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VETERANS OF TWO WORLD WARS FIND HELP IN OWN HOSPITAL GROUP

The first A.A. group in a veterans' hospital, although stated primarily to aid World War I servicemen, is proving equally effective in helping uncontrolled drinkers who served in the recent war.

In the fall of 1941, an A.A. member living near the Northport (LI.) Veterans' Hospital told the commanding officer of that facility about A.A. and his willingness to carry the message to alcoholic patients. Three years later - in November, 1941 - the officer took him up on the offer.

Two World War I patients at the hospital had heard about A.A. and wanted additional information. After the A.A. talked to them, arrangements were made to form a group at the hospital.

About a week later, eight patients - all veterans of World War I - attended the group's first meeting. Meetings have been held every Sunday night since, and at present are attended by 15 to 30 patients. Only World War I veterans were present at early meetings, but now the attendance is divided about equally between veterans of both world wars.

To date about 60 members of the group have been discharged from the hospital. Although no exact check can be made on them, only ten have returned, most of the ten have been discharged.

One member of the group - Joe, a veteran in his early thirties with submarine service in the recent war - had been committed to the hospital by his wife. Because of her past experiences with him, she refused to sign

his release. A.A. had confidence in him, arranged for his discharge from the hospital, and got him a job in the vicinity. Joe made good, later got a job in his home town, and has since been reunited with his wife.

Ted, an aviator of the First World War who had kicked around with A.A. since its inception without making the grade, ended up in the Northport Veterans' Hospital in 1939. In 1941 he managed to get a commission in the Air Corps, but within a short time he drank himself out of the service and back into the hospital. Recently he was again discharged from the hospital after several more trips in and out. But now he has that "something" that gives A.A.s faith in a fellow-member.

Medical officers and employees of the hospital give the group their support and co-operation. One employee, Charlie C., got his start in A.A. through the group. He has since been instrumental in forming a group at Kings Park State Hospital on Long Island.

The A.A.s who are contributing to the success of the A.A. group at the Northport Hospital hope that they are laying the groundwork for a program long needed by veterans. Through this kind of work, the many veterans with alcoholic tendencies returning from the recent war may be able to recognize their ailment without waiting fifteen years or more - as many World War I veterans did. -

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