

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
September 28, 1932

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed September 21, 1932

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman,
Authority on Meteorology.

MILITARY WEATHER FORECASTS

Though weather and climate have always been recognized to be important factors in warfare, military meteorology, as a branch of applied science, is mainly an outgrowth of the World War, during which most of the belligerent countries had regular meteorological units attached to their armies. The military meteorologists were confronted with many new problems, especially in the line of weather forecasting. The late William Gardner Reed, who served as a major with the Meteorological Section of the U.S. Army Signal Corps, once wrote in regard to some of these novel undertakings:

"Special forecasts may be made for all sorts of special operations. For example, the offensive use of gas requires detailed forecasts of local air movement in restricted localities and this often calls for special observations in detail at frequent intervals. The artillery often finds it advisable to institute firing programs at particular times, such as dusk and dawn, and the meteorological service will be called upon to make special forecasts of visibility for these programs. Forecasts of the character of the night, whether clear, cloudy or with broken cloud, are particularly important in planning offensive bombing operations by aircraft or in arranging for defense against possible enemy raids. For instance, if the conditions on the Lorraine front in the fall of 1918 indicated a moonlight night with broken cloud and a moderate west wind at reasonable flying levels, an enemy raid was practically certain and could be forecast with great accuracy; furthermore, with a little knowledge of the enemy's habits, together with observations of his aerial activity during the preceding day, the point of the raid could generally be forecast."

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

SCIENCE SERVICE
21st and Constitution Ave.
Washington, D.C.