

Local Veterans Hospital Taking On 'New Look'

VA Now Getting Full Use From State Soldiers Home

By CHARLES V. STANTON
Editor, News-Review

The U.S. Veterans Administration Hospital at Roseburg will be one of the show spots of the Pacific Northwest in a few more years if Dr. George L. Wadsworth, manager, succeeds in carrying out the ambitious program he has outlined.

There is little doubt that he will achieve his goal, unless transferred to another station. He already has shown an uncanny ability for getting things done. And he has made many improvements with a minimum of expense.

Thousands of items in storage upon his arrival to take charge of the hospital. Most of those items now have been utilized and the rest soon will be serving a practical purpose.

He found, for example, several thousand building blocks stored for some unspecified purpose. At the same time he had some rather sad looking quonset huts, brought in for emergency housing purposes during the war. By using the blocks to raise the walls of the quonsets, pouring concrete floors, facing the fronts, cutting windows into the curved ceilings and hanging fluorescent lighting fixtures, and using lots of paint, he has provided attractive and

usable quarters for therapy, administration, barracks, etc.

Buildings Renovated
Nearly all of the buildings at the institution have been renovated. Instead of uniform interior decoration, Dr. Wadsworth has provided varying color schemes. Color, he contends, has remarkable therapeutic value, and he expects the departure from uniform institutional coloration to have a beneficial effect upon patients.

It is this same determination that everything possible shall be

Wadsworth reports, show a very special interest in planting and nurturing trees.

"Back in Iowa, where I was stationed previously, patients were more interested in farming," Dr. Wadsworth said. "But out here, where forestry is a major industry, interest seems to center on trees. It's our job to do everything we can for the patient. If he doesn't like farming or gardening, but does like trees, then we'll provide trees."

No patient is compelled to work. Nearly all, however, want to do something. So, they are assigned tasks at which they can work when so inclined. The tree project is immensely popular, whereas few patients cared to work at the farming projects previously provided. It has been proven, Dr. Wadsworth reports, that the outdoor work provides both physical and mental therapy, thereby speeding recovery.

Because of the interest shown by patients in the landscaping project, the hospital management is abandoning its farm projects, Dr. Wadsworth reports.

"We'll buy our farm products from local farmers," the manager states.

The cannery also will be closed. A few small garden plots will be kept for the use of those patients desiring to work them. The greenhouse and nursery will be maintained. But raising produce for use at the institution, an activity heretofore handled by the engineering department, will be discontinued, and the landscaping job, which will substitute for farm ing, will be under the direction of the department of medical therapy.

Dr. Wadsworth expects that the beautification of the grounds soon will be evident. The work will be expanded from year to year.

Axons of lawn will surround buildings and border roads. Back of these lawns will be groves of native, flowering and ornamental trees. Flowers and shrubs will give color throughout the year.

"It will take us five years to make a good showing, but we expect by that time to have it looking nice," said Manager Wadsworth.

SPEAKER NAMED
PORTLAND — Principal speaker at the Aug. 21 picnic of the Multnomah County chapter of the Oregon Republican Club here will be Donald Eastwood, Washington attorney general. Douglas McKay, secretary of the Interior, has been invited



DR. GEORGE WADSWORTH... making a showplace

done to speed the recovery of patients that is to make the hospital and its surroundings a show spot for the Pacific Northwest.

An elaborate landscaping program has been mapped out. Some work already has started. Because only limited funds are available, it will take several years—five at least—to complete the major part of the job now initiated.

More than 6,000 trees have been planted as a start on the project. About 2,000 seedlings were set out by Boy Scouts. The rest were planted by hospital personnel. Ground has been prepared for acres of lawn. These acres have been kept in cover crops to make them more suitable for growing grass. Water is to be pumped from the South Umpqua River for irrigation.

There will be some ornamental planting, but much of the area set out to trees will carry native species. Ponderosa pine already is showing excellent growth.

Patients Like Trees
Patients at the hospital. Dr.

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At the time the U.S. Veterans Hospital was constructed in Roseburg, the State of Oregon deeded to the federal government the land and buildings formerly utilized as an Oregon State Soldiers Home.

As the federal hospital took shape, use and maintenance of the former state property located across the South Umpqua River from the main reservation, became an increasingly difficult problem.

Nearly all the old buildings were removed. A few were retained. The former hospital building was used during an emergency as a county hospital. A former dining hall was utilized for storage. The cannery building was in use until this year, but now is to be closed. Part of the land was devoted to farming. The hospital management, however, has now decided to discontinue the farm project.

But the site of the former Oregon State Soldiers Home is now getting a face lifting.

Grounds are being landscaped. The former hospital building now houses (except for one wing) the communications equipment, classrooms, and other facilities of the naval reserve. The remaining wing has been made into domiciliary quarters for hospital attendants and other personnel.

Dubbed "Umpqua Arms" by the occupants, the residential quarters, housing about 30 men, has helped solve the problem of retaining employees. Previously there was much turnover because of the difficulty in finding suitable living quarters in Roseburg. Occupants pay rent to the Veterans Administration at a rate fixed by a committee of private citizens called in by Dr. Wadsworth, hospital manager, to assist him in reaching a fair rental charge. The quarters were altered and renovated by the hospital maintenance staff at comparatively little cost. They provide modern conveniences, with ample facilities for rest and relaxation.

In the reconstruction process, Dr. Wadsworth arranged removal and use of much of the material found stored in the former dining hall. The Army Reserve and Air Force Reserve now are preparing to occupy these quarters, which

are being reconstructed for their use. The building will house classrooms, projection room, offices, barracks, target range and storage. Remodeling is under contract to the Todd Building Co. and the cost is being paid by the U.S. Army.

Other buildings on the property also will be utilized by the Army for motor pool and storage purposes.

All surrounding grounds are to be landscaped, Dr. Wadsworth reports, but the most extensive improvement will be made to the cemetery.

A new roadway, with loop drive, is being graded from Harvard Avenue. Cemetery acreage will be increased and is to be planted to lawn and shrubs.

Veterans organizations, Dr. Wadsworth reports, are interested in providing an attractive gateway at the new Harvard Street entrance.

Opening Date Announced For Glide Dist. Schools

Thursday, Sept. 8, is the opening date for all schools of Glide School District 12, Supt. Byron Evans reports. The first and ninth grade students are to report Tuesday, Aug. 30, at the Glide primary school for pre-registration and physical examinations. Parents of the first grade students must bring birth certificates of their children. Parents who find the Tuesday date of Aug. 30 inconvenient, may take their children to the Deer Creek school Wednesday, Aug. 31, reports correspondent Mrs. Arthur Selby.

SUPERSTITIOUS CROWS

WINSBORO, La. (AP) — Hub Dear believes crows are superstitious. This, says Dear, makes them a cinch to keep out of watermelon patches. Just drive stakes at intervals through the patch and stretch string from stake to stake. "Thinking the string is some kind of trap, he will not light in the patch where the string is placed," said Dear. "The crow is a smart bird but he is also very superstitious." Dear discovered this version of the traditional scarecrow in 1917 and has used it since.

Heat Wave Helps Boost Electric Power Output

NEW YORK (AP) — A continuing heat wave helped boost electric power output in the United States last week to an all-time high of 19,727,000 kilowatt-hours, Edison Electric Institute said Wednesday. Heavy consumption by air-conditioning and refrigeration equipment was a major factor in sending the nation's electric power production to a new record, industry sources said. The week's total was a hefty 17.4 per cent higher than the 1,399,000 kilowatt hours recorded for the like week of 1954. All major geographic areas used more electricity than a year ago. The Pacific Northwest was up 12.4 per cent.

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