

CAUSES OF NEUROTIC BREAKDOWN IN BRITISH SERVICE  
PERSONNEL STATIONED IN THE FAR EAST IN PEACETIME.

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TREDGOLD (1948) points out that the "importance of studying the mental health of British troops in the Far East . . . is unlikely to have diminished with the end of the war," and he emphasizes that "as long as conscription exists, the mental health of the young man doing his military service will be of great importance to the welfare of the community." For this latter reason the writer has thought it desirable to report some of the experience he gained during 1948. At that time, he was one of the two psychiatrists stationed in Singapore who dealt with the vast majority of the psychiatric casualties that occurred in the Far East.

The neurotic case-histories retained by the writer, and at present available, were not selected in any way, though their number is too small to be of statistical significance. However, impressions were formed during daily practice in the Far East and were based on points which were conspicuous by their recurrence, the cases quoted in this report being utilized merely to exemplify these various points.

*Discussion of Factors Involved.*

The etiological factors concerned in the motivation of the vast majority of the neuroses appeared to fall into three broad groupings, viz. :

- (1) Cases with a frank neurotic history.
- (2) Cases in which the "separation factor" predominated.
- (3) Cases in which some factor which had been operative in the U.K. persisted whilst the patient was in the Far East.

One or more of these factors was present to a greater or a lesser degree. Their salient features may now be considered.

(1) *Frank Neurotic History.*

Only those cases in which the history points to obvious, undoubted neurotic features, or breakdown, are included under this heading. Case r6 is a typical example.

He was a Driver in the R. Sigs. Aged 19. Cat. A.I. Total Service, 1 7/12. Far Eastern Service, 6/12. He complained that "I always seem to worry." He was afraid he would have an accident whilst driving and fell out. We may now pass on to describe some experiments on the recall of the order of sequence of simple test items. These experiments were undertaken