



Group 4

Tasks

Read M1 and M2:

1. What impact do the numerous disabled veterans have on the development of medical technology?
2. How do they approach the problem?
3. Is the approach successful? Why/why not?

M1 Transcribed Source - The cooperation of the engineer at the Formation of Replacement-limbs

„It has been a year since outstanding and far-sighted Doctors approached the management of the Association of German Engineers and requested help to the solution on the artificial limb issue, especially of the replacement of the arm.

The request to collaborate was motivated by the fact that the demand of artificial arms and legs rose as high as no one would previously have thought possible because of the disaster of war. The industrial rehabilitation of men with severe arm injuries into their former profession or a new one demanded a new working arm, which has not been created in peacetime.

It is therefore necessary to build an organization to work through technical solutions, that enabled seriously disabled persons to return to their former profession or a similar one partial or completely.

The contemplable doctors, especially surgeons from Berlin, considered that the Association of German Engineers as a reservoir of technical intelligence would easily find men, whose technical ability combined with joy and love towards the noble duty empower them to successful collaboration.

The management ensured their aid immediately.

A committee that was established through the management collected material about the latest state of the art concerning the replacement arm. The direct result of the unsatisfactory findings was a contest in September 1915 which concerned the replacement arm in case of an upper arm amputation which most commonly appeared.

This contest should set everyone who worked in this area before and who newly pay attention to it in motion.

About 100 applicants were received, 80 of them involved a model which had really been built. The result of the contest was nevertheless unsatisfactory.

Despite the amount of applicants neither the first nor the second prize was granted to anyone.,¹

M2 Scientific Text - Damaged Heroes

„The starting point with the occupation with disabled veterans from World War I in Germany was the confrontation with photographs from military hospitals and military hospital workshops.

¹ Schlesinger, Georg: Die Mitarbeit des Ingenieurs bei der Durchbildung der Ersatzglieder. In: Zeitschrift des Vereines Deutscher Ingenieure 36 (1917). p.114. (author's translation)



The enormous number of figurative representations of mangled and damaged human bodies rose questions.

The majority of the figures showed men of all ages, who were out of kilter physically and mentally due to mutilation caused by war and surgical amputations.

Contemporary specialists restored the damaged bodies with experimental surgical intervention and technical prostheses partly only poorly and partly highly artificial.

The fact that this reconstructive action on the bodies of war victims is a humanitarian and cultural accomplishment is undisputed.

Seen from that perspective World War I was incredibly »productive«:

One profited from the technical experience of this war in many areas of medical technology and prosthetics right to the present and the knowledge gained from the disabled veterans build the starting base for progress in plastic surgery, in the treatment of brain-lesioned patients and the research of phantom pain.“²

² Kienitz, Sabine: Beschädigte Helden. Kriegsinvalidität und Körperbilder 1914 - 1923. Paderborn 2008. p. 344. (author's translation)