

PSYCHIATRY

New Army School

Medical officers from civilian practice are taught how to handle mental ills developing in army and under strains of global war.

► MEDICAL OFFICERS entering the Army from civilian practice will have a chance to learn what sort of mental ills they may be called upon to treat in connection with modern warfare and military life. The opening of a new Army school of military neuropsychiatry is announced in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (April 3) by Col. Roy D. Halloran and Lieut. Col. Malcolm J. Farrell, of the Army's Surgeon General's Office.

Special strains put upon the mind, nerves, and emotions of soldiers by service in the Air Corps, the Tank Destroyer, Ranger and other special service units will be discussed as part of the course in this new school. The medical officers will learn how to cut the time they take to observe and treat individual patients to the brief periods that military emergencies permit. They will learn how to unwind the red tape of necessary Army administrative procedures, so bewildering to the civilian physician.

The civilian physician specializing in mental illnesses is seldom faced with problems like those encountered in the Army. He may have been attached to a school or child guidance clinic, advising parents what to do with the problem child who won't eat his spinach or who habitually plays hooky from school or has gotten in with a tough gang and begun to steal and lie. Or he may have been in a state hospital, dealing only with patients who have long been ill with serious mental diseases. His patients may have been mostly women, prisoners, or other special groups.

In the Army he must treat young men, most of them in excellent health when they entered the Army, who have broken under the unusual physical and mental strain of mechanized, global war.

Nearly one third (30%) of the casualties now coming back from Africa, the Solomons, and the other war zones, it is estimated, are mental or nervous breakdowns, or have mental symptoms as part of the difficulty. This is revealed by an editorial in the same issue of the A.M.A. Journal. Nervous and mental disorders are major causes of medical

discharge from the Army, it is stated.

Opening of the new school is shown by the editorial to be an outgrowth of the founding about a year ago of a special branch of the Surgeon General's Office devoted to neuropsychiatry. Col. Halloran is now chief of this branch and Lieut. Col. Farrell is assistant chief.

Under this division consultants on mental ills have been appointed to the various service commands in this country and to the European theater of operations and the Southwest Pacific theater. Mental hygiene programs have been planned to keep men in the replacement training centers in top-notch mental health. Liaison has been established with the Special Services Branch of the Army for promotion of morale. And the psychiatrists are giving their aid in handling Army problems of delinquency where these are shown to be tied up with medical problems.

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CHEMISTRY

Glycerin To Be Banned In Smokes and Toiletries

► GLYCERIN will be banned for use in foods, tobacco, cosmetics and toilet preparations starting in April. Medicinal use has been shoved down to 60% of normal recently with further reductions likely, due to demands of the explosives industry.

Scientists are now hard at work to develop substitute formulas. More than a hundred medicines in the National Formulary, an official book of drugs, are being studied by Dr. M. W. Green, E. C. Beeler and C. A. Steinmetz in the laboratories of the American Pharmaceutical Association.

Modified versions of 13 of the most widely used medicines have just been officially approved to permit pharmacists to make specified reductions in glycerin content ranging from 20% to 100%. Glycerin in some cases is entirely replaced by increased amounts of sugar.

From 20% to 50% of the glycerin can be omitted or replaced in many other medicines without affecting taste, appearance or stability, the scientists be-

lieve. Tests are now being conducted to find out how well the new products will stand up when kept in your medicine cabinet for a long time.

Corn syrup makes a successful substitute but will probably be too scarce to be practical.

"We're also studying the use of propylene glycol," Dr. Justin L. Powers, chairman of the National Formulary Committee, reports, "and indications are that it will be satisfactory."

Glycerin has long been used as a carrying agent for medicines because of its excellent solvent properties and because it does not ferment.

Small quantities are used to keep certain drug preparations moist and pliable. It is this same property that led to its use in cigarettes.

Just what the government ban will mean to the smoker is not yet clear but smokes are likely to be a good bit drier. Apple juice may be successfully used to keep the smokes moist, tests seem to show. The chemical diethylene glycol is already being used in some brands.

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POWER PROTECTERS — Wind, blowing at 600 miles an hour from the compressed air chamber of these Westinghouse circuit breakers will blow out any short circuit arcs that threaten electric power equipment at a new Columbia Steel Company plant in Utah. The metal "fish hooks" are part of the breakers' contacts which automatically pull apart when a short circuit occurs. The arc jumping across the contacts is then instantaneously blown out by a blast of air just as little Johnny blows out the candles on his birthday cake.