

PUBLIC HEALTH

Remarkably Low Wartime Death Rate in England

Most Important Increases in Disease Death Rates Were For Tuberculosis, Meningitis, Whooping Cough

A "REMARKABLY good wartime" death rate was registered in England and Wales during 1941 and the first three months of 1942, Dr. Percy Stocks, Medical Statistical Officer of the General Register Office, declares in a report to the *British Medical Journal*.

For 1941 the death rate, including violent deaths caused by the war, was 12.9 per 1,000 population. For the first three months of 1942, a period which almost invariably registers a higher death rate than the year as a whole, the total death rate, including deaths from violence, was only 14.8 per 1,000. For this same quarterly period in 1939, the rate was 15.1; for 1940, 19.9; for 1941, 17.5.

Even better index of the health of the country is the death rate from disease, which was 11.7 per 1,000 in 1941. During the same year, the United States, with the lowest death rate in the history of its death registration states, registered a rate of 10.5 per 1,000, according to figures just released by the U. S. Census Bureau.

The infant death rate in England and Wales for 1941 was 58 per 1,000 live births. For the first quarter of 1942 it was 61, the lowest ever recorded in any March quarter.

The birth rate was 14.2 per 1,000, compared with 14.9 per 1,000 in 1939 and 14.4 in 1933, the latter being the lowest hitherto recorded.

Most important increases in deaths from disease during 1941 were for tuberculosis, meningitis (cerebrospinal fever in the English records), whooping cough and dysenteries and paratyphoid fever.

"Tuberculosis has given rise to some anxiety," Dr. Stocks states.

Infectious diseases registering decreases, despite the war, are typhoid fever, scarlet fever, erysipelas, gonococcal infections, late syphilis and, among males only, recent syphilis, rheumatic fever, ear and mastoid disease, two kinds of heart disease (pericarditis and acute endocarditis), diseases of the mouth and

pharynx, gastritis, appendicitis, and infections of childbirth.

For pneumonia, bronchitis and the like, "the cold winters and the conditions imposed by aerial warfare were unfavorable both in 1940 and 1941," Dr. Stocks reports.

These offset the benefits of sulfa drug treatment of lobar pneumonia, so striking in 1938 and 1939, but the set-back has not been considerable, he continues. Bronchitis and bronchopneumonia, on the other hand, showed an excess of deaths in 1941, though not nearly so pronounced as in 1940.

Other diseases from which there was a noteworthy increase in deaths include: pernicious and other anemias, hemorrhagic diseases, Addison's disease, cerebral hemorrhage, heart diseases, epilepsy,

mental disorders and ulcer of the stomach and duodenum.

Decreases, despite the war, were registered for gall-stones and diseases of the gall bladder, pancreas, bladder and genital organs in both sexes; gout and diseases of the veins, skin, bones, joints and muscles in men; exophthalmic goiter, cirrhosis of the liver and toxemias of pregnancy in females; prematurity and birth injury in infants.

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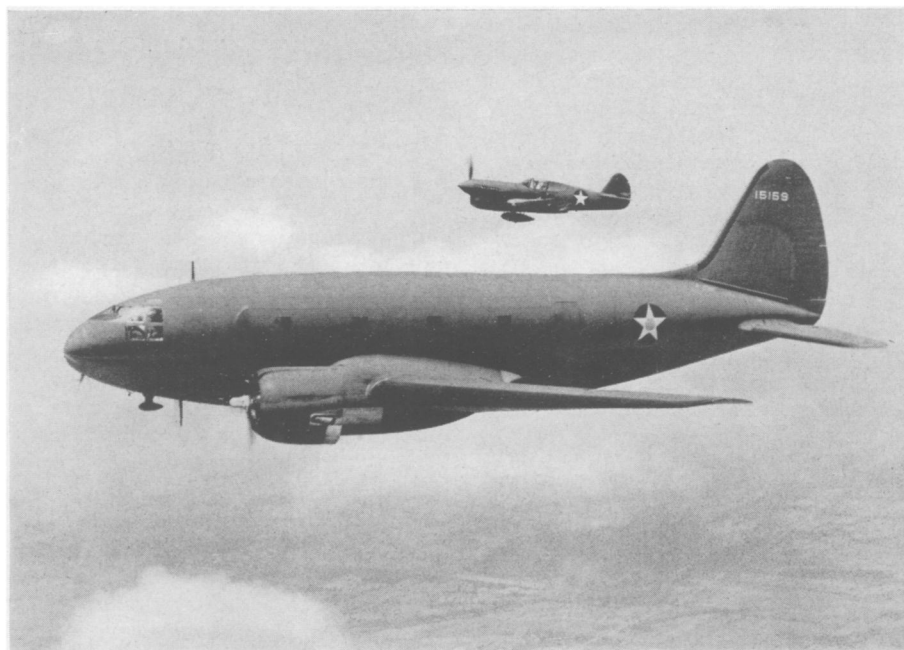
NUTRITION

Roses Yield Vitamin C To Enrich British Diet

THE OBVIOUS fondness of wild birds for dog-rose hips caused British scientists to analyze these berries and led to the discovery that the hips have 20% higher vitamin C content than oranges, a fact of great importance now that foods containing vitamin C are scarce in Britain.

Many people living in country districts have collected quantities of these berries for making into jam and puree, the latter to be used during the winter months for soup or "cocktails." It is said to have a flavor similar to that of the best tomato puree.

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SMALL PROTECTOR

This huge sky transport, the new 25-ton Curtiss Commando, designed to speed large numbers of troops, one or more jeeps, and field artillery to critical battle areas, makes its fighter escort, the new Curtiss Warhawk, look tiny in comparison.