

Do You Know?

Wheat sirup may soon join corn, maple and other table sirups.

Peanut oil can be used to lubricate both watches and tractors.

Iodine is a necessary element in the nutrition of man and of livestock.

Silicates in laundry soaps are in common use and some soaps contain as much as from 10% to 30% of these chemicals.

Chicks hatched in the United States during 1943 totaled approximately 1,600,000,000; this is about a dozen chicks for every man, woman and child.

Birds will not dig up and eat newly sowed *seed* if it has been treated before planting with an unpalatable compound in the anthraquinone series.

Recent progress in *fertilizer* research has introduced new materials, new methods of application, and new practices in soil treatment that have greatly increased production.

Peanut hulls, formerly wasted, are now ground and used as a substitute for cork in crown bottle caps; the fine hull flour formed in the grinding is used in making plastics.

Grebes, those interesting diving birds, carry on a spectacular courtship during which, for several seconds at a time, they tread water in such a way as to appear to be actually sitting on top of it.

Zoysia, as a type of grass for surfacing airports, is said to be so rugged that it resists most major plant diseases and will not tear under the impact of skidding automobiles.

PSYCHOLOGY

Waiting for Robombs

► BEADS OF PERSPIRATION on the forehead.

Whiteness of the face.

Aimless movements of arms and legs.

Stary eyes and tremors of arms and legs.

That's how people act when the robombs are about to fall. A mental hygiene specialist, Sgt. Adolf Woltman, of the U. S. Army, writing about U. S. soldiers' experiences in England, gives you an idea just how folks back home might act if and when the Nazis sneak a few bombs over here.

You will be scared during the "cringing seconds" between stopping of the motor and the explosion. Everyone is, Sgt. Woltman tells us (*American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, January). But different people show it in different ways.

"No one made fun of the divergent behavior of the next person. We admitted to each other that we were afraid," Sgt. Woltman reports.

"The whole body seemed to become tense, ready to run or to jump. Palpitation of the heart became more noticeable near the wrists and the temples. Beads of perspiration formed around the forehead, and I learned to understand fully the meaning of the Army saying: 'Sweat it out.' The whole body felt keyed up. In sharp contrast to these suppressed tensions of energy there seemed to be a simultaneous calmness, a waiting for something to happen, and a knowledge that energy for action had to be preserved till needed. Breathing would increase and become deep and heavy."

Although the natural thing to do when you are frightened is to run, if you are under robomb attack there is no place to go that is any safer than the one you are in. So the thing you have to learn to do is to stay quiet. The strain of con-

trolling this impulse to run makes you tired and aching.

The favorite time for bomb attacks, Sgt. Woltman observed, was during meal time. It was necessary to learn to eat anyway and not go scared and hungry.

It was more difficult to learn to go to sleep at night.

"To stay quietly in bed and listen to the 2,000 pounds of high explosives sail overhead was an unpleasant endurance test," Sgt. Woltman comments.

Despite the strain, Sgt. Woltman saw only one man break under it. He was a soldier who would not admit that he was afraid.

The noise of a robomb is easily mistaken for other common sounds such as a passing truck, an airplane, an electric fan—sounds which you are in the habit of ignoring ordinarily. The men circulated "famous last words" such as "That's only a truck," or "That's one of our airplanes."

"I also remember," Sgt. Woltman said, "waking up in the night on several occasions listening to approaching 'buzz-bombs' which never seemed to come nearer, until minutes later I would discover someone in the room snoring on the same wave-length as the propulsion motor."

After the attacks were over, it was necessary to learn to adjust to normal conditions again, surprisingly enough. It was necessary to learn how to disregard noise again and to relax in bed and walk freely on the street.

Science News Letter, January 27, 1945

ENGINEERING

Simple Method for Making Thermoplastic Domes

► AN INVENTION of interest to the aircraft industry is covered by patent 2,367,642, issued to Edward L. Helwig of Bristol, Pa. It consists in a simple method for making structural domes out of transparent thermoplastic sheeting. The plastic material, heated to softness, is stretched across the top of a suitably deep drum and gasketed down at the edges. Air is pumped out of the drum, whereupon the outside air, under ordinary atmospheric pressure, bends the sheet inward to the desired curvature. Or, air under pressure may be pumped into the drum, blowing the dome into shape like a huge soap-bubble.

Science News Letter, January 27, 1945

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