

clude. This means that the trait is likely to show up in the young even when one of the parents is entirely normal.

Whether humans inherit in a similar way a tendency to get the "jitters," or other nervous ills from exposure to such violent noises as bursting bombs, gunfire, shrieking sirens or industrial noises,

cannot be deduced from these experiments. The nervous system of humans differs from that of rats, and noise probably does not have a comparable effect on even susceptible individuals. It is known, however, that excessive noise does make some people jumpy.

*Science News Letter, March 15, 1941*

Methods for protecting the morale of soldiers have been worked out through practical experience over many years. Similar devices must be found for civilians who now must bear the brunt of immediate contact with war fears.

The soldier is a member of a close unit. He knows that his name is on a certain roll, and his whereabouts kept track of. If anything happens to him, he is sure that his absence is not going to go undetected for long.

The soldier is in uniform. From the days of schoolboy thrillers, we become used, Dr. Bion says, to the idea of blood, or of wounds on a uniformed body. But the sight of blood on civilian clothes is unnerving.

The soldier lives by rules and manuals of drill.

The civilian should not only have his place in some defense unit, but he should be a part of some organization at home as well as at work. It is particularly terrifying to feel that you must face danger alone at night when the imagination naturally tends to run riot, magnifying dangers.

Going to school has its value in protecting the mind by returning the individual to the safe scenes of his childhood. For this reason, courses of adult education have a special value in time of national emergency.

*Science News Letter, March 15, 1941*

PSYCHOLOGY

## Familiar Sights and Acts Regarded as Mental Armor

### In Times of Danger of Death, Comfort Is Found in Simple Act of Buckling on a Belt or Equipment

**A**RMOR plate against attacks of "war nerves," has been invented by a British psychologist. The new protection consists of the presence of familiar things:

Sight of a policeman's blue uniform, known and trusted since childhood.

Going through with some simple act made familiar by constant drill.

Definite orders to report at a certain place and do a certain set thing.

These are the civilian's protection for his sanity in time of great fear.

Lessons for building up home defense units in America are seen in a discussion of how to prevent tragic mental effects of the war of nerves, contained in a new book of British origin just published in the United States on *The Neuroses in War*. Dr. W. R. Bion, who has been psychiatrist in the Emergency Medical Service and captain in the Royal Tanks Corps, contributes the report on civilian morale and mental protection. (*Reviewed, SNL, this issue.*)

So far as possible, familiar organizations—the local police and fire departments — should be expanded and entrusted with duties of home defense in place of building up new and strange organizations such as England's A.R.P., Dr. Bion advises.

In time of danger of death—the great unknown—a real need is filled and comfort and strength obtained by the presence of authorities familiar since childhood.

Organization should be thorough and complete so that every man, woman and child has a task that must be done and is a part of some unit. For the aged and infirm this may be some very simple act which has its greatest value in

relieving fear. Dr. Bion recalls "the satisfying feeling that was produced on one occasion during the last war, when the objective situation appeared desperate and the enemy commenced an attack, by the simple act of having to buckle on belt and equipment before standing to arms."

The alarm, Dr. Bion emphasizes, must not be just a signal to take shelter, but a call to action. And there must be an action, however trivial, to which everyone is called.



#### BOW-AND-ARROW BRANDING

*Arrows tipped with sponge-rubber balls dipped in vari-colored paints are being used in the Gunnison National Forest for marking deer, to learn to what extent they move from one feeding area to another. The deer are not injured—not even seriously alarmed. And so tame are the herds that a marksman can stand on the same spot and "shoot" several animals before the rest of them scatter.*