

## Reviews

### ARMY MEDICAL ORGANIZATION

*Organization, Strategy, and Tactics of the Army Medical Services in War.* By Lieut.-Colonel T. B. Nicholls, M.B., Ch.B. With chapters by Air Commodore A. S. Glynn, M.B., Ch.B., Colonel A. R. Laurie, M.B., Ch.B., and Colonel F. G. Lescher, M.D., M.R.C.P. Second edition. (15s.) London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox. 1940.

The second edition of this book contains just over 500 pages, an increase of about 100 pages, due to the inclusion of chapters on the organization of hospitals in the Emergency Medical Service, on air medical transport, and on the anti-aircraft medical services; and the author, Lieut.-Colonel T. B. Nicholls, has written a long preface.

In these days a large number of medical officers are undertaking for the first time duties as commanding officer; a larger number are engaged in learning the rudiments of their new military profession. Those who have studied medical arrangements in the light of modern tactics and have undergone practical experience of a warfare of rapid movement, ruthless attack, and frequent air raids, with dive bombing and machine-gunning, have found that practically everything learned from experience in the last war has to be forgotten. An almost entirely new scheme has to be made, general policy has to be altered, fresh details must be worked out, and no set and stereotyped plan can be relied on. Although it may be useful in certain circumstances to follow standard ideas and scheduled plans the keystones of successful organization to-day are fluidity, elasticity, and rapid improvisation. It is one of the misfortunes of wartime that few suggestions and hints of an up-to-date and practical nature can be published now, owing to the risk of giving away useful information to the enemy.

Neither of the words "Inspection" and "Reconnaissance" appears in the index to the volume under review. The organizing officer, whether commanding a unit or administering a higher medical formation, must be up and about, day and night during active operations, seeing everything for himself, helping out in difficulties, arriving at instant decisions, and taking appropriate action. "Liaison," too, is missing from the index, though the practical importance of that is well recognized in these days of mobility. "Camouflage" is an important subject, not indexed, and "Protection" is just touched on in the E.M.S. chapters. "Conferences" would form the heading of a useful paragraph. These are a few of the subjects a knowledge of which is essential at the present time. In making medical arrangements in mobile warfare, intercommunication and control are vital: a chapter could well have been devoted to this subject alone, including details of message writing. The subject of operation orders is well dealt with. But, in war, medical departments of the staff should never issue operation orders. A very brief "medical para" for inclusion in administrative instructions is all that is necessary in higher formations, and in units such as field ambulances or casualty clearing stations simple "instructions" or "medical arrangements" are quite sufficient. The less paper used the better. With regard to the new chapter on medical air transport no mention is made there of the contraindications for carrying surgical cases or of the British Red Cross Society's air ambulance organization which was started in 1931. The chapter on anti-aircraft medical services is delightfully brief and that on the E.M.S. very full and well written.

Medical military organization is a fascinating subject which cannot be learned from a book. In the field a small

pocket-book, compiled by the officer himself, is invaluable. To attempt to carry round a large volume for reference is like the case of the inexperienced surgeon who has to read up each operation before performing it. The book under review is eminently an academic production. It is fortunate that many blank pages are added for further notes, amendments, and corrections.

### VIRUS DISEASES OF MAN

*Virus Diseases of Man.* By C. E. van Rooyen, M.D., and A. J. Rhodes, M.B., Ch.B., M.R.C.P.Ed., with an Introduction by T. J. Mackie. Oxford Medical Publications. (Pp. 932; illustrated. 63s. net.) London: Oxford University Press. 1940.

Of recent additions to virus literature this textbook on virus diseases of man is one of the most important; in fact, if one excludes Vol. VII of *A System of Bacteriology*, which by now is out of date, it is the only treatise of its kind in the English language. And when one considers the number of virus infections to which man is now known to be subject, and the large volume of original work done in this field of human pathology, one is surprised that two workers, however well informed and enthusiastic, should have contemplated writing a textbook unaided. Latterly it has become the practice in the production of a book such as this to enrol a number of contributors each of whom writes from first-hand knowledge; it is a practice that has much to commend it. We would hasten to say, however, that this is not meant in any way as a criticism of the book under review; rather is it a tribute to the authors, who have maintained throughout such a uniformly high standard.

The first ten chapters are given over to the technical side of virus work—the microscopy of viruses, staining methods, filtration and ultra-filtration, the use of the centrifuge in the study of viruses, the demonstration of inclusion bodies, serological reactions in virus work, and the methods available for the cultivation of viruses. Throughout this section the information is presented in a clear and concise manner. The text is helped out by a number of illustrations—line drawings, photographs, and photomicrographs—and the chapter on inclusion bodies is embellished by four coloured plates, the work of the authors themselves, which are at once artistic and faithful reproductions of the subjects portrayed. In the remaining thirty-seven chapters the various virus infections to which man is susceptible are described. These descriptions follow a more or less set plan. After a brief introductory account of the disease, its clinical manifestations are outlined and discussed. Then in turn the epidemiology and pathology of the condition are considered, an account of the results of transmission experiments is given, and the known facts concerning the causal virus are described. The account ends with a description of the immunity reactions and the laboratory diagnosis of the disease. Each chapter is completed by an extensive list of references.

It is obviously impossible in the course of a brief review adequately to criticize each of these chapters. Suffice it to say that the known facts seem all to be there and, what is more, presented with due regard to their relative value. The authors seem to have read widely and critically, and wherever they are dealing with some controversial question, such as the aetiology of trachoma or the mechanism of immunity in poliomyelitis, the matter is presented in an unbiased manner. This book is, in our opinion, a real addition to virus literature which will be of use to the student of medicine, the laboratory worker, and the clinician. It is quite well produced, though the paper on which it is printed has rather a dingy look; there is an adequate index.