

PUBLIC HEALTH

## Europe's Typhus Different

American variety is spread by rat fleas, that of Old World by louse. Is a real war plague which can change the course of history.

► THE TYPHUS FEVER that has broken out in Naples differs from the typhus fever we have in the United States, and both are quite different from typhoid fever which recently hit a town in Kentucky.

European typhus fever is spread by the body louse. It usually kills more victims than the American variety, especially when it develops into epidemic form. The deaths from European typhus may run from 20 to 40 out of every 100 patients, while the American variety kills only two out of 100. Crowded housing conditions and lack of soap and water for bathing and laundering favor the spread of European or epidemic typhus.

Typhus is a real war plague and has been credited with changing the course of history more than once. Most notable recent example was when typhus in Serbia held up German-Austrian invasion of that country for six months in World War I, at the most critical period of the war.

The American variety of typhus fever is spread by rat fleas. Headache, chills, fever and general pains are symptoms of either variety of typhus fever, plus a skin rash of red spots which has given the disease the name spotted fever in some parts of the world. It has also been known as jail fever and ship fever. Russian peasants call it winter fever.

Preventing American typhus fever means getting rid of rats and avoiding flea bites. Preventing the much more dangerous European variety rests on delousing or anti-louse procedures.

A vaccine, believed to give protection against either kind of typhus fever, has been developed and has been given to American troops for their protection in regions where louse-borne typhus prevails. The Army also has a dusting powder which repels lice, as well as other methods of delousing a soldier's clothes and equipment.

Typhoid fever is caused by an entirely different germ which attacks the intestinal tract and gets into the body in contaminated food, milk or water. This disease also was once a war plague. There is now an efficient vaccine against typhoid fever which is used to protect

American troops, and most other modern armies protect their men from typhoid by vaccination. Civilians in general in this country do not need the vaccine because good sanitation and public health control of healthy carriers of the disease keep food, water and milk from becoming contaminated with the germs. The recent outbreak in a Kentucky town was reported due to two old wells in which the water had become contaminated.

*Science News Letter, January 8, 1944*

AERONAUTICS

## Huge Altitude Wind Tunnel Soon To Be Ready

► A HUGE altitude wind tunnel for research on aircraft engines, the first of its kind, now being built at the Cleveland Airport by the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, will see completion the early part of next year.

This tunnel, which is part of the \$20,000,000 Aircraft Engine Research Laboratory, largest in the world, will be the first to combine all conditions approach-

ing those of the stratosphere. It will be used to improve the high altitude performance of aircraft engines and engine installations for Army and Navy planes.

Giant-bladed fans will create a 500-mile-an-hour wind in the tunnel. Air temperatures in the wind tunnel as low as 67 degrees below zero Fahrenheit, simulating stratosphere conditions at 50,000 feet, will be maintained by the huge refrigeration plant, which will have a capacity twice as large as that of the biggest refrigeration plant in the world.

Designed to test engines with a maximum of 3,000 horsepower, it is expected that the tunnel will prove adequate to test engines up to 4,000 horsepower.

*Science News Letter, January 8, 1944*

ARCHAEOLOGY

## Owners of Iraq Treasures Asked to Contact Yale

► OWNERS of inscribed clay tablets, seal cylinders and any other archaeological treasures from the kingdom of Mesopotamia, now Iraq, are requested to communicate with Albrecht Goetze, Babylonian Collection, Yale University Library, New Haven, Conn., states a report to the American Schools of Oriental Research.

These clues to the political and cultural history of the ancient Orient are now scattered all over the country in libraries, museums and private collections.

*Science News Letter, January 8, 1944*



**FIRST OF ITS KIND**—This is the NACA's new and unique altitude wind tunnel under construction at the Cleveland Airport. The tunnel is insulated by fiber glass.