

Ordnance Officers Check Army Gear

By HARMAN W. NICHOLS
United Press Staff Writer

ABERDEEN, Md. — One of the biggest eags in our defense machine is located here in the laboratories of the Ordnance Corps' testing, teaching, and training center.

The public generally does not realize what goes on around the sprawling 74,000 acres of the Aberdeen Proving Ground.

But here, skilled technicians use all the tools and tricks of science to create combat conditions for pre-battle tests. Arms and ammunition, trucks and tanks meet every challenge they may one day have to meet in battle.

THE MEN WORK 24 hours a day, the year around, to make sure America can field the best equipment in the world. Present weapons are compared with every known type of similar material.

The proving ground has been in operation for 33 years.

During that period, thousands of vehicles have traveled nearly six million miles over the multi-type roadways. More than one million artillery and small arms weapons have fired more than one billion rounds of ammunition on the ranges. And 100 million man-hours have been spent in the shops to perfect new equipment.

THERE IS AN ordnance school which has provided technical training for 150,000 officers since the first World War. The replacement training center and related emergency training facilities have "graduated" 350,000 soldiers.

Two unusual research machines were for use in the laboratories were developed by scientists as labor of love—or off-duty hobbies.

One of these is the intricate electrical numerical integrator and computer. It calculates firing tables faster than the time required to shoot the guns. The other is the highest-speed camera in the world. Its revolving mirror exposes 10-billion frames per second.

ANOTHER IMPRESSIVE tool used in research work is the supersonic wind tunnel. Machines here measure the time of flight for new shells, guided missiles and bombs.

Cost is cut in this operation. The machines test inexpensive miniatures, built to scale. Thus the hazards and costs of using full-scale models of this ammunition are eliminated.

Another important division here is the development and proof service. There are exhaustive tests of all kinds of standardized or experimental guns and vehicles. Reville is held twice a day to provide two-shift, around the clock, soldier personnel to carry on such experiments.

SURPLUS FOREIGN equipment is tested against its American counterpart. Technicians presently are working the Russian equipment, wearing it out and tearing it down to learn the advantages and disadvantages.

About 99 per cent of U. S. children between the ages of 5 and 13 were enrolled in schools during the 1950-51 term, says the Encyclopedia Americana.

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