

Deaf PX Barber Says Soldiers Should Learn To Speak Sign Language

Nearly every one on the Post knows that Carl Burgoyne Smith of the PX barber shop is not a loquacious person. He follows his tonorial profession with the aplomb and assurance of a master artisan. He has clipped the hair of high-ranking officers and low ranking enlisted men without giving a local anesthetic.

Carl is a congenial mute and probably that is what makes him an outstanding professor in this particular endeavor. You will never get an argument out of Carl. His dexterity with the scissors or razor is recognized by every one, and the children on the Post like Carl because he is patient, kindly, and his smile is an open invitation to his chair.

Carl came to the PX barber shop December 31, 1941, and is almost as much a fixture as the flag-pole. He views life with philosophic complacency. He is not idealistic, but has formed certain patterns on life, the embroidery of which might be helpful in this war. Carl reads during all his spare time and can rattle off—via pencil—quotations from Thantopsis, Shakespeare and other classics.

It is his belief that every man, woman and child should be taught the sign language and finger spell-

ing. In fact, he advocates a compulsory law about it. He claims it would be a wonderful relief from political orations and sore throats, and says that a speaker can still be a good orator by using the sign language.

"Bosses in factories find the medium of the sign language very handy and aviators have to use it," he says. "Soldiers will find it very helpful in a foxhole or in any tight place. They can talk simple, natural signs to strange natives."

Finger spelling and the sign language are different, according to Carl. In other words, finger spelling is not the sign language in the usual meaning of the term. Finger spelling may be used in any language which has the same alphabet which we employ. This includes French, German, Spanish and Italian as well as English. When the English language is used with the manual alphabet, it is simply another form of written English. Carl says it is simply finger writing.

He claims that finger spelling is very easy to learn and any person should be able to master it within one hour. On the contrary, the sign language is not a simple one. It requires at least one year to master and talk the sign language fluently. Often the sign language is emphatic, demonstrative, and expressive, in either humor or serious talk. It consists of a series of gestures which express ideas by means of motion, and "every little movement has a meaning all its own.—*Truck Tracks*, Fort Wayne, Michigan.