

for injuries sustained as a result of a "fit" on the job.

Hope for decreasing the number of epileptics lies mainly in neurosurgery and finding more effective anticonvulsant

drugs. But the lot of almost every patient can be improved, Dr. Lennox declared, by encouragement in intellectual and vocational pursuits and by reorienting the hopes and attitude of the patient.

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MEDICINE

Prepared for Wounded

Condition of Veterans Administration is better than at close of World War, but expanded Army and provisions of new bill may add to demands upon it.

► THE VETERANS Administration is today "far better prepared for eventualities" than it was at the close of the 1917-1918 war when it had to "start from scratch," Dr. Charles M. Griffith, medical director, declared at the meeting of the Association of Military Surgeons of the United States in San Antonio.

Total number of ill and injured ex-members of the armed forces for which the Veterans Administration will have to provide medical care after this war cannot be estimated and the Army's estimate for the number during the fiscal years 1943 and 1944 cannot, of course, be divulged. An idea of the expansion of Veterans Administration facilities that will be needed can be gleaned from the fact pointed out by Dr. Griffith that "enlargement of the Army and Navy has progressed, if press reports are to be credited, to a total already exceeding the entire enrollment in 1917-1918" and the "official statement of the Secretary of War that a strength of 7,500,000 men is the present objective."

The total number the Veterans Administration will have to care for, however, may be greatly increased if a bill already passed by the House of Representatives (H. R. 7311) becomes law, Dr. Griffith declared.

"Applicants discharged from the present armed forces," Dr. Griffith explained, "are not acceptable for hospital treatment or domiciliary care by the Veterans Administration unless they had been separated from the service for disability incurred in line of duty, or were in receipt of a pension for service-connected disability."

The new bill, however, "authorizes for persons who served in the present Army or Navy the same benefits of hospital treatment or domiciliary care which are provided for persons who served in the World War."

The effect of this proposal, Dr. Griffith

stated, "would be felt mainly upon the provision of hospital treatment or domiciliary care for disabilities not due to military or naval service. Millions of possible beneficiaries would be newly created who, because of a status as 'veteran of a war,' would be potentially entitled to such hospital treatment or domiciliary care at any time in their lives" provided they meet certain eligibility requirements. These requirements do not exact an honorable discharge. A discharge not dishonorable will suffice, and there is no delimiting requirement as to the nature of the condition causing the disability.

In the present war, up to Sept. 1, 1942, under present regulations, a total of 4,377 applicants have been admitted to the Veterans Administration, Dr. Griffith reported. Of these, 1,886 were suffering from general medical or surgical illnesses and injuries; 1,463 were tuberculous; and 1,028 had neuropsychiatric disorders.

"These beneficiaries were, in the great preponderance, simply men who broke down in their training," Dr. Griffith stated.

The Veterans Administration has today a nucleus of hospital buildings with modern equipment and trained personnel and hopes by the time the war is over to have acquired more hospital beds and to be able to enlarge its medical and other necessary personnel from among doctors, nurses and others who will be demobilized.

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Pennsylvania Plan

► THE PENNSYLVANIA plan for handling the medical and health problems brought to light by Army service rejections was described by Major General C. R. Reynolds, U. S. A. Ret., now with the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

The 8,262 Pennsylvania men rejected up to Oct. 1, 1942, because of tuberculosis have been reported to State Tuberculosis Clinics and private physicians for treatment and for follow-up of possibilities of their having spread the disease to others or of those from whom they may have acquired it. The same sort of service and epidemiological follow-up has been extended to the more than 7,200 cases of syphilis in Pennsylvania men discovered in Army examinations.

The problem of men rejected for nervous and mental conditions is causing great concern among physicians and health authorities, General Reynolds emphasized. The proportion of rejections for this condition has risen lately, especially among Negroes, until it now accounts for about 13% of all 4-F rejections and is the largest single group in that classification. The number of mental and nervous cases in the Veterans and other government hospitals now accounts for about 57% of the total beds occupied and the peakload for the last World War alone has not yet been reached, he declared.

The medical care of these men is one of the most difficult problems of rehabilitation of men rejected for Army service. One important reason is that publicizing the fact that the men have been rejected because of nervous or mental conditions prejudices their position in society and their opportunities for employment.

Selective Service examinations today show no more physical fitness than in 1917, General Reynolds stated. Apparently, he pointed out, we have "the same kind of people, only more of them."

Present physical standards are high and should remain so, he believes, so that we may have an Army fit to "win the toughest war in history." But most of the physical unfitness is due to structural or physical defect rather than disease and much of it results from neglect and faulty use of the body which could have been prevented or remedied.

The situation, he said, "calls for physical training in our whole educational system and emphasizes the importance of physical medicine."

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The Federal Bureau of Mines is studying the possibility of mixing oil and pulverized coal to produce a *liquid fuel* that can be used in certain types of industrial oil-burning furnaces.