

GENERAL SCIENCE

BW Intelligence Network

➤ A BIOLOGICAL warfare intelligence network will shortly be set up by the government's Communicable Disease Center in Atlanta. The first 15 BW "intelligence agents" will soon begin receiving intensive laboratory and field training.

As further money and authorizations are granted, other young doctors and nurses will be trained to distinguish natural and accidental epidemics from those set by the enemy. State health departments will be brought into the network. The first conference with state officials on BW will be held in Atlanta, April 19 and 20.

After six weeks' training, the first 15 agents will be assigned to "strategic areas" in the country, according to Dr. Alexander D. Langmuir, chief of the Epidemiologic Services of the Communicable Disease Center. Dr. Langmuir said he would rather not go too specifically into what he meant by "strategic" areas. However, he added, the agents would be attached to state health

departments and Communicable Disease Center field stations.

There, they will receive field training. They will study and report on natural and accidental epidemics.

Dr. Langmuir will be general chairman of the Atlanta meeting of state health departments. Chief subject of the meeting will be the reporting of communicable diseases, with special emphasis on those diseases which could be used in BW.

Dr. Norman Kiefer, director of health services and chief of the special weapons division of the Civil Defense Administration will open the conference.

More than a year ago, Civil Defense announced that some members of state health departments would be trained in detecting biological warfare epidemics but, as yet, no decision has been made as to who is going to do the training, or when, or where.

Science News Letter, April 14, 1951

MEDICINE

Map Man's Blood Groups

➤ A REFERENCE center for the mapping of man's blood groups is to be set up by the Royal Anthropological Institute in London. The decision was taken at a special meeting of the Institute on the subject of Blood Groups and Anthropology, in the course of which the geographical differences in the distribution of blood groups were discussed.

The principal function of this center will be to gather and classify at one central point the vast store of uncollated blood group information now scattered about in innumerable scientific journals in a veritable babel of languages. It will also incorporate new findings as they are reported in the future.

The importance of this work lies in the possible light such information may shed on the genetic relationships of different groups of peoples and on the past nomadic wanderings and migrations of early human tribes over the face of the earth, thus pointing back to the much-disputed "cradle" of mankind.

Startling differences in the occurrence of blood groups is found between the peoples of different areas of the earth, so that anomalous outcroppings of unusual blood groups in certain areas may indicate the past settlement there of invaders from some other region.

One problem in anthropology which the study of blood groups may ultimately help to settle, though so far the results have not been encouraging, is that of the origin of the American Indians.

A committee of ten prominent blood group scientists and anthropologists has been nominated to give immediate study to the setting up of the Blood Group Reference Center. Included in the committee are Prof. R. A. Fisher, geneticist and pioneer investigator of the genetics of the Rh blood group in man; Prof. H. J. Fleure, anthropologist; Dr. A. E. Mourant, Director of Medical Research Council Blood Group Reference Laboratory; and Dr. W. d'A. Maycock, Director of the Ministry of Health Blood Transfusion Service.

Science News Letter, April 14, 1951

INVENTION

Earrings Flash With Light In Patented Gadget

➤ DECORATIVE EARRINGS with tiny electric lights in their centers are promised in an invention on which the government has issued a patent. Lights may be illuminated only when desired.

The entire device includes a small battery to be hidden in the hair, and a comb to hold it in place. Battery and comb are worn low on the back of the head. A ribbon bow helps concealment.

Electric circuits from the battery pass under the hair, where they also are concealed, to the earrings. A switch is provided so that the wearer may light-up or off at will. Inventor is Eli W. Gaffield, Washington, D. C., and he received patent 2,546,945 for his efforts.

Science News Letter, April 14, 1951

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