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PERSONNEL CLASSIFICATION TESTING IN THE ARMY

By Dr. WALTER V. BINGHAM

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INTRODUCTION

THE Committee on Classification of Military Personnel, appointed by the National Research Council at the request of The Adjutant General in May, 1940, has completed four years of advisory service. These years have seen striking changes in the nature and scope of the technical problems involved in classifying and assigning officers and men as the Army has entered on successive phases of planning for the national defense, mobilization, swift expansion, participation in a world-wide war and return of service personnel to civilian employment. A short sketch of what has been done during this period will introduce a summary of activities within the past year.

¹The membership of this committee at the time of its appointment by the National Research Council included also C. C. Brigham, H. E. Garrett, L. J. O'Rourke, M. W. Richardson, C. L. Shartle and L. L. Thurstone. Following the untimely death of Dr. Brigham on January 23, 1943, C. F. Hansen was designated as his successor.

RETROSPECT

Four months before the Selective Service and Training Act was passed in September, 1940, The Adjutant General had asked the committee what steps should be taken to provide aids to general personnel classification and appraisal of soldierly potentialities of recruits and inductees. The question took this form: Should reliance be placed on the standardized vocabulary tests then in use at recruiting stations as aids in sizing up the military suitability of volunteers? Or should use be made of available revisions of Army Alpha, Army Beta and the Binet-Simon Scale? Or had the time arrived to prepare new tests for purposes of screening and initial classification?

It seemed clear that a new general classification test was required, and also an examination which could be given to non-English-speaking men and to illiterates. Tests of aptitudes for training in clerical duties and in mechanical occupations also seemed to be indicated.

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