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15th International Conference on Applied Military
Psychology, 7-11 May 1979

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31 December 1979

*Office of Naval Research
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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) The Fifteenth International Symposium on Applied Military Psychology was held in Jerusalem, Israel, 7-11 May 1979 with the Israeli Defence as hosts. The theme of the conference was "Psychological Aspects of Recruitment and Adjustment to Military Life". Twenty-seven representatives of 12 countries were present. This conference report reviews the formal presentations that were the substance of the symposium.		

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15th International Conference on Applied Military
Psychology, 7-11 May 1979

International Symposia on Applied Military Psychology are held annually under the sponsorship of the United States Office of Naval Research. The first of these meetings, intended to foster communication lines among both military and civilian scientists representing psychological research by and for the military services, was held in 1963. The London Branch of the Office of Naval Research typically handles administrative arrangements, whereas participating nations take turns hosting the symposia.

The Fifteenth International Symposium of Applied Military Psychology hosted by the Manpower Division of the Israel Defense Forces, was held in Jerusalem from 7-11 May 1979. As usual, the meeting was conducted in English and was deliberately kept informal. The main theme of the meeting, selected by the Israeli hosts, focused on the psychological and sociological aspects of recruitment and adjustment to military life. In keeping with this theme, emphasis was placed on the initial period of military life, embracing such topics as the recruitment process, selection and classification criteria, conscription, basic training, and problems of maladjustment to military service.

Of the 20 countries invited, 12 sent representatives to the meeting, for a total of 27 participants. The conference planning and management was handled by LTCOL Reuven Gal, chief psychologist of the Israeli Defense Forces. He and Dr. Marshall J. Farr (director of the personnel and training research programs of the U.S. Office of Naval Research, headquartered in Arlington, Virginia) co-chaired the meeting. This conference report will emphasize the major formal presentations that constituted the substance of the meeting. Because of the overlap attributable to the broad nature of the topics discussed, some of the presentations do not fit neatly into any one category.

Topic I. Adjustment and Attrition

Moshe Israelashvili, Military Psychology Unit of the Israeli Defense Forces, spoke about the process of adjustment in the Israeli Army, especially in the face of the severe stress imposed by absolute military discipline. Some reasons for that stress are as follows: (1) the officer has vast power over his subordinates, and may demand behavior which seems inflexible and, at times, irrational to those under him; (2) punishment is often not proportional to the crime; and (3) recruits have unrealistic expectations which lead them to severe disappointments.

The magnitude of the adjustment problems in a recruit's early days on the job is illustrated by the suicide problem: 40% of the suicides were committed during the first six months of service. Of these, 50% occurred during basic training. An analysis of the kinds of demands

put on a soldier during basic training reveals that the Army-produced stresses are quite unlike those usually encountered in civilian life. For example, there are physical, objective hardships; continuing stressful situations; and a requirement to learn skills (such as killing) which are in sharp contrast to commonly accepted behavior norms.

Israelashvili offered several approaches to improving the situation of the soldiers: (1) Provide a more realistic picture to those entering the military of what to expect; (2) Train regular officers in how to handle problematic (maladjusted) individuals; (3) Keep the recruit meaningfully busy so that he doesn't have an opportunity to become "obsessed" with the stresses of military life; (4) Maintain stability in the social environment by keeping the men together as a platoon all through their basic and occupational training; and (5) Increase research aimed at defining situational variables which can be improved, identifying early indicators of maladjustment, and distinguishing among levels and kinds of poor adjustment.

Alan Godwin, a principal psychologist in the British Senior Psychologist (Naval) Office, briefly discussed attrition due to maladjustment in the Naval Service, a wholly volunteer force of about 55,000 enlisted personnel and 10,000 officers. Recruiting of enlisted men, called "ratings," is consistently not meeting its numerical goals. The problem of maintaining an adequate supply of ratings is compounded by attrition in the first three months of service, during which one can quit merely by requesting it.

As background for better understanding of what he considers reasons for attrition due to poor adjustment, Godwin described the selection, assignment and early training process of the recruits. Based on a written test and interview, special career advisors, trained by Navy psychologists, determine the military occupational specialty each recruit will be assigned. This decision is made in the recruiting office, before actual entry into the Service. About 70-80% of the recruits get the assignment they desire.

During basic training (known as Part I), which occupies the first six weeks, about 6% of the personnel ask to leave. In the next six weeks (Part II), devoted to technical training, an additional 12% request discharge. Godwin said that Part I attrition seemed to be largely a result of personnel who felt they had not been assigned to their proper occupational specialty. In contrast, he asserted, Part II attrition was related somewhat to not doing well academically. (LTCOL Gal, Israel, commented at this point that, in Israel, if a soldier does not succeed in basic training, he is recycled through a different unit.)

Dr. Martin Rauch, chief psychologist for the Ministry of Defense of West Germany, described some problems of the FRG's armed forces. With a declining birth rate expected to cause future manpower shortages,

studies are being directed at why personnel attrite, on causes of voluntary enlistment, desertion, suicide, drug-taking and risk-taking behavior. For example, research on why recruits volunteer for the military reveals that 28% do so for specific, civilian-type job training, 15% for financial reasons, and 12% for general educational enrichment.

The FRG armed forces take in about 230,000 draftees each year, compared to about 30,000 volunteers. Among draftees the suicide attempts have now increased to about 1,000 a year; the precipitating adjustment difficulties leading to the suicide attempts seem to arise mainly in the first three weeks of service. In an effort to deal with the suicide problem, the military psychologists have led group-dynamics courses for all levels of commanding officers (supervisors). These courses include role playing by the psychologists of the strict officer and the soldier intent on suicide. The existence of this kind of course is indicative of the fact that the FRG now realizes it must adjust its military system, especially its officers, to the new youth culture, with its different attitudes, values and expectations.

(In commenting on the relationship between officers and enlisted personnel in the Israeli armed forces, LTCOL Gal pointed out that all officers come from the enlisted ranks and therefore, understand the enlisted man's attitudes. Furthermore, one of the main criteria for selecting Israeli officers is their social and interpersonal sensitivity, determined by sociometric techniques.)

CAPT Massimiliano Stracca, a medical doctor managing an Italian Navy hospital in Rome, presented a paper on current problems in adjusting to military life. His view is that adjustment depends on three factors. The first, external to the military, concerns the cultural, political, and socio-economic state of society. The second has to do with the hierarchical structure of the military system. And the third factor is the personality of the youth in interaction with military life. Stracca elaborated on the first factor, pointing out that a questionnaire administered to recruits of the three Italian armed forces revealed that the recruits believed that their military service was a waste of time, a period unfairly stolen from their civilian life, and alien to their attitudes towards discipline and authority. To deal with this crisis of traditional values, Stracca called for "...competent personnel with proper psychological training to understand and deal with all personal problems." Although Italy has no military psychologists or sociologists, some progress has been made towards improving military leaders' treatment and understanding of their subordinates: new rules of discipline were promulgated last year that respect individual dignity, simplify disciplinary procedures, and curb the abuse of power.

The co-authors (Drs. Menno Akkerman and Henk Visser) of the next paper, Akkerman in the Air Force and Visser in the Navy, discussed applied organizational development (OD) techniques in Holland. The title of their paper, "Conflict, Synthesis and Adjustment," refers to the possible ways in which the new recruit and the military organization can interact. They first compared both the newcomer and the organization in terms of their dominant present-day characteristics. Today's new recruits are better educated, more critical of authority, more job oriented than organization oriented, and expect more attention to their individual needs and desires. The armed services are characterized by being predominantly conservative, tending to formality, and striving to become more technological and computerized. The newcomer sees a large, impersonal organization which gives little attention to personnel needs and feelings, and expects prompt obedience. The organization, in turn, expects its new members to suppress their individuality and adjust to the military system as soon as possible.

The explanatory model which Akkerman and Visser propose is one that explains the problems of the newcomer as a result of interactive processing in which both the organization and members play a role. To put it another way, the key problem is to find ways in which the people and the organization can be adjusted to each other. The organization can be successful in achieving conformity during those times that it is expanding, providing opportunities for upward mobility, and providing good working conditions. However, if the new members perceive themselves as being deprived of things, maladjustment is the result. They feel alienated, seek escape in alcohol, are less willing to work overtime, and become more interested in considering unions to intervene for them.

A number of activities are now found in the Netherlands whose purposes are "to reduce the negative stress effect between individual and organization." These activities include: (1) Psychological treatment of those who complain. This increasingly is being carried out on an interdisciplinary basis, by medical officers, psychologists, social workers, clergy and personnel officers. (2) Preventative actions. (a) the "group-dynamics" approach has been introduced in all three armed forces. It is used for the training of personnel officers, and in leadership and attitude training. (b) For two weeks, the so-called "group-confrontation" approach is applied to a group of officer or NCO-candidates. They are subjected to heavy physical and psychological pressure so that they can come to recognize their physical limits, learn how to function in groups, and learn how to handle stress.

Although some of these activities aimed at reducing organizational-individual conflict "have received a positive evaluation," Akkerman and Visser acknowledge that the results of these activities have "till now not been very noticeable." They call for "humanizing" the organization,

and suggest a number of means for accomplishing this. Their recommended approaches focus on improving the work environment and dealing with maladjusted individuals in a participative way to diagnose their problems and to provide individualized guidance.

The authors stress that there is something more important than merely listing a series of steps to humanize the armed services; what is needed is to develop long-term strategies which will encourage the military system to transform itself structurally and procedurally, in order to deal successfully with its human components. Social scientists could play an important role in shaping such strategies of change.

Dr. William Helme, of the US Army Research and Standardization Group (Europe) representing the US Army Research Institute for the Social and Behavioral Sciences (ARI), discussed research performed under contract to ARI by B.A. Frank and F.W. Erwin of Richardson, Bellows, Henry and Co., Inc., located in Washington, D.C. The research explored the feasibility of using autobiographical questionnaires to facilitate early identification of Army enlistees who were not likely to complete their first 180 days of service because of a failure to adapt to the Army life. From November 1976 to February 1977, two different questionnaires were administered to about 4,500 incoming male enlisted recruits at the reception stations in Fort Dix and Fort Sill. Data for the final analysis sample of 4,282 men included 3,660 who had completed the 180 days, as well as 622 who had been separated from the Army for various failure-to-adapt reasons.

Using the attrition criterion, the questionnaire results were item analyzed, and cross-validities were computed for all items. The results supported those of an earlier similar study strongly suggesting that autobiographical information can predict early attrition. Furthermore, data analyzed for black and white subgroups showed no appreciable difference in average scores. Based on results, the authors recommend that (1) This type of questionnaire be tried out operationally with data collected at Armed Forces Entrance Examination Stations; and (2) Further research be considered to evaluate how well these kinds of measures would predict long-term attrition.

The next presentation was by Dr. Robert Penn, who directs a research program dealing with attitudes and motivation for the US Navy Personnel Research and Development Center, San Diego, California. He reported on a longitudinal study of 5,000 recruits from all three of the Navy's basic training stations. Penn's effort focuses on enlistment, attrition, and reenlistment behavior, by administering questionnaires to the same enlisted personnel at five points in time: (1) In basic training (known as boot camp), four days after entering the Navy; (2) At the completion of boot camp; (3) Six months after the end of boot camp; (4) Eighteen months after entry into the Navy; (5) Three years after entering Service (this last administration is scheduled to occur shortly).

Particularly noteworthy findings were the differences between those who attrited in boot camp and those who survived it. The former were not as intelligent, had less formal education, and included substantially more unmarried men. In fact, many of those who failed to complete boot camp said in their first questionnaire that they thought they would not last, and that they were sorry they had enlisted as soon as they entered on duty.

Three main reasons were reported to account for why the youths joined the Navy: (1) To achieve maturity; (2) To gain job security, medical benefits and job-oriented training; and (3) Because they had had difficulty in finding civilian employment and therefore had nothing else to do. Interestingly, the reasons given for joining the Navy did not predict attrition. However, looking at responses to the questionnaire, one finds that those attrited lacked commitment and had difficulty in coping with the frustration of military life. (In reaction to this finding, a program was recommended to teach recruits how to cope with military life and provide them with realistic information about Navy job expectations.)

Penn believes that the most significant finding to date has been a major drop in the recruit's satisfaction with the Navy at the end of boot camp compared to six months later. For the most part, the sailors attributed this decline in satisfaction to the lack of effective leadership. Furthermore, those personnel who were not assigned to one of the Navy's formal "A" schools (where they received specialized training towards qualifying for a particular occupational category) were, in all respects, less satisfied than their school-bound peers.

The next presentation, by Major Lawrence Ingraham, Commander, U.S. Army Medical Research Unit (Europe), was a change of pace in that it was a clinical, hypothesis-raising study, not an experimental one. Ingraham focused on soldiers in the time period between six months of service and the end of their four-year period of obligation. Although they are assigned to Europe for several years, the mean time that they actually serve in Europe is eighteen months before they attrite.

Ingraham's approach was to screen the personnel records of this attrition group and to interview about 65 of them either individually or in small groups. One clear finding emerged: the occupational speciality or reason for discharge made no difference, the only factor that discriminated between those who attrited and those who did not attrite was that the attrition group failed to complete high school. The key perceived cause here, similar to that reported by Penn's respondents, was poor leadership. Subsidiary causes which Ingraham noted were: (a) The lack of a feasible way to change an occupational rating when one could not perform adequately; and (b) The lack of strong enough punitive measures. In the latter case, however, it is unclear whether more severe punishment might turn out to be counter-productive.

In connection with Ingraham's point about the difficulty of converting to a different occupational specialty in the US Army, the delegations from Israel, Belgium and Canada commented on the way their nations treated the problem. The Israeli system does allow reassignment. In Belgium, the commanding officer can decide whether to approve a job change. And in Canada, subsequent to one's occupational training, there is a program called "re-muster," under which one can change his "trade specialty" at any time. As a matter of fact, about 10-15% of Canadian armed forces members do convert from one trade specialty to another; the reassigned individuals maintain their seniority and salary.

Following up the points made by some of the previous speakers about the importance of effective leadership in improving personal adjustment, Mrs. Anne Childs (the senior psychologist in the Research Branch of United Kingdom Royal Air Force Support Command) reported on leadership training of officers. An 18-week course is devoted to training people to be officers and leaders. The philosophy taught is that leaders must be flexible, that leadership styles should depend on each given situation. The teaching strategies include both lecturing to the students and outdoor simulation exercises. However, Childs pointed out, the problem with this approach, called Functional Leadership Training, is that it is limited because training takes place in simulated, non-field, non-stress conditions.

CDT Arnold Böhrrer, of the Psychological Research Section of the Belgian Air Force, presented a paper on "Social Anxiety and Adjustment of Military Life." He used anxiety and related scales to measure social anxiety (fear of social incompetence and criticism), self-confidence, and fear of failure in "test-like" situations. His focus was on the relationship of these concepts to officers' success in their initial training at the Royal Military School. The results of Böhrrer's study are complicated and difficult to interpret clearly, but do lead to the following conclusions that bear on adjustment to life at the Belgian Military School:

- (1) Self-confident officers obtain better selection scores and are judged to have better military aptitudes than less self-confident subjects.
- (2) Social anxiety is correlated with selection scores. Its effects on the student's academic achievement depend on his ability level. Its effects on attrition from the military school are related to the kind of studies followed.
- (3) Cadets who report "facilitating anxiety," that is, who state that they perform better when they have light feelings of tension, tend to achieve better military aptitude scores than cadets who answer in the opposite way.
- (4) Among students who measured in the middle ranges of ability, anxious students obtained poorer academic results than non-anxious students.

(5) Anxiety is such a complex psychological variable that other variables must be considered in order to understand the impact of anxiety on behavior. These include an individual's ability, his degree of relevant training and/or experience, and the difficulty level of the subject being studied. These variables determine to a great extent the anxiety state experienced by the student in a given task situation, and thus the student's academic performance and adjustment.

In introducing his talk on the "Etiology of Desertion," Major Paul Sieben (Belgium) provided some statistics about his country's military system. Volunteers sign up for two years, whereas conscripts spend either ten months in Belgium or eight months in Germany. Conscripts enter at age 19, and are taken in only if there are not enough volunteers. Drug abuse is a very minor problem, with only about 20 cases a year. Suicide attempts number approximately 118 each year. There are about 500 cases of desertion annually from among the 25,000 volunteers in the standing armed forces.

Sieben divided the factors which cause desertion into an internal set and an external one. With respect to the internal set, he identified several types of factors:

(1) Age. Some Belgian volunteers are still legally minors. In other words, if they were not in the military, they would be accorded the special treatment due civilians of their age group. Sieben's point here is that these young adolescents do not possess enough moral autonomy to be considered responsible for their behavior.

(2) Degree of Intelligence. Some deserters lack the intellectual ability to understand and appreciate military rules and regulations, especially those pertaining to justifiable sick leave and legitimate absence.

(3) Mental Stability. The backgrounds of deserters often reveal family problems (a history of running away from home, and general rejection of parental authority); chronic school problems (truancy, frequent changes of school); involvement with breaking the law; and neurological/mental health difficulties.

Among the external factors influencing desertion, one finds the following:

(1) Family and Affective Problems. Deserters frequently describe problems with parents, wife or fiancée involving a range of perceived crises from losing one's wife to financial hardship on the family.

(2) Deficiencies of the Military System. Military service is a unique experience to the recruit. The potential deserter frequently finds fault with the lack of personal dignity, the regimentation of his time, the inadequacy of vacations, the excess of discipline, and

the arbitrary, make-work nature of his daily routine. A significant source of dissatisfaction lies in unrealistic, and therefore unfulfilled, expectations about military life and work. (Note that several other speakers (e.g., Israelashvili and Penn) discussed previously in this report also stressed the problems created when the recruit does not receive realistic information about what to expect in the service.)

What happens to the apprehended deserter after he has been in custody and is returned to service is another drawback in the military system. The released man often finds it difficult to resume his normal place in his social group, because of the tenacious prejudices of his peers and commander.

Sieben offered a number of suggestions for helping to prevent desertion. In most cases, they are logical steps for correcting the identified deficiencies. These steps include: (1) Providing realistic information about military life and work as a preview to one's enlistment decision; (2) Promoting personal discussion between the private and his commander when the former first arrives at his unit; (3) Taking rapid action on serious requests for transfer which appear justified and might head off increased maladjustment; (4) Reducing recidivism by improving the reception accorded to released prisoners when they return to service, granting them short leaves, and providing some financial assistance until their regular salary schedule resumes.

TOPIC II. Intervention Actions to Reduce Adjustment Problems.

Captain Chen Nardi, a social worker in the Mental Health Branch of the Israeli Defense Forces' Medical Corps, discussed "A Behavioristic Model of Social Work Intervention in a Military Unit." The intervention he studied is that of a social worker himself working within the battalion, focusing mainly on the officers. Nardi believes that he can help the enlisted men indirectly by teaching their leaders special behavior-modification techniques, based on rewards to treat the problem individual. Nardi made a deliberate choice, when he was assigned to the job of improving the behavior of a unit, to reject the "negative contingency" approach, already used intensively in the army. This punishment technique, as B.F. Skinner has pointed out in "Beyond Dignity and Freedom," has several severe shortcomings. It leads to a reappearance of the punished behavior when the negative contingency is removed. The punished behavior tends to become redirected toward people who cannot punish the individual. Finally, use of punishment by a commander turns the commander into a source of aversive stimulus for his men, who thus try to avoid him and may engage in destructive passive resistance.

Within the battalion in which Nardi worked, he met frequently with the unit's chief to give him positive reinforcement for the target behavior; namely, when the chief provided positive reinforcement to his

subordinates. Nardi also helped the chief to examine and evaluate the beneficial effects derived from this positive approach. The benefits are reflected in the output of the unit, in the way in which it carries out its responsibilities, and in the process by which the system deals with each individual. Some of the adverse behavior patterns that are reduced in units in which the leaders practice positive reinforcement are absenteeism, desertion, arrests, military police complaints and loss of equipment. Recently, a new reporting system for military units has been initiated which will make it easier to document the positive changes brought about by Nardi's intervention approach. The new reporting identifies a variety of statistics (such as the adverse behavior noted above) which index the "health" status of each unit.

The next presentation dealt with the various models of interpersonal relations and organizational development taught in orientation workshops for new training staff, as well as in refresher-course workshops given to veteran training staff. CAPT Moshe Even-Chen, chief psychologist of the Israeli Defense Forces' Armor Corps, said that these workshops, of several hours duration, select from among a repertory of models, depending on the nature and needs of the group involved. Briefly, these models can be described as follows:

- (1) Transactional Analysis (TA). The intention here is to present some essential concepts from TA—"Parent," "Child," "Adult"—and their significance as tools for analyzing behavior and in encouraging effective communication on a one-to-one basis. Understanding of this model is crystallized through exercises such as role play.
- (2) Rewards & Punishments. The goal of this model is to stimulate individual and group awareness of the variety of positive and negative reinforcers which are available to lower-echelon training staff as training tools. There is discussion of the possible applications of these reinforcers in typical and critical incidents, and there is analysis of problem incidents brought to the group by individuals.
- (3) Identifying Personal Resources. The objective here is to promote awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses as they relate to training, to enable the individual to find ways of transforming weaknesses into strengths, thus boosting his self confidence. Small-group discussions are the primary means employed to achieve this goal.
- (4) Communication. To foster effective interpersonal communication, lecture and role-play exercises are used. The focus is on such things as listening skills, feedback techniques, non-verbal communication, empathy, and demonstrating the differences in effectiveness between one-way and two-way communication patterns. To appraise the merit of these various models, a dual-purpose system was developed. One purpose was to achieve valid, systematic and standardized evaluation techniques for all lower-echelon training staff. The other was to create a framework of incentives and reinforcements which would aid in motivating the training staff toward higher performance levels.

TOPIC III. Special Populations

So-called "special populations" (such as women, ethnic minorities, personnel of low ability level, low socio-economic status and low frustration threshold) may pose unusual challenges to a military organization. These groups frequently require special attention and a disproportionate share of resources, are resented by the general population, and pose greater adjustment problems to the system.

Major Terry J. Prociuk, an associate professor at the Canadian Royal Military College at Kingston, Ontario led off this topic area with a presentation on "Women at Canadian Military Colleges." In early 1979, Canada announced plans to allow women undergraduates to enter the Canadian military colleges, starting with the 1979-80 academic year. The plan included military service, on an experimental trial basis, at sea, in aircrews, in "near-combat roles" in the land element, and at an isolated military post. In the military-school setting, the women will, like their male counterparts, attend classes, live in college dormitories, eat at the cadet dining hall and participate in drills, sports, parades, and the like.

Prociuk's own research, and thus his talk, focused on the attitudes held by male cadets toward the introduction of women into the Royal Military College, one of three military colleges in Canada. As part of the curriculum for a course he taught in social psychology to second year students, Prociuk provided information on and initiated class discussions on sex differences and the psychology of women. Following the discussions, and as part of a larger research study, the cadets were asked to work on a group project (in small groups of 4 or 5) dealing with the question of women in the military and at the Royal Military College. The class, comprised of 85 Anglophones, used a five-point rating scale (0 = strongly disagree; 1 = disagree; 2 = neither agree nor disagree; 3 = agree; 4 = strongly agree) to communicate their attitudes. On the general question of increased participation by females in the Canadian Forces, the class response was one of agreement (i.e., a 3.15 average rating). Among the important reasons given in support of this agreement was that women should be judged, as men are, on the basis of their capabilities and merit. Interestingly enough, several cadet-groups indicated that women may, in fact, be more capable and versatile than men in certain types of work.

With relation to the introduction of women at the Royal Military College, the cadets expressed less agreement (namely an average of 2.2) towards participation of females in the Regular Officer Training Plan, which provides the main source of highly qualified officers for the Canadian Forces. Under this plan, officer cadets enroll at the completion

of high school for an initial nine-year period of service, and live at the College during the time of their academic studies. When asked to comment on their relatively neutral feelings about women at the College, the cadets revealed a concern that many of the school's long-held traditions (e.g., initiation practices and boxing competitions) would be irreversibly altered. In addition, the cadets expressed reservations about the possibility of double standards for physical fitness and sports. On the other hand, however, the respondents did indicate that the preservation of women's rights was of considerable importance, and that, on the basis of merit, women should be allowed every competitive opportunity. Furthermore, some cadets believed that if the problems were approached in a rational and intelligent manner, they could be resolved, and might even lead to new and stronger traditions.

It was Prociuk's contention that, on balance, there appears good reason for optimism concerning the successful introduction of women into the Royal Military College. He argued that some expressions of ambivalence by the cadets were to be expected, since traditions and shared experiences are what hold groups together in times of war and peace. However, Prociuk seemed convinced that recent social changes leave us no choice but to refashion our social institutions more squarely with the realities and challenges of the world of 1980. And this world is one of people, not of men or women.

The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have a Special Populations Section within their Unit of Military Psychology. The next speaker, Chaim Borkow, head of the Section, discussed those youth who represent the least promising of the Israeli enlistees. These people, who are the most likely to break down, are characterized by low socio-economic status, lack of motivation to serve in the military, anti-social norms, low frustration tolerances, general low ability, and a vicious circle of failure experiences.

Israeli recruits are classified into five Kaba (quality groups or categories), based on intelligence, education, Hebrew-language proficiency and motivation. The lowest-quality Kaba known as the experimental (E) group, constitutes about 5% of all conscripts, and is treated differently from all other groups. After the October War, Israel lowered its eligibility requirements, and now essentially drafts everyone (except for the very severely disturbed and physically unfit). This has made it imperative to try to deal effectively with the E group, which contributes a disproportionate number of drug users and deserters. The E Kaba is experimental in that its members are given prolonged basic training—as long as six months. After they complete this extended basic training, they take special courses, depending on the kind and degree of their deficiencies. Following these courses, they are distributed to certain units which have the capability to absorb them, e.g., which have social workers

or psychologists to provide guidance and counseling. Once the E Kaba members are in these units, they are thoroughly integrated with the rest of the unit: their E-Kaba identity is not obvious.

Israelashvili's presentation, discussed earlier in this report, cited several reasons for the severe stress faced by members of the IDF. Borkow elaborated on personality traits typical of those who break down under stress: They are unable to (1) accept authority and criticism; (2) delay gratification of desires; (3) introject national values; (4) identify with the group to which they belong; (5) believe in their ability to perform appropriately; and (6) maintain flexibility and interact socially with others.

Borkow presented a variety of statistical data which were aimed at the relationship among maladjustment and various behavioral and demographic factors; for example, suicide attempts, desertion, drug abuse, level of education, the individual's and his parents' country of birth, and military occupation. The Israeli military system tries to prevent maladjustment by such means as granting welfare payments to the families, placing the member close to home, providing individualized aid by clinical psychologists and social workers, providing the extended basic training and special courses mentioned above, and by making available a "Commissioner of Complaints" to serve as a kind of ombudsman to the enlisted men.

In the final paper under this topic, Dr. Marshall Farr, representing the headquarters group of the U.S. Office of Naval Research (ONR), described a research effort conducted by Dr. Robert Vineberg of the Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO), and sponsored jointly by ONR and the U.S. Navy's Education and Training Command. The HumRRO study dealt with the special population of low-mental-ability (LMA) Naval enlisted personnel, trying to find out how to utilize their limited talents and skills most effectively.

To understand this study, some background information on how the U.S. Navy functions is important. Enlisted individuals are classified into pay grades E-1 to E-9. These correspond approximately to length of time in the Service, so that men at the E-3 and E-4 levels, for example, are generally still in the first (usually 4-year period) enlistment, whereas the E-5 level usually indicates someone who has re-enlisted.

Based upon aptitude test scores, enlisted individuals in all services are classified, at the outset, into 5 mental-level categories, category 1 being the most favorable. In general, most service members fall into categories 2 and 3. The services do not take category-5 people, and try to limit the number of category-4 people, based upon the belief that the latter group cannot successfully cope with military life, training and job demands. (It would be interesting to consider the similarity between this category 4 and the E Kaba of the Israel's system.)

Vineberg gathered information about how well LMA personnel (category 4 and the lower half of category 3) actually performed in a variety of occupational specialties, ranging from non-technical to technical types of jobs.

The approach taken in the research was to develop a special performance-rating instrument based on job analyses of selected occupations. The job analyses were completed by the supervisors of 993 men stationed aboard 3 aircraft carriers, who rated the performance of their E-3, E-4 and E-5 men on a 1-7 point scale which included from 26 to 45 items. (The questionnaires differed in the number of items because they contained, in addition to certain common-core items, other items oriented specifically to the 9 different occupational specialties sampled.) It is important to realize that supervisors may not have been aware of their men's mental-level category. It is also important to note that, since the Navy does not take in many LMA personnel, the sample size of those LMA men for each specialty is necessarily small. (Very highly technical specialties could not be used for this study because there would be too few, if any, LMA types in them.)

The results of the study were surprising. There is an overall trend for job incumbents in category 4 (that is, the LMA individuals) to receive slightly higher ratings than any other category. In the jobs surveyed, supervisors perceived the most effective E-3 and E-4 incumbents to be persons in either the highest or lowest mental category. They perceive persons in the lower mental categories to be the most effective job incumbents in the E-5 pay rating.

Farr cited several possible interpretations or implications of these surprising findings:

(1) Motivation may be the chief factor operating, that is, the motivation of the LMA personnel is so strong that it overcomes their ability shortcomings.

(2) Those LMA individuals permitted to re-enlist (i.e., those in the E-5 rating) are the most competent within their mental-level category because they have succeeded in getting through their first four years in service. Even the E-3 and E-4 men evaluated had "survived" two or three years in service.

(3) It may be worth further study to consider the impact of cutting the qualifying scores for entry into certain Navy technical schools.

(4) LMA men may recognize reality, and thus be better able to cope with the boredom and discipline of Navy life—since they realize that their Navy job is the best they can get in real life.

(5) It may be possible to develop more sensitive selection techniques that could better identify LMA people whom we now reject. Perhaps we could develop job-sample tests, or motivational predictors.

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