless Group test was a more complex site of interaction, and psychiatrists

3 Shapin and Thackray, p. 12.

4 See Chapter Three.

5 Susan Leigh Star, ‘The Structure of Ill-Structured Solutions: Heterogeneous Problem-Solving, Boundary Objects and Distributed Artificial Intelligence’, in *Distributed Artificial Intelligence 2*, ed. by M Huhns and L Gasser (Menlo Park: Morgan Kaufmann, 1989); Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer, ‘Institutional Ecology, “Translations” and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley’s Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39’, *Social Studies of Science*, 19.3 (1989), 387-420; William C. Barley, Paul M. Leonardi and Diane E. Bailey, ‘Engineering Objects for Collaboration: Strategies of Ambiguity and Clarity at Knowledge Boundaries’, *Human Communication Research*, 38.3 (2012), 280-308.

sought to clarify their meaning to the military staff who they felt did not appreciate the psychological interpretation of the test (and consequently the importance of the psychological personnel). Interviews were most contentious of all the technologies of testing. They broke down as a boundary object as military and psychological staff pursued strategies of clarification to emphasise the primacy of their own meaning, and in so doing reaffirmed their own authority in a clash over power. By showing the variety of interactions over the different test components, this research helps to make sense of the conflicts that occurred between military and psychological factions. It was not simply that a reactionary Army disliked odd psychoanalytic ideas (as the acceptance of Word Association tests showed), but that tests like the interview brought military and psychological personnel into direct conflict over their respective degrees of authority. By contrast, the methods used at the CRUs were such successful 'practical psychology' that they generated very little conflict at all. By careful design, the psychological was intertwined so successfully with the 'normal' that consequently CRUs were not seen as psychological at all. They are barely acknowledged in most histories of Second World War psychiatry, quite possibly because they did not result in controversy and power-struggles.

Power was at the root of many of the findings that arose in relation to the third research question: how and why did the Tavistock attempt to shape a science? Their efforts in this direction were revealed in their efforts to develop theories and methods so as to aid traditional legitimisation of their science. As Chapter Two showed, at the early experimental stage, German methods of officer selection were rejected where they did not fit within the overarching theoretical conceptions and existing practices of the Tavistock group. Chapters Three and Five show efforts to create widely applicable methods, intended to demonstrate the universal scientific principles of the work. Such decisions were linked with legitimisation of the psychiatrists' role and authority.

The motivations behind such actions were most clearly elucidated in Chapter Four, which traced how professional rivalries, epistemologies and standards were brought into the wartime work. Rivalries of the psychiatrists, such as with neurologists and medics, resulted in flurries of letters sent to undermine the opposition; this was not simply a matter of reputation but of funding and access to research facilities and subjects. The complex relationship between scientific authorities, in various guises, and other authorities, arose in Chapter Three's discussion of battles over WOSBs interviews. It was analysed in more detail through Chapter Four's analysis of the Expert Committee on the Work of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services. Whilst this Committee was created by Churchill on behalf of senior military men who wanted to control psychological scientists, it was co-opted by the scientists as a place where the value of their work, and their respective spheres of influence, could be codified through bureaucratic process.⁶ They worked together to resist outsiders'

6 Another recent work that finds a similar process occurring in relation to a different science is Samuel Alexander Robinson, 'Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Ocean Science and the British

definitions of their work and its uses, and were able to do so in part because of the 'expert' nature of the committee; they were able to make claims about the relevance of their work and decry others' interpretations as not fully understanding its intentions and situations. Negotiations of power at the Committee again related to resources at a basic level, as different remits were apportioned in the meetings. In scrutinising the communities in which WOSBs and CRUs were situated, this thesis complicates what has been traditionally seen as a military-psychological conflict by showing divides and alliances within those categories. It shows how relationships within scientific communities can affect relationships of scientific groups with outsiders.

Scientific networks were also in some respects more influential upon practices than military patronage because connections between psychological scientists had longer-term implications. Discussions between different groups of psychological scientists about research subjects and methods at the Committee were echoed in discussions within the Tavistock group at the Control and Development Centre, where they fretted over the remit and methods of their research. The concluding section of Chapter Four emphasised how efforts to establish validity of the WOSBs, formal education of staff, and new research outlets were connected with a desire to establish scientific identity amongst their psychological peers. To secure the authority and resources that they had battled neurologists for, and negotiated with psychologists for, into the postwar period, the Tavistock group felt that they must meet scientific expectations and standards. Chapter Five follows Chapter Four not only in chronological terms, but also by elucidating how some of the problems that the CDC demonstrated in WOSBs – such as lack of standardised training and central control – were taken into account in the group's later work. Thus they attempted to make their practices simultaneously more scientific and more acceptable to their patrons and subjects.

In comparing the two military-psychological projects of WOSBs and CRUs, this thesis highlights the multitude of influences that converge in such schemes and how dramatically methods and the contingencies that shape them can affect the success of such collaborations. This work suggests that military histories could gain much from looking beyond the interface between soldiers and experts to the wider community. Ideas, methods, developments and conflicts which, on the surface, appear to be the product of one expert group are also shaped by disciplinary rivalries or collaborations, or even what one group of experts wants another group to think of them. Whilst it may seem that experts are brought in because of military necessity, numerous social, political and economic factors create pressure to consult outsiders; they also shape the nature of the suggestions and schemes that the experts produce.

This research also broadens the historical study of psychological science in several ways that raise useful questions. For instance, the application of this approach to other institutions to reveal their pre-histories would enable a deeper study of the

Cold War State' (University of Manchester, Centre for the History of Science, Technology and Medicine, 2015).

nature of the discipline in Britain. Historians such as Graham Richards, Sandy Lovie, Maarten Derksen, Edgar Jones and Jonathan Toms have developed a thoughtful and sophisticated picture of institutional and academic psychology, and scholars such as Roger Smith, Joanna Bourke and Mathew Thomson are building a history of 'psychology from below' by examining some of the informal ways that communities interacted with psychological ideas.⁷ But as Steven Shapin has observed, it would be missing an opportunity to 'assess the total cultural significance [of science] by only the most successful and enduring of its institutions.'⁸ There is a lot to be learned from groups and ideas which are not necessarily formally established, or not as visible today as university departments or rhetoric of the ego, but which, like the Tavistock group, the WOSBs and CRUs, reflected and reshaped the way that society of the day thought about itself. Such studies would contribute to a greater understanding of the way that psychological ideas permeate professional and public groups, and of how those ideas and those groups form.

From the earliest arguments that psychological knowledge could be relevant to the wartime problems of officer selection and POW resettlement, though the experiments, theorising, and planning of schemes, and then in the work to establish the scientific validity of this work, complex and nuanced human relationships occupied a central role. Interactions between groups involved strategies of control and authority but, more than this, the identities, interests, and practices of those involved in making the WOSB and CRU schemes were constructed through such networks.⁹ In this thesis, I have argued that an exploration of the complexity of communities is vital to an understanding of both the specific cases of WOSBs and CRUs, and to the broader historical picture of how Britons thought of themselves in the twentieth century. From the language of deep-sea-diving and Rip Van Winkle fairytales that became a part of how POWs' problems were conceptualised, to the Leaderless Group Test that used obstacles to reveal officer mentality, military-psychological projects and the problematisation of the relationships between individuals and wider society were the result of co-construction of ideas by various groups. By closely examining the many parties involved, this thesis contributes to a small but growing scholarship on the intersections between the psychological and everyday life. Whilst Nikolas Rose's work from the 1980s onwards examined how psychological technologies are used to govern by revealing new objects and forces, more recent work has demonstrated the agency of the people who constituted the subjects of the psychological sciences.¹⁰

7 Roger Smith, 'Psychological Society', in *Between Mind and Nature: A History of Psychology* (Reaktion Books, 2013), pp. 102–36; Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (Reaktion Books, 1999); Mathew Thomson, *Psychological Subjects: Identity, Culture, and Health in Twentieth-Century Britain* (OUP Oxford, 2006); Mathew Thomson, 'Psychological Subjects: Response', *History of the Human Sciences*, 20.3 (2007), 123–39.

8 Steven Shapin and Arnold Thackray, 'Prosopography as a Research Tool in History of Science: The British Scientific Community 1700-1900', *History of Science*, 12.1 (1974), 1–28 (p. 8).

9 Rhodri Hayward, 'The Tortoise and the Love-Machine: Grey Walter and the Politics of Electroencephalography', *Science in Context*, 14.04 (2001), 615–41 (p. 627); Steven Shapin, 'Here and Everywhere: Sociology of Scientific Knowledge', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 21 (1995), 289–321.

10 Nikolas Rose, *The Psychological Complex: Psychology, Politics and Society in England 1869-1939* (London, United Kingdom: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985); Nikolas Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shap-*

This thesis builds upon work by historians such as Smith, Bourke and Thomson who shift the focus from subjectivity and government to ‘the multiplicity of actors and the various agendas involved in the production of psychological knowledge.’¹¹ This thesis has instead reassessed the nature of supposedly formal ‘state agencies.’ It reveals the active role of experts and patrons, but also the influence of bureaucratic structures, public concerns, supportive middle-managers, disciplinary rivals and allies, and even curious local businesses. The time is ripe for a new study exploring the changes, continuities, renegotiations and reshaping of these communities as they found themselves returning to civvy street.

ROADS NOT TAKEN: AVENUES FOR FUTURE WORK

Of the various angles which could have been used for this thesis, there are several which did not find their way into its chapters. This work, like many histories of science influenced by Latour and Actor-Network Theory, has attempted to ‘follow the actors,’ yet such an approach always requires the historian to make a choice about *which* actors to follow.¹² This narrative has situated the Tavistock group at the centre, and attempted to uncover some of their military collaborators whose involvement in WOSBs or CRUs was important but perhaps less well recognised. Accordingly, there is much more remaining for historians to uncover. The limitations of this thesis fall into four rough groupings: the study of bureaucratic manoeuvring and relationships; examination of military-psychological work in the international context; providing a history of large military-psychological projects “from below;” and the post-war work of the Tavistock. The lack of study on these topics, and the ripeness of opportunity for work in these areas, is highlighted in this thesis, which also offers some suggestions of approaches that might be taken by future work.

This thesis has brought to light a number of areas of the Army mental health organisation during the Second World War into which more research is required. Whilst Rees appears in this thesis as a powerful advocate for Army Psychiatry, more could be done to clarify how he worked with his superiors, Brigadier Kenneth McLean and Lieutenant-General Alexander Hood. There is also the scope for much expansion on the relations between the psychological staff of the Directorate for the Selection of Personnel, the Directorate for Army Psychiatry, and the Emergency Medical Services. Though Chapter Four of this thesis endeavoured to highlight some of the ways that psychological experts related to one another, there is not yet a more developed and nuanced picture of the relationships between these technical groupings. Further clarification of the relationships between the Army psychiatrists, neurologists, and hygienists would prove informative, given the apparent antipathy between some of

ing of the Private Self (Routledge, 1990); Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, *Governing the Present: Administering Economic, Social and Personal Life* (Polity, 2008).

11 Rhodri Hayward, ‘The Invention of the Psychosocial: An Introduction’, *History of the Human Sciences*, 25.5 (2012), 3–12 (p. 7).

12 Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

their individual members.¹³ Ideally, future work would take an even broader view and eventually encompass the relations of these disciplines more broadly in the mid-twentieth century.

We have also seen in Chapter Four that there were interesting dynamics of collaboration and boundary demarcation between groups of psychological experts called to speak at the Expert Committee on the Work of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in the Services. It would be an important further job of work to attend to the way that the Army psychological staff interacted with the those at the Air Ministry, and the Admiralty, and how all three negotiated the bureaucratic structures of the British war machine. For instance, Chapter Five of this thesis revealed how the Air Ministry apparently bungled its approach to involving the Ministry of Labour in its repatriation scheme, where the Army took a more tactical approach and had greater success. But were the psychological staff aware that they were competing for the same resources, and if so, how did this shape their behaviour? It is also unclear how, at the highest echelons of military mental health, individuals like Brigadier McLean (Army), Mr Alec Rodger (Royal Navy), and Professor Bott (RAF) dealt with one another and with those in charge of military medical services. The bureaucratic structures of military-psychological research in Britain are an interesting area for further work.

The relationship between international groups are also undeveloped in this thesis. Records indicate that there was considerable interaction between the American, Canadian, and British psychological selection specialists. Though the thesis mentions the way that Canadian personnel's views of British selection work caused them some anxiety, it does not go further. There has been recent work that provides accounts of selection in these nations, such as Marcia Holmes' thesis, but as yet no exploration of how the science of selection crossed national borders and was translated (or failed to translate) between countries.¹⁴

Whilst this thesis addresses the views of the technical staff working on psychological projects for the British Army, the experiences and views of others are not represented. The women of the ATS, for instance, were vital to the running of both the WOSBs and the CRUs. Yet they are minor figures in the background of this thesis. Likewise, the voices of the candidates who experienced the WOSBs and the POWs who attended CRUs are largely lacking from this account, though at various points it does attempt to show some of the ways that their agency shaped the projects. It was outside the scope of this work to represent these aspects; to do so would require an oral history methodology to uncover, as neither group's views are represented in the archive files of the National Archives or the Tavistock.

Finally, a bigger picture of the Tavistock group's work remains to be studied. Though the Tavistock were always at the centre of this research, the wartime work of the Tavistock group was not the original focus of this thesis. Originally, the intention was

13 WO Division 4 in the National Archives would be a good starting point for such an investigation.

14 Marcia Holmes, 'Performing Proficiency: Applied Experimental Psychology and the Human Engineering of Air Defense, 1940-1965' (University of Chicago, 2014).

to investigate the work of the Tavistock Institute staff during the post-war period. It rapidly became apparent, however, that it was impossible to do justice to this later work without tracing the ideas, methods, and networks that developed during the Second World War. It also became clear that this wartime work would take up an entire thesis, and even then many aspects of the war work could not be covered. This thesis therefore did not analyse how the work of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, formally founded in 1947, developed from the war work. The Tavistock Institute worked on many interesting projects, including studies of coal mining and work with the Glacier Metals Company to improve relations between staff: an investigation of such work was the original intention of the thesis. A breadth of study of the Tavistock's work was sacrificed for a depth of study concentrated on two projects. The time is now opportune for an investigation, building on the present work, of how the post-war Tavistock Institute developed. Official histories, public reports, and unofficial musings of those involved in post-war projects frequently locate the origins of later work in the war.¹⁵ Now that many of the interests, ideas, practices, networks, and relationships of the group have been highlighted in this thesis, a future project could analyse how these extended, changed or perished in the years that followed, and whether the links forged in the military were as important as the actors later believed them to be.

Like the Tavistock group, the subjects of these potential fields of new enquiry may have had 'no profound grasp of psycho-pathology,' but nonetheless they did likely have a profound influence on psychological science in Britain, and it on them.¹⁶ Research into these fields of enquiry would contribute to a growing scholarship exploring how human science is both practical and systematic, public and specialist. The significance of such work is that it therefore simultaneously tells us about a particular form of psychological thought and about the wider society of which the work was a part. New studies on these lines would thus provide greatly needed insight into psychological science and Britain in the twentieth century.

15 For instance, Henry Dicks cited several examples in his history of the Tavistock and Eric Trist wrote that the Chairman of Unilever 'had become interested in WOSBs during the war... then we were asked to start consumer studies by people who had got to know us during the War... in fact all our early projects came from wartime contacts.' Bowlby also noted the importance of the war work in securing funding from the Rockefeller and there are contemporary newspaper reports which echo this view. H. V. Dicks, *Fifty Years of the Tavistock Clinic* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1970); Eric Trist, "Guilty of Enthusiasm", from *Management Laureates*, Vol 3, Ed. Arthur G. Bedeian (Jai Press, 1993); *The Modern Times Workplace*, 2008 <<http://www.moderntimesworkplace.com/archives/ericbio/ericbio.html>> [accessed 24 October 2012]; Milton Senn, 'John Bowlby Interview with Milton Senn, M.D.', *Beyond the Couch: The Online Journal of the American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work*, 2007 <http://www.beyondthecouch.org/1207/bowlby_int.htm> [accessed 4 November 2013]; 'Comment', *The Observer (1901- 2003)* (London (UK), United Kingdom, 10 March 1946), p. 4.

16 Adrian Stephen speaking at a Society meeting in 1943, as quoted in Pearl King, 'Activities of British Psychoanalysts during the Second World War and the Influence of Their Inter-Disciplinary Collaboration on the Development of Psychoanalysis in Great Britain', *International Review of Psycho-Analysis*, 16.15 (1989), 14-33 (p. 17).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: TAVISTOCK GROUP PICTURES





Ben Morris, Jock Sutherland, Thomas Ferguson Rodger, Eric Trist (with his tie dishevelled in the usual manner according to his biography), and John Bowlby (seated in the background).

Eric Trist, John Rickman, John Bowlby & Jock Sutherland.



APPENDIX B: WHO'S WHO OF THESIS

Surname	Forename	Role	WOSBs	CDC	CRUs	Birth	Death
Adam	Sir Ronald	<p>Army Officer instrumental to the creation of new WOSBs. Appointed to deputy chief of the Imperial General Staff (DCIGS) in December 1938 following the “purges” of Leslie Hore-Belisha (Sec. of State for War). Instituted a number of reforms, such as merging the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, and the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. After a while spent leading BEF corps, Adam helped to organise the Dunkirk birdgehead and embarkation of the BEF. Back in Britain in June 1940, Adam was appointed General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Northern Command, where he displayed an unusual degree of concern for his men’s psychological welfare: he was known as one of the “red colonels” because of his interest in welfare. In May 1941 he was appointed Adjutant-General in charge of personnel matters in the army. He led a range of new programmes, including the WOSBs and the Army Bureau of Current Affairs (ABCA). He was promoted to full General in 1942. At the end of the war, Adam was also closely concerned with the demobilisation of the army and the establishment of CRUs. Churchill and General Sir Bernard Paget (Commander-in-Chief, Home Forces) were conservatives who very much distrusted Adam’s sometimes radical programmes, but Adam had the backing of Sir James Grigg (Secretary of State for War after Hore-Belisha’s resignation) and General Sir Alan Brooke (Commander-in-Chief of General Staff from December 1941, who lunched with Adam every week when they were both in London). Served as chairman of the NIIP 1947-53, member of the Council of the Tavistock Clinic from 1946-52, and member of the Miners’ Welfare Commission 1946-52. He was chairman of the executive board of UNESCO from 1950-4.</p>	x		x	1885	1982
Bion	Wilfred Ruprecht	<p>A Tavistock Clinic member before the war, Bion was one of the Command Psychiatrists (for Western Command) that Rees appointed in 1940. He had been a highly decorated Tank Commander during the First World War, and got on well with soldiers (if not authority figures). He then worked as the psychiatrist at the first WOSB, and is credited with inventing leaderless group test, for which he developed the theoretical principles. When the group from No. 1 WOSB went to the CDC, Bion became rapidly frustrated at the work and left to work at Northfield Military Hospital. He was later removed from this work by Rees (various reasons given, some say Bion upset other psychiatrists, others say there was a financial scandal that he could not be trusted to let pass without fuss). After this Bion went abroad with 21 Army group but returned promptly due to the death of his wife. He conducted work with POWs at No. 21 WOSB, but responsibility for POWs return was later put in the hands of Tommy Wilson. Bion was one of the TIHR founders.</p>	x	x	x	1897	1979

APPENDIX B: WHO'S WHO OF THESIS

Surname	Forename	Role	WOSBs	CDC	CRUs	Birth	Death
Bowlby	John	Psychiatrist at the Maudsley Hospital and on staff of London Child Guidance Clinic 1936-40. Joined the RAMC in 1940 and worked at EMS Fazakerly, Liverpool, where he and fellow psychiatrist Kenneth Soddy had a disagreement with the neurologist director and left after conflict with the Army's Consultant Neurologist. Bowlby then became Command Psychiatrist for Southern Command, where he conducted investigations in selection at 103 OCTU in summer 1941 (at the same time that Rodger and Wittkower were conducting tests in Scottish Command). He later worked at the CDC.	x	x		1907	1990
Bridger	Harold	Bridger was a maths teacher before the war. When the war began, he joined the Artillery and became a Major. He worked with Bion on WOSBs, then later took over from Bion at Northfield Military Hospital. After this, he was the Chief Vocational Officer for the CRUs. After the war, he joined the Tavistock and trained as an analyst. He was a founder member of the TIHR.	x		x	1910	2005
Braund	Dick	MTO at WOSBs. Trist thought he had special gifts as a policy planner, and asked for him to work at the CRUs.	x		x		
Brooke	Sir Alan Francis	Brooke was an influential Army Officer. He was an instructor at Camberley with Ronald Adam 1923-6, then Lieutenant-General in command of anti-aircraft command from 1938 until shortly before the breakout of war. Brooke was Commander-in-Chief, Southern Command from August 1939, and nominated to command a corps of the BEF. He ended up in the same rowboat as Adam leaving Dunkirk, and shared a ship cabin home with him. In December 1941, Brooke became Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS), and soon after he also became chairman of the chiefs of staff committee, and effectively principle strategic adviser to the war cabinet as well as professional head of the army.	x			1883	1963
Buchanan Smith	Alick Drummond	Before the war, Buchanan Smith worked in genetics research at Aberdeen and lectured in genetics at Edinburgh University. His father was active in United Free Church of Scotland. He was the Commanding Officer of a Territorial Army battalion, and missed capture in 1940 because he was in hospital. Buchanan Smith then served as the Commanding Officer of the Scottish Command Company Commanders' School, where he facilitated and encouraged WOSBs research. He became Director of the Selection of Personnel.	x			1899	1984

APPENDIX B: WHO'S WHO OF THESIS

Surname	Forename	Role	WOSBs	CDC	CRUs	Birth	Death
Crew	Francis Albert Eley	Crew provided a laboratory at the Animal Genetics Institute, Edinburgh University (where he was Chair of Animal Genetics) for the experimental first WOSB. Crew had brought such left-wing scientists such as J.B.S. Haldane, Lancelot Hogben, & Julian Huxley to visit this Institute. He was Assistant Director of medical services for the Edinburgh area, 1939-1945, and Director of Medical Research at the War Office, 1942-1946. Toward the end of the war, he became Professor of Public Health and Social Medicine at the University of Edinburgh from 1944-1955. 1957-58, and was then WHO Visiting Professor of Social and Preventative Medicine at the University of Rangoon.	x			1886	1973
Dawson	Ian	MTO at WOSBs. Trist thought that he was a natural clinician and asked for him to work at the CRUs.	x		x		
Delahaye	James Viner	Delahaye was the former CIB President chosen to be President of first WOSB. He later moved with the other staff to the CDC in Wall Hall. He had stood as Labour Candidate for Exeter, Dulwich and Buckingham in the inter-war period but failed to win. He was then commander of 122 OCTU, R.A. At Larkhill from 1939-1941. Worked on resettlement for The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) from 1944, and then was regional representative of the British Council from 1945 until his death in 1948.	x	x	x	1890	1948
Gray	W.N.	MTO at first WOSB, who had been interviewed during CCS experiments.	x				
Hargreaves	Ronald	With the Tavistock Clinic from 1938. Hargreaves was involved in early selection experiments, and is credited with developing the General Service Scheme. He was Command Psychiatrist at Northern Command when Sir Ronald Adam was there, and is linked with stimulating Adam's interest in selection & "selling" the Matrix test. Hargreaves attended very early meetings with Adam, Thorne, Rodger & Sutherland in Edinburgh to discuss officer selection. He made several trips to the US and Canada to discuss Army psychiatry and selection. After the war, he was awarded an OBE and worked for Unilever for a short while before he joined the WHO as the chief of the Mental Health Section at the behest of Brock Chisholm.	x			1908	1962
Jaques	Elliott	Jaques was a Canadian serving as a Research Psychiatrist (rank of Major) in the Canadian Army Medical Corps. He was liaison to the WOSBs. After the war, Jaques was one of the founder members of the TIHR, doing work for Glacier Metals before going on to Brunel University. He later did selection work with the US Army and is credited with inventing the term "mid-life crisis."	x			1917	2003

APPENDIX B: WHO'S WHO OF THESIS

Surname	Forename	Role	WOSBs	CDC	CRUs	Birth	Death
Main	Thomas Forrest	Tom Main was at Gatheshead Mental Hospital before the war. When the war began, he had a year's analysis with Susan Isaacs. He worked with Tommy Wilson in Western Command in 1941, where they both investigated how misfits and training problems were linked with men going AWOL. He fell out with Field Marshal Montgomery whilst working in North Africa. Main primarily worked on matters of morale, and was psychiatric adviser to the 21st Army Group, planning for psychiatric services for the Normandy invasion. He then went on to work at Northfield Military Hospital after Bion and Rickman had left. After the war he went to work at the Cassel Hospital for Functional Nervous Disorders.	x			1911	1990
Menzies (Lyth)	Isabel	Menzies worked with Trist at No. 1 WOSB during University holidays (she was a lecturer in economics at St Andrews). She then did some statistical work on the WOSBs validation for the CDC, before joining the staff working at the CRU headquarters. After the war, she joined the TIHR and became an analyst.	x	x	x	1917	2008
Mitchell	Alexander	Mitchell was a Sergeant-tester at first WOSB. He had distinguished himself in Other Rank selection work and other special investigations. Mitchell was conscripted, and began his military career as anti-aircraft gunner. He went on to work at WOSBs where he developed the Mitchell vocabulary test, and he then worked as a psychologist at the RTC. He ended the war as a Major, and went on to work for TIHR & became a member of the BPS. After this, he moved to Lintas Consumer Study Unit (part of Unilever) where he conducted research on the impact of television advertising & Chair the Market Research Society 1962-3	x			1912	2007
Murray	Hugh	WOSB Sergeant-tester, working with Trist. Became close with Trist and eventually became a TIHR staff member. Murray and Trist wrote a 3-part history of the Tavistock and its ideas in the 1990s.	x			1919	
O'Keefe	David	Sergeant-tester at first WOSB, had distinguished himself in Other Rank selection work and other special investigations.	x				
Rait-Kerr	Rowan Scrope	President of the WOSB in Golders Green, which was charged with selecting officers for the technical arms. RK was then appointed President of the RTC when it moved to Hampstead and Delahaye went abroad. Known as one of the "red colonels" because of his interest in welfare.	x	x		1891	1961

APPENDIX B: WHO'S WHO OF THESIS

Surname	Forename	Role	WOSBs	CDC	CRUs	Birth	Death
Rees	John Rawlings	Rees was the Medical Director of the Tavistock Clinic, 1933-1947. When the war began, he was appointed Consultant to the British Army at Home with the rank of Colonel from March 1939. Rees appointed Tavistock Clinic staff & affiliates to positions as Command Psychiatrists, and worked towards "selling" psychological methods to the army. He and Dicks were in charge of assessing the mental health of Rudolf Hess, Hitler's Deputy. In 1945, he shared the Lasker Award with Brock Chisholm, head of Canada's Army Medical Services. He returned to the Tavistock after the war, but in 1947 he left, feeling somewhat pushed out by the younger generation. He organised the 1948 International Congress for Mental Health, and was elected the first President of the World Federation for Mental Health.	x	x	x	1890	1969
Rendel	Richard Meadows	'Insighted' WOSB President. Director of Planning, Civil Resettlement Headquarters, working closely with Wilson and 'turning orders inside out.' Afterwards, Rendel was Commandant of Control Commission Centre in Bad Oeyenhausen to pick "non-Nazi" leaders and administrators.	x		x	1887	1966
Rodger	Thomas Ferguson	Scottish psychiatrist who conducted earliest experiments in officer selection procedure with Eric Wittkower. Rodger had been assistant to Professor Adolph Meyer at Johns Hopkins 1931-2, Deputy Superintendent of the Royal Mental Hospital, and Assistant Lecturer in Psychiatry at the University of Glasgow 1934-1940. He became an RAMC Specialist in Psychiatry from 1940. By 1944, he was Brigadier; Consultant in Psychiatry, stationed in India and the South East Asia Command area (Burma, Ceylon, India, Thailand, Indochina, Malaya and Singapore). In 1945 he returned to Scotland as Senior Commissioner of the General Board of Control for Scotland. In 1948, he was appointed to the new Chair of Psychological Medicine at the University of Glasgow.	x	x		1907	1978
Simoneit	Max	Chief German military psychologist whose selection tests were borrowed and adapted by the British Psychiatrists after being observed by Thorne.	x			1896	1962
Sutherland	John Derg	Sutherland was the acting psychologist for the first 3 months at the first WOSB, though he was trained as both psychologist and psychiatrist. He had worked for the EMS prior to this at Carstairs EMS Hospital, where he had been invited to sit in on early meetings between Adam, Thorne, Rodger and Hargreaves. After the war, he joined the Tavistock Clinic as Medical Director.	x	x		1905	1991

APPENDIX B: WHO'S WHO OF THESIS

Surname	Forename	Role	WOSBs	CDC	CRUs	Birth	Death
Thorne	(Augustus Francis) Andrew Nicol	Thorne was an Army Officer and was instrumental to the creation of new WOSBs. He served in WWI where he inspired men with his apparent invulnerability (his most serious injury of the war was sustained while playing football) & was made DSO three times. Thorne served as assistant military attaché to Washington 1919-21, Instructor of Army Staff College 1923-5. He was Military attaché in Berlin (1932-1935) where he met Hitler several times & observed the German officer selection procedures. Thorne was back in the Army by the Second World War, where he defended Dunkirk at the evacuation, and was then made Lieutenant-General, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Scottish Command. In Scottish Command, he encouraged psychiatrists to develop new officer selection procedures. He was promoted to General in 1945. In 1950, he went to help restructure the Norwegian Army.	x			1885	1970
Trist	Eric Lansdown	Trist had studied psychology at Cambridge under Bartlett, and was interested in the work of Kurt Lewin, who he visited in the US. He got a job at St Andrews, where he taught Isabel Menzies, and did research on unemployment. When the war began, he was given a job as clinical psychologist. Trist had been at Mill Hill EMS Hospital, London, from which he'd been to visit Wharnclyffe where Rickman was experimenting. Aubrey Lewis wouldn't let him leave MH to join Tavistock Group (he was in a reserved occupation), so he joined the army in order to enter the RAMC and work with the Tavi at No. 1 WOSB. Trist was one of few people in Britain with a background in clinical psychology at the time. He devised a psychological testing programme (intelligence tests, TAT, life history questionnaire) for WOSBs. Trist moved on to Watford when No. 1 WOSB became the RTC. He worked there for 3 months whilst the programme became operational. Trist had worked with Bion at No. 21 WOSB, where returned POWs were filtered, then moved to work on CRUs with Wilson, where he chose many of the other staff to join them. After the war, Trist joined the TIHR.	x	x	x	1909	1993
Wilson	Tommy (Alexander Thomson Macbeth)	Before the war, Wilson had been the Rockefeller Research Fellow and Physician at the Tavistock Clinic. Wilson worked in Western Command from 1941 and conducted work on morale with Tom Main. From November 1943, Wilson studied the problems of returning POWs. He had watched Northfield with interest and worked in the Middle East, and viewed POW problems as linked with dissociation. After convincing the WO that a therapeutic organisation to deal with repatriated POWs had to be regimental not medical, he headed up the CRU programme with Rendel. He went back to the Tavistock after the war, and also became a founder member of the Institute of Human Relations. He later left the Tavistock to work for Unilever.	x		x	1906	1978

APPENDIX B: WHO'S WHO OF THESIS

Surname	Forename	Role	WOSBs	CDC	CRUs	Birth	Death
Wittkower	Eric	Wittkower was the psychiatrist who conducted earliest experiments in officer selection procedure with T.F. Rodger in Edinburgh. In his earlier life, Wittkower had worked from 1925-1933 in Charité (Berlin), then because of the situation in Germany, in 1933 he and his wife Claire moved to Switzerland, and thereafter on to England & the Maudsley Hospital. He joined the Tavistock Clinic & St. Bartholomew's before joining RAMC. He was analysed by Eva Rosenfeld, then by John Rickman, and completed his psychoanalytic training at the London Institute in 1950. In 1951 the Kleinian oriented Wittkower left the Maudsley and the Tavistock to go with his wife and two children to Montreal.	x	x		1899	1983

APPENDIX C: TIMELINE OF EVENTS RELATED TO TAVISTOCK GROUP & ARMY WORK

1919

- The Tavistock Clinic was “launched” by Hugh Crichton Miller and J.R. Rees at a meeting with Lord Wolmer, Dr Farquhar Buzzard, & Reverend Lionel Ford, Headmaster of Harrow School, in the drawing room of Lady Margaret Nicholson in Pont Street, Chelsea. Unusually for the time, Tavistock was an outpatient clinic. The first patient was seen on 27 September 1920.

1930

- The Institute of Medical Psychology (The Tavistock Clinic) was adopted as the official name.

1933

- Hugh Crichton Miller retired from the Tavistock Clinic, feeling that he had been pushed out by people ‘who considered that they had learned better elsewhere.’ Wilfred Bion was promoted to senior staff of the Tavistock.

1934

- 26 June 1934 — The Tavistock Clinic secured royal patronage in the form of the Duke of Kent, youngest son of King George V, who gave a speech on his acceptance at a dinner in support of the Institute of Medical Psychology.

1936

- Another name change to The Tavistock Clinic (Institute of Medical Psychology), in order to distinguish it from ‘other institutes, not always reputably or responsibly staffed or sponsored... springing up elsewhere and using appellations scarcely distinguishable.’
- The Tavistock Clinic moved into research — the Rockefeller Foundation and Sir Halley Stewart Trust awarded research grants, given to A.T.M. Wilson (mapping personalities of patients with the School of Hygiene) and Eric Wittkower (study on pain and pathogenesis with various hospitals).
- Designs were ordered for a new site acquired by the Extension Committee on Store Street, just off of Gower Street. Plans included multiple floors and more than a hundred beds.
- The Feversham Committee was founded under auspices of the Ministry of Health, & under the leadership of the Earl of Feversham, to investigate voluntary mental health services. It would report in 1939.

1937

- All staff members voluntarily gave up honoraria to try to help the dire finances of the Clinic.

1938

- The Tavistock offered its services to the Ministry of Health to provide a neurosis unit for the expected psychoneurotic civilian casualties of the looming war and undertook to assist in training people in air-raid-precaution duties.
- Sir Henry Brackenbury retired from being Chairman of Council at the Tavistock. Lord Alness took over, bringing a 'new kind of respectability'. Alness sat on the Feversham Committee; in 1938 Lord Feversham spoke at the annual luncheon of the Tavistock and paid tribute to the work of the Clinic.
- The Medical Director's report dealt with criticisms of 'beating the big drum and indulging in too much publicity and promotion to be in good medical taste.'

1939

- February 1939 — MPs discussed what constitutes a psychologist (in relation to a debate on expert witnesses): it was stated that they were 'not divided by any line that Parliament could draw into those who were experienced in psychological medicine and those who were not' (there were only about 30 psychology lecturers at this time). Francis Fremantle stated that progressive work in mental treatment lay in out-patient work and clinics.
- March 1939 — Rees and Henry Yellowlees (physician for mental diseases and lecturer in psychological medicine at St Thomas's) were invited to become Consultants to the British Army in case of War.
- Summer 1939 — The Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Tavistock Clinic advised that the only way it could meet its obligations was to declare itself bankrupt. Rees transferred the Tavistock's account to another bank who agreed to accept their overdraft.
- July 1939 — The Feversham Committee reported that better co-ordination of mental health services at local and national level were recommended, stressed the need for training, preferably along the lines of LSEs course, and rejected the use of the term "psychiatric social worker", preferring "mental health social worker".
- July 1939 — The Horder Committee establish that only treatment, not pensions, will be offered to those who experience 'war syndromes.' They emphasise that the term "shell shock" 'must be rigidly avoided.'
- 3 September 1939, 11.15am — Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain announces that Britain is at war with Germany. A group of Tavistock staff move clinical records and some furniture from the Malet Street premises to Westfield Women's College of the University of London in Hampstead, where the Clinic would remain

in operation throughout the war. J.P. Spillane was supposed to become Rockefeller Fellow at the Tavistock Clinic, but did not take up the position because of the war.

- September 1939 — Rees and Yellowlees were called up, commissioned with the rank of Colonel and commenced duties as Consulting Psychiatrists to the Army.
- Stanbrough Hydro, Watford, was taken over as an E.M.S. War neurosis centre with Hugh Crichton Miller as medical director, and Mary Luff and Henry Dicks as psychiatric specialists, in anticipation of neurotic air-raid casualties. At one point in 1939, there were three patients with the three doctors, 35 nurses, and ancillary personnel. One of these patients still managed to escape. Mary Luff was soon released to become part-time Acting Medical Director of the Tavistock Clinic in the Westfield premises.
- Tavistock Clinic staff decided to establish a pool of earnings from private practice to 'safeguard as far as possible the interests of mobilized junior members of staff, including non-medicals, who might otherwise at the end of war be forced to desert psychological medicine for some quick money-earning alternative.'

1940

- Postgraduate training at the Tavistock Clinic ceased due to dispersal of students on war assignments. Research work by Wittkower and Wilson came to an abrupt end.
- London University approved & recognised teachers from the Tavistock.
- Tavistock received an unexpected legacy of £14,000.
- Mary Luff departed to take her children to the US, and was succeeded by A.T.M. Wilson, who was then called up to the R.A.M.C. and replaced by Jane Suttie, who then left for Ireland due to family commitments. Margherita Lilley was then appointed Executive Medical Officer.
- April 1940 — Army psychiatrists were appointed to Home Commands (see "Appendix D: Map of Psychiatric Services in Second World War Britain" on page 223).
- April 1940 — Hargreaves (& Raven) experiment at No 11 Depot RAMC Leeds with Progressive Matrices intelligence tests.
- 4 June 1940 — Dunkirk evacuation.
- July 1940 — the Army Council decide without delay to introduce selection tests into establishments and field units in all home commands — "it was emphasised that these tests, which were of established value in contributing to the selection of specialists and the acceleration of training, were intended to assist COs but in no way to interfere with their own judgement". Eric Farmer (Cambridge Psychological Lab) & Alec Rodger introduced a verbal intelligence test.
- August 1940 — in a report to Northern Command, Hargreaves reports success in

Matrices and recommended it be applied to all recruits. In Scottish Command, Professor Godfrey H. Thomson and T.F. Rodger experimented with men training at No 2 Depot RAMC Edinburgh — such experiments pointed out “Wastes” (people who would never be suitable, and people who were in the wrong jobs).

- October 1940 — Rees and Farmer made arrangements for very low scorers on intelligence tests to be examined by the Command Psychiatrists.
- October 1940 — the Adjutant General (AG) reported to the War Office that he was impressed by selection tests and that Army as single biggest employer of labour should appreciate them as the Ministry of Labour had done in recent years.

1941

- The German war effort seemed successful (e.g. Blitzkrieg & Luftwaffe). Problems with very high rejection rates at OCTUs became apparent. Ronald Adam became AG. Sir Alexander Hood became Director General of the Army Medical Services.
- January 1941 — Hargreaves’s memo “Notes on the Efficient Use of Man-Power” submitted to GOC in C Northern Command — it recommended that testing & disposal of recruits be placed under control of Adam and that a special department should be set up to administer the tests. It referred to German and US armies, observing that “We in this country, not only had ignored the development of selection techniques during the first 9 months of WWII, but were still not in sight of the point where the Americans left off”.
- January 1941 — Adam took Hargreave’s memo to the War Office and argued that an overhaul of selection was required to win the war.
- January 1941 — Colonel Bingham wrote a letter to *The Times* arguing that officers should continue to be drawn from public schools rather than democratising selection processes. A public debate over selection ensued in the press and in parliament. By the end of the month Bingham was removed from his position.
- March 1941 — Hargreaves issued memo #2, “The Selection and Allocation of Army Personnel”. On the basis of this, and representations from the Consulting Psychiatrist, an Advisory Committee on Mental Testing, the Executive Committee of the Army Council (ECAC) was appointed under the DG AMS, consisting of Professor J.H. Drever, Dr. C.S. Myers and Dr S.J.F. Philpott.
- Mid 1941 — up to 30 parliamentary questions per week concerning officer candidate rejection rates, morale and the need to officer the rapidly expanding army.
- 9 June 1941 — the Beveridge Committee was appointed ‘to examine in consultation with the three Service Departments, the use now made... of skilled men.’
- End of June 1941 — Adam stated that he was not satisfied with the existing system of selecting candidates for OCTU’s and requested a test be developed, possibly along German lines. A plan of action was submitted to the Army Council who

accepted the principle of applying selection tests to Army personnel & ATS, and directed Adam to make arrangements. It is agreed that intensive research over a period of around 3 months would be required to test the suitability of tests.

- June 1941 — ECAC create the Directorate for Selection of Personnel (DSP) to develop scientific selection procedures. The Director is Brigadier K.G. McLean. Most of his psychologists had been associated with the NIIP under Colonel J.G. Davies.
- Mid 1941 — working in “close collaboration” the DSP and the Army psychiatrists develop the General Service Scheme (GSS).
- July 1941 — psychiatrists’ authority officially was recognised in Army Council Instruction (ACI) 1136/41, which enabled them to make recommendations for the transfer of men (where before only COs had this power).
- July 1941 — Thorne (GOC Scottish Command) arranged experiments in the problems of selection, conducted by T.F. Rodger, Major Wittkower (& later Sutherland) at the Company Commanders’ School in Edinburgh.
- July 1941 — Bowlby (Southern Command) tested & interviewed 100 cadets at 103 OCTU, RAC. On the basis of interview and intelligence tests, he was able to make ratings largely in agreement with those of OCTU.
- 30 July 1941 — The Beveridge Committee made an interim report suggesting that skilled men were not being utilised effectively.
- August 1941 — Bion published a report on the use of psychological tests and exams in armoured division (converted battalions).
- September 1941 — A memo on the first officer selection experiments was issued, with tentative conclusions that psychiatric interviews and intelligence tests could be used to find officers, and that tests could be used to give pointers to speed up interviews. Rodger and Wittkower were asked to formulate proposals for an improved procedure.
- September 1941 — Memo AC1 1805/41 dealing with the “Introduction of a System of Selective Testing in the Army” was issued.
- 31 October 1941 — the Beveridge Committee gave their second report, arguing that ‘the use of skilled men... could be improved, particularly in the Army... the men required can be found largely but not wholly through changes in the Army organisation and better use of existing personnel.’
- November 1941 — a small conference was held to assess degree of agreement between Bowlby’s methods and OCTU. Similar results were noted as had been found previously in Edinburgh.
- 5 November 1941 — Barbara Low’s paper on ‘The Psycho-Analytic Society and the Public’ was discussed for three meetings of the British Psycho-Analytic Society (BP-AS), some of which were heated. Rickman lost his temper and criticised the of-

ficers of the society for their rudeness and lack of capacity to respond to the needs of the wider community.

- Early December 1941 — Adam visits with CIGS Brooke to discuss selection experiments. They meet with GOC (Thorne) and the officers involved in investigations to discuss future policy. Rodger concludes it would be unwise to develop selection separately from the army. The decision was made that Presidents of selection boards should be made a full Colonel and that a junior regimental officer should be included to work as a MTO.
- December 1941 — Adam staged a conference in Edinburgh with Rodger and Wittkower, Rees, and the Presidents of CIBs to review difficulties & discuss creation of new style scientific residential boards.
- December 1941 — Tavistock psychiatrists have (and make preparations to counter) Richardson and Riddoch's document criticising the growth of Army psychiatry.

1942

- First months of 1942 - a follow-up investigation of Rodger & Wittkower's work was conducted at Company Commanders' School in Edinburgh.
- January 1942 - An experimental Board (No. 1 WOSB) was established with Colonel J.V. Delahaye DSO, MC, (who had formerly been a CIB President) as President, at Genetics Institute, Edinburgh University.
- February 1942 — Thomas Horabin MP gave a statement in Parliament, criticising officer selection methods as being outdated.
- February 15th 1942 — No. 1 WOSB opened at King's Buildings.
- February - June 1942 — five Extraordinary Business Meetings of the British Psycho-Analytical Society (BP-AS) were held at the request of four members. These and the meetings that followed became known subsequently as the "controversial discussions": the approaches of Melanie Klein (of the Tavistock) and Freudian psychoanalysis (represented by Anna Freud) were discussed and debated.
- March 1942 — Officer selection techniques attained the satisfaction of the War Office.
- April 14 1942 — Adam visited Edinburgh and examined the procedure again. He was satisfied, and it was decided to extend the new system throughout the country and replace CIBs.
- April 1942 — the Directorate of Army Psychiatry (DAP) was set up as part of the Army Medical Services (AMD 11) with Col Sandiford, a regular RAMC officer, as Director and 2 Deputy Assistant Directors.
- April - Oct 1942 — 15 WOSBs were established.
- August 1942 — the War Office decided that WOSBs could best be co-ordinated by

establishing a Control and Development Centre (CDC) in Wall Hall, near London.

- 29 August 1942, the Duke of Kent, royal Patron of the Tavistock Clinic, died whilst on RAF service. Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent, assumed the Presidency of the Clinic and paid an informal visit slightly later in the war.
- Early September 1942 — No. 1 WOSB staff moved to form the CDC in Wall Hall (“Valhalla”) near Watford. The so-called “Invisible College” comes into being.
- September 1942 — An Expert Committee was appointed by Churchill to investigate and appraise the work of psychiatrists and psychologists in the Services.
- October 1942 — C.P. Blacker was seconded to the Ministry of Health as an adviser on population and medico-social problems, to undertake a comprehensive survey of psychiatric facilities required in the postwar period. Blacker stated that “Analytic methods of psychotherapy are sometimes spoken of as if they were a decadent and modern fad.”
- December 1942 — Churchill, sceptical of psychiatric expertise, wrote a memo to Grigg (Secretary of State for War), stating that he considered a CO was the best judge of potential officers, and that if he was not a good judge he was ‘scarcely fit for his position’. He also wrote to the Lord President of the Army Council: ‘I am sure it would be sensible to restrict as much as possible the Work of these gentlemen [psychologists and psychiatrists]... [as it was] very wrong to disturb large numbers of healthy normal men and women by asking the kind of odd questions in which the psychiatrists specialize.’

1943

- Three WOSBs were established in the Middle East (one moving to Italy & another to North Africa until mid-1944)
- March 1943 — the Senior Psychiatrist of WOSB was attached to AMD II as an Assistant Director of Army Psychiatry in charge of supervision of officer selection.
- March 1943 — Churchill wanted Adam removed — he was thoroughly suspicious of his innovations and hinted that ‘some other employment could no doubt be found for Sir Ronald Adam.’ Grigg and General Brooke (who had weekly London lunches with Adam) support Adam, and he was not removed.
- Spring 1943 — instructions were issued that the number of interviews conducted by psychiatrists at the WOSBS should comprise no more than half of the candidates (this came to be known as the “50% rule”). Further instructions added that no questions about sex or religion were permitted.
- June 1943 — George Collie wrote an article, ‘Returned Prisoners: A Suggested Scheme for Rehabilitation,’ for *The Fortnightly*, in which he claimed that POWs experienced a ‘Rip Van Winkle’ effect.
- September 1943 - March 1944 — discussions amongst the Training Committee of

the BP-AS on the appropriate training for candidates and analysts (continuation of the controversial discussions).

- Winter 1943 — at No. 21 WOSB, Selsdon Court Hotel, Surrey, Bion and Trist investigated adapting the WOSB system to select officer POWs who might be able to return to duty.
- November 1943 — ATM Wilson headed an investigation on returning POWs at RAMC barracks in Crookham. 1,200 returned POWs (mostly medical personnel) underwent a four week programme of rehabilitation and training.
- December 1943 — Edward Glover (scientific secretary of the BP-AS) attacked the work of Army psychiatrists and selective testing in public broadcasts.
- At a meeting of the BP-AS, analyst Adrian Stephen (brother of Virginia Woolf) praised the ‘practical psychology’ of the Tavistock and stated that ‘if two or three psycho-analysts have been given commissions and can take some share in the war effort and in any scientific work that is done, no thanks at all are due to their connection with [the British Psycho-Analytical] society.’

1944

- Air attacks on London were stepped up with V1 flying bombs. Many children were (re-)evacuated and numbers in attendance at the Tavistock Clinic plummeted.
- January 1944 — Bion, Wilson, Hargreaves and Rodger met to discuss POWs. Bion was removed from leading POW work and Wilson continued his experiments at Crookham.
- January 1944 — Philip Newman contributed an article on ‘The Prisoner-Of-War Mentality: Its Effect After Repatriation’ to the *British Medical Journal*, in which he argued that POW’s mental symptoms were comparable to ‘the bends’ experienced by divers resurfacing from the depths of the ocean.
- January 1944 — Glover again criticised the Army psychiatrists in a journal called *Cavalcade*.
- January 1944 — Mass Observation published *The Journey Home*, an report on a survey about what people hoped for and what they expected from demobilisation.
- February 1944 — Glover resigned from the BP-AS, and meetings were held to deal with complaints from members about attacks that he had made on Army psychiatrists, whom he blamed for his defeat in elections for the Medical Committee (continuation of the controversial discussions).
- Spring 1944 — The Ministry of Pensions held an inter-departmental meeting of the Army, RAF, and Navy, where the three forces agreed to accept responsibility for the rehabilitation of their own repatriated POWs.
- May 1944 — DAP Technical Memorandum No. 13, ‘The Prisoner of War Comes Home’ was published, detailing the limited previous scholarship on POW mental-

ty and the findings of the Crookham Experiment.

- July 1944 — In Parliament, Earl Fortesque somewhat pre-emptively announces a 'special rehabilitation course' for returning POWs.
- The Tavistock Clinic Council decided to sell Store Street site in order to remain in business. The sale raised approximately £71,000 (less than it had cost, but just enough to cover debts).
- November 1944 — No. 10 Special Reception and Training Unit (SRTU) was established in Derby under Wilson's leadership as a pilot for Army POW resettlement. They found that repatriates wanted hands-on courses, not lectures, and that they hated the name for this unit.
- Late 1944 — a meeting took place between Dicks, Rickman and Bowlby to discuss possible collaboration and potential plans. Bowlby and Rickman felt that likely leaders in the post-war Tavistock would now be accepting of 'true psychoanalysts' like themselves.
- A Tavistock Clinic report demonstrated a focus on expansion and prophylaxis, stating that 'the developments in preventative work that have grown as a result of wartime experience must be carried on by the establishment of a department of social psychiatry in which the fundamental causes of psychoneurosis would be explored...'
- End of 1944 — 21 Army Group board was established (the 21 Army Group was comprised of soldiers from various countries, though primarily British and Canadian, under the command of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force).

1945

- Early 1945 — a ballot was held to elect an Interim Medical Committee (IMC) at the Tavistock Clinic, comprised of 7 members, who would eventually supersede the Medical Committee but in the meantime would advise on future policy and staffing of the Clinic.
- February 1945 — the Expert Committee reported to War Cabinet, fully vindicating psychiatric expertise.
- March 1945 — the War Office officially agreed to proceed with the creation of 20 Civil Resettlement Units (CRUs). Wilson gave talks to the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Production, and various captains of industry, to persuade them to support the CRUs.
- April 1945 — Rendel and Wilson rapidly made plans for the CRUs, including securing Hatfield House for their headquarters and planning a publicity campaign.
- May 1945 — the Ministry of Labour decline to help the Air Ministry with their POW rehabilitation scheme, as head office had not been consulted.
- 31 May 1945 — No. 1 CRU at Hatfield opened its doors to its first batch of POWs.

- 12 July 1945 — the King and Queen visited No. 1 CRU, taking lunch with the Marquess of Salisbury and stopping to talk with some of the POWs. This visit was widely reported in the newspapers.
- August 1945 — Tavistock moved to No. 2 Beaumont Street, W1
- 6 & 9 August 1945 — atom bombs were dropped by American planes onto the Japanese Cities of Hiroshima & Nagasaki. On the 15th, Japan announced its surrender. The War Office instructed that POWs from Europe were no longer to attend CRUs, in order to make space for Far Eastern POWs. Wilson and Rendel 'turned orders inside out' to make room for all POWs who wished to attend, and were subsequently removed from leading the CRUs.
- 5 October 1945 — first meeting of the IMC of the Tavistock Clinic. Bion was unanimously elected Chairman until December, & the decision to co-opt Trist and Sutherland was made. Early IMC meetings dealt with requests from industry for help with mental health and industrial relations projects, largely emanating from industrialists demobilized from Army service where they had witnessed officer selection or morale studies.
- October 1945 — Luff and Dicks resigned from posts as Assistant Directors in order for debate about permanent staff to take place. Salaries were seen as crucial to retaining 'the most essential members of the "Tavistock Group"', but some were concerned that this would require fee-paying patients, and render the Clinic ineligible for charitable status. Rees suggested creating the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations (TIHR) as a separate department, distinct enough to earn income from private fees and from industrial and Government departments.
- November 1945 — Dr Alan Gregg of the Rockefeller Foundation visited the Tavistock and discussed plans for development.
- November 1945 — IMC judged that the Children's Department had a 'total difference of outlook'. A new family clinic was mooted, and Bowlby 'emerged as the right person' to head it.
- November 1945 — the Beaumont Street building of the Tavistock Clinic was inaugurated with a small ceremony and speeches from retiring Chairman Lord Alness, Sir Ronald Adam, and J.R. Rees. It was announced that the Rockefeller Foundation had granted £22,000, to be spent over three years to develop 'work in social and preventative psychiatry.'
- A memo was drawn up and issued to the Rockefeller plans for the future. Strong recommendations were made that funds should be allotted for the immediate appointment of staff so that they would not be lost. £1,500 was proposed for senior men which represented less than earnings of a Lieut-Col. and much less than could be achieved in other organisations or was achieved in pre-war private practice. Proposed amounts for junior staff on training fellowships were at the level of Class

III registrarships offered by the Ministry of Health, but the Tavistock was not a recognised place for them to officially complete their training.

- Dicks met with Sir Francis Fraser who was planning postgraduate developments for the NHS. Fraser confirmed that the Maudsley would be the only designated postgraduate institute with teaching status, and advised that the Tavistock was too small and had too few beds: 'We will let you do some GP refresher courses — that kind of thing.'

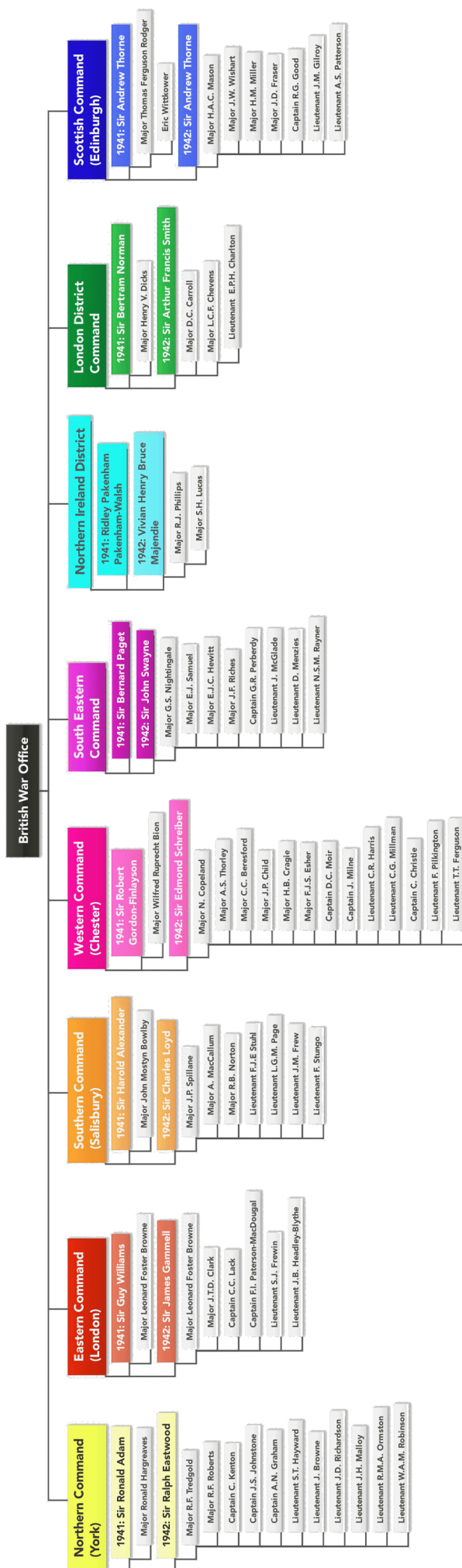
1946

- January 1946 — the IMC took over from the Medical Committee. Non-medical technical staff would be represented equally with medicals and the Committee was renamed the Professional Committee. Rees was elected Chairman. Members of Council were changed, and anonymous donors 'one of them closely connected with the Council', donated £1,500 and £2,000 to the Clinic.
- 1 February 1946 — the Rockefeller grant to the Tavistock Clinic comes into effect.
- April 1946 — Rees, Luff and Secretary Dudley Herbert held an interview with the 2 senior Commissioners of the Board of Control (one of whom was W.S. Maclay, ex-Tavistock), on the role of the Tavi in NHS plans. It was hinted that the Clinic would be taken over, but it would be wise to separately incorporate the TIHR. The Rockefeller also intimated that they could not give money to a government agent of a foreign country.
- July 1946 — all staff of the Tavistock Clinic were terminated in order for a full review of all staff to take place. The question of full-time salaries considered and more experienced psychologists placed on the same level as psychiatrists.
- Rumours of changes in the Tavistock reached other groups. Discussions were held with the Maudsley in an attempt to secure joint part-time training for registrars. National Institute of Industrial Psychology (NIIP) had to be reassured that work was not to be in the field of vocational competence but of social hygiene and human relations.
- 1946 to 1947 Sir Richard O'Connor Adjutant-General to the Forces and Aide de Camp General to the King. He supported the change in policy to entirely remove psychs from WOSBS, argued that the strength of feeling in the army against psychologists and psychiatrists made it advisable that they be withdrawn from the boards.

APPENDIX D: MAP OF PSYCHIATRIC SERVICES IN
SECOND WORLD WAR BRITAIN

Key (Click to Show on Map)





APPENDIX E: COMMAND PSYCHIATRISTS & COMMANDING OFFICERS

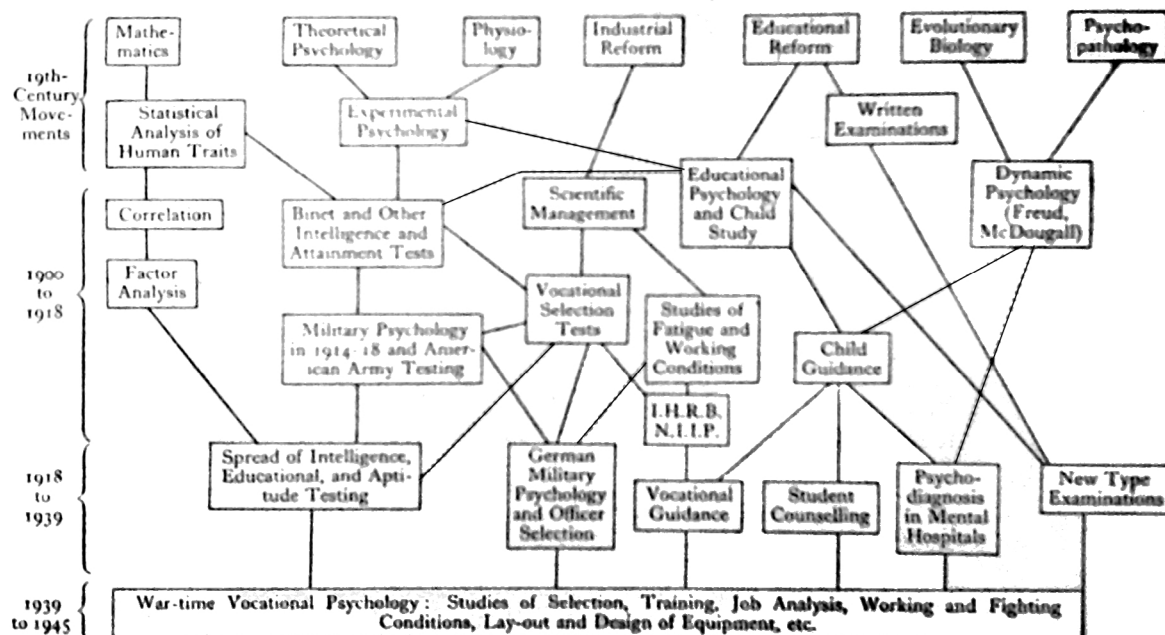
(Early 1941 & Late 1942)

APPENDIX F: GENERAL STRUCTURE OF A WOSB

Day	Morning	Afternoon
1	Arrival - Checking Papers, etc. President's Talk	Written Psychological Tests
2	Candidates divided into 4 groups (ABCD)	
(Groups A & B)	Interviews	Psychological Tests
(Groups C & D)	MTO's Tests (Leaderless Groups)	
3	Candidates continue in same 4 groups (ABCD)	
(Groups C & D)	Interviews	Psychological Tests
(Groups A & B)	MTO's Tests (Leaderless Groups)	
4	Final Board & dispersal of candidates	

APPENDIX G: DIAGRAM OF VOCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

(from Vernon & Parry, *Personnel Selection in the British Forces*)



BEER	UNFAIR	TRUST	GIVE	FRIENDLY	ENJOY	CRITICISM	LOVELY	DISLIKE
BOOK	HOME	CHILDHOOD	MOTHER	LONG	FATHER	BODY	DIET	TIE
BREAK	BEAT	HARD	MAKE	MASTER	SOFT	RESIST	IDEAL	RESPONSIBLE
NEWS	WORRY	FAILURE	GOOD	DREAM	SYSTEM	INFERIORITY	WOUND	DEAD
BOX	ARM	STATE	LEAD	ACTION	VITAL	A.B.C.A.	SMART	MORALE

Re-spacing

PHOTOGRAPH
FAVOURITE
STICK
BAD
DRILL

**APPENDIX H: WORD ASSOCIATION
LISTS OF WORDS
(from the Tavistock Archives)**

<u>APPENDIX H</u>		
1	BEER	26 DRINK
2	BOOK	27 READING
3	WIN	28 COUNTRY
4	BOX	29 ARM
5	LEAD	30 DEFENSE
6	HOME	31 LONGER
7	IMPLEASING	32 FORM
8	ATTACK	33 DEATH
9	PARTY	34 SILENCE
10	INFERIORITY	35 BATT
11	BOSS	36 FINE
12	BARREL	37 PATCH
13	DISORDER	38 SURPRISE
14	CHUCK	39 LONGING
15	FAILURE	40 DESTROY
16	CONTROL	41 LINE
17	IMPOSSIBILITY	42 MAYBE
18	DESERT	43 ENOUGH
19	CAREER	44 PAGE
20	MEMO	45 DISLIKE
21	ASSAULT	46 STRIKE
22	GLORIOUS	47 INJURY
23	WORK	48 PROFIT
24	POLITICS	49 IMAGINATION
25	MOTHER	50 DIRTY

APPENDIX I: CDC LIST OF CONCERNS ABOUT WOSBs

(from 'A Critical Review of the Present State of Officer Selection in Relation to the Position and Work of RTC', Tavistock Archives Box 205802222, pp. 1-2.)

1. Doubts about Reliability – Variations in Standards.
2. Doubts about Successful General Validation – Questions raised by the Follow-up.
3. Doubts about Present Working Efficiency – Further Questions Raised by the Follow-up.
4. The Increased Difficulty of the Main Selection Task – The Unresolved Problem of Young OCTU Candidates.
5. The Increased Variety of Commitments – Lack of Flexibility from Failure to Grasp First Principles.
6. The Increased Turnover in Board Staffs – the Lack of Tradition among Newcomers.
7. The Special Problem of Inefficient Senior Board Staff – the Impossibility of Offsetting the Effects of their Retention.
8. The Lack of Facilities for Research – The Impossibility of Developing and Validating Techniques.
9. The Training of Board Staffs – the Lack of a Working Board.
10. Supervision and Inspection – the Lack of Means to Ensure Proper Standards.
11. The Responsibility of WOSBs – the Importance of Their Vindication.
12. Long or Short Term Measures – a Choice of Policy.

APPENDIX J:
NUMBERED MAP OF
CRUs



No. 1 CRU
Hatfield House, Hertfordshire
(20 miles North of London)

No. 2 CRU
Peover Hall, Knutsford, Cheshire
(near Manchester)

No. 3 CRU
Wightwick Hall, Wolverhampton

No. 4 CRU
Middleton Hotel, Ilkley, Yorkshire

No. 5 CRU
Acton Place Camp, Long Melford, Sudbury, Suffolk (near Colchester), Essex

No. 6 CRU
New Washington (near Newcastle-on-Tyne), Co. Durham

No. 7 CRU
Lilford Hall, Nr. Oundle, Peterborough, Northamptonshire

No. 8 CRU
Kneller Hall, Twickenham, Middlesex

No. 9 CRU
Riccarton House, Currie, Midlothian, Scotland (near Edinburgh)

No. 10 CRU
Daglingworth Camp (near Cirencester), Gloucestershire

No. 11 CRU
Hermitage, Newbury (15 miles West of Reading), Berkshire

No. 12 CRU
Clatterbridge Hospital, Bebington, Wirral (near Birkenhead), Cheshire

No. 13 CRU
Resettlement Centre, Caerphilly, (near Cardiff), South Wales

No. 14 CRU
Sudbury, Derby

No. 15 CRU
Kenry House, Kingston Hill, Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey

No. 16 CRU
Mabledon Park, Tonbridge (near the border of Kent & Sussex), Kent

No. 17 CRU
Stourport-on-Severn (between Worcester and Kidderminster), Worcestershire

No. 18 CRU
Witton Park Camp, Blackburn, Lancashire

No. 19 CRU
Haydon Park, Sherborne (near Yeovil), Dorset

No. 20 CRU
Buchanan Castle, Drymen, Stirlingshire (near Glasgow), Scotland

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