The Medical Roundup

by Walter Alvarez

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A School for the Mentally Handicapped

So many distressed mothers write asking where research is being done on mental retardation that every so often I will mention one of the great schools in this country in which mentally disturbed and physically handicapped children are cared for. One of them is "The Woods School," in Langhorne, Pennsylvania, where 400 children are cared for by 407 employees–doctors, teachers, therapists and nurses. Considerable research is carried on, and there are 58 special education teachers. Another great school for the mentally retarded is the Vineland, New Jersey School.

DR. ALVAREZ

Why Our Roads Aren't Safe

As a physician who has to know a good deal about human beings–good, bad, and indifferent, feeble-minded, stupid, half-insane, and criminal –I have a strong conviction that most of the urging that we hear all the time over the radio to drive safely is a complete waste of time. Obviously, from the statistics, it doesn't do any good. One wouldn't expect it to do any good, because the people who drive safely don't need any urging, and those who are criminal, or stupid, or insane enough to run through stop lights–are not interested in exhortations. Some studies of habitual traffic offenders have shown among them many cases of insanity, feeble-mindedness, criminality, and don't-care-a-darn-ness.

I recently read that when a bus full of college girls stopped for a red light, the truck behind it came on unheedingly; crashed, and set the bus on fire. What did I read? That the driving history of the man in the truck was "pock-marked with traffic violations and convictions. In the past five years he had committed at least seven violations such as speeding and passing red lights." But there he was, still driving.

Through the years, as I have gone to renew my driver's license, I can't remember ever having seen anyone around the office with either interest or skill or authority to decide that, for reasons of immorality, insanity, low intelligence, senility, or a bad past record on the road, I should be denied a license. So far as I could see, I could have gotten the license without questions if I had been feeble-minded or insane, a psychopathic delinquent, a notorious gangster, or even if I had been arrested 20 times

Also, I wondered if, for some rare reason, I had been denied a driver's license, might I have arranged the matter quickly by "seeing the right man." As long as our licensing regulations are the way they are, I can't see why we should fuss when a lot of fine young women and their professor are burned to death. Actually, we don't fuss, and we don't do anything–and that is the tragedy.

Blood-Tinged Semen

Some men are concerned because their semen contains tinges of blood. Experts in this field tell me that, as a rule, that is of no consequence. Cancer of the seminal vesicles (the little containers of the semen that lie just in back of the bladder) is rare. More often the vesicles are inflamed. A man with this finding would do well to consult a urologist.

Hairy Women Need Not Fear Shaving

Many women who are much distressed by hair over large areas of skin realize that for them the cheapest method would be shaving. But they hate to use a razor because they have heard somewhere that shaving will make the hair coarser. Actually, years ago, in 1923, a Dr. Trotter, a woman physician, made careful studies, shaving the hair on one leg for many months, and not touching the hair on the other leg. Then she carefully measured the thickness and the pigmentation of the hairs on the two sides, and failed to demonstrate any difference. We should all know that a man can shave for 50 years and still have a fine blond and almost invisible type of hair on his face.

Vitiligo, or Leucoderma

In this harmless, but mentally distressing disease, large areas of skin lose pigment and become white. There is a drug that is said sometimes to make the pigment come back, but at times it does not work, and I have heard that at times it does harm. If it is used at all its use should be watched by a physician. Some men paint the patches with a weak solution of permanganate of potash, just strong enough to color the skin for the day. Other physicians cover the patches with the preparation "Covermark" which can be bought in drugstores.

Dr. Alvarez' booklet on arthritis and rheumatism may be obtained by sending 25 cents and a large, stamped, self-addressed envelope with your request to Dr. Walter C. Alvarez, Dept. MMT, The Register and Tribune Syndicate, Box 957, Des Moines 4, Iowa.

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BLOOD CONTENT

Dextrose, a form of sugar, is found in the blood.

MISSILE SITE – Known as Thor site 75-1, emplacement number one, this is where the first Thor missile is scheduled to be fired. It is at the site of Vandenberg Air Force Base, in California, which construction crews have rapidly built into a first-class city. —(UPI Telephoto)

Vandenberg Made Into City by Fast Work of Building Crews

Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif. –(UPI)– A fair-sized "city" of about 20,000 persons has blossomed almost overnight here on the central California coast.

It is identified by its residents simply as "Vandenberg."

Officially, Vandenberg is the Strategic Air Command's first major missile base intended for operational capability. And by this definition, it also is the free world's first such installation.

In slightly more than two years, a virtual regiment of construction workers and engineers has succeeded in building this whole new city, with homes, stores and streets; water, sewer and electric systems; hospitals, schools and recreational facilities.

Has Fire Stations

Vandenberg even has fire stations, a bank, a bowling alley, a toyland for children – and a jail.

Yet no ordinary city was ever built with such concern for time schedules.

And no other city has some of the "sights" you can find at Vandenberg.

These are the structures for launching Atlas, Thor and Titan missiles and for guiding and tracking those missiles in their flights.

The building of Vandenberg is unique in another way, too. Only two years ago it was a deserted Army camp, big enough to fit Manhattan – the heart of New York City – within its borders. But it was a ghost town of boarded-up buildings, broken roads and lawns that had become hayfields.

It was late in 1956 that the Air Force announced its choice of Camp Cooke – Vandenberg's old name – as the site for the nation's first missile base.

Brand New Installation

The big job ahead then was to take the old armored warfare training camp, utilize what still was usable and remake it into a brand new kind of military installation for missiles.

In May, 1957, an Army Corps of Engineers contractor started work on the first technical site for the new base. Within a month another contractor started the first job on the base proper.

With this two-pronged effort, changes in the base's appearance were kaleidoscopic. The first-arriving missilemen met an endless parade of carpenters, plumbers, plasterers and electricians.

Base roads crawled with construction machines and trucks carrying loads of earth and building materials to job sites. Punctuating all the action was the clatter of pneumatic hammers.

The quantities of building materials required were almost beyond imagination. For one group of 100 buildings, the nails alone amounted to a full load of 40 pick-up trucks. The 8,000-foot airfield taxiway and 13 missile launchers consumed more than 1,250,000 bags of cement.

An Air Force statistician figured that the amount of earth workmen removed to put certain missile facilities underground would make a solid column of soil 40 feet thick and a half-mile high.

Dormitories Ready

By early 1958, the first dormitories were ready for airmen. Every month thereafter engineers completed more buildings. In July, 1958, the basic construction of the first Thor launchers was completed. In January, 1959, the first Atlas launch complex was ready for instrumentation and checkout.

And the following month the new Vandenberg Airfield was ready.

Now, most of the work of rebuilding Camp Cooke into Vandenberg is done. A modern main gate gives a front-door impression of an up-to-date base both in purpose and appearance. The impression goes right through to the missile launchers – even though the modern look has come so rapidly that the odor of fresh paint still lingers.

So far, engineers have awarded 92 major construction projects, committing approximately 91 million dollars for basic construction alone. When all costs for technical facilities, plus costs of housing, are added, the total comes to about 200 million dollars.

Vandenberg – a populous little city all by itself about half way between Los Angeles and San Francisco – is headquarters of the Strategic Air Command's 1st Missile Division.

"Peace is Our Mission," is the division's motto.

Decline Noted in Reported Cases

A large decline in cases reported to Medford city police last month, in comparsion to a year ago, was shown by the police department's monthly report. The percentage of cases cleared remained about the same.

A total of 2,461 cases were reported in December, 1959, and 2,327 of these were cleared for a percentage of 94.6. In December, 1958, there were 3,299 cases reported, of which 3,169 were cleared for 96.1 per cent.

City police received a report on one suicide last month and no reports of murder, manslaughter or rape. The largest decrease in any crime reported to city police was in larceny under $50, with 68 cases reported last month and 86 a year ago. There were 12 cases of larceny over $50 reported, and 14 cases a year ago.

Traffic accidents reported to city police increased from 51 in December, 1958, with 12 injuries, to 95 last month with 36 injuries. There were no traffic fatalities reported.

City police issued 3,493 parking meter tickets last month, compared to 3,709 in December, 1958.

Organizer Named To Back Humphrey

Portland – (UPI) – State Rep. E. E. (Ed) Benedict, Portland, has been appointed organizer for the Oregon Democrats for Humphrey, it was announced today.

Benedict has been a member of the committee supporting Sen. Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota for the Democratic presidential nomination since its start last summer.

George Washington was 57 when he became President.

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