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# WHAT THE SOLDIER THINKS

NUMBER TWO

Quarterly Report, with Charts, of Research Studies  
Indicating the Attitudes, Prejudices and Desires  
of American Troops

SPECIAL SERVICE DIVISION  
RESEARCH BRANCH

ARMY SERVICE FORCES, WAR DEPARTMENT  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

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WAR DEPARTMENT

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY SERVICE FORCES  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

IN REPLY  
REFER TO SPSPX 330.11  
(15 Jul 43)

15 July 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL, ARMY SERVICE FORCES:

Subject: Quarterly report to the Chief of Staff  
on factors relating to morale.

1. This report summarizes some major aspects of recent studies on the attitudes and interests of troops. These studies are based on the statistical analysis of replies made anonymously to questions asked of thousands of soldiers, here and abroad. In the field covered, such factual evidence is more representative, and therefore more generally applicable, than the personal impressions of even the most experienced observer.

2. Our studies indicate the satisfaction of troops with many physical factors generally related to morale. The men like their food; they are appreciative of the medical services; they appreciate their technical training. The picture is not so favorable with respect to factors less tangible but equally important to morale.

3. The first section of the report shows the attitudes of the men toward their role as soldiers. Here we find that only two men out of five feel that they would be more useful as soldiers than as civilian war workers. Men with doubts about the War or about our Allies are more likely to prefer the role of civilian war worker. This reluctance to be soldiers is greatly accentuated among those who are married, older, and those who are classified as limited service. The general picture is made worse by the discovery that the longer a private has been in the service, the less he believes he can contribute more as a soldier than as a civilian war worker. Perhaps even more disturbing is the evidence that the longer men are in the service the less is their pride in their outfits.

4. Such attitudes may well be a handicap to training and to efficiency in combat. These studies indicate the need for unremitting effort to impart to the men a pride in their service, a sense of personal participation, and a belief in the cause for which they are fighting. This effort will be most effective if special attention is given to the older, married, and limited service men.

5. The fact that the great majority of men A.W.O.L. are found at the lower educational levels suggests that the Command may desire to acquaint itself more fully with the special problems of the men with low education and make clear to them the penalties involved for being A.W.O.L. and the reasons for the necessary discipline.

6. The second section of the report deals with general problems of the soldier.

a. The favorable reaction of the men to Army technical schools is highly satisfactory, and a gratifying number are assigned to jobs which make use of this special training.

b. The attitudes of our troops towards our Allies in this War must necessarily reflect a carry-over from civilian attitudes. Yet proper attitudes toward our Allies are essential to team-work in the War, and it is evident from these studies that only the constant effort of the Command can improve these attitudes and keep them from deteriorating.

*F. H. Osborn.*

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## HOW THE STUDIES ARE MADE

The staff of the Research Branch of the Special Service Division is composed of Army officers who are specialists in this field, together with a number of civilians from leading universities and from commercial life.

Techniques have been developed, tested and adjusted to fit the Army's problems.

The basic steps in conducting a study are as follows:

1. The questionnaire is prepared in consultation with the War Department Branches immediately concerned. All details are worked out in advance.
2. The questionnaire is pre-tested on smaller groups to make certain that the questions are meaningful and understandable to the enlisted men.
3. The project is cleared for action with the Commands in which the study is to be made.
4. The number of men to be surveyed is set sufficiently large to insure statistically reliable findings.
5. The men to be surveyed are selected to insure as true a cross-section as possible.
6. The men are assembled in class rooms or mess halls, where they themselves--in absolute anonymity--fill in their questionnaires. No officers are present, the classes being conducted by trained enlisted men. The questionnaires bear no names, serial numbers, or other personal identification. Ordinarily, illiterates or men of very low intelligence are interviewed personally by trained enlisted men.

Other techniques, of course, are employed from time to time to fit special needs.

