

HAROLD RUSSELL SANDSTEAD (1904-1955)

CLINICAL nutrition lost one of its outstanding proponents when Harold R. Sandstead, M.D., was killed in an airplane crash November 1, 1955. He was en route to Oregon to present a lecture on nutrition problems in the Far East and to complete arrangements for nutrition surveys currently underway in Iran and Pakistan. These surveys are the beginning of widespread activities being sponsored by the Interdepartmental Committee on Nutrition for National Defense, which Dr. Sandstead was largely instrumental in establishing. He served as its first Executive Director and was in charge of the Secretariat.

Dr. Sandstead was born December 17, 1904, in Davenport, Nebraska. He graduated from Cotner College in 1927.

Upon graduation from the medical school of the University of Nebraska, he interned at the University Hospital at Omaha. After two years of practice at Schleswig, Iowa, he joined the U. S. Public Health Service and was assigned to the Marine Hospital in Cleveland. He was active in research there and later at Hines Veterans Hospital, Chicago. After an additional year of training at Johns Hopkins, he went to New York and worked on a co-operative nutrition program at Cornell Medical School sponsored by the Milbank Fund. This program involved examination of a large group of New York school children and the work was extended to a similar group at Hagerstown, Maryland, in 1941.

In 1943 Dr. Sandstead was assigned to the War Department and was stationed at the Shrivenham (England) Military Government-Civil Affairs School, where he helped prepare an estimate of the kinds and amounts of medical and sanitary supplies and equipment which would be required for an Allied invasion of Europe. During the time Dr. Sandstead served as Chief of the Public Health Branch of SHAEF, survey teams were sent into Holland under his direction to evaluate the nutritional status of the civilians.

For this work the Queen of the Netherlands in 1945 appointed Dr. Sandstead an Officer of the Orange-Nassau with Swords. He also received the Bronze Star and a citation from the U. S. Army.

Upon his return to this country he was made Chief of the Nutrition Branch of the Public Health Service. In 1948 Dr. Sandstead served as a member of the U. S. delegation to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Nutrition Conference in Montevideo, Uruguay. In 1949 he surveyed the nutritional health of the Alaskan Eskimos and in 1950, of the natives of Guam.

When the Nutrition Branch was terminated because of budgetary limitations, Dr. Sandstead was assigned to the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, where he initiated a study of buccal-mucosal changes and their possible relation to nutrition. He had an active part in the teaching and training program of the Division of Nutrition of the Medical School.

In April 1953, at the request of the Surgeon General of the Army, he made a nutrition survey of the Korean military forces. This included thousands of Korean soldiers in various localities and in a variety of military installations. It brought Dr. Sandstead another Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster. While in Korea, he saw many people with marked enlargement of the parotid glands. On his return to this country, he carried out a study which suggested that chronic bilateral asymptomatic enlargement of these glands may occur as a result of recent or remote malnutrition (*AM. J. CLIN. NUTRITION* 3: 198, 1955).

During the summer of 1955 Dr. Sandstead and his son Harold participated in an extensive nutrition study of the Navajo Indians in Arizona. The reports of this investigation are soon to be published and will be the first extensive study of the nutritional health of this group of Americans.

The expanding requirements for military cooperation throughout the world early indicated to Dr. Sandstead that the nutritional status of the Allied military forces would become increasingly important. With this in mind, he was largely instrumental in establishing the Interdepartmental Committee on Nutrition for National Defense. This Committee is composed of representatives from each of the departments and agencies concerned with foreign operations. The Committee chairman is Dr. Frank B. Berry, the Assistant Secretary of Defense in Charge of Health and Medical Affairs.

The Committee is guided by an advisory board of outstanding nutrition experts in the United States. Two nutrition survey teams have been organized which are currently working in Pakistan and Iran to evaluate the nutritional status of the military personnel from medical, biochemical, and dietary standpoints. With the teams are a food technologist and an agricultural economist who are attempting to evaluate the food resources of the countries.

The Interdepartmental Committee on Nutrition for National Defense, the nutrition surveys which it has initiated, and those that follow will stand as a lasting memorial to the work in which Dr. Sandstead was so intensely interested.

Dr. Sandstead's life was devoted to the field of clinical nutrition, with a continuing interest in determining practical methods for improving the nutrition of peoples throughout the world. He was extremely modest, never seeking personal credit, but always striving for the betterment of mankind as his primary goal.

In 1930, Harold Sandstead married Florence Hilton of Lincoln, Nebraska. Their two children are Martha, who is attending Syracuse University, and Harold, who is a medical student at Vanderbilt University. The happiness of their household warmed everyone who came in contact with them.

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