

hour, since the Martin B-26 has the same power plant and moves through the air at this speed though it is a heavier plane.

In general, night fighters are heavily armed. For operations in a localized area, special radar equipment is used. Enemy planes, first detected on a long-range radio set, are reported to the ground station at the airport where the night fighters are based. Directions are

given to the night fighter pilots which will enable them to bring their planes to positions fairly close to the enemy bombers, preferably behind them. The radar operators aboard the night fighters then switch on their interceptor equipment, which spots the enemy planes at fairly close range, keeping pilots advised of their location until it is time to fire.

Science News Letter, July 1, 1944

GENERAL SCIENCE

Languages in a Hurry

Malayan, Arabic, Burmese, Chinese and French quickly learned by speaking language in class and by training oneself to "think" in the foreign tongue.

► **TEACHING** 15,000 Americans to speak such languages as Malayan, Arabic, Burmese, Chinese and French was speeded by having them speak the foreign language in class from the first day, eliminating or postponing the study of little-used constructions, and having them "think" in the foreign language. Students in these classes conversed with natives from all walks of life—economists to pearl divers.

Searching for ways in which the procedures followed in the Army Specialized Training Language Program could be adapted to peace-time teaching of foreign languages, a special committee working under the Commission on Trends in Education of the Modern Language Association of America found that although no single method of presenting the language had been universally adopted in these intensive courses, several outstanding tendencies marked the classes.

The students were given a chance to progress according to their several abilities. The classes were kept relatively small and frequent promotions and demotions made so that the trainees with aptitude were not handicapped by those who learned more slowly. Every one in the group was called on frequently to speak in the foreign language.

The problem of whether fluency or accuracy was more important was met by compromise in most of the classes. Fluency was usually the primary objective in the early stages, but accuracy was stressed with the more advanced groups.

Designed to give students command of the colloquial spoken form of a foreign language, the Army Specialized Train-

ing Language Program, given at many colleges and universities throughout the country, was intended to make up as quickly as possible for our weaknesses as a nation in practical knowledge of foreign languages.

The first language course began in April, 1943, and by the end of the year approximately 15,000 trainees were studying languages under this system.

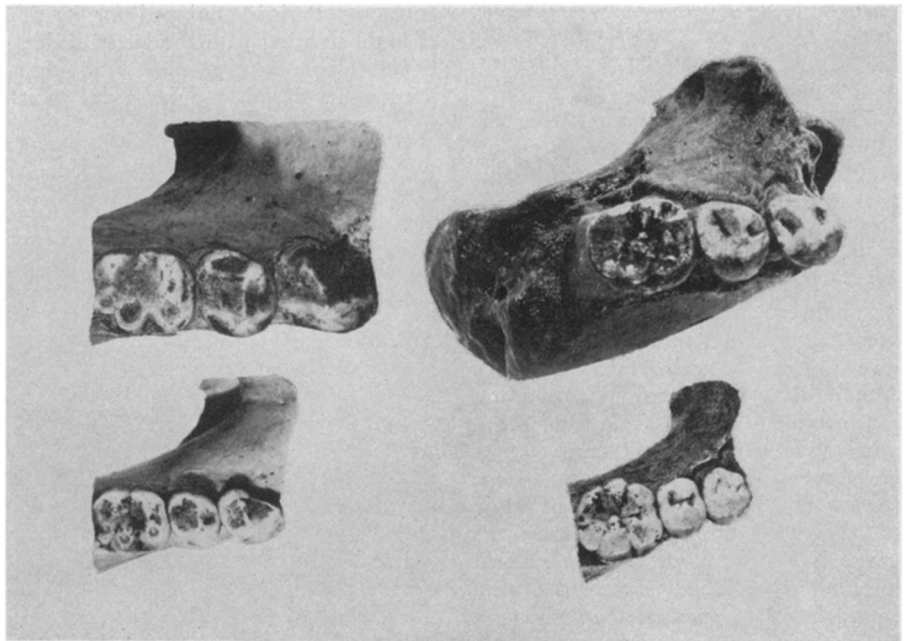
The curriculum was based primarily on experience derived from the Intensive Language Program of the American Council of Learned Societies which had been in operation for two years.

The course was designed to give the students 10 to 12 hours a week of oral practice in the foreign language, in small sessions with a native speaker, and three to five hours a week of formal instruction in the structure of the language studied.

"The people who were engaged to conduct the drill sessions represented, without doubt, the most heterogeneous group ever assembled anywhere to teach languages," the report states. "Besides some teachers of languages, there could be found economists, political scientists, lawyers, judges, poets, novelists, Army officers, school girls, housewives, barbers, a pearl diver, and even a former numbers-racket specialist."

A number of unusual techniques were used to capitalize on the feeling that language is not merely something to learn about, but something which we speak.

Songs and proverbs were used frequently in some classes because their melody and rhythm make them easy to learn. Good phonograph records were also employed. Lively plays, with



GORILLA SIZE—That Dr. Franz Weidenreich's estimate of *Meganthropus paleojavanicus* as "big as a big male gorilla" (*SNL*, June 24, p. 409) is not exaggerated can be judged by comparing the jawbone fragment (upper right) with the homologous part of a modern gorilla's jaw (right). Below are similar parts of chimpanzee (left) and human jaws (right)