GENERAL SCIENCE

# Army "Goes Scientific"

**Young officers will receive special training, young scientists to be commissioned as officers. The war demonstrated how important science is in national security.**

➤ THE POSTWAR U. S. Army is going to be a much more science-minded organization than it was before Pearl Harbor, Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson announced, in the course of the principal address delivered before the opening session of the meeting of the American Chemical Society.

"We are setting up a long-range program to augment the number of Army personnel educated along scientific lines, not with the thought that we would be self-sufficient in these fields but in order to provide a larger group of highly skilled persons for key positions in research and development and in order to strengthen our contacts with scientists and technologists, Secretary Patterson stated.

"Three measures are involved:

"1. Commissioning in the regular army of promising graduates of advanced technical schools and universities;

"2. Sending younger army officers of demonstrated aptitude to technical schools and universities for advanced post-graduate work in the basic sciences;

"3. Offering better inducements to civilian scientists to take employment with the War Department and to remain in this activity.

"This program will succeed only if more adequate recognition by way of rank and prospects of promotion is extended to those who devote their careers to research and development, and such recognition will be given."

World War II, Secretary Patterson said, demonstrated how important science could be as a factor in national strength, as World War I demonstrated the importance of industry. One of the weightiest reasons for deciding to knock Germany out first, he disclosed, was a justified fear of what German scientists could do if given time enough. There was no comparable peril, he commented, from Japanese science.

Chemists made many direct contributions toward the better arming of America and her allies, the speaker pointed out. The most destructive of air weapons, he declared, were not high explosives, but fire bombs, which were developed by chemists, both civilians and those in the Chemical Warfare Service. Flamethrowers, also chemical weapons, figured decisively in the conquest of island stepping-stones to Japan.

The principal reason why our enemies never resorted to poison gas, Secretary Patterson asserted, was that they knew we had greater stocks of deadlier gases than they possessed. The same held true for the still-untried means of biological warfare, which were in the hands of the chemists. In passing, he took occasion again to deny the much-circulated report that the Nazis possessed a poison gas that could get through the American gas mask.

Beneficent byproducts of chemical research done in the first instance for war purposes include BAL, the British antidote for lewisite, which has been found to be a good remedy for arsenic and mercury poisoning; the higly toxic nitrogen mustard gases, which have shown beneficial effects on some types of cancer; and a compound known as di-iso-propyl-fluorophosphate, which gives promise in the treatment of glaucoma and myasthenia gravis.

In conclusion, the speaker stated, "In all planning we must embrace the scientific research potential in establishing measures for national security, until the happy day comes, if it does come, when world peace may be accepted everywhere as an accomplished fact."

*Science News Letter, April 20, 1946*

GEOLOGY

## Bahama Banks May Hide Submarine Oil Field

➤ THE SHOALS of the Bahama Banks, a navigational hazard in the Atlantic Ocean east of the southern coast of Florida, may hide a submarine oil field, Prof. John L. Rich, University of Cincinnati geologist, told the American Association of Petroleum Geologists.

Reporting on an aerial survey of the area, Prof. Rich declared that the giant sand bars and ripples of the Bahama Banks bear a striking resemblance to the patterns of certain productive lenticular oil and gas sands in Ohio.

Situated between the Bahama Islands and Cuba, the shoal area has a depth varying between 6 and 30 feet. Prof. Rich flew over the region making aerial photographs from a height of 10,000 feet.

He said that a series of photogrammetric maps of giant sand ripples visible through the clear water over the shoals revealed configurations exactly like parts of the Clinton sand area in Ohio, though on a smaller scale. He urged further investigation of the Bahama Banks as a possible oil-bearing area.

*Science News Letter, April 20, 1946*

Government men state there are some 13,000 *bears* in Alaska's two national forests.


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