

Air Publication 1269B

1st EDITION, 1946

AIR MINISTRY

HANDBOOK
of
PREVENTIVE
MEDICINE

HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

1947

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Issued for the information and guidance of all
concerned.

J. H. Barnes

By Command of the Air Council

AIR MINISTRY
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FOREWORD

The aim of preventive medicine is to preserve and improve health by the interception or removal of all factors which may exert an adverse influence on individual well-being.

In the Royal Air Force emphasis is placed on the ultimate responsibility of commanders for the health of their men. An equally great responsibility rests on medical officers to advise their commanders of the measures necessary to protect the personnel under their care, as far as possible, against communicable disease and any defects of habit or environment which may impair their vitality, as well as measures to improve their efficiency even beyond what is accepted as normal.

It is of the utmost importance not only that loss of man hours through sickness should be kept to a minimum, but that all personnel on duty should be at the peak of their efficiency. That outmoded word *debility* has a real meaning when applied to an individual whose physical and mental vigour has been sapped by sub-clinical malaria or a diet lacking in vitamin B.

In all wars disease has been responsible for many more admissions to hospital than has enemy action. In Macedonia, during the war of 1914-1918, 27 cases of disease, chiefly malaria, were admitted to hospital for every wounded patient; while in East Africa, where dysentery was the principal foe, the ratio was as high as 33 to 1. The Serbian Army was defeated by typhus, not by the Bulgars. In 1943 the incidence of malaria in certain islands in the South West Pacific rose to 80 per 1,000 a week (over 4,000 per 1,000 per annum), while a similar incidence for dysentery was encountered in parts of Burma.

Medical recommendations may clash with strategical and tactical considerations and may therefore be impossible to fulfil. The ruthless removal of a native village from the outskirts of a military camp, however desirable from the view point of the hygienist, may have to be renounced for political reasons. The only suitable ground for a landing strip may be alongside a malarial marsh. Compromise is often inevitable. It may not be possible to ensure an absolute minimum of avoidable disease, but the most strenuous efforts must always be made to reduce ill-health, and sub-health, to the lowest possible level, by applying the principles of preventive medicine which are set out in this publication.

H. E. WHITTINGHAM,

Director-General of Medical Services,
Royal Air Force.

February, 1946.

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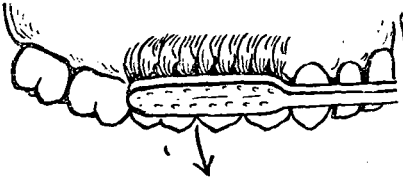
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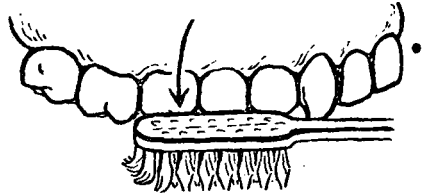
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FIG. 1

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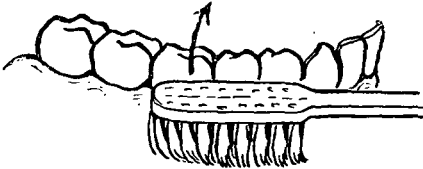


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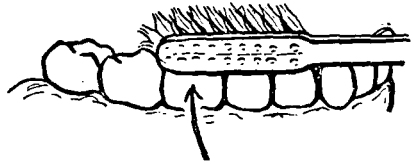


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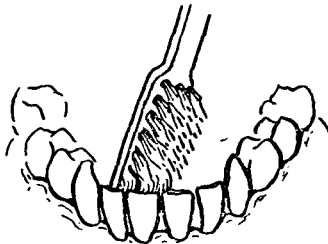
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