R.A.M.C. RECRUITING—A WINDOW DISPLAY

BY

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As the era of National Service nears its end, the Army as a whole is having to think more and more of recruiting from the general public. While the contented soldier will always remain the best recruiting agent, we must, among other methods, compete with civilian career prospects in the field of advertising to a much greater extent than hitherto. The corollary to this is that our advertising methods must be right up to date and must be continually kept up to date.

As a general rule, any advertisement must be bright and attractive enough to catch the eye of the passer-by, and its content must be sufficiently interesting to hold his attention long enough for its message to get through. At the same time this message must be as brief and clear as possible.

Perhaps in Western Command we have been stimulated to think more about this subject by the fact that the R.A.M.C. was allotted one of the major stands in the “Youth and the Army” Exhibition in Manchester last July. This was a ten day exhibition and it was felt that a more continued and persistent effort would be more likely to produce results in actual recruits. A form of window display which could tour Army Information Offices throughout the Command was decided on as the first line of approach, and the following is a brief description of the display which is now on view in the Command (see Plate facing this page).

First, the “eye-catcher”: lights and moving objects are the things most likely to catch the eye, and both types of attraction were used in the Manchester Exhibition. For a window display it was considered that movement has more possibilities than lights. The idea used in this display was borrowed from a housing exhibition in which wallpapers were displayed on vertical prisms which could be pushed round. A little ingenuity and a lot of help from 12 Command Workshops, R.E.M.E., resulted in a series of prisms rotated slowly by a small electric motor. Nine prisms are needed to show the main trades of the corps, and each prism on its one foot square facets bears three pictures of tradesmen at work, one trade to each prism.

These prisms are incorporated in three linked panels four foot wide by five foot high, standing in open U formation, the angle of one to the other depending on the size of window available. Having put across one of the main attractions of the Corps, its interesting trades, in this way, the question remained: what to show in the rest of the panel space below the trades—pay, promotion, travel, sport, or what?

We considered that one of the attractions which the R.A.M.C. can offer in greater degree than other branches of the Army is the fact that training can lead to many civilian qualifications which will be of value after a man’s army
service. The various societies and associations were therefore approached and all kindly supplied copies of their certificates or diplomas. These were mounted on one of the panels entitled “Passports to Success” with a very brief explanation of their significance.

The fact that we offer a progressive career in common with the rest of the Army is important, so another panel entitled “A Profession with a Future” bears a pictorial presentation of this fact in the form of badges of rank, including commissioned rank, mounted on a series of rising steps.

The third panel is aimed at countering the general idea that there is something unmanly about nursing and its allied professions. It bears the title “A Man’s Life” and shows photographs of sporting activities and R.A.M.C. men in their war-time roles.

The whole display is surmounted by the Corps badge and title, and the floor space in front of the panels is occupied by lettering in relief form with the message “Win a Diploma in the Royal Army Medical Corps.”

For the style and composition of the display and for the actual production of the photographs, captions, and general setting we are deeply indebted to Colonel R. G. W. Ollershaw, Q.H.S., T.D., B.M., Officer Commanding 7 (Manchester) General Hospital, T.A., and Captain J. Kilshaw, non-medical officer 126 (Lancashire) Field Ambulance, T.A., who in their civilian capacities are Director and Assistant respectively of the Department of Medical Illustration of the Manchester Royal Infirmary. Their advice and their practical assistance were invaluable.

What effect such a display will have on recruiting can never be accurately assessed, but we are convinced that more and more of this sort of advertising is required, and if these notes should stimulate others into producing better ideas their aim will have been achieved.

OMAN 1958

BY

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Before I went to the Oman it was just an unusual word which had once helped me to finish off a corner of a crossword. I had not appreciated its strategic importance at the entrance to the Persian Gulf, nor its potential as a possible source of oil.

The country consists of a narrow fertile littoral, a desert hinterland and a fertile mountainous area 100 miles inland—the Jebel Akdhar range. The chief towns are Muscat on the coast and Nizwa which is situated at the foot of the mountains. Communication other than by air is by lorry over rough desert tracks where an average of 10 miles per hour is a good speed.

Politically the Sultan of Muscat has ancient ties with the British. In internal
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