

## THE MEDICAL MEN IN THE WAR GAME

### WHY THE DEPARTMENT IS VITAL IN WAGING BATTLE.

Concluding article of series, by Capt. Thos. S. Crowe, M. R. C.

In times of peace of course our viewpoint may be modified for at such times the Medical Department of the army has few functions to perform. Until yesterday, I might say, no living American had ever seen one complete Medical Division of Medical troops assembled together. A division, as we all now know, is a complete army, and the very functions for which we are organized are only completely realized when the division is formed. The line of the Army until yesterday knew about the sanitary train, but only Leavenworth trained officers were made to realize that this sanitary train was a military asset. To some line officers, therefore, those who are not students, the military duty of a surgeon was limited to the command of a dozen or so men massed in a Post Hospital. It is not strange, therefore, that the old type army officer is profoundly ignorant of the principles of organization in so far as they include the medical department of the army, and it is necessary for some of us doctors to prove that we are fit to command and by our military knowledge add to the efficiency of the army if we expect to gain from him the respect due our specialization in which the military part of our duty is of course included.

The type of officer we find it difficult if not impossible to please is of course to quote my esteemed teacher at Camp Greenleaf "fortunately, disappearing rapidly, and the alert, capable, younger type of modernly educated officer will be in command of most of units of the new army."

Other commanders like ourselves are young at the game, anxious to learn, and it is our own fault if we do not master our duties as soon as he does his. If we succeed in this, we may be confident of finding in our commander companions ready to cooperate with us in the common purpose of defeating the enemy.

Now that we are placed in the correct pathway that leads to a conception of what a soldier really is, let us go just a little down that pathway or road. A soldier is not a man who shoots big and little guns. General Pershing, I believe, never carries a gun. Some soldiers dig trenches, some drive wagons, some are buglers, some take care of sick and wounded report, some of the mess, and above all, some are and some are not cooks. We cannot therefore define a soldier by the character of duty he performs but we must seek for a common quality that characterizes all men wearing the uniform.

That common quality is subordination.

Hence, a soldier is a man trained to obey. An officer is one who has been tried and found able to obey and competent to teach others also to obey. An officer must be trained also to care for the welfare of those intrusted to him for training. He must see that his men are clothed and fed. This is

the Quartermaster and Mess Officers' special function. He must keep his men in good health. This is surgeons' specialized function; he must train his men to transmit orders and carry messages, which is specialized function of signal corps. He must train his men to drill and use of firearms; this is the specialized function of the Infantry.

All officers must possess administrative ability. We are all responsible for property.

Officers who have not received, acquire in one way or another, that training that every officer in the United States army should possess, that training to make them first a soldier and after he becomes a soldier he may then become a soldier-specialist.

There is no one amongst us who denies that the Otolologist, Proctologist and Optometrist should study medicine in general before becoming a specialist. It is just as reasonable to demand and expect a man to have military training in general before he practices a soldier-specialist.

The Medical Department is known as a Staff Department. The staff is the part of the army that relieves the combatant forces of every duty except that of fighting. The Medical Department's staff duty is peculiar in that it also takes up the burden of caring for sick and wounded in the field. Upon their ability to not only operate skilfully but also to collect and evacuate the wounded skilfully depends to a great degree the man-power of the front line of trenches.

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