Desert Research

scientists studying arid lands

By STAN GORDON

Getting that hard collar is not unusual for a team of university scientists doing research on the major deserts of the world under a $250,000 U.S. Army contract.

Titled "An Inventory of Geographical Research on Desert Environments," the arid lands project will cover what has been published, what research is underway in fields of publications not adequately covered, and what outstanding specialists may have work on the deserts of the world.

Dr. William McGinnis, head of the project, said, "The objective of this project is to develop a directory for the army on institutions doing arid lands research and to identify major authorities and principal depositions in each field." He added, "The army wants this information to store knowledge for a better understanding of conditions in the world's deserts."

Dr. Lawrence K. Lustig, associate professor of geography, said, "We only evaluate, the army makes it's own judgments. By asking us to research the deserts the army hopes to do its current knowledge and get a practical view of new material."

Arizona's Desert

Comparing the deserts of Asia to the Yuma desert in Arizona, Dr. Lustig makes the following distinction. Dr. Lustig said, "The climate and terrain in Yuma is comparable to the deserts in Asia. What the army wants to know is if men, food, equipment and supplies are put through the rugged living conditions in the Yuma desert and survive, how will they fare in other deserts of the world?"

"For example," he said, "A common barrier to vehicles traveling in the desert are washes, or small gullies. If the size of the washes in Asia are larger and more difficult to traverse than the washes in Yuma, then this is a problem the army must overcome."

Dr. Joseph F. Schreiber, associate professor of geography, who has traveled more than 9,000 miles doing research in the deserts of Australia, said, "The deserts I saw would make Arizona's deserts look like gardens. They are rocky, much rougher, more desolate and have very little rainfall."

Navy Building Radio Center

Dr. Schreiber added that the U.S. Navy was in the process of building a low-frequency radio communications station at the North West Cape of Australia on Exmouth Gulf.

"The station will be used for communication with submarines and another mission," he said.

Dr. Lustig said, "Until recently the deserts of Australia were avoided because they were of no economic value. Now, if Australian deserts have been discovered and are being mined, in northern Peru, phosphates have been discovered and both of these make excellent fertilizers."

Dr. Lustig added that deserts always had sand dunes or salt lakes. "These are dry lakes with deposits of salt," he explained. "Their value is in the salt itself and in the minerals that may be obtained from them such as borax."

Desert Diamonds

Found in Dunes

Even if diamonds are a girl's best friend, would she believe it if you told her that her necklace was made from the diamonds found in the Namib Desert of Africa?

The southern half of the Namib is covered by dunes, said Dr. Lustig. In these dunes and in the marine terraces on the coast of the desert diamonds are being found. Sweltering to finish a project may yet be a concern to the scientists researching the deserts. "Some of them began only three months ago to compile their material and coordinate their facts, the statement made by Dr. McGinnis may be a hard one to live up to. He said, "The results of our work will be unclassified. There will be no secrecy involved. We intend to finish the project by December of 1966."

Welcome Alumni

HOME COMING SPECIAL

I-oz. MOHAI $1 a Skin

CANTINA KNIT SHOP

Man Tailored... Woman Proportioned

Gant uses the same deft "needle" in their women's shirts as they do in their men's...with a difference. Their women's shirts are cut to women's proportions. This 94 rolled-up sleeve blouses Oxford $6.95

Hours 9-6 - Fri. 'til 9 P.M.
No. 30 El Con Center - Ph. 327-1165

Choose

BETTY HULT SHOP