Matters of Interest

PAPERS BY R.A.M.C. OFFICERS


TRENCH GASCOIGNE PRIZE ESSAY COMPETITION

Prize: Thirty guineas and Gold Medal.

Closing date: 15th November, 1954.

Subject: "To what extent will the introduction of atomic weapons and guided missiles modify the traditional functions of the Navy, Army and Air Force; and what changes in the structure and training of the three Services will be necessary to enable them to perform their new functions?" or "Rearmament and the maintenance of large land, sea, and air forces during a cold war cause national bankruptcy. Our economic position at present prohibits the support of large armed forces and, consequently, dominates our strategic policy. Discuss what strategy, in your view, should be adopted in the circumstances and what type of force, bearing in mind the need for efficiency and balance, should be maintained to implement it."

*General conditions for the essays are contained in A.C.I. No. 102/1954.*
THE MILOCARIAN ATHLETIC CLUB

Lieut.-Colonel A. E. C. Bredin, D.S.O., M.C., The Dorset Regiment, writes:

I am contributing this short article as a member of the Committee of the Milocarian Athletic Club, and with the approval of Lieut.-General Sir A. Dudley Ward, who is a Vice-President (the present D.C.I.G.S. was an athlete of distinction) and Captain J. R. Gower, R.N., the Chairman of the Committee. The reason for "bursting into print" in this way is because as a Club, the only joint Service Club concerned with sports or games, we feel that, these days, there is too little known about us; and, as a result, too little interest taken throughout the three Services. Pre-war, the Milocarian Athletic Club was one of the leading clubs in the country; and up to and including 1948 we always had one or more representatives in the Olympic Games. It is realized that the post-war years, with all their "cold, lukewarm and hot" wars, have involved the Services, and more particularly the Army, heavily in all parts of the world; and that, as a result, in contrast to the settled existence led by civilian clubs in the United Kingdom, there is no hope of producing teams at home in any way fully representative of the Milocarians. But that does not mean to say that the three Services should not be made fully aware of the position, and it is considered that more encouragement should, and could, be given to aspiring young athletes in the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Air Force.

Perhaps at this junction it might be as well to remind ourselves of the object of the Club:

(a) To encourage and raise the standard of athletics and cross-country amongst the officers of the Royal Navy, Army, and Royal Air Force.

(b) To bring the three Services into closer touch with each other and to form a medium through which better liaison of the Services may be obtained.

(c) To enter teams for the A.A.A. Relay Championships, open meetings and inter-club matches, thereby providing the opportunity for members of the three Services to compete together.

No one can gainsay that the object, as given above, is a very worthy one, and one, moreover, deserving of proper support. In the past, too much has depended on the enthusiasm of certain members; and I can speak with experience as it fell to my lot to start and maintain the Middle East branch of the Club during 1950-1. The President of the Club is Lieut.-General Sir Frederick Browning, and last year H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh was very pleased to extend his patronage to the Club.

Now a word about the history of the Club. Largely the conception of Major the Hon. W. S. P. Alexander of the Irish Guards (a brother of the Field-Marshal) and at that time officer in charge of Athletics at Sandhurst, and Captain I. E. F. Campbell, D.C.L.I., also on the staff at Sandhurst, the Club was formed in 1930. This took place after the triangular contest between Woolwich, Sandhurst and Cranwell, with the sanction of the three commandants at that time (Major-
Generals H. D. de Pree and E. S. Girdwood and Air Vice-Marshal A. M. Longmore). Originally the membership was open to Blues and Half Blues from the three Service Cadet Colleges; but it is now open to all officers of the three Services, and cadets, with certain provisos as to the standard to be obtained to qualify for election. The name of the Club was derived from a combination of Milo and Icarus. Milo was a strong man of Croton in Southern Italy in the sixth century B.C., famous for winning the Pentathlon (wrestling, running, long jumping, throwing the discus and javelin), and so the ancient Olympic Games, on no fewer than six occasions. Icarus, and his father Daedalus, fled from Crete with wings attached to their bodies by wax to escape the wrath of Minos; Icarus ignored the parental warning not to fly too near the sun and when the wax melted and his wings dropped off he fell into what is now known as the Icarian Sea. The Club colours are dark blue for the Royal Navy, red for Sandhurst, yellow for Woolwich and light blue for Cranwell.

Between 1931 and 1939 the Club won many successes on the track, notably in the A.A.A. Championships, the Kinnaird Trophy and the News of the World Whit-Monday Games, besides having representatives in the Olympic Games of 1932 and 1936. During the Second World War over a hundred Milocarians were killed in action. In 1946, the Milocarian Trophy was purchased and presented by the Club to the Amateur Athletic Association for competition among schools as a memorial to those members of the Club who fell in the war. As a matter of interest, the trophy was won in 1952 by King Alfred's School, Plön, B.A.O.R., and Lancing College were second; Halton Apprentices' School, where D. O. Finlay started his career in the R.A.F., also entered. It is suggested that all members of the Club should encourage their old schools to take part in this good and interesting competition. After the war, it was not until 1948 that the Club found itself in a position to embark on a full track season programme; and owing to lack of recruiting during the war years the number of active athletes was limited. However, no less than five Milocarians represented Great Britain in the Olympic Games that year. In the winter of 1948-9, the Club gained 5th place in the Southern Junior Cross-Country and 4th place in the National Junior Cross-Country Championships—in which members of the Club under 21 competed as “Juniors.” All things considered, the results in 1950 and 1951 were good even by pre-war standards; and the membership increased by anything between sixty and one hundred during the years 1948-1951. There are now overseas secretaries in Germany, the Middle East (Egypt), the Far East (three) and in Austria, and some of the local branches abroad are really active.

Among the more famous athletes who have worn the Milocarian colours are A. W. Sweeney, W. H. Summers, G. L. Rampling, R. A. Morris, E. W. Denison, C. H. Stoneley, D. O. Finlay, Lord Burghley, A. J. A. Watson, L. Reavell-Carter, C. J. Reidy and M. V. W. Chote. J. V. Powell had made his best times for the 880 yards (1 min. 53.3 sec. at Chelmsford in 1936) and 800 metres (1 min. 50.8 sec. at Stockholm in 1936) before becoming a member of the Club.
In conclusion, I should like to say the following:

(a) An extract from the Secretary's report for 1952 reads as follows: "The Club did not enter for any open competitions. . . . It seems unlikely that the Club will regain its former position as one of the leading clubs in the country until the cold war has subsided. At present the majority of young officers, particularly in the Army, go overseas within a few months of leaving cadet colleges." It is all the more important, therefore, that when active members do return home from abroad they should at once get in touch with the Secretary and the match manager. The latter has had great difficulty in raising teams during the last season or so.

(b) It would help active members enormously if commanding officers could give more encouragement to a good cause and perhaps a few facilities to keen young officers. I know commanding officers' difficulties well enough—having been a commanding officer myself and being just about to become one again!

(c) There is no doubt that amateur athletics generally would benefit greatly from a more active Services representation such as that provided by teams of the Club. Moreover, foreign competition has grown more severe in recent years.

(d) The cause of joint-Service co-operation is helped greatly, on the lowest officer levels, by members of the three Services competing together—one of the objects of the Club. And today our stock-in-trade—training for war and fighting the Queen's enemies when necessary—is more than ever a joint-Service affair.

(e) Of the three Services, the Army is probably in a better position, under normal conditions, to support the Club than the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force—by virtue of our greater numbers and the fact that we are the "land animal"—though we are probably the hardest hit while the present unsettled state of affairs prevails.

(f) Further details regarding the Club, including eligibility for membership, can be obtained from the Honorary Secretary, Captain D. J. McNabb, R.A.O.C., Command Ammunition Depot, Bramley, Hants.
Matters of Interest for J R
Army Med Corps 1954; vol
100

J R Army Med Corps 1954 100: 238-241
doi: 10.1136/jramc-100-03-12

Updated information and services can be found at:
http://jramc.bmj.com/content/100/3/238.citation

These include:

Email alerting service
Receive free email alerts when new articles cite this article. Sign up in the box at the top right corner of the online article.

Notes

To request permissions go to:
http://group.bmj.com/group/rights-licensing/permissions

To order reprints go to:
http://journals.bmj.com/cgi/reprintform

To subscribe to BMJ go to:
http://group.bmj.com/subscribe/