

# The Deaf Fit in At Army Map Service

(The following article was written by a hearing supervisor at the Army Map Service and is printed here verbatim as an indicative of the good reaction diligent deaf workers can evoke. The A.M.S. is the only Government agency in the District of Columbia to win the Army-Navy "E" Award, and twice, so the deaf there are meeting high grade competition.—Editor)

Much is printed about the employment by the Federal Government of the physically handicapped, but we wonder why attention has not been called to the splendid job the deaf are doing at the Army Map Service, Washington, D. C.

A little over a year ago, the first deaf person was employed by the organization as a topographic draftsman. It was in the nature of an experiment by the Army Map Service, for in an organization where, during critical times, speed is an essential requirement, the fact that a deaf person would necessarily require a longer period of training, due to the fact that all instruction and questions must be written, is of major importance. However, the "experiment" proved eminently satisfactory. It was found that the ability of the deaf to grasp and understand a situation was entirely satisfactory and that very little writing was required. In the months that followed, other deaf persons were recruited from training schools and private industry. They were assigned to positions as typists, clerks, type setters, draftsmen and photostatic laboratory assistants. They have been able to acclimate themselves to existing conditions with very little trouble

and the quality of their work is equal to that of other employees.

The Army Map Service, an installation of the Corps of Engineers, U. S. Army, is, as many Federal agencies, geared to the current war effort, and the increased personnel, crowded offices, limited equipment and constant tension have caused a condition not conducive to concentration. The ability of the deaf to ignore such surroundings is a definite asset.

It is amusing to note the interest the sign language has aroused among the employees. The majority of persons working in divisions with the deaf have asked for sign cards and have made an effort to learn the language. Few have extensive knowledge of the signs themselves, but many have learned to use the letters of the alphabet accurately and rapidly. An entertaining incident happened recently which well illustrates this point. An A.M.S. baseball team, several players of which are deaf, were playing another team from outside the department. All the members of the team were using the sign language (in various degrees of proficiency) much to the consternation of the opposing team who finally came to the conclusion that the entire team was deaf.

So the "experiment" made by the Army Map Service has been doubly successful. It has employed the deaf in positions which are interesting to them and necessary to the war effort and it has brought to us, their coworkers, a cognizance of the physically handicapped which should be beneficial to all of us.