

NUTRITION

PW's Recover Quickly

Rapid recuperation from starvation of Americans liberated from Jap prison camps gives good prognosis for people in disturbed areas abroad.

► THE MEN, women and children in European and other disturbed areas who have suffered starvation or near starvation during the war will have a better chance for good recovery than has generally been expected, nutrition experts serving as consultants to the Army Medical Corps believe.

The speed with which Americans liberated from Japanese prison camps have recovered from starvation is the basis for this belief.

Civilians captured in the Philippines were examined during the 72 hours between their return to West Coast ports and their departure for their homes throughout the country. Results of the examinations were reported to Maj. Gen. Norman T. Kirk, Surgeon General of the Army, by the consultants, Dr. Allan M. Butler, of Massachusetts General Hospital, Dr. Julian M. Ruffin, of Duke University School of Medicine, and Miss Marion M. Sniffen and Miss Mary E. Nickson, of the American Red Cross in San Francisco.

Re-conquest of the Philippines came just in time for the American civilian prisoners of war, the report indicates. Those at Santo Tomas, Los Banos and Bilibid internment camps were then "slipping over into the borderline state of extreme starvation."

Late in 1944, the American administrative committee of the camp at Santo Tomas reported that "more than 50% of the camp had clinical signs of starvation."

On their return to America, shortly after their liberation, 78% of the internees reported that they felt "fine" except for getting tired easily.

The most common complaint still existing in the Americans, the nutrition consultants report, is neuritis of the hands and feet.

The biggest complaint they had immediately on reaching America was digestive upset suffered on their way back as they began to eat "something approaching a normal American diet."

These digestive upsets that came with the shift from the inadequate diet to highly concentrated food like the Army

K ration give a tip to persons responsible in future for feeding liberated prisoners or starving populations. A special emergency diet should be used, the nutrition consultants advise. Skim milk and other suitable proteins, plus vitamins, should be given first, instead of carbohydrate foods like white flour and sugar.

Of the eight children born in captivity, only three showed the effects of malnutrition. Rickets was not as prevalent as it might have been from diet standards alone because the mild climate and sunlight in the Philippines made it possible for these babies to synthesize their own vitamin D.

The rapidity of recovery of the adults and the relatively good condition of the children show how quickly the human body will return to normal, the nutrition consultants stated.

"This recovery justifies a prognosis for individuals throughout disturbed areas of the world which is better than generally appreciated," they report.

"Continually, while the information submitted here was being obtained," the report concludes, "evidence of a chivalry

of men to women and of men and women to the sick and young was revealed which should be recorded in honor of these individuals and as a tribute to the society whose code they adhered to under such trying circumstances."

Science News Letter, September 22, 1945

ENGINEERING

Telephone Installations Will Soon Begin

► TELEPHONE installations in private homes and in offices will follow closely the manufacture of new telephone instruments, switchboards for central offices and telephone exchange cable, it is announced by Western Electric Company, Inc., which manufactures most of the materials and equipment used by the Bell Telephone companies. Some of the manufacturing plants are already working on a seven-day week; others will, as soon as conversion from war manufacturing is completed.

The making of telephone instruments for civilian installations was actually re-established in the late summer of 1944, after war needs were met. Over 400,000 instruments have been made since last fall and production is now going on at the rate of 25,000 a week. But even with this production, many subscriber applications cannot be filled immediately because of a shortage of switchboards and cable.

Science News Letter, September 22, 1945



BIG GUN! The undamaged tube of the gun found by Col. F. B. Porter in Bavaria was 105 feet long. (See page 180)

ORDNANCE

Biggest Gun Made

Found by American officer in Bavarian forest, the world's biggest gun fired shells weighing eight tons to an extreme range of nearly 30 miles.

► ONE SPECIMEN of the heaviest ordnance ever built, a monster weighing 1,344 tons that threw 31.5-inch shells weighing more than eight tons each to an extreme range of nearly 30 miles, has been found on an abandoned railroad track in Bavaria by an American field artillery officer, Col. F. B. Porter.

Reporting his discovery to the *Field Artillery Journal* (Sept.), Col. Porter states:

"Recently while on a mission which took me along a little-used road between the towns of Auerbach and Eshenbaum in Bavaria, I came to a small dirt road which led through the forest to a village called Metzendorf. There I met an American soldier who said that there were some big guns back in the woods. Being interested in weapons I followed the indicated route for about half a mile.

"On approaching a single-track railroad I saw a gun tube so huge that I stopped and gasped for breath. Upon further inspection I found the remnants of 14 railroad cars, intermingled along the track with special cars carrying two huge gun tubes, one cradle and carriage for these tubes, and the parts and accessories for one gun and carriage.

"Before abandoning them the Germans had performed as much demolition as was possible. One huge tube was intact, however, and the carriage, though badly damaged, can probably be repaired. The necessary parts of other weapons (if such still exist) could be used, making one weapon available for study."

The huge weapon was built by the Krupp works, and was originally intended for use against the Maginot line. Breakthrough at the "soft" end of that line at Sedan and the subsequent collapse of French resistance robbed it of that job. However, it was later used against the Russians at the siege of Sevastopol, where its enormous shells, rivalling in weight the biggest bombs carried later by Allied planes, were received with mingled dismay and incredulity. Guns of this type may also have taken part in the cross-Channel bombardment of Dover. It had been given a name: Gustav Geschuetz, which may be loosely translated as "Gus the Goon."

Although the gun was a giant, it was no freak, like the nine-inch weapon used in the ultra-long-range bombardment of Paris in the spring of 1918. Length of the tube, as paced off by Col. Porter,

was 35 yards. Length of the rifled portion was only 36 times the diameter of its bore, which really makes it relatively short-barreled, as artillery pieces go.

Because of its enormous weight, and the necessity of moving it in several separate pieces, it required about three weeks after arrival at the firing point to set it up. Speed of the American sweep through southern Germany in the last days of the war, driving off the German cannoners before they could complete demolition of the piece, may be thanked for saving at least one specimen for ordnance men to study.

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PLENTY OF ROOM!—The bore of this gun is 31½ inches in diameter!