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PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE

Leaflets, being printed here in a specially constructed trailer on a sector of the Western Front, are the paper bullets of the Allied Psychological Warfare Branch. There are various ways of delivering the leaflets to the enemy's doorstep. These are being prepared for dropping by balloons. Loading weight and psychological weight both matter in this assault on enemy morale.

The first leaflet raid was made on the night of September 3rd, 1939, when the war was a few hours old. Since then this balloon unit, (here seen dressing the bundles with waterproof covers) has dropped more than a hundred million leaflets. Multiply this total to include those delivered by aircraft and leaflet shell, and it's easy to imagine how Germany's chief paperhanger must resent this papering of the Reich with Allied propaganda.

The balloons used are designed to explode when dropping their load. After being inflated with hydrogen they are tested for leakage with a special instrument.

A slow fuse is lit. Each section burns for nine minutes and the length of the flight is fixed by the length of fuse fitted. Wind strength and direction have been plotted by the Met. men who can calculate that the balloons will drop their leaflets over a big target area with amazing accuracy.

Three hundred and fifty balloons can be released in a night. The ammunition they carry won't kill any Germans, but if numbers found on surrendering prisoners are anything to go by, they have plenty of effect.