

Volunteer Service Groups Form Necessary Part of VA Program

By SID HOLLINGSWORTH
Mail Tribune Correspondent

One activity in veteran rehabilitation which has the wholehearted endorsement of the Veterans Administration is the VA Volunteer Service organization.

It is distinctly a product of World War II, and was conceived and developed as a means of coordinating the volunteer work performed in the various stations throughout the country where the sick and disabled war veterans are hospitalized and cared for.

Originally, this was an undertaking borne exclusively by the recognized service organizations — those which have been dedicated to such service. Then the need to adapt the men to home life and the community brought the interest of religious, welfare, entertainment and educational groups, established wherever VA installations have been placed.

National Level
Today, this work goes forward not only on a local but a national level. This fact was brought to the attention of the Camp White VAVS group assembled in the Employees club for the final meeting of the season, by the present manager, Henry C. Herzog.

He reads excerpts from the address of Administrator Sumner G. Whittier to VAVS representatives, setting forth the policy and the appreciation of the government for the work that is done on a purely voluntary basis for veterans. Time and material benefits are contributed regularly.

The VAVS is not a luxury. It is a necessity. It is a fully recognized and fully accepted component of the VA hospital, the administrator told the national advisory committee of VAVS at their annual meeting in Washington.

Treat His Spirit
"Our job doesn't end when we have done all we can medically for a patient. We must treat his spirit as well as his body," Whittier declared. "You give him motivation by your presence, by the many acts you perform."

Another force in veterans' medicine today relates to the advancing age of veterans in our hospitals, Whittier pointed out.

"Today 44 per cent have passed 55. In another 10 years, more than half of our patients will be past 55," he said. "More and more will you be called upon to exercise all your tact, all your human consideration, all your skills, to deal with older veterans facing that long, tortuous journey home."

Under the plan of organization at the Camp White Domiciliary, the VAVS functions under supervision of the Chief of Special Services and in coordination with all divisions including medical, which has general control over the planned living program, covering recreational activities.

Directed Work
Frank Glonning, special services chief, has directed the volunteer work as advisory committee chairman. He has effected a smoothly running schedule of participation in entertainment and assistance for the handicapped. A run down of activities includes the following:

Music appreciation, art instruction, sewing, knitting and crocheting, theatre programs, special events, passive games, stamp, garden, bridge and Fifty Plus clubs, the last named being devoted to interests of men past 50 years of age.

Special interests cover wheelchair activities, baseball, softball, off-station trips, travel talks, discussion groups, member adoption, postmark and meter group and the apasia class.

Functions to Needs
All of these interests are fostered in one way or another by the volunteers. Glonning pointed out that the program functions according to the needs presented by the VA for such services, as well as the individual nature of each vol-

unteer organization, all having their own plan of participation in the volunteer effort.

Three types of volunteer effort are noted. There are the regularly appointed representatives of the advisory committee, which meets once a month except during July and August.

Then there are special groups, drawn from the community to provide entertainment, education and sports. Among these are the Muzzioli accordionists, and the teams that play at Memorial field. Lately, a number of individuals have joined the ranks of the volunteers at Camp White. Philatelic and the Fifty Plus club interests are sponsored by unattached volunteers.

Schedule Arranged
A schedule is arranged from the assignment of days drawn from a master plan and the activities unfold with the precision of clockwork. The success of VAVS has been due to planning and management, Glonning said. Before this system was worked out, the recreational activities were in a more or less chaotic and catch can state.

At Camp White the volunteers are favored with what is recognized as a "favorable press" in the news stories published by the Medford Mail Tribune to the various activities. Also, the cooperation of radio and TV stations in presenting the progress report of Camp White is notable.

The domiciliary personnel has given able assistance in the work of integrating the station in the community by joining local clubs in addition to their membership in the various service organizations.

Red Cross
The American Red Cross, which has followed the parade of men in uniform during and after the wars, functions at the camp through the gray ladies. They, together with the auxiliaries of the American Legion and the VFW have offices in the post office building, where the men go for such services as the writing of letters and incidental favors.

The World War I Veterans recently joined this company with an office across the hall from the contact office.

It cannot be said that the men living at Camp White are without religious guidance. In addition to regular services of the two resident chaplains, programs are offered by the Salvation Army and churches in Medford and the surrounding towns on Sunday evening. The AA group holds regular Sunday meetings in addition to occasional gatherings from all parts of southern Oregon.

The Red Cross has sponsored travel talks and a variety show under auspices of the Junior Red Cross. Caesar Muzzioli brings his accordion class to Camp White one Monday each month, and this month he held a dress rehearsal which lasted most of the evening, preparatory to the appearance they made at the Portland Festival.

College Teachers
From the early days in the story of Camp White as a part of the chain of hospitals and homes for disabled veterans, there have been above the average writers who have struggled for mastery of English prose, poetry and even humor. Instruction has been given by Southern Oregon college professors.

In this field as well as in sports, the aid of volunteers extends beyond the bounds of the community proper. Camp White writers have consistently distinguished themselves in the Hospitalized Veterans Writers Project, a national undertaking, supported by professionals, which has its headquarters in Chicago.

Camp White bowlers participate each year in the national tournament of the Bowlers Victory Legion. This year 77 teams representing 64 VA hospitals located in 33 states participated in the event, directed from headquarters in Washington, D.C.

The Dairy Maids, who join with the Rogue Valley baseball league and the American Legion Juniors to provide consistent interest at Memorial field, this year joined the Northwest Women's softball league, bringing teams from as far north as Vancouver, B.C. and Seattle to Camp White.

The awakened interest of the American Legion in the VAVS program is one of the most significant developments of the past year. Dr. William Levin has been named by the Oregon department of the Legion as state chairman, and has attended a number of re-

cent meetings here. He is no stranger to Camp White, having served here during World War II. Last Sunday a delegation of department officers visited the domiciliary in the course of a rehabilitation meeting in Medford.

One contribution to the volunteer program at Camp White has been the sustained interest as well as the variety of activities promoted by the Veterans of Foreign Wars, under the direction of Lelia Birch, auxiliary hospital chairman. Regular Monday evening dances are supported by them, along with an assortment of variety shows. The participation of members in the Centennial gesture of growing beards was started by the VFW.

But there are numerous minor efforts, less conspicuous, but appreciated, performed by smaller groups. The BPOE has loaned the Elks hall in Medford for many years as a place to hold the regular VAVS meetings.

Representatives
The VAVS advisory committee representatives are: Margaret Eakin, American Gold Star Mothers; Tom Ginn, Polly Offut, American Legion and Auxiliary; Frances Flinn,

American Red Cross; Emil Kroeger, BPOE; Ardena Kretschmer, Blue Star Mothers; Marian Cech, Daughters of Union Veterans; F. Edgar Nelson, Bertha Neff, DAV and Auxiliary; Ivan and Helen Lusk, Military Order Cooties and Lady Bugs; Pat Graham, National Order Trench Rats; Florence DeNoma, Frieda Lawrence, Woman's Relief Corps; Joe Mikolavich, National Catholic Community Service; Mrs. B. L. Lockwood, Oregon Federation Garden Clubs; Capt. William E. Ricken, Salvation Army; Andrew Unger, Austria Barneburg, USWV and Auxiliary; George Perry, Lelia Birch, VFW and Auxiliary; Harry Leuty, Alethea Turner, Veterans World War I and Auxiliary.

Others unaffiliated include: Medford City schools, grange, Musicians Union 597; Colleen Hope, Miss Pat's and Thurston dancing schools; Southern Oregon college; Medford Bowling association and Lions club. Individuals include Harold Spraguer, Harold Gould, Mrs. T. S. Drake, Rita Holmes, Verne Marshall, Bob Pruitt, Mrs. Elsie Alexander, the Borden family, Al Williams and Nellie Cook.



RECEIVES PIN—Mrs. Marian Cech, Medford, receives a gold pin award from Manager H. C. Herzog for 2,500 hours continuous volunteer service at the domiciliary. Mrs. Cech, first to volunteer when Camp White became a part of the Veterans Administration system of hospitals and homes, is symbol of the volunteers ministering to the needs of domiciliary members. Mrs. Cech represents the American Gold Star Mothers and the Daughters of Union Veterans. (Sears photo)



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