

● Earth Trembles

Information collected by Science Service from seismological observatories resulted in the location by the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey of the following preliminary epicenter:

Saturday, March 15, 0:46.3 a.m., EST

In lower California. Latitude, near 28.1 degrees north. Longitude, 113.6 degrees west. Sharp shock.

For stations cooperating with Science Service, the Coast and Geodetic Survey, and the Jesuit Seismological Association in reporting earthquakes recorded on their seismographs, see SNL, Feb. 22, 1941.

PSYCHIATRY

Health Service Advised To Attack Mental Disease

DISEASES of the mind and nerves, which afflict more than half a million persons in the United States and consign at least that number to hospitals or other institutions, will be attacked on a nation-wide scale by the U. S. Public Health Service if plans drawn at the first meeting of the National Advisory Council on Nervous and Mental Diseases are carried out.

Establishment in or near Washington of a National Institute for Research on Nervous and Mental Diseases, similar to the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Health, was recommended. The proposed Institute would cooperate closely with the National Institute of Health and St. Elizabeths Hospital, federal institution for the care of the mentally ill. Besides the clinical and laboratory research to be undertaken at the Institute, grants-in-aid for other research projects looking to the cure or prevention of mental disease may be made to responsible institutions throughout the country, it was proposed.

Members of the Advisory Council on Nervous and Mental Diseases, appointed by Surgeon General Thomas Parran, are: Dr. Edward A. Strecker, Professor of Psychiatry, School of Medicine, University of Pennsylvania; Dr. Nolan D. C. Lewis, Director of the New York State Psychiatric Institute and Hospital in New York City; Dr. Lloyd H. Ziegler, Associate Medical Director, Milwaukee Sanitarium, Wauwatosa, Wis.; Dr. Abraham Myerson, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School; Dr. Arthur H. Ruggles, Secretary of the American Psychiatric Association and Superintendent of Butler Hospital, Providence, R. I.; Dr. Henry W. Woltman, Consultant on Neurology, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn., and Dr. Findlay Gale, Jr., Professor of Neuropsychiatry, Medical College of Virginia, Richmond, Va.

Science News Letter, March 29, 1941

MILITARY SCIENCE

Fortifications of Concrete Not Useless Despite "Failure"

Army Engineer Approves Such Defensive Works When They Are Used in Conjunction With Troops in Open

CONCRETE pillboxes, steel turrets and other field fortifications are far from being outmoded and useless, despite the alleged failure of the Maginot line, declares Capt. William Whipple, Jr., of the Army engineer corps. (*Military Engineer*, March-April.) They are not self-defending, but when such defensive works are skillfully employed in conjunction with troops in the open they still have great military value, he asserts.

Since the present war began, fortified lines have been successfully breached in three engagements, Capt. Whipple states. These were the Russian breakthrough of Finland's Mannerheim Line, the German capture of Fort Eben-Emael in Belgium, and the penetration of the Maginot Line in the later stages of the Battle of France.

However, the record shows that the Russians were able to break the Mannerheim Line primarily because of their overwhelming numbers and the possession of heavy artillery and large numbers of bombers, and that even with these advantages they paid a terrific price in lives for their gains. Fort Eben-Emael was not defended with nearly the same degree of skill with which it was attacked, primarily by a crack company of engineers, and the Maginot Line was

not even attempted by the Nazis until the mobile troops intended for its defense had been sucked into the struggle to the west after the break-through at Sedan.

Recently the Army has made studies of various techniques for attacking field fortifications, erected for "laboratory" purposes at Fort Belvoir in Virginia. Among other things, it was discovered that the very high-velocity, flat-trajectory shells of anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns were more effective than the much heavier projectiles of 155-millimeter field guns.

Well-directed small-arms fire, from rifles, automatic rifles and light machine guns, was found effective in driving defenders away from the gun ports. Hand-placed charges of high explosives and incendiary compounds, set by engineers who swarmed up to the fortifications under cover of darkness or smoke screens, proved able to disable the defenders' machine guns.

The only answer to such determined attack is not to depend altogether on the fortifications themselves, but to have mobile troops in reserve in the open, ready to meet attack with equally determined counter-attack.

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ARCHAEOLOGY

Hamath Wrecked to Terrify Small Opponents of Assyria

UNEARTHING the ruins of Hamath in Syria, Danish archaeologists have revealed the violence, fire and destruction wrought upon this Bible city that dared to stand up to steam-roller Assyria, conquering the world 2,600 years ago.

"The fate of Hamath was of course meant to terrify other states from pursuing a similar anti-Assyrian policy," Dr. Harald Ingholt, director of the excavations, declares. (*Asia*, April.) Dr.

Ingholt, now lecturing on Syrian archaeology in this country, probed into ruins of Hamath for the Carlsberg Foundation of Copenhagen, every year from 1931 to 1938.

Why the Bible writers Isaiah and Amos mentioned Hamath as a dark warning to independent but weak small states is clear today from the condition of the long-buried wreckage, Dr. Ingholt points out.