

'Artificial Earthquakes' Set Off in Navy Tests

CHINA LAKE, July 25 (AP) — The Navy said today that it has been setting off "artificial earthquakes."

The tremors were produced by exploding up to 6000 pounds of high explosives in Mono Lake, 20 miles north of this ordnance test station.

The shock waves sent through the earth by the blasts were recorded to obtain seismological data as a part of the International Geophysical Year program.

Travel 40 Miles

Navy scientists said the blasts produced waves in the earth's crust much like those of an earthquake. These waves travel out and downward until they reach a major change or "discontinuity" in the earth's composition at a depth of 40 miles or more. There the waves are reflected and returned to the surface

where they are recorded by sensitive seismographs.

From this information the depth of the "discontinuity" is calculated and data as to its nature is obtained.

Quake Prediction Aid

"These experiments and others like them will lead to an understanding of earthquake causes and perhaps the eventual prediction of earthquakes," said Dr. Pierre St. Amand, head of the optics branch of the Navy test station.

Co-operating with the Navy in the experiments were California Institute of Technology, Stanford University and the U.S. Geological Survey.