

MOUSTACHES*

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THESE studies of association between types of moustache and personality features were made during World War II in two officer-selection Boards (U.K., Male). The Boards contained Senior Officers (who interviewed each candidate), "Military Testing Officers" (who graded on practical tests given over three days residence), and a psychiatrist. A "Psychological Testing Team" conducted written tests. Board results were expressed as "pass" or "fail" or "referred back". The ratings upwards of "pass" were DD, D, C, B and A. Men considered too unadaptable for officer grade (and so "failing"), but likely to become or to remain good N.C.O.s, were (for the information of the Board) specially noted as "fail: N.C.O.". The "referred back" men were rated NY ("Not Yet"—chance of further maturity). In this paper "pass" and "fail" are placed in inverted commas to emphasize that ratings had reference to selection for one rôle only—that of Commissioned Officer.

The cut of a man's moustache could of course never be of influence in the Board decision. The investigation here presented was an outcome of a personal curiosity, and whilst it took opportunity of the existence of the very extensive personality assessments, it was never in any way connected with the sternly practical task of the Boards.

Since initially it was quite unknown what, if any, personal characteristics might be linked to moustaches, it happened that a good deal of the information collected was on later analysis found to be non-significant. No further allusion will herein be made to such work. From the nature of wartime, some material became mislaid, and some figures which might have been of value are lost (as, for example, the "fail; N.C.O." rates for the main study).

All occurring moustaches were grouped under five headings:

"Trimmed"	...	Flatly covering most of lip.
"Divided"	...	Small group of hairs each side.
"Clipped"	...	Toothbrush shape.
"Line"	...	Very narrow strip.
"Bushy"	...	"Old Bill", "Handlebars", or lesser hybrids.

PRELIMINARY STUDIES

Prior to the main study, comparisons were made of the first 100 moustached men with a random 100 clean shaven. The "pass" rate for these moustached was 19 per cent.; for these clean shaven 21 per cent. The average intelligence levels were equal ("Officer Intelligence Rating", 5.3 for moustached, 5.5 for clean shaven). There were no significant differences in intelligence between the five moustache groups. Rates of "pass" and "fail" for

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these 100 moustached, and incidence of "fail; N.C.O." are shown in Table 1. (It is to be understood that the "fail; N.C.O." are, of course, also included in the total "fails".)

TABLE I

Group	"pass"	"fails" (and N.Y.)	"fail; N.C.O."	Totals
Trimmed	21%	79%	41%	39
Divided	25%	75%	33%	12
Clipped	Nil%	100%	78%	14
Line	21%	79%	46%	24
Bushy	27%	73%	27%	11
				<u>100</u>

Two points became evident. First, every man with a "clipped" had "failed" (none were NY); second, this same group yielded relatively many "fail; N.C.O." (i.e. men being or expected to become good N.C.O.s). The preliminary study having thus shown up the "clipped" group as distinctive, it followed that in the main study these men were often being compared with those of other groups. Since all "clipped" turned out to have "failed" (in the main study also), such comparisons properly had to be made with "fail" candidates of these other groups. This was the main reason why much of the work of the main study was based on "fail" candidates.

Other pilot studies gave added reasons for this concentration upon "fails". It appeared that the distribution of "pass" gradings was much the same in each of the four moustached groups other than the "clipped" (Table II). The distribution of "pass" gradings was similar amongst both moustached and clean-shaven (Table III). These two findings supported the view that in the main study detailed work on the less distinctive "passes" would be relatively unfruitful.

TABLE II

Group	"Passes"				Totals
	B.	C.	D.	DD.	
Trimmed	Nil	8	16	18	42
Divided	Nil	Nil	8	2	7
Clipped	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Line	2	Nil	4	4	10
Bushy	1	2	7	3	13
					<u>72</u>

TABLE III

	"Passes"					Totals
	B.	C.	D.	DD.	NY.	
Moustached ..	2	2	6	9	5	24
Cleanshaven ..	1	4	9	7	9	30
						<u>54</u>

MAIN STUDY

The main study covered 400 consecutive moustached candidates at one Board, 173 at another. Figures for whole intake relate to the period of some months occupied by the 400 study. For this intake the "pass" rate was 23 per cent.

The five moustached groups will now be considered separately.

"TRIMMED"

The men with "trimmed" moustaches produced selection results essentially similar to the clean shaven. The "trimmed" group seemed to comprise a spread of personality varieties comparable with that for the mass of all candidates.

"DIVIDED"

The men with "divided" moustaches proved an inadequately defined group. Detail figures were often not extracted and no special conclusions were warrantable.

"CLIPPED"

Figures for the five moustached groups in the 400 appear at Table IV.

Group		"pass"	"fail"	NY.	Totals
Trimmed	..	22% (42)	73% (140)	5% (10)	192 (48%)
Divided	..	25% (7)	68% (19)	7% (2)	28 (7%)
Clipped	..	Nil% (Nil)	100% (31)	Nil% (Nil)	31 (8%)
Line	..	11% (10)	88% (80)	1% (1)	91 (23%)
Bushy	..	22% (13)	71% (41)	7% (4)	58 (14%)
All moustached		18% (72)			400 (100%)

The 369 moustached left after excluding the "clipped" produced almost the same proportion of "passes" (20 per cent.) as did the whole intake (23 per cent.), with probably a range of ratings similar to that in the intake (Tables II and III); but not one "clipped" candidate passed (even at lowest grading)—evidently this last group comprised a far less extensive range of personality varieties than did the other moustached persons.

The figures of Table V refer to 173 consecutive moustached men additional to the 400. These observations were, on request, made by another observer at another selection Board (U.K., Male).

Group		"pass"	"fail"	NY.	Totals
Trimmed	..	27% (17)	70% (43)	3% (2)	62 (36%)
Divided	..	21% (3)	43% (6)	36% (5)	14 (9%)
Clipped	..	Nil% (Nil)	100% (10)	Nil% (Nil)	10 (6%)
Line	..	30% (22)	57% (43)	14% (10)	75 (44%)
Bushy	..	50% (6)	50% (6)	Nil% (Nil)	12 (6%)
All moustached		22% (48)			173 (100%)

The criteria adopted by this other observer as to what arrangement of bristle should constitute a "bushy" must have been somewhat different from our own, this title being accorded to only 12 of the 173 (6 per cent) as compared with 58 in the 400 (14 per cent.), his grouping here tending to inclusion in "trimmed". "Line" (44 per cent.) had been by him more generously interpreted: ours (23 per cent.) were very thin, our grouping here tending to inclusion in "trimmed". Fortunately the "clipped" moustache ("Toothbrush" or "Hitler") was relatively little capable of confusion with any other variety (his 6 per cent., ours 8 per cent.). The total "failure" of the "clipped" group thus was confirmed in this independent survey. Board "pass" rates varied slightly, chiefly according to what type of service was being selected for at any particular juncture. The difference in the two batches between the "pass" rates for the moustached men, 18 per cent. (in the 400) and 22 per cent. (in the 173), would be a reflection of differences in the overall "pass" rates prevailing at the time in the two Boards, but this would not significantly affect the distributions of the figures for the moustached groups within the two Boards.

Returning to the 400, the educational backgrounds of a run of 27 of the "clipped" group, compared with a run of 34 "trimmed" "fails" ("trimmed" chosen as being the most variegated group) appear at Table VI.

TABLE VI

Group "fails"	Sec/Pub Education	Elementary Education	Totals
Clipped	15	12	27
Trimmed	25	9	34

The two groups had "occupational level" gradings, which when averaged were practically alike ("clipped" at "3-9", "trimmed" at "3-8"). In civil life "clipped" men had overall done no better and no worse than other "fail" men (and plenty of "fails" both cleanshaven and moustached were described as "Company Directors" and so forth); but they had perhaps been more assertive, since they relatively more often had started from only elementary education.

The military occupations of the "clipped" moustached were investigated. The "trimmed" group was again taken as a standard for comparison. With "clipped" men, out of a sample run of 28 "fails", 5 were regular soldiers and 7 others were Instructors. With "trimmed" men, out of a run of 34 "fails" one was a "regular" and one other an Instructor. Thus the "clipped" group showed 12 out of 28, the "trimmed" only 2 out of 34; of men perhaps more likely to be of relatively rigid and authoritarian ("N.C.O.") disposition. This accords with the high rate of "fail; N.C.O." within the "clipped" group as evidenced in Table I—78 per cent., as compared with 41 per cent. for "trimmed" and with 38 per cent. mean for all groups excluding "clipped".

The "fails" of all moustache groups in the 400 were scrutinized for tendency for any particular constellation of personality features to be evident beyond the broader personality background—what might be called a "façade". Three such "façades" were considered reasonably capable of extraction:

- X. Disruptive of contact; unpleasing; antagonistic.
- Y. Unconvincing and self-justifying.
- Z. Melodramatic and sycophantic.

The distribution of "façades" in the moustached groups of "fails" appears in Table VII.

TABLE VII
"Façades"

Group	Present	Strongly Marked	X	Y	Z	Totals
Trimmed	45% (15)	21% (7)	12% (4)	21% (7)	12% (4)	34
Divided			Not recorded			
Clipped	73% (28)	63% (19)	63% (19)	23% (7)	7% (2)	30
Line	47% (14)	13% (4)	10% (3)	17% (5)	20% (6)	30
Bushy	63% (19)	40% (12)	20% (6)	20% (6)	23% (7)	30

The men with a "clipped" were relatively more prone to have a "set" of personality features, which "façade" tended with them to be strongly marked, and "façade X" was strikingly predominant within the "clipped" group. From Table IV the conclusion had already been drawn that the "clipped" group contained a much less wide range of personality varieties than with the other moustached men; it now also appeared from these findings on "façades" that the "clipped" men were much more like to each other than were the "fail" members of any other moustache group.

In the 400, the chances of having any one type of moustache were approximately one in two for a "trimmed", one in four for a "line", one in eight for a "bushy", one in sixteen for a "clipped" (figures for "divided" of uncertain validity) (Table IV). The "clipped" was popular with a more narrow range of individuals than were the other moustaches.

Many trains of evidence thus led on to the conclusions about those candidates who bore "clipped" moustaches, particularly when compared with "fail" men wearing other moustaches. The "clipped" men had no lack of drive, were of adequate intelligence and not inclined to self-indulgence or over much self-concern—but they had not been selected to go on to officer training because they were too limited in imagination, too little appreciative of the views of others, and unable sufficiently to bind together groups of men because of their liability to create rather than to disperse interpersonal tensions. Like their moustaches, so tended these men—faintly rebellious, energetic but prickly; precise to a fault, self limited in looking to either side, not offering concessions; conventionalized members of a group all much like unto themselves, in fair measure self-admirers and poor in aesthetic sense. They tended to be at once disciplining to near ruthlessness, and disciplined to near self-mutilation. In a setting of vigour and determination, the control of this inner imbalance was maintained by so much rigidity as to diminish the personality.

The glass of fashion might be expected to influence styling, and similar personality features could in different times be associated with different moustaches. During World War I, instructor N.C.O.s at Guards dépôts were unaffectionately known as "drill pigs". A short waxed sharp-pointed moustache of fearsome correctness was practically an item of their equipment. No "waxed", short or long, appeared in this 400, and indeed it is nowadays a rare moustache. It is a fair guess that some of the "clipped" men, had they lived in earlier times, would have tended to wear a "short waxed". It is possible that the incidence of moustaches, or of moustache types, was different from the general population in these men coming forward as prospective officers, but this would not invalidate conclusions as to personality trends linked to moustache varieties.

"LINE"

Candidates were all given a questionnaire on medical history. Many men made entries under only one or two headings, spending relatively less time on this questionnaire than on other documents also given to be completed; but by contrast other candidates would frequently add expanded details of illness. All candidates were broadly of equivalent health, but there was extreme variability in their degrees of "health consciousness".

For this study each of the answers on the medical questionnaire was rated as an "entry"; counts of the entries for 118 "fails" are shown in Table VIII. (The last column shows entries computed for convenience as if they had all referred to 30 "fails" of each group.)

TABLE VIII

Group	Totalled Entries	Totals	Entries "reduced" to 30 "fails"
Trimmed	114	35	98
Divided		Not recorded	
Clipped	109	32	102
Line	144	30	144
Bushy	77	21	110

The "line" men who "failed" had relatively loaded questionnaires. The excess of entries with the "line" group over any other group (among which the totals of entries were about equal) was around 40 per cent.

Of references to other than the reasonably ordinary medical incidents of life, 33 "trimmed" "fails" produced 3, 21 "bushy" "fails" made 3, 32 "clipped" men made 4, whilst 30 "line" "fails" showed 80. Thus not only did the "line" "fail" men give relatively excessive entries, but they also expanded a much greater proportion of their writing in forms strongly suggesting a beyond average interest in their personal health.

With some runs of "fail" moustached candidates the medical questionnaires were scrutinized for references to emotional illness. Thirty-five "trimmed" "fails" made no reference to emotional illness. Twenty-one "bushy" "fails" made one reference ("nervous as a child"), 32 "clipped" made one ("nervous breakdown"), but 30 "line" "fails" made six (two "nervous breakdown", one "depression", one "stomach nerves", one "nervous debility" and one "insomnia").

Findings to be displayed at Table IX show a high rate of "hysteria" as a trend within the "line" "fail" group (as would be expected with their strong "health consciousness"); there is also demonstrated a high rate of "hedonism". Neither feature with the "line" group was linked to any striking demonstrativeness of personality (or "façade") (Table VII).

With the 400, 11 per cent. of the "line" bearers "passed" (Table IV); but with the 173, 30 per cent. of those grouped as "line" "passed" (Table V). It had been shown to be probable that the "lines" of the 400 had been so grouped only if considerably more sharply cut than those of the 173. There was thus a suggestion that exaggerated thinning of "line" moustaches was, broadly, associated with lessened leader effectiveness.

The rate of "pass" for the "line" group tended low (at 11 per cent.) as compared with the "trimmed" 22 per cent., "divided" 25 per cent. and "bushy" 22 per cent. (Table IV)—an effect which it appeared was probably largely

due to the proneness towards undue self-regard amongst men cultivating very thin moustaches.

BUSHY

The numbers of times "hedonism" and "hysteria" (in practically those terms as such) had been used in the descriptions derived from the men's written work appear at Table IX.

TABLE IX

Group	"Hedonism"	"Hysteria"	Totals ("fails")
Trimmed Nil	1	34
Divided	Not recorded	
Clipped 1	1	30
Line 7	5	30
Bushy 6	6	30

With the "trimmed" men most "failures" were due to lack of force and colour—any "hedonism" or "hysteria" would thus not be noticeable as such beyond other characteristics. Men bearing "clipped" moustaches would not appear likely to have been prone to undue self-indulgence or self-concern, and it was not surprising to find within this group no more on the score of "hedonism" and "hysteria" than with the "trimmed" "fails". "Hedonism" appeared associated with the "bushy" moustaches much as it did with the "line". The observed very marked "health consciousness" of the "line" group was doubtless the main reason for their relatively frequent description as showing "hysteria". The "bushy" persons were, however, not given to "health consciousness" and thus their leaning to "hysteria" must have come to expression through other channels. "Hysteria" could have meant emphasis on self-display, as well as, or more than, on self-concern. The "clipped" was outstandingly linked to high "façade" incidence (Table VII), but this excess over the other groups was wholly due to high incidence of "façade" "X" (Antagonistic); "façade" "Y" (Self-justifying) being with them at an incidence comparable to other groups and "façade" "Z" (Melodramatic) at the lowest incidence of any group. With the ("fail") "bushy", the incidence of "façades" was also high at 63 per cent. (as compared with the "trimmed" at 45 per cent. and the "line" at 47 per cent.). Again, with the "bushy" the intensity of "façades" (in "fails") was high (40 per cent. "strong" as compared with 23 per cent. for "trimmed" and 13 per cent. for "line"). Unlike "clipped", however, the distribution of the three "façades" "X", "Y" and "Z", was spread evenly amongst the "bushy" "fails". It emerges, therefore, that the "bushy" "fails" were proportionately more prone than other groups taken together to exhibit façades of "Y" and "Z" types—that is, to have relative proneness to self-display, which disposition was presumably associated with their high rate of description under "hysteria". Probably many of the "bushy" "pass" candidates in the 400 had been of honest exuberance, the overall "pass" rate (22 per cent.) being much as that for the whole intake (23 per cent.).

With the 173 moustached men at the other Board, the "pass" rate for the "bushy" group was as high as 50 per cent. Table V and its analysis had showed that criteria for selection of this particular "bushy" group had been relatively stringent. There was thus indication that, broadly, increased "bushiness" of moustache amongst men suitable for officer training was associated with increased leader effectiveness.

SUMMARY

1. Five hundred and seventy-three moustached candidates at two officer selection Boards were studied.
2. The moustaches were placed in five groups: "trimmed", "divided", "clipped", "line" and "bushy".
3. Men with "trimmed" moustaches showed no significant differences from the clean shaven.
4. The "clipped" moustache group was found associated with a distinctive type of personality. No man with this moustache had "passed" the Boards.
5. The personality features within the "clipped" group did appear to have been reflected in the cut of this moustache.
6. Men bearing "line" moustaches "passed" at half the rate for the whole intake; those who "failed" displayed "health consciousness" far more than "fails" of any other group.
7. The "bushy" moustached men "passed" at a rate similar to the whole intake; those who "failed" tended to self-indulgence and self-display.

I have lost touch with the two "testing team" sergeants, Rhodes and Dickie, who worked with me. I hope that they may come to hear of this completed study and of my thanks for their devoted labour.