

From AA's Scrapbooks: 1943

IN THIS YEAR AA WAS IN THE WAR. In the early days after Pearl Harbor the movement was still untried by any big stress on the general sobriety of its members. Until the war was well along no one really knew how the AA principles would hold up away from the group support. In effect every member in the armed forces was, at the beginning, a loner.

By the end of '43 and the beginning of '44, correspondence with the New York office had shown that AA could indeed stand up. The members were proving themselves not only at the level of actual combat but in industry as well. Early in 1943 Dr. Bob appealed for special gas rationing consideration for AA members.

"If Uncle Sam has a drop of Yankee blood in his veins he won't pass up the bargain now being offered by Alcoholics Anonymous.... Men for gasoline—that was the pro-

posal voiced by Dr. Bob Smith: 'We are doing our part in the war effort. Many of our people are making fine records in the armed services. Most of the others are engaged in war industries or professions. But gasoline rationing is hampering our efforts to dry up alcoholics and return them to useful service.' " This quote is from the Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph of December 13, 1942.

On February 18, 1943 a letter from the Office of Price Administration in Washington states: "We recognize the important social significance of the work done by the Alcoholics Anonymous and feel that the mileage driven by its members for the purposes of the necessary meetings of the organization comes wholly *outside* of the pleasure driving ban. . . . Of course, trips made by members at the direction of a physician to give assistance in emergency cases are likewise outside of

the regulation of the pleasure driving ban."

In April of 1943 Howard H. Smith, writing for the North American Newspaper Alliance, says, "Complete eradication of chronic alcoholism from war industries as a cause of absenteeism has become the goal of Alcoholics Anonymous. . . . AA is breaking a campaign in all its 230 groups to contribute substantially to the upturn in the nation's war production graph. A plea received today from San Francisco for an investigator to work with the management of large shipbuilding concerns along the West Coast follows similar appeals from a big Michigan rubber manufacturer and an eastern munitions producer for such assistance. As speedily as other

requests are received, national headquarters here plans to assign investigators from the groups in the nearest localities to go to work on restoration of sick individuals to full efficiency. . . . (Government agencies have requested AA aid, also the Army has utilized the service for numerous cases. Members are making fine marks in the armed services throughout the world. Six years ago 90 percent of AAs were employed, today 100 percent are employed, scores are in executive posts of great responsibility in the war effort and private enterprise."

This report for national distribution, by a well known newsman, summarizes very well the acceptance and reliability AA had attained in a few short years.

