



WHALE OF A PLANE

This 4-engine bomber of the future designed at Wright Field has two pusher propellers and two tractors. The arrangement makes for an advantageous placing of the fire power. The Air Corps suggests that this design might be called the "Air Whale." Perhaps "Shark" might be appropriate.

ASTRONOMY

## Whipple Comet and Eclipse To Provide Astronomical Show

Extra Attraction Will Be an Occultation of Bright Star, 59 Leonis; Comet Won't Be Seen By Naked Eye

**W**HEN the moon is totally eclipsed on March 2, a splendid view of the new comet recently discovered by Prof. Fred L. Whipple will be possible through even a small telescope.

Computations at Harvard Observatory, where the comet was discovered, showed that the comet is headed for the place in the sky where the moon will rise on the early evening of Monday, March 2, eclipsed by the sun. With the moon's light thus shielded, a good look at the Whipple comet, a little west of the moon, will be possible although the moonlight a few days before and afterwards will blot it out.

As an extra attraction there will be an occultation, or a covering of a bright star, the 5th magnitude object called

59 Leonis, which is much brighter than the comet (which will be about 8th magnitude).

This triple attraction is expected to cause almost all amateur astronomers with small telescopes, many of them made by themselves, to go into action that evening.

On February 19 Whipple comet will pass close over or just north of second magnitude star Denebola in the tail of Leo the Lion. Denebola rises about 9 p.m. EWT, February 15, fifteen degrees north of east. Astronomers cannot predict whether or not the comet will reach naked-eye visibility, but the chances are against its doing so.

At present the comet is between eighth and ninth magnitude, visible only in

two-inch refractor or six-inch reflector. An amateur would probably need a chart to find it.

On February 19 the comet will be of the eighth magnitude and about March 15 it will be seventh magnitude which is still far below naked-eye visibility for comets.

For amateur astronomers, its position at midnight on February 13-14 will be right ascension 12 hours 10 minutes, declination north 18 degrees 31 minutes. This region of the sky is full of nebulae (the celebrated Coma-Virgo region) so amateurs should watch for motion of comet to be sure they have it and not a nebula. The orbit calculated by R. N. Thomas is a parabola, which means that the comet has come in from outermost space far beyond the sun's whole family of planets, and after swinging around the sun, will return there and never be seen again.

The comet will pass closest to the sun April 30 at a distance of 135,000,000 miles. It is coming down into our system at a high angle, nearly 80 degrees, which means that it will plunge through the plane of the ecliptic then shoot up and out again.

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MEDICINE

## New Agency To Help Ration Nation's Doctors

**P**AS (officially the Procurement and Assignment Service under the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services) has just been given the job of helping the Selective Service System ration the nation's supply of medical doctors, dentists and doctors of veterinary medicine.

"Since war was declared, the shortage of these professional men has become acute," Brig. Gen. Lewis B. Hershey, director of Selective Service, points out in a memorandum to state directors (*Journal, American Medical Association*, Feb. 7.)

Each of them, consequently, must serve "where he can render the greatest professional service to the nation."

Local Selective Service boards when classifying doctors, dentists and veterinary doctors are therefore expected to consult PAS committees of the corps areas on the availability of such professional men in the community. The authority of the Selective Service System to classify registrants is not affected but the information from PAS will help in making the "most effective allocation of medical manpower."

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