

Effect of the drug on 77 volunteers from New York's prison population had previously been studied by a special research group appointed by Mayor LaGuardia. These studies showed marihuana was something like alcohol in that it did not create a "new" personality but, by lowering inhibitions, accentuated all traits, both harmful and beneficial.

The aftermath of prolonged use of the drug strongly resembles an alcoholic hangover, it was reported.

Used to combat withdrawal symptoms of narcotic drug addicts who were being taken off their drug, marihuana lessened the severity of the withdrawal symptoms or eliminated them sooner.

"The patient was in a better frame of mind, his spirits elevated, his physical condition was rapidly rehabilitated and he expressed a wish to return to his occupation sooner," Dr. Allentuck reported. He concluded: "There is no evidence to suggest that the continued use of marihuana is a stepping stone to the use of opiates. Prolonged use of the drug does not lead to physical, mental or moral degeneration, nor have we observed any permanent deleterious effects from its continued use. Quite the contrary, marihuana and its derivatives and allied synthetics have potentially valuable therapeutic applications which merit future investigations."

*Science News Letter, May 30, 1942*

#### PSYCHIATRY

## Navy Psychiatrists Are Saving Manpower for Industry

### Men Who Would Be Likely To Break Mentally Under Extraordinary Strains of Battle Are Placed in Jobs

**H**OW Navy psychiatrists are saving money and precious manpower for both the Navy and local communities by returning to suitable jobs in civilian life those men likely to break mentally under the unusually severe strains of sea warfare was disclosed by Commander Uno H. Helgesson before a joint meeting of the American Psychiatric Association and the American Psychopathological Association in Boston.

Very prompt psychiatric first aid treatment for battle casualties was also urged. He suggested mobile first-aid posts which could be sent right to the scene of battle.

The Navy is not the cold, impersonal machine that military organizations are commonly thought to be, Commander Helgesson said. Consideration has been given to the effects on the individual and community morale of sending a man home after he has been sworn in.

So the Red Cross was requested to furnish psychiatric social workers who act as liaison between the Navy and the community and family. Through local Red Cross chapters, psychiatric social workers at the Navy training stations have been able to get the rejected men into their old jobs or into new ones better suited to them, or they have put them into the hands of competent clinics or welfare organizations for such assistance as they need.

It is explained to the rejected man that as a civilian worker he has a function as important in this war as that of a sailor.

Those rejected include the "weak sisters," the "gripes" and those who resent authority and the "sick bay addicts" who can rarely be counted on in an emergency, as well as men with epilepsy or the early symptoms of actual mental disease. If such men were not removed from duty early in their service, it would deprive war industries of workers and at the same time be a great loss to the Navy.

"The economic loss from this kind of casualty, although it probably would run into the millions in a year's time, is not so serious as the loss in manpower and efficiency," Commander Helgesson said.

"We have no unlimited supply of commissioned officers and petty officers to train our new recruits. All the money in the world can not buy a ready-made experienced commissioned officer or petty officer. Economy of manpower is, therefore, particularly essential among officer and petty officer personnel."

Mobile psychiatric first aid posts were urged by Commander Helgesson to care for psychiatric battle casualties. These acute mental conditions following combat are of quite a different nature from peace-time neuroses, Commander Helgesson explained. They are mental

breakdowns in the face of difficulties which are not the common experience of man. But it is a well-known fact that the majority of these combat casualties can be returned to useful civilian occupations if treated early enough.

The trouble is that naval casualties occur in widely scattered areas and a long time, sometimes weeks, may elapse before they reach a naval hospital.

Among British casualties and also American, there are some who go into a deep stupor like that in some cases of the mental disease schizophrenia. But in the case of the battle casualties, it has been found that prompt treatment results in quick and relatively complete improvement. This peculiar form of psychiatric battle casualty seems to be more common in this war than in any before.

*Science News Letter, May 30, 1942*

#### AERONAUTICS

## Army Can Use at Least 24,000 Model Airplanes

**A** REQUEST for thousands of airplane models for the Interceptor Command of the U. S. Army has been transmitted to Science Clubs of America by Brig. Gen. J. K. Cannon, commanding the Army's First Interceptor Command. These models will be used in training airplane spotters. At least 24,000 will be needed.

Science Clubs of America members are being asked to continue to make seven models right through the summer. After the models are completed they should be sent directly to Science Clubs of America headquarters at 310 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y., where they will be picked up by the Army and distributed to the more than 8,000 observation posts scattered from Maine to Florida along the Atlantic seacoast. Science Clubs of America are sponsored by Science Service.

Models for the Interceptor Command may be made from the much more easily worked balsa wood, instead of pine, which is required for Navy models.

The Army will need only seven planes. These may be built on the scale of 1 to 72 or may be enlarged to a scale of 1 to 36. The Navy plans, now in the hands of schools, may be used for the details. Each unit in the Army program will consist of seven planes. One single motored plane of the P-40 type, three bi-motor ships of the B-26, P-39 and DC-3 types, two multi-motors of the B-17 and B-24 types and the Curtiss biplane SBC-4.

Throughout the entire nation high

schools have been engaged in building model airplanes on a scale of 1 to 72 expressly for the U. S. Navy. The Navy wanted 50,000 models of 50 different airplanes. Soon this activity will be interrupted by summer vacations. There is no need, however, for science clubs to stop their work and experiments simply because summer is here and some schools will be closed.

Many students have had experience in building airplane models for the Navy. These boys and girls can give instructions to those who had but limited experience in the field.

Schools are being asked not to discard models which did not come up to the rigid specifications prescribed by the Navy. Instead, some of these models which may be slightly off on one or two dimensions will be acceptable to the Army for use by the Interceptor Command.

For the time being only those models enumerated will be accepted. However, other single, two-motored and multi-motored ships may be found useful later; so don't throw good models away.

Brig. Gen. Cannon has also asked the Junior Aviators, an organization sponsored by the Scripps-Howard newspapers, Boys' Clubs of America and other organizations as well as schools to cooperate in the Army program.

*Science News Letter, May 30, 1942*

#### PALEONTOLOGY

### Fossil Skull in Museum Is of "Awful Alligator"

**M**EET PHOBOSUCHUS. That's from the Greek for "terrible crocodile" or "awful alligator."

The name is well merited. Phobosuchus is a six-foot-two-inch fossil skull representing a genus of giant reptiles that swam along the shores of shallow lakes and wallowed through swamps, in what is now the Big Bend region of Texas, during Cretaceous time, about 70 million years ago. The crushed fossil fragments, pieced together to make a restored skull, have just been placed on display at the American Museum of Natural History. Alongside is the skull of the largest known living crocodile species—a sea-going monster from the coasts of India, with a total length of 33 feet. It is dwarfed by comparison with the Phobosuchus specimen.

The skull was found a couple of years ago as a mass of crushed fragments, by Dr. Barnum Brown, curator of paleontology at the Museum. It has taken the intervening time to unscramble and re-



**BIG JAWS**

*Restoration of the skull of a huge crocodile that once snapped these jaws in the Big Bend country of Texas—about 70 million years ago. Working on the restoration are (left to right) Dr. Barnum Brown, who discovered the fossil remains, Roland T. Bird, who assembled them, and Dr. Erich Schlaikjer, who helped excavate them. In the foreground, for comparison, is the skull of a present-day Asiatic marine crocodile. The restoration is at the American Museum of Natural History.*

assemble the Chinese puzzle they presented, and to intercalate missing parts. The completed specimen is six feet two inches from base to snout-tip, three feet wide at the widest part, and bears a formidable array of pointed teeth, some

of them as much as six inches long. Comparative measurements indicate that the over-all length of the monster was not far from 45 feet.

The "awful alligator" shared his swamps and lakes with dinosaurs.

*Science News Letter, May 30, 1942*

#### GENERAL SCIENCE

## 10,000 High School Seniors In Science Talent Search

**O**VER 10,000 copies of the examination for the Science Talent Search, being conducted by Science Clubs of America, sponsored by Science Service, have been distributed to 1,734 secondary schools throughout the nation.

Entries in this contest for 40 trips to Washington where 20 Westinghouse scholarships will be awarded are being received until June 1.

Designed to bring to attention boys and girls who are potential leaders in scientific research of the future, the Science Talent Search is using a twelve-page two-hour examination administered

by school authorities as part of the selection technique. The contestants, who are all seniors ready to enter college, also are writing essays on "How Science Can Help Win the War." Teachers provide evaluation and scholarship data.

One feature of the Science Talent Search is that girls make their own opportunities in the contest. The trips and the scholarships will be allotted to boys and girls in proportion to the number of boys and girls competing.

It is expected that the winners of the Washington trips to be held July 13 to 15, will be announced about June 15.

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