

PAY ACCOUNTS

The year under review has seen the virtual completion of the greater part of the war and immediate post-war activities of Pay Accounts and Base Records. Apart from the distribution of Campaign Stars and War Medals and the review of war gratuity payments made to certain classes of war pensioners following the recent amendment to the War Service Gratuity Regulations, the work which remains is largely of a "washing-up" nature.

War Service Gratuity.—During the twelve months ended 31st March, 1949, 10,563 war service gratuity applications were received, bringing the total applications lodged to 237,715.

The total amount deposited to war service gratuity Post Office accounts to 31st March 1949, was £20,353,175, of which £211,100 was deposited during the year ended 31st March, 1949.

The recent amendment to the War Service Gratuities Emergency Regulations 1945 extends the period to which minimum payments for pensionable disability and death apply to three years after the date of entitlement. This involves the review of some twenty thousand cases which can be dealt with from office records, while there may be up to five thousand more in respect of whom pensions have been granted since 31st March, 1946, or later date of entitlement, although they had no pensionable disability when the original application was made for the gratuity. Contact will be made with these men by advertising the effect of the amended regulations in the returned servicemen's *Journals*.

Final Pay.—The number of soldiers' accounts brought to finality during the year totalled 2,263.

Free Rail Passes: Dependants of Deceased Personnel.—During the year ended 31st March, 1949, 51 twenty-eight-day free rail passes were issued to widows, and to mothers of unmarried deceased servicemen.

General.—There are still a few open pay accounts for personnel receiving hospital treatment, but these will be finalized within the next three or four months when the men complete treatment or are transferred to pension.

Besides the 25,000 cases mentioned in paragraph (1) to be reviewed, some 5,500 persons have not yet applied for the gratuity, and a considerable number of other payments issuable on application have not yet been claimed, although application forms have been forwarded to the personnel concerned.

BASE RECORDS

Personal Files.—Apart from the normal traffic of personal files, the records room staff has been, and still is, fully employed in purging the main filing system of "dead" material, &c., in order to give more filing space.

During the year the records room staff has been progressively reduced and now numbers 22, as against 56 employed at the end of the previous year.

History Sheets.—The issue of Certificates of Discharge to all personnel who have had overseas service was completed towards the end of the year, and the staff of the History-sheets Section has been reduced to the minimum considered necessary to deal with the issue of campaign stars and medals. The staff employed on this and allied sections is now reduced from over 100 to 51.