

# REFERENCE PAPERS

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## WARTIME INFORMATION BOARD, OTTAWA

No. 26

August 3, 1944

### R.C.A.F. PERSONNEL COUNSELLING PROGRAM

First service to inaugurate a scheme of vocational counselling for the post-war civilian occupation of its personnel is the Royal Canadian Air Force. On June 1, 1944, its program of personnel counselling went into operation in a number of stations across Canada.

The scheme is to offer assessment, information and assistance to men and women in the R.C.A.F. to enable them to train themselves, while still in the force, for the post-war career for which they are best fitted by personal aptitude, experience and background, interest and inclination, and training acquired in the service, plus training received for that career in spare time.

The man's or woman's best civilian opportunities are discovered, and he or she is then turned over to the education officer for assistance in obtaining such additional education or training as the career demands.

This is strictly a service program to be conducted before demobilization in order to make return to civilian life more successful. It is not, strictly speaking, rehabilitation, although the rehabilitation program's provisions are taken into account when career planning is in progress. It prepares men and women for rehabilitation while they are still in service.

The technique of this plan of personnel counselling is based on the experience gained through the R.C.A.F. program of personnel selection whereby recruits are carefully selected for their air force jobs. It was early recognized that interviews, letters of recommendation and educational standards were not decisive indicators of ability. One of the basic requirements for air crew and ground crew is the ability to learn, and two special basic tests were devised to show intellectual and mechanical abilities with special emphasis on learning capacity. Educational deficiencies were made up after enlistment. Service records of the men and women thus selected have shown a close correlation between their success on their job and their scores on the basic tests.

This technique is also employed in career counselling. The first approach is an assessment of the man's or woman's skills, knowledge and personal assets with special reference to his or her air force training and air force trade. This is done by the personnel counsellor.

Personnel counsellors have been, and are being, trained at Rockcliffe Station by the training division of the R.C.A.F. They are chosen from any branch of the service and are commissioned officers of both sexes. They are picked for their civilian experience, preferably in business and industry, for their good service record, their personal qualities and their interest in this type of work. By June 1, 123 were ready, and the first group has already been posted for overseas duty.

A personnel counsellor will be posted to every station where there are at least 400 permanent personnel. Smaller stations will share the services of a visiting counsellor. It is planned to reach every member of the air force wherever he or she may be, and counsellors will be sent to India, the Middle East, and Iceland. They will also be stationed at the home bases of operational groups such as bomber and coastal patrol commands. Every effort will be made to get counsellors into the remoter stations and bases, for it is felt that men who are far out of touch with the home situation may perhaps have greater anxiety for their future.

THE  
PERSONNEL  
COUNSELLOR