

held in firing position, the loader is at one side and to the rear of the firer as shown in the illustration on the front cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER. The launcher may be fired from any position which may be used normally by a rifleman in combat.

After the loader has inserted the rocket in the launcher, he turns a contact lever to the "fire" position, signals "ready" to the firer, and then drops down and away from the rear end of the launcher

and grasps a new rocket.

When the firer squeezes the trigger, the rocket-propelling charge is ignited and flashes from the rear of the launcher tube.

The rocket itself is heavier than the hand grenade and is nearly two feet long. It looks like a small, elongated aircraft bomb. It has an explosive head, propelling charge powder tube and a finned tail to provide accuracy in flight.

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#### ASTRONOMY

## New Comet Discovered

**Diamaca, named after its Roumanian discoverer, will probably be visible with small telescope in northern evening sky near Hercules.**

► A NEW comet, named Diamaca after the Roumanian astronomer who discovered it, was reported low in the northern part of the evening sky near the constellation of Ursa Major, the great Bear.

The comet was first noticed in Roumania early in the morning of Sept. 10. Due to the difference in time, this was actually 10 p.m., EWT, on the night of Sept. 9. It was found to be moving toward the northeast.

At the time of its discovery, the comet's right ascension was 8 hours, 35.4 minutes, according to the cabled report received by Dr. Harlow Shapley, director of Harvard Observatory, American clearing house for astronomical reports, who has relayed the discovery news to American observatories. Its declination was plus 53 degrees, 1 minute.

The comet was observed on Sept. 18 in America by Leslie C. Peltier, amateur astronomer of Delphos, Ohio, who found it had dimmed from the reported eighth magnitude to tenth magnitude and it was moving about twice as fast as the original report indicated. Mr. Peltier made his observation independently before he had heard of the Roumanian report. The predicted position for the evening of Sept. 24 is 16 hours, 45 minutes, and 34 degrees which places it inside the Keystone in Hercules.

Evening is the best time to observe the comet through a telescope, of course. In fact, the comet will soon begin to set a few hours after the sun.

Care should be taken not to confuse the comet with the numerous bright galaxies or spiral nebulae in this part

of the sky near which the comet may pass.

The message of the discovery came from Zurich, Switzerland, via the observatory at Copenhagen, clearing house for astronomical information in Europe. Usually such messages are relayed to the United States via Sweden. It is not known whether the Nazi control of Denmark prevented its transmission to Sweden, or whether German-Swedish communications are limited.

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#### ANTHROPOLOGY

## Scientists Help Troops to Get Natives to Cooperate

► ACTIVE assistance of natives in some of the most remote regions where our troops are now fighting is being secured by anthropologists.

They are also helping organize tribes to gather rubber so vitally needed for our war production, and to help stimulate local crop production to feed our troops in these distant sections, Dr. Ruth F. Benedict, associate professor of anthropology at Columbia University, stated in Science Service's "Adventures in Science" program over the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Approximately 5,700 tons of steel has been saved by limiting to two inches or less the length of women's hair pins and bobby pins.

*Electricity* for lighting store windows and fronts is banned in Australia.

Anthropologists have first-hand knowledge of strange parts of the world, which is proving most useful to the Allies. They know what native foods may be safely eaten and have detailed knowledge of the topography of little-known regions. Based on native practices, some are offering valuable suggestions as to how to clothe or shelter our troops most expeditiously and comfortably. Others are giving courses in languages never before taught in America.

"The fact that anthropology is so useful in down-to-earth, practical operations came as a shock even to many people who know a good deal about anthropology," stated Dr. Benedict, who is herself helping Uncle Sam win the war. More than half of these scientists are devoting their full time to the war effort and another quarter are doing part-time war work.

"The anthropologist has one great qualification for post-war planning for he finds cultural differences interesting," Dr. Benedict pointed out. "He looks over the contemporary cultures of the world and it seems quite possible to him that the special values of each of them could be maintained and enhanced in a post-war world."

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#### MEDICINE

## Flea Bite Allergies Are Relieved By Vaccine

► SUCCESSFUL vaccination against the hives and asthma some people get from flea bites has been achieved by a flea antigen developed at the University of California, Dr. Barbara C. McIvor and Dr. L. S. Cherney of the University Medical School announced.

Fleas are a serious threat to health because they may carry the germs of typhus fever and plague. The flea antigen is not directed against this danger, but to the severe reactions some people have from bites of non-infected fleas.

In California, North Africa and probably other parts of the world the flea is a pest aside from its disease-carrying danger, just as mosquitoes are. In such regions the antigen should prove a boon to hypersensitive persons.

In the University investigations 115 out of 128 patients were relieved of symptoms by the vaccination. Three failed to complete the course of treatments. Trials by 41 doctors in other parts of the country showed that all but five of 92 patients were helped.

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