

Zeitschrift: ASMZ : Sicherheit Schweiz : Allgemeine schweizerische Militärzeitschrift
Herausgeber: Schweizerische Offiziersgesellschaft
Band: 140 (1974)
Heft: 12

Artikel: The Selection of Recruits in the British Army
Autor: Dodd, Norman L.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-48865>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 05.01.2026

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

Konsequenz 17: Eine äußerst sorgfältige Grobentstrahlung vor Bezug eines Notkellers ist unerlässlich; man hält sich unter Umständen etliche Stunden darin auf.

Konsequenz 18: Im Ort, wo sich die ausgebauten Schutzräume befinden, sind neben diesen starke Notkeller zu rekonoszieren, welche möglichst nah bei den Mannschaftskellern liegen.

Konsequenz 19: Da durch eine Grobentstrahlung nie der gesamte radioaktive Staub entfernt werden kann und demzufolge in den Notkellern die Gefahr besteht, diesen einzuatmen, hat die Schutzmaske am Gesicht zu bleiben!

3.7. Schutz der Waffen

Die Waffe kann nicht ausgewechselt und muß demnach so gut wie möglich geschützt werden.

Konsequenz 20: Das Gewehr ist unter dem AC-Schutz-Überwurf beziehungsweise unter der Pellerine zu tragen.

3.8. Bereitschaftsgrade und Bereitschaftsgradänderungen

Lebt die Truppe im verstrahlten Gebiet in den Schutzräumen, so benötigt sie bei geschickter Kelleraufteilung minimal 1 Stunde, bis sie diese verlassen hat, da sich im Auskleideraum in der Regel höchstens vier Mann gleichzeitig marschbereit machen können.

Konsequenz 21: Ordnet ein Kommandant Bereitschaftsgrad III oder IV an, so muß er sich bewußt sein, daß die Truppe erstens die obgenannte Zeit benötigt, um diesen zu erreichen, und zweitens zur Aufrechterhaltung des befohlenen Bereitschaftsgrades sich nicht mehr in den Schutzräumen, sondern höchstens in den Notkellern aufhalten kann; dadurch ist sie intensiverer Bestrahlung ausgesetzt.

3.9. Fragwürdige Dosenberechnungen

Bei der Berechnung der in einem Keller aufgenommenen Dosen spielen der Normwert, die Aufenthaltsdauer und der Schutzfaktor eine Rolle. In der Rechnung wird nicht berücksichtigt, daß der Mann unter Umständen nicht feinentstrahlt ist, also nicht nur der Strahlung von außen durch die Kellermauern, sondern auch einer solchen aus den nicht entfernten radioaktiven Partikeln auf den Kleidern ausgesetzt ist.

Konsequenz 22: Es ist durch die zuständigen Stellen abzuklären, welche Bedeutung einer eventuell mehrstündigen Bestrahlung beizumessen ist, die durch nicht entfernte radioaktive Staubpartikel auf der Kleidung entsteht.

3.10. Treffen

In der Schutzmaske sinkt es etwa um 50%, da die Gläser bei längerem Tragen, trotz Einfettung, anlaufen und die Sicht ohnehin schlecht ist.

Konsequenz 23: Eine neue Schutzmaske mit speziell behandelten Gläsern und besserem Sichtwinkel wird dringend benötigt.

3.11. Der Feldweibel

Die Aufgaben des Feldweibels werden durch das zusätzliche Problem des Erstellens einer vollständigen AC-Schutz-Bereitschaft vervielfacht (Mannschaftskellereinrichtung, Küchenproblem, Materialmagazin unter Tag bringen, Entstrahlungsstelle für Mannschaft und Material usw.). Ebenso würde es sich im Ernstfall verhalten.

Konsequenz 24: Die Kompanie benötigt für eine solche Übung und im Ernstfall einen «vollamtlichen» zweiten Mann mit Feldweibelfunktionen (zum Beispiel einen Wachtmeister).

The Selection of Recruits in the British Army

Col Norman L. Dodd, Retd.

The correct and most economical use of the limited manpower available is important in any military force but it is vital in an army which relies upon a voluntary system of recruiting. Not only must men be placed in units where their education and aptitudes can be used to the best advantage but also in trades and employments in which they can be satisfied in their work and so enjoy their career in the Army. At the same time the manpower planners of the Service must ensure that each regiment and corps receives sufficient recruits of the correct standard. A balance must be kept which takes account of the man's wishes and the Army's requirement. Usually these co-incide because a man who is a square peg in a round hole will be unhappy and therefore a bad influence on those around him. He will soon leave the Army and will be a very poor advertisement for the Service.

Before 1968 all prospective recruits for the British Army were allocated to corps and regiments by the selection officers at the Army Careers Offices (Recruiting Offices) to whom they reported for enlistment. The training depots then appointed them to appropriate jobs. This system led to imbalances and often to men finding, on arrival at their training depot, that they had made a mistake and would rather be in some other regiment and trade. These recruits often took advantage of the option given them to leave the Army during their first few weeks of training rather than go through the trouble of requesting a transfer.

Between 1968 and 1971 a pilot scheme was run under which a cross section of recruits were given a longer period of briefing during which the various arms and services were explained to them. They were then given aptitude tests and very thorough interviews before they were allocated to their Corps or Regiment. The effects were dramatic; the drop out rate at the Depots and Training Centres was immediately reduced by 40%. The Ministry of Defence therefore decided to form a permanent Selection Centre to which every man recruited in England must report before his final assignment to a corps or regiment. The location chosen was in Sutton Coldfield almost in the middle of England and the Centre opened in September 1971. Since that date the procedures and tests used have been refined and improved with the experience gained and are now probably the most efficient in the world today. The proof is that the drop out rate is under 10% at the training centres and only 6¾% at the Centre itself.

The Centre receives its input from the Army Careers Offices which are situated in most towns and cities throughout the country. The usual procedure is for the prospective recruit to call at his nearest Office and make enquiries about the Army in general. About 50% of these youths and men have some idea of the Regiment which they wish to join, the remainder have little or no idea. If the man's interest is serious he is asked to fill out an attestation form and provide the names of two witnesses to character. He is given a fairly simple general intelligence test and is medically examined. If these prove satisfactory he is asked to report on a given day. The oath is then administered and he is formally enlisted but "not finally approved", either as a Young Soldier if aged between 17 and 17½ or as an adult if over 17½. Youths aged between the ages of 16 and 17½ can join the Army as Juniors and serve with Junior Units or as Apprentices in Apprentice Schools.

They attend the Junior Selection Centre but go as civilians and are enlisted there after final selection.

At his formal enlistment in the Careers Office the recruit can specify the Corps or Regiment which he wishes to join providing he is suitable and a vacancy exists. It is then noted on his attestation that he is a "Committed Recruit" to that corps or regiment. Normally his reasons will be a family connection or a desire to join his "County Regiment", or, sometimes, the glamour of the Guards or Household Cavalry. As soon as the man is enlisted his name is telephoned to the Selection Centre and he is "booked" to join the next available intake. This is normally not longer ahead than 10 days, in the interim period he is sent home on unpaid leave.

On arrival at Sutton Coldfield Station the recruit is met by an NCO from the Centre and taken, with the other arrivals, to the modern St. George's Barracks. Arrivals are so arranged that up to three "companies" each of eighty men arrive every Monday, one (A) company in the morning and one or two (B and C) in the afternoon. D company arrives Tuesday morning, R (Reserve) company, if required, on Tuesday afternoon and, if there is a rush of recruits, an extra company X can be scheduled to arrive Wednesday afternoon. In this way up to four hundred and eighty recruits can be processed through the Selection procedure every week.

The men remain at the Centre for three very busy days. On arrival at the Centre every recruit reports to a reception desk where his name is checked off the nominal role – very important today in Britain where, due to the activities of the Irish Republican terrorists, strange young men carrying suitcases are not welcome in military establishments! Next he hands in his National Health and Income Tax forms and is given a Squad number to wear and a name tag. He is issued with the minimum amount of army clothing, trousers, jersey, PT kit, etc., which are common to all units and is given a small advance of pay. He is then escorted by his Squad NCOs to a four man barrack room, by now it is time for a meal the quality of which normally surprises the men whose father's have filled them with stories of the horrors of army food! A visit to the barber is fitted in at this time, normally a fate which they accept in good grace – though one man objected strongly to having his expensive wig trimmed.

Once the whole company has arrived the Officer Commanding the Holding Wing makes an address of welcome and explains the

various, but not very onerous, rules which they must obey during their stay at the Centre. They are under military discipline at this time and the one small restriction is that they are not allowed out of barracks. This rule is to ensure that they spend the maximum time possible in a military environment. Albeit a comfortable one because there is an excellent canteen, rest rooms, games rooms, sports facilities, a gym and a cinema.

After the arrival formalities are completed the serious business of selection commences. The men now enter the "Selection Machine"; the aim of which is laid down as: "To assess the interests and ability of the recruit and to allocate him to training in accordance with these factors and with the needs of the Army."

The assessment is made under three headings, interests, abilities and army requirements and these are considered in this order of importance. This is because of enlightened army self interest! For today, as already mentioned, a man can opt out in his first few weeks of training, and then, after the first eighteen months service, he can give eighteen months notice to leave irrespective of the number of years for which he originally attests. Although every recruit still signs on for three six or nine years, and receives a higher rate of pay for the longer service enlistment, the option to quit recently introduced means that, except in exceptional cases where the man has undergone expensive and specialist training, there is virtually no fixed engagement. It is important, therefore, that every man should be properly allocated to a job within his capabilities. If he is he will probably be happy and so stay on and become an asset to the Army. "Fortunately", said Major Nick Gordon RAEC, the Technical Officer at the Centre, "most people are interested in three or four jobs and from these we can normally also meet the needs of the Army."

The first session comprises of a series of "Psychometric Tests"; these are carefully designed objective but not intelligence tests. There are five in all of which four tests present attainments and the fifth gives an indication of what the man may learn in the future. The first consists of a series of dominoe drawings which must be placed in order, the odd one out marked and various series completed. In the second the recruit is given a book containing a large number of drawings based on Bennett's Mechanical Problems. Each picture shows a consecutively more difficult task; one may show a number of gloves made of nylon, wool, rubber and canvas, the man must say with which he would handle an electric

Illustration 1. A squad of young men who have been found to have minor medical problems and have elected to stay at the Centre for remedial treatment to fit them for final acceptance by the Army.



Illustration 2. Christopher Parry from London, James Mason from Walsall, and Andrew Bacon from Leicester have just arrived at the Centre and are about to be welcomed by the Officer Commanding, Holding Wing.



wire. Others show plumbing systems in which the recruit must make the hot water pipes, there are simple electric circuits to be followed and the right and wrong methods of painting shown. Some questions require considerable academic knowledge while others require practical experience. The third test consists of speed arithmetic and the fourth tests a man's vocabulary. The final test determines the man's accuracy, concentration and alphabetic competence. It consists of checking a list of items, copying them exactly, placing them under appropriate headings and then in alphabetic order.

The recruits score in each test and in each section is then assessed and the man's Total Selection Group (TSG) and his Summed Selection Group (SSG) decided. These are scored 5 to 30 for TSG and 1 to 5 for SSG; TSG 5-8 are classed as SSG I, 9-14 SSG 2, 15-17 SSG 3, 18-20 SSG 3-, 22-25 SSG 4 and the lowest, not acceptable to the Army is TSG 26-30 SSG 5. Comparative experiments with civilian systems shows that TSG 6, which falls in the SSG 2 bracket gives an IQ of 125 and TSG 26 an IQ of 80. Every trade and job in the Army has its own age, medical and TSG/SSG grading; these are published in a loose leaf book which also includes the Job Description and other details to assist both the man and the Selection Officers. Some small latitude is allowed to the Selection Centre but any deviation from the rules must be approved by two Selection Officers.

The Assessment Tests are followed by a half day of Job Briefings. For this the men are divided into smaller squads and are taken to different rooms, called Interest Areas. At each of these the squad is shown a short film and slides which describe the type of jobs available in the various corps and regiments which fall within that particular interest. The eight Interest Areas are Combat, Outdoor Crafts and Transportation, Mechanical and Workshop Crafts, Scientific and Precision Maintenance, Specialist Operators and Storemen including intelligence, Signals and Survey, Printing and Photography, Administration and Specialist Interests to include police, catering, veterinary and medical. The men can then examine literature or ask questions from their squad NCOs and are given leaflets explaining the different rates of pay and allowances.

By the end of this session the recruit has usually more or less decided what he wishes to do and the corps or regiment in which he wishes to serve. He is therefore asked to make three choices in order of importance to him. However, at this stage he may be "punch drunk" with the information supplied; if so he is asked to complete an interest proforma which has been produced by the Applied Psychology Department of the University of Edinburgh. In this he is given a large number of carefully designed questions with two alternative answers. Would you rather type letters or teach mathematics? Serve meals in a restaurant or take care of deaf children? Paint a landscape or raise chickens? are some of the examples. From a study of the answers the man can usually be advised on where his interest probably lies.

By now the man will be in his third day at the Centre and it is time for him to meet a Selection Officer and finally decide on his future. Interviews last at least one hour and are conducted by the twenty four highly trained and qualified Selection Officers. These Officers are Captains and Majors drawn from all branches of the Service. They are nominated by their appropriate Branch in the Ministry of Defence, interviewed by the Chief of Personnel Selection in the Manpower Planning Branch who is also the Commander of all Army Personnel Selection in Great Britain. They, if suitable and are volunteers, attend a course at the Army School of Instructional Technology and then do a probationary period at the Selection Centre before they are finally approved. Most Selection Officers have been commissioned after service in the

ranks and so are able to advise the recruits based upon their own personal experience.

At the interview the Selection Officer has with him the recruit's original attestation form, his scores on the various tests and his preference form. After putting the young man at ease he will see if the recruit's ability as shown on the tests fits him for the choices he has made. If they do not or the man's SSG grading is too low he will inform him; normally this is apparent to the man himself already. The interviewer is bound by some rules; if the recruit is "committed to a Regiment" and has the necessary gradings, etc., he must be allowed to join; if the recruit wants to enter a particular trade and has the necessary SSG grade and there is a vacancy he has the right to go where he can learn it.

Having discussed the recruit's three choices and made sure that the man himself knows exactly what he is doing the Selection Officer will offer him a specific job in a particular regiment or corps in line with one of the requests. The recruit then accepts or refuses the offer, or can, in some cases, leave the officer for a short time to reconsider and then returns with his decision. If the recruit refuses the offers made, a few do but most of the 6% of "drop out" quit after the first night away from home, he is given a free travel warrant and, after handing in his kit, leaves the Centre. His attestation form is marked "Not finally Approved" and he is discharged from the Army. Those who accept are immediately "Finally Approved" by the Selection Officer and are fully fledged recruits. They are normally kept over night at the Centre and sent next day to their Regimental or Corps Training Depot travelling in civilian clothes and carrying their minimum of kit with them.

Almost every recruit who has been interviewed has praised the efficiency of the Selection Centre and the very fair way in which the life in the Army is presented during their three day stay. In the financial year 1972/73 the Selection Centre processed 12,400 prospective recruits, it is geared to handle up to 20,000 a year but so far the 19,000 in 1971/72 is the highest score to date. The permanent strength of the Centre staff is thirty-two officers, thirty NCOs, Sgts and above, ten sergeant testers and thirty corporals and below employed on administrative duties, about one hundred in all. There are three "Wings", the first being the Selection Wing which handles the tests, briefings and interviews, the Holding Wing "commands" the recruit squads and the Administrative Wing includes the QM, clerks, etc. There is also a small pay office and a medical centre. The resident doctor is available to re-examine any prospective recruits who do not appear to be up to standard. Some do slip through the original medical inspection at the Careers Office stage; one man who seemed to be limping said "I always walk like this". On examination he was found to have six toes on his left foot! There is also a remedial team attached to the medical centre; they provide help to men who are keen to join but do not meet the army's medical standards because they are overweight or have some small temporary disability.

The Commanding Officer, a Lt Col, commands not only the Selection Centre but is also responsible for some recruiting personnel in the area and holds the appointment of Commander, Birmingham Garrison.

The experience gained in the first experimental selection programme has been put to good use at Sutton Coldfield. The system used has been copied by the two Army Youth Selection Centres at Aldershot and Harrogate and by the Recruit Selection Centres presently organised in Scotland who deal with all men recruited "North of the Border". Their experience has proved that most Scottish men wish to join their Highland or Lowland Infantry

Regiments and so are normally "Committed Recruits" on arrival.

The Sutton Coldfield Centre has been visited by senior representatives of the US Army Recruiting Command who presented a plaque in thanks for the outstanding co-operation given to them when they were at the Centre fact finding for their own Selection procedures. The Officers and NCOs undoubtedly take their duties very seriously and have already proved the value of the system by reducing the high drop out rate previously existing. How successful the system is in placing round pegs into round holes will not be fully apparent until the men who have joined since it opened reach their extension dates in the coming years. For the moment the future looks bright – though to some extent all recruiting must depend upon the rates of pay offered, something not under the control of the Selection Centres.

Kritik und Anregung

Maßnahmen zur Förderung des Umweltbewußtseins

Erfahrungen und Ideen eines jungen Zugführers

Immer wieder präsentieren sich die Schießplätze nach getaner Arbeit im Frühling als Abfallgruben. Nicht nur im Winter, auch die Sommermonate hindurch wird gesündigt. Beim Abverdienen organisierten wir eine kleine Ausstellung mit vielen interessanten Anregungen für Verhütungen solcher Gedankenlosigkeit und Nachlässigkeit im Umgang mit der Natur. Anschließend präsentierten wir eine Zusammenfassung in Form eines Films unter dem Motto: «Aus den Augen, aus dem Sinn!» Diese Aktionen betreffend den Umweltschutz wurden vom Schulkommando St. Gallen/Herisau großzügig unterstützt.

Für die Organisation und Durchführung dieser Kampagne wurde folgendes Vierpunkteprogramm an das gesamte Kader abgegeben:

«Wenn die Truppe auf dem Feld verpflegt oder biwakiert, bleibt sehr oft viel Abfall auf dem Platz zurück.

Um diesem Übel abzuhelpfen, gelten ab sofort folgende Punkte:

Der Feldweibel kommandiert pro Zug einen Rekruten, der das Aufräumen besorgen muß.

Jeder Zugführer faßt beim Fourier Abfallsäcke, die er dem bestimmten Rekruten seines Zuges abgibt.

Der Abfall ist im nächsten Abfallkorb zu deponieren; ist keiner vorhanden, wird der Abfall in die Kaserne transportiert, wo der Container bereitsteht.

Der Faß-Unteroffizier kontrolliert sämtliche Plätze und ist dafür verantwortlich.»

Noch einige Gedanken zu allgemeinen Problemen im Zusammenhang mit Umweltschutz.

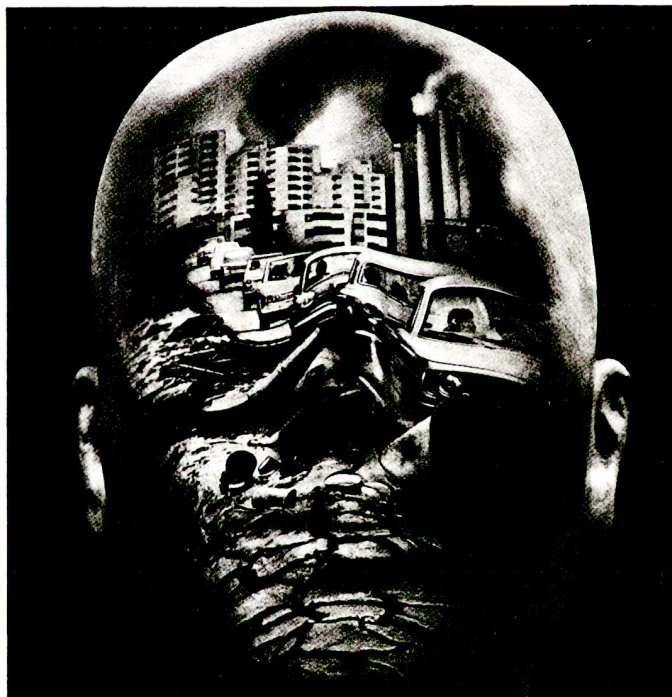
Zum Beispiel hat die Menschheit 600 000 Jahre gebraucht, um auf den heutigen Stand von 3,7 Milliarden Menschen anzuwachsen.

Für die nächsten 3,7 Milliarden Menschen sind nur noch 30 Jahre nötig.

Wo sollen über 7 Milliarden Menschen atmen, trinken, essen, leben? Es gibt nur einen einzigen Ort: den Planeten *Erde*. Denn einzig er bietet uns Menschen alles, was wir zum Leben brauchen. In seiner Atmosphäre atmen wir, sein Wasser trinken wir, aus seinen Meeren und seinem Erdreich beziehen wir letztlich alle Nahrung. Grund genug, alles für die Erde zu tun. – Doch wir Menschen tun alles dagegen. Wir sind daran, diese Erde zu zerstören. Laß weder Plastikflaschen noch Blechdosen noch anderen Unrat in der Natur herumliegen. Du verminderst nicht nur den Erholungswert einer Landschaft, du kannst auch Gewässerverschmutzungen verursachen und Tieren wie Menschen gefährlich werden.

«Nimm Picknickrückstände wieder nach Hause. Die Umweltschutzfreundlichkeit des Kampfanzeuges zeigt klar die vielen Rücktransporttaschen.»

Ich hoffe, einige dieser Ideen werden zur Nachahmung animieren.



Lt Andreas Rohner, Thal

Korrektur zum Artikel «Aktuelle Rüstungsprobleme»

Von Oberst i GSt Charles Großenbacher
Rüstungschef der Armee
in Nr. 11, November 1974

Durch ein Versehen wurde ein Textabschnitt ausgelassen. Nachfolgend die Berichtigung. Wir bitten, den Fehler zu entschuldigen.

Verlag ASMZ, Huber & Co. AG

Artillerie

Das Rüstungsprogramm 74 bringt bereits eine Verstärkung der Artillerie, indem die Feuerkraft der Infanteriedivisionen durch die

Beschaffung weiterer Panzerhaubitzen M109 verbessert werden soll. Daneben sind Verbesserungen der Feuerleitung vorgesehen, und als weitere Möglichkeit werden die Entwicklungen auf dem Sektor gezogene Rohrartillerie und Raketenartillerie aufmerksam verfolgt.

Schutz- und Führungsmittel

Auf dem Gebiet des Schutzes der Truppe bringt das Rüstungsprogramm 74 die verbesserte Schweizer AC-Schutzmaske; mit dem Rüstungsprogramm 75 soll der neue Stahlhelm beschafft werden, dessen Vorserie bereits läuft, und im übrigen soll Feldbefestigungsmaterial beschafft werden.

Ferner werden mit dem neuen Funkkonzept 74 die Grundlagen zur Einführung moderner Führungs- und Übermittlungsmittel bei der Truppe geschaffen.