

DENTISTRY

# Contagion Theory of Trench Mouth Challenged

**Bacteriologist Suggests That Vincent's Disease May Be Associated With Dietary Deficiency**

**T**HEORIES that Vincent's disease, or "trench mouth" is contagious were questioned by Dr. Theodor Rosebury, bacteriologist of the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, speaking before the Chicago Dental Society. Dr. Rosebury called for immediate investigation at the first outbreak in any army camp of the ailment which was widespread among Allied soldiers of the last world war. He said:

"It has not been demonstrated that Vincent's infection is a communicable disease. The evidence of man-to-man transmission which has been reviewed is entirely circumstantial."

(Medical scientists at the National Institute of Health recently reported they were unable to prove that Vincent's infection was communicable among monkeys.)

Dr. Rosebury suggested that "trench mouth" is associated with dietary deficiency which lowers the resistance of mouth tissues to infection.

Dr. Rosebury added: "It is nevertheless clear that infection plays an important part in the disease, and the facts also fail to demonstrate the alternative—that Vincent's infection is not communicable. Since the disease has been prevalent among soldiers, and is likely to become so again, it is important that the question be answered in order to justify the use or lack of use of isolation and other sanitary precautions in handling outbreaks. A plan for an experiment to elicit the needed information, to be done at an army camp on the occasion of an outbreak of Vincent's infection, is therefore suggested."

*Science News Letter, March 7, 1942*

## Sulfanilamide An Aid

**E**XTRACTION of teeth of patients with valvular heart disease can be accomplished with the aid of sulfanilamide without the risk of causing an often fatal heart ailment, subacute bacterial endocarditis. Dr. Joseph A. Hopkins, of St. Anthony's Hospital, Rockford, Ill., reported these findings to the meeting

after study of the use of sulfanilamide in dental surgery.

Dr. Hopkins explained that the germ which causes this type of endocarditis—*streptococcus viridans*—is present in the throats and mouths of even healthy persons. The germ does not enter the blood stream, however, unless there is a break in the mucous membrane such as would be caused by pulling a tooth. Once in the blood stream the germ may attack the weak spots of the heart.

By giving patients sulfanilamide, this danger is eliminated since the germ is killed before it can cause trouble, he concluded.

*Science News Letter, March 7, 1942*

AERONAUTICS

# Training of Airplane Pilots Should Start in Grade Schools

**T**RAINING of airplane pilots should start in the grade schools with instruction in the fundamentals of aeronautics and model-making, Dr. M. N. Walsh, neurologist and psychiatrist at the Mayo Clinic, declares in a report on pilot selection.

He urges that "boys at least 15 years old and more be given the advantage of that most important of all training: early familiarity with the air by means of actual flying.

"This is their right. By this means a natural selection of those best fitted to be airmen will occur."

In spite of much work on the problem of pilot selection, there are, in Dr. Walsh's opinion, no objective tests which will show whether or not a man will become a good flyer, and he doubts that there ever will be. But, as the Germans and Russians have discovered, programs that start training children in the principles of flying at such an early age that they "grow into flying" perform



WELCOME EMBLEM

*This design by Walt Disney, intended for voluntary use by packers of foods, is expected to become a familiar sight wherever American food products are sent throughout the world. The American eagle is poised protectively over a cargo boat chasing off a bombing plane. The stars above represent the four freedoms, it is explained by the U. S. Department of Agriculture.*

very efficiently the task of "natural selection of pilots."

Those not suitable as pilots because of either physical or temperamental disability are automatically weeded out before they reach military age.

The present war will probably be long, Dr. Walsh points out, so he urges immediate steps to set up the mechanism by which "American boys can be given the advantages of the type of training which is carried out in Germany, Russia and Japan" and which is being started in Great Britain and Canada. Foundations for a state program of this type are being laid in Minnesota with the active cooperation of Governor Harold Stassen.

Extension of such a program throughout the nation will enable American airmen "better to cope with their adversaries" and, says Dr. Walsh, will insure that in "the future time of peace the United States may take its rightful place as leader of the world in the air."

*Science News Letter, March 7, 1942*