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CONTENTS

	PAGE
Objectives of the Association.....	1
Photograph of President Horatio M. Pollock.....	2
Vita and Bibliography of President.....	3
Introduction of the President by Neil A. Dayton.....	5
Presidential Address	9

PAPERS

I. BIOLOGICAL AND MEDICAL SCIENCES

Surgical Aspects of Cranial and Intracranial Malformations.....	15
Jost J. Michelsen	
Prevention of Mental Deficiency from the Viewpoint of Neuropathology.....	33
Clemens E. Benda	
Some Comments on the Mongoloid.....	46
L. Grant Tennies	

II. PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHIATRY

The Problem of the Mentally Retarded and the Army.....	55
Lt. Col. William C. Menninger	
The Marginally Useful Soldier.....	62
Major Donald E. Baier	
One Hundred Institutionalized Mental Defectives in the Armed Forces.....	67
Robert H. Haskell and Alfred A. Strauss	

III. SOCIAL SCIENCES

Mentally Retarded Pre-School Children: Suggestions to Doctors and Nurses in Well-Child Clinics	72
Nina Ridenour	
Organization of Special Classes to Fit the Needs of Different Ability Groupings.....	80
Elizabeth M. Kelly	
Educational Methods Applicable to Adult Mental Defectives.....	87
Dorothy W. Buchan	
A Follow-up Study on the Re-establishment of Mentally Defective Girls in Domestic Science in an Urban Centre Under Colony House Supervision.....	96
A. Mildred Jeffrey	

REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS

Biological and Medical Sciences.....	101
Psychology and Psychiatry	103
Social Sciences	107

REPORTS

Business Meeting May 15, 1943.....	110
Report of the Chairman, Committee on the Social Control of the Mentally Defective.....	115
Editor's Report	116
News Notes	118

ONE HUNDRED INSTITUTIONALIZED MENTAL DEFECTIVES IN THE ARMED FORCES

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THE last issue of the AMERICAN JOURNAL OF MENTAL DEFICIENCY, January, 1943, carried an editorial on the use of mentally handicapped individuals in the war and reconstruction period. We quote: "Whether for war or for peace, all units of society should be integrated toward a common working efficiency in national or international life. This means that each individual, the basic unit of society, must be advantageously related to the total social structure. . . . Not one should be neglected. . . . Each human being has an unalterable fundamental value in the total biocultural economy of man. . . ."

It is with this philosophy in mind that the Training School has operated for the last seventeen years; namely, for the rehabilitation of the high grade defective. It is not enough, however, to have a philosophy and to try to put this philosophy to work; it is our duty to scrutinize the results of our efforts and to face our failures as well as our successes.

When we became aware that so many of our Training School boys had enlisted or had been drafted into the armed forces, we recognized another opportunity to evaluate the results of our training program. Kephart and

Ainsworth,* in 1938, presented before this Association a preliminary report of community adjustment of parolees of the Wayne County Training School. Although this survey furnished us much encouragement, the criticism could be advanced that the parolees of the Kephart-Ainsworth study were judged by ourselves with respect to success or failure on parole. Furthermore, it was possible to assume that failures had been influenced by insurmountable difficulties in the community placement.

The preliminary report of 100 mental defectives in the armed forces, which we intend to present, deals with a group of parolees who have been thoroughly scrutinized by highly specialized investigators as to their fitness for a highly standardized community.

Last year we started to collect the data concerning boys who had enlisted or had been drafted into the army; this occurred before the draft age had been lowered to include the 18-20 years age group. We had heard about them through our contacts with their families, but in a great number of instances the boys had written to us to tell about

* Kephart, N. C., and Ainsworth, M. H. A Preliminary Report of Parolees of the Wayne County Training School. *Proceed. LXII Annual Session. American Association on Mental Deficiency.* 1938.

their pride in being in the army. In April, 1943, a careful check was made by our social service department to verify and to substantiate the records of

The I.Q.'s of this soldier group either shortly before or shortly after admission were within a range from 48 to 109. The following Table I shows the per-

TABLE I
COMPARISON OF I.Q. AT ADMISSION OF A STANDARD GROUP WITH THE SOLDIER GROUP

I.Q. at Admission	Year 1936		100 Soldiers		100 Soldiers at Time of Discharge	
		%		%		%
Less than 50		2		1		—
50-59		19		8		9
60-69		46		42		32
70-79		28		35		32
80-89	}	5		11	}	20
90-99				2		
100 and above				1		
				14		27

these first 100 boys who came to our knowledge last year. Since this time many more have entered the armed service. It is obvious that our data collected are based upon the information we received from the respective families and no military data have been obtained by direct contact.

The analysis of our material shows that of the hundred soldiers formerly pupils of the Training School who came to our attention, 92 were white and 8 colored. In age, at the time of admittance to the institution, this group ranged from 7 years 2 months to 15 years 9 months, the average being 12 years 10 months. We may compare this average with the average of all admissions during the years 1931-37, when more than 50 per cent of our group under study were admitted; namely, 12 years 4 months.

These soldiers had been in residence in the Training School for periods varying from 8 months to 12 years 10 months, the average being 4 years 5 months. This average length of residence is higher than in all our discharges up to June, 1942, that average being 3 years 4 months.

percentages of our soldier group compared with the I.Q. range of an admission group during one typical year, 1936.

This table shows that nearly 50 per cent of the soldier group belongs to the borderline group of mentally defective. We have added the I.Q. range at the time of discharge which demonstrates that the group as a whole heightened its I.Q.

We can compare our soldier group in school achievement with a survey which had been made by our Mrs. Hoakley in 1936 on 781 children leaving our school department at sixteen years of age.

TABLE II
COMPARISON OF SCHOOL GRADE ACHIEVEMENT OF A STANDARD GROUP WITH THE SOLDIER GROUP

Grade Achievement of	781 Children		100 Soldiers	
		%		%
8th grade	1	1	1	1
7th grade	2	2	2	2
6th grade	9	13	13	13
5th grade	26	23	23	23
4th grade	37	39	39	39
Below 4th grade	25	22	22	22

In school achievement our soldier group was within the range of grade achievement of the total institutional population.

Commitment to the Training School is based not only on intellectual deficiency; in the majority of cases, there exists a behavior problem which may be called pre-delinquent. In the previously mentioned Kephart-Ainsworth study the reasons for commitment were compared with the community adjustment after parole. We may take their study on 292 boys as standard figures for our population in general.

Kephart and Ainsworth divided the behavior problems presented before commitment into delinquent behavior, *i.e.*, larceny, truancy, breaking and entering, and so on, and into non-delinquent behavior, *i.e.*, educational retardation only, neglect, problem behavior at home. The following Table III gives

TABLE III

COMPARISON OF PRE-ADMISSION BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS OF A STANDARD GROUP WITH THE SOLDIER GROUP

	Kephart-Ainsworth	100 Soldiers
	%	%
Delinquent Behavior	74	63
Non-delinquent Behavior	26	37

the respective data for the Kephart-Ainsworth study and our soldier group. Our soldier group as a whole presents, therefore, less delinquent behavior before admission than the representative group for the whole institution.

The following Table IV shows the comparison of community adjustment as measured by the socio-economic status. We judged the adjustment on a five point scale from well adjusted to not adjusted, whereas Kephart and Ainsworth classified their cases according to the criterion of self-support in various degrees. We are allowed to use our scale in comparison with the Kep-

hart-Ainsworth criteria because we found this scale in another study in reliable accordance with the Kephart-Ainsworth data.

TABLE IV.

COMPARISON OF COMMUNITY ADJUSTMENT AFTER PAROLE OF A STANDARD GROUP WITH THE SOLDIER GROUP

	Point Scale	Kephart-Ainsworth Study	100 Soldiers
		%	%
Well Adjusted	1 and 2	43	61
Fair Adjusted	3	29	21
Not Adjusted	4 and 5	28	11
Unknown		—	7

Though the soldier group rates higher in community adjustment, it has to be kept in mind that the data are not fully comparable. The Kephart-Ainsworth study was made on a group who had been away from the Training School for at least four years and had gone through the depression years. Our group has been away from the institution for a period ranging from a few months to several years and has had the economic opportunities of the present time. Nevertheless, we may conclude that our soldier group presented a trend to more favorable community adjustment than an average group of our institution.

Of these 100 boys, 40 per cent had enlisted in the army or navy. This percentage represents the lower limit since we could not obtain the data for many. Most of them had entered the armed services during the years 1940 to 1942, a few during the years before.

In our last survey, in April, 1943,* we could ascertain present data on 84 out of the original group of 100.

* This survey was made by our Mrs. Ainsworth and her staff.

According to the information given by the families, 43 or 51 per cent were in the army, with 14 or one-third of this number in special formations within the army such as the artillery, cavalry, parachute and so on; 16 or 19 per cent were in the navy or merchant marine; 3 or 4 per cent had joined the marines; 6 or 7 per cent had received training in the air corps and 6 or 7 per cent performed their duties in the medical corps. In summary, 74 or 88 per cent had continued successfully with their duties which so many of them had taken up voluntarily. Negative results to date in this study comprise a group of boys of whom 4 had been discharged for medical reasons and 5 had been dishonorably discharged or had been convicted. One boy had died in a hospital. If we take mental deficiency as the reason for the medical discharge, which might be probable although we have no information, then 9 out of 84 mentally defective soldiers did not make good. This represents 10 per cent of the whole group.

It is of interest to know how many of these boys had been promoted to private first class, corporal, sergeant, seaman second and first class, coxswain, third class petty officer and so on. We are informed that 23 out of 74 boys had received promotion either in the army or navy, marines or air-corps. This is 31 per cent.

It is an often heard saying that the I.Q. defines an individual's adjustment to new situations. Let us investigate the progress of 9 boys whose I.Q. at the time of parole was between 50 and 59 and the adjustment of 15 boys whose I.Q. was 85 and higher. Of 9 morons only 1 had been medically discharged

(the total number of such discharges was 4); 4 are in the army, 2 in the field artillery, 1 in the army air corps, and 1 in the navy. None of them had been promoted. Of 15 dull-normal boys, 3 are in the army, 1 in the air corps, 1 in the medical corps, 3 in the navy and 3 in the marines; 4 are unknown. Of the group of 11, 3 boys had received promotions which is 27 per cent and certainly not higher than for the whole group.

To summarize our findings, a group of 100 mental defectives from the Wayne County Training School have enlisted or have been drafted into the armed services. In comparison with other investigations concerning the same population, this soldier group is a selected one as far as the I.Q. is concerned, the I.Q. being slightly higher than for the average institutional group. The behavior problems these soldiers presented before admission are less pre-delinquent than the average for the whole group. The community adjustment of the soldier group after parole is probably the same or slightly better than for the standard group.

After a period now of more than six months up to several years in the armed forces, 88 per cent of this soldier group has continued acceptably in this stringent situation; indeed 31 per cent has received some promotion.

This small group of morons does not show more inadequacy with respect to discharge and conviction than the whole group, and a group of dull-normals not more adaptiveness in terms of promotion.

Many of our soldier group had already been in the Civilian Conservation Corps after parole. Since the CCC may

be called a semi-military training, it might be of interest to know how many of our soldiers had been in CCC and to compare their success there with their adjustment in the armed services.

Willson* published in 1941 a study concerning mental defectives in CCC. He received data from thirty-four state institutions with a total male population of 25,603. Of this group 748 had been enrolled in CCC. Valid data could be obtained for 528 of these boys. Only 131 or 18 per cent had been dishonorably discharged which compares favorably with the 20 per cent dishonorably discharged from the total enrollment in all CCC Camps during the fiscal year 1940.

The Training School had from April, 1934, to December, 1941, an enrollment of 229 parolees in the CCC. This number is exactly 40 per cent of all boys paroled from the Training School within the same period. Of this total, 229 Training School boys enrolled in CCC, only 40 or 17 per cent had been discharged dishonorably, which is slightly less than the group in Willson's study.

In our soldier group, 42 out of 100 had received training in CCC, ranging in the majority from six months up to two years. This is 42 per cent of all our soldier group, only a slightly greater percentage than the whole group of parolees. In the soldier group, how-

ever, 13 or 31 per cent had been dishonorably discharged from CCC, which is much higher than for the standard group (17 per cent). Of these, 13 of our soldier group that had been earlier dishonorably discharged from the CCC, their army history to date shows that 1 has been convicted as thief and deserter; 1 has been medically discharged; of 1 we have no information; 8 are in the army with 1 a corporal; 1 is a marine; 1 is a navy seaman first class. We do not intend to interpret these figures. We leave, however, the thought that it might be worthwhile to compare in later years the adjustment of mental defectives in CCC with their adjustment in the armed forces and to discuss the different emotional values of such highly standardized environments.

Pertinent data concerning 100 institutionalized mental defectives in the armed forces have been presented. We have no figures to show how many Training School boys were rejected in the sequence from the first to the last of these 100 boys.

We attempt no conclusions. We are mindful of the rightful demands for careful screening against costly later casualties. We are also mindful that any such arbitrary rulings as "no one time institutional resident shall be accepted into the armed services" are necessarily unfair to the services and the individual. We make this presentation in part to insure that after this conflict is over, a meticulously detailed study of all Training School boys in the service based upon a study of army service records cannot be evaded.

* Willson, G. M. The Civilian Conservation Corps as Adjustment Outlet for Boys Trained in State Institutions for the Mentally Deficient. American Association on Mental Deficiency, 46: 124, July, 1941.