

GEOLOGY

Mexico's New Volcano

Paricutin is seen from air and visited on foot by scientists from U. S. A. in Mexico for Physics Conference. Nestled among dead craters.

By WATSON DAVIS

► I HAVE just seen Mexico's new volcano, Paricutin, from the air and it is like having a grandstand seat at the geologic drama that shaped the face of much of this country. Dr. L. C. Graton of Harvard and I flew from Mexico City in two small planes provided by Dr. Gonzalo Bautista, governor of the State of Puebla, and piloted by Capt. Luis Martel and Lt. Carlos Cortez of Puebla's aviation school.

The air around the volcano in late afternoon proved too dusty for successful aerial observation, but a start early next morning gave almost perfect conditions for observation.

We saw Paricutin nestled among dead crater peaks, each of which in past geologic time must have had a few months of life. A great tower of smoke and dust billowed upward, with outbursts about every twenty seconds, showering red-hot pumice on the sides of the cone, which in February began to arise out of what was then a cornfield. Around the cone lay a great lava flow formed during past weeks, while to the northeast could be seen the little village of San Juan Parangaricutiro which is being smothered under several feet of volcanic ash that lies like blackish-brown everlasting snow over everything.

Our little plane buzzed about the erupting cone, keeping away from flying debris that might puncture the wing fabric or unbalance a propeller by an unlucky hit. Both planes twisted and turned for angle photographs that should be helpful to Dr. Graton in interpreting the volcano's geology.

The pilots and I spent eight hours on the previous night making a trip overland, 20 miles by airline but longer by auto, over ash-choked roads and by burro over trails for the last three miles, to the rim of the depression in which the volcano lies.

Outbursts of flame lighted the countryside for miles around, and falling incandescent sand outlined the cone. A soft, harmless rain of volcanic sand pattered down as we clambered by volcano light over lava still steaming and hot.

Our ground and air views of America's latest volcanic blister impressed on us that nature is still building the earth and that study of such infrequent outbursts should give new knowledge of how the rocks of earth were manufactured. Since our food is grown on earth made of these rocks, and since our metals for war and peace come largely from deposits in molten magmas associated with volcanic action, new practical knowledge should come from studies of Paricutin.

As we flew over the Mil Cumbres (Thousand Peaks) region between Mexico City and Morelia, we realized that each of these old cinder cones had its brief days of fire and that although the earth is young here, geologic action was old when man began to record history. There are volcanic cones by the tens of thousands in Mexico, yet only one other eruption like Paricutin is recorded. That was in 1759, when a cone called Jorullo, about 15 miles from Paricutin, was formed.

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PSYCHIATRY

Describes Mental Illness Seen in Staging Areas

► AS MANY as half the soldiers reporting at sick call in the staging areas, through which they pass just before embarkation for overseas, are partly or primarily psychiatric problems, according to estimates of the dispensary medical officers reported by Maj. Louis S. Lipschutz, of Camp Stoneman, Pittsburg, Calif., at the meeting of the American Psychiatric Association.

Of all these, however, only a small fraction have serious mental disorders. About 3% of the thousands reporting for sick call are admitted to the hospital, and 5% of such patients are sent to the neuropsychiatric division.

The others mostly come in with complaints of backache, headache, foot troubles, visual disturbances and similar symptoms of a psychosomatic nature. They are what the Army calls "gold-bricks." Putting them in the hospital is



BIG INCH—When this oil line, reported to be one of the largest ever built, is completed, it will have a capacity of 300,000 barrels per day. This photograph from the Lincoln Electric Company shows some of the welding that made it possible to rush it through in record time.

bad medicine for them because it justifies their complaints of physical symptoms and makes them worse. Equally bad is ignoring or ridiculing their complaints, because this arouses resentment which intensifies their already disturbed feelings.

If the psychiatrist can see these men promptly he can ward off many panic states and acute hysterias. Both the treatment and the prevention of the condition, Major Lipschutz indicated, consist in better indoctrination, giving the men a clear idea of what they are fighting for and its importance to them personally and to their country.

One military psychiatrist told informally a story showing the effectiveness of just such treatment. At one of the military hospitals he saw a soldier who had developed paralysis of both legs with no physical condition to account for it. This psychiatrist talked to the soldier for about five minutes, telling him what the war was all about. Then he casually said, "You may go now," whereupon the man got up, saluted, and walked out.

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Oklahoma coal reserves are estimated to be over 50 billion tons.