DERMOID and epidermoid tumors of the central nervous system are rare. It is estimated that only about 200 cases have been reported to date. Several publications concerning intracranial dermoids and epidermoids have appeared in recent years so that neurologists, neurosurgeons and neuropathologists have learned to recognize these tumors, especially epidermoids arising in the diploë and causing characteristic x-ray changes in the skull. Weinberger described pneumo-encephalographic findings that he considered typical of intracerebral epidermoids. The case herewith reported is unique in that the lesion was evident in the plain x-ray films before air injection, appearing as a circumscribed area of decreased density within the left frontal lobe.

CASE REPORT

R.O., a corporal 20 years old, had been in good health until 7 April 1944 when, while at an overseas base, he had an episode during which he felt peculiar. He was not able to describe his subjective state more adequately. The next day without warning, while sitting in a chair, he had a generalized seizure lasting 10 minutes. He bit his tongue and was drowsy for several hours thereafter.

The past history discloses a right mastoidectomy at the age of five and a single convulsion.

Figs. 1 and 2. The area of decreased density in the left frontal lobe is indicated by the arrows.
at the age of eight. His physical and mental development were otherwise entirely normal. He finished high school at the age of 19 and was inducted into the Army at that time. He was returned to the United States on 26 May 1944. He complained of daily headaches but otherwise was symptom free.

Examination. The patient was right-handed. Except for a narrowing of the left palpebral fissure (which the patient claimed he always had had) the neurological and general examinations were normal. All laboratory studies, including an electro-encephalogram, were normal. X-rays of the skull showed a large regular ovoid area of decreased density in the left frontal lobe (Figs. 1 and 2).

During the next few weeks the patient's headaches became progressively more severe. A pneumo-encephalogram showed the entire ventricular system to be moderately dilated and shifted to the right. There was a deformity in the anterior portion of the left lateral ventricle.

Operation. On 11 July 1944 a left transfrontal craniotomy was done under local anesthesia. A large mass was found in the left frontal lobe about 4 cm. below the surface. It measured about 4 x 7 cm. and extended mesially to the falk. On opening into the lesion it proved to be a cyst having a wall of paper thinness, ovoid in shape and containing a thin colorless fluid in which many yellowish-white flakes floated. A thick layer of deep yellow material having the consistency of soft paste was adherent to the cyst wall. This material was removed with ease with a blunt spoon. Numerous short blond hairs were mixed in the substance seemingly not connected with any tissue. All in all about 50 cc. of the colorless fluid and about 60 cc. of the semisolid material were removed. As much of the wall as possible was teased out.