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The returning serviceman

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THE RETURNING SERVICEMAN

A Thesis

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is twofold: (1) to study the various programs that have been set up to assist the veteran in his return to civilian life, and (2) to ascertain how much need exists for a thorough understanding of the body of social case work knowledge and for a practical application of its techniques to the problems of the returning serviceman. The problem may not appear acute at the present writing but with over a million men already discharged from service the task of helping these men fit back into civilian life is facing the community. True, they are trickling back in small numbers to each town and city but this is fortunate because it gives the community a chance to plan programs and test them in a fairly leisurely fashion so that when the hectic rush of homeward bound servicemen hits the community, it will be ready to meet it with a well ordered plan that has had the advantage of scientific evaluation.

Scope

The return of the serviceman is a problem that has popular appeal. The plans for helping him are multifold and vary in scope from the thoughtful planning of civic and social agencies down through the haphazard schemes of the man in the street.
This thesis is an attempt to describe some of the programs that are being shaped and tried with an evaluation of their value. It will include descriptions of plans that are nation-wide, i.e., the work of the reemployment committee-men of the Selective Service Boards; the programs set up by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; the function of the Red Cross; and the programs of cities and towns in the Commonwealth with specific reference to Boston, Worcester, Newton and Canton.

The material for this thesis has been gathered by discussion with the executives and workers in the various programs; by readings from selected current literature, from courses in psychiatry and social case work at the Boston University School of Social Work, and from the writer's experience in the practice of social case work as a student in the Children's Mission to Children, Boston, and as a family case worker on the staff of the Catholic Charitable Bureau of Boston.

This experience has shown the writer the value of the individualized approach to a person's problem through the medium of social case work. The writer hopes that one value deriving from this study will be in its attempt to gather in one place the thinking and planning relative to the returning serviceman.
Limitations

The study must of necessity be limited by the dearth of material consequent to the small numbers of men returning, by the constant change in set-up as new ideas are injected and by the hazardous practice of judging a program in its infancy. As a practical measure, no material later than June 1, 1944 has been used.
CHAPTER II

THE CIVILIAN PLANS FOR THE RETURNING SOLDIER

There is probably no man in the United States, or woman either, who has not at one time or another given voice or thought to what the civilian population owes the returning serviceman. Foremost is the idea that a job is the solution to the problem. Many civic organizations have started formal plans to see that when "Johnny comes marching home" he will march right into his old job or one that has been planned for him. There is consternation among the civilian population that idleness will breed discontent and harbor such evils as Communism and Fascism. Paul G. Hoffman points out that Hitler organized his Brown Shirts and Mussolini recruited his Black Shirts from the ranks of unemployed youths. He argues that freedom starts with a job and is the common man's understanding of the right to life and the pursuit of happiness. In the same issue of the Rotarian, Paul B. McKee postulates that eight out of ten returning servicemen would ask for a good job if faced with the problem of selecting the kind of world they would like to come home to. Otto Fuerbringer, in the August 7, 1943 issue of the Saturday Evening Post, labors the same

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1 Paul G. Hoffman, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home We Must Have Jobs Ready", Rotarian, 63: 8-10, September, 1943.

2 Paul B. McKee, "Let's Heap the Work Pile High", Rotarian, 63: 11-12, September, 1943.
null
theme in his observations that everyone is agreed that more
than parades and fetes are needed to welcome the men home. He
states that there must be a job for every mustered out man.
In an editorial in Fortune, October, 1943, the returning soldier
is pictured as having as his first aim the job back home. He
considers it his prime personal problem to discover the means
of getting that job out of the turmoil of reconversion and he
is fearful that depression will return to America with him.

That the people of America share this fear is shown in
the current literature. The nation as a whole is giving ser-
ious thought to the problem and various plans are being drawn
up. Morse A. Cartright, writing in "The Annals", says, "The
terrific dislocation of the war itself, moreover, will inev-
itably be followed by a severe counter dislocation when peace
comes." The civilian population considers it its patriotic
duty to prepare adequately for the homecoming soldier. Carl
Zapffe in the September, 1943 Rotarian says:

That's why we gray heads who aren't
any good at grinding over deserts
and slogging through jungles any
more, are up to our elbows in post-

3 Otto Fuerbringer, "We Can Train Soldiers for Post-
War Jobs", The Saturday Evening Post, 216: 28-29, August 7,
1943.

4 "Soldiers, Jobs and the Peace", an editorial,
Fortune, 28: 111-200, October, 1943.

5 Morse A. Cartright, "Re-education of the Returned
Soldier and Sailor", The Annals of the American Academy of
Political and Social Science, 227: 111-121, May, 1943.
war work. We feel we're just doing our part on the home front.6

People recognize that this task is no overnight affair and must be planned before the armistice. All seem agreed that a job for every veteran is the solution. Some communities are attempting to see ahead and to be able to state just how many veterans can be taken back into their old jobs or placed in new ones. Others are thinking in terms of whether or not the returned serviceman will want his old job and are making plans for vocational guidance and training. Others are making efforts to find out what kinds of work will need to be done after the war. The serviceman already discharged has no difficulty in getting a job but as the October, 1943 issue of Fortune points out, "So far, the discharged men have shared with the rest of the nation's manpower the bonus of an unprecedented labor boom". It is the opinion in some quarters that the nation needs to change its state of mind about peace time jobs and stop thinking in terms of making work, for in order to be lasting and satisfactory a job has to be real and exist for the purpose of getting something done. An editorial in Life upholds this view that the reason for work opportunities today is due to the pressures of wartime production and that with the coming of peace the nation is apt to slip back to a state

7 Fortune, op. cit.
where there is no inducement to work.

The layman's approach is economic. He sees the problem solely in terms of finding job opportunities, whether he leans toward government control and programs of public works or whether he sees the problem as one to be solved by private industry. He recognizes that any old job will not fill the bill and is willing to expend money in re-education and rehabilitation and in supplying adequate medical attention. Above all he does not want relief rolls to soar again as they did during the pre-war depression. He does not want to see the returning soldier, whom he may think of in terms of his son, brother or nephew turned loose to seek out his own job and perhaps be swallowed up in a rush of indiscriminate job finding. He wants a carefully thought out program that takes into consideration the individual veteran's occupational skills and need for training. He knows that the nation is not able to compensate the veteran financially for the personal sacrifices he has made and the dislocation in his life but he wants to help him transfer the training and discipline of his service life into productive civilian channels that may make the veteran realize that his sacrifices were useful in that they will lead to years of peaceful, free living.

8 "Jobs For Veterans", an editorial, Life, pp. 15-28, August 9, 1943.
CHAPTER III

THE FEDERAL SET-UP

Among many other things, we are, today, laying plans for the return to civilian life of our gallant men and women in the armed services. They must not be demobilized into an environment of inflation and unemployment, to a place on a bread-line or on a corner selling apples. We must, this time, have plans ready - instead of waiting to do a hasty, inefficient, and ill-considered job at the last moment.\(^1\)

Thus spoke the President of the United States to the citizens of the country. He further went on to lay before them in concrete terms what he felt should be done for the returning serviceman and gave his reason for his plan - "the members of the armed forces have been compelled to make greater economic sacrifice and every other kind of sacrifice than the rest of us and are entitled to definite action to help take care of their special problems."\(^2\)

The President postulated a six-point program calling for mustering out pay large enough to cover a reasonable period of time between discharge and employment, for unemployment insurance if no employment is available, for education and training, for credit allowance under employment compensation and

\(^1\) Excerpt from President Roosevelt's radio address, July 28, 1943.

\(^2\) Ibid.
Federal Old Age and Survivors Insurance, for improved hospital services for the Merchant Marine, and sufficient pension for disabled servicemen.

Under Congressional Law "each member of the armed forces who shall have been engaged in active service under honorable conditions on or after December 7, 1941, shall be eligible to receive mustering-out pay." This provides varying payments for the type and length of service.

Congressional Law also provides vocational rehabilitation for men with service-connected disabilities. During the course of training, compensation will be paid to the veteran equal to the amount paid for a total or temporary disability.

Many of the men who have already been discharged are gainfully employed in spite of handicaps and have not taken advantage of vocational training. However, the Veterans' Bureau feels that when the need for these men is not so urgent in the war industries they will avail themselves of the opportunity.

The government has also made plans for the veteran with a non-service connected disability. In his message to Congress

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3 Ibid.

4 Public Law 225 - 78th Congress, Chapter 9, Second Session, 1944.

5 Public Law 16 - 78th Congress, Chapter 22, First Session.

6 Ibid.
the President stated that the "new program of the Federal Security Agency will make provisions for veterans whose disabilities are not service-connected."

The President further feels that veterans should have an opportunity to continue their interrupted studies and as Floyd Reeves in a University of Chicago Round-Table Discussion pointed out "there will be probably several million youth who will have dropped out of school before they finished the education that they would have had if there had been no war."

At the present writing there is before Congress a bill to give those veterans who can qualify education not to exceed four years at the government's expense.

As Dr. Cunningham pointed out, "after discharge from the service, the Veterans' Administration becomes the discharged soldier's Number One Agency." This agency is responsible for adjudication of the veteran's claims, for hospitalization, domiciliary care, and vocational training, except for the veteran with a non-service connected disability. He can receive his training under the Federal Security Agency.


9 University of Chicago Round Table, When Johnny Comes Marching Home, p. 1.

Finding jobs for veterans is also a responsibility that the government is assuming. The task of finding jobs is delegated to different agencies. Attached to each local draft board are Reemployment Committeemen whose duty is to see that a man gets his old job back if he wants it. However, he must apply for it within forty days of discharge. Refusal of the employer means that the United States Department of Justice through its local district attorney will take action. This is with the proviso that the employer is not obliged to rehire a veteran if circumstances make it impossible. Not so with federal employees, they are taken back at their old jobs or ones similar in standing and salary on the veteran's application. The local Reemployment Committeemen have been instructed that they are the personal representatives of the veterans with direct responsibility of seeing that men get their old jobs back and also receive services due them from government agencies and community resources set up to help them.

On February 14, 1944 a joint statement was issued by Paul V. McNutt, Chairman of the War Manpower Commission, and Lewis B. Hershey, Director of the Selective Service System, to the effect that in the future the work of finding employment for ex-servicemen would be divided between the two agencies.

The Reemployment Committeemen of the local draft boards would confine their efforts to helping a man get back his old job and the War Manpower Commission would assume the task of finding him a new one if he was unable or unwilling to return to his former employment.

This latter function is carried on by the United States Employment Service which has a special department for the serviceman called the Veterans Employment Service. "The Army and Navy pave the way for the reemployment of discharged veterans by opening their hospitals to V.E.S. representatives for the purpose of interviewing disabled veterans before their discharge." This gives the servicemen an opportunity to tell what his educational and occupational background has been and what he would like to do. The Veterans Employment Service representative learns from proper authorities what the man can stand in the way of physical exertion. When the serviceman arrives home information about him is already on file at the United States Employment Service and he is sent a notification to come in and discuss work possibilities. If an employer, fearful of the man's handicap, does not want to hire him the Veterans Employment Service representative goes to the employer and explains the man's capabilities in view of the information he obtained from the hospital.

The whole program of the Federal Government is mainly concerned with finding employment for the veteran and supplying the financial assistance necessary to fit the man for a peacetime job. To date with a good economic market private industry can more than absorb the men who have returned and it is expected or hoped that it will continue to be able to do this when demobilization starts on a grand scale. However, as the National Resources Planning Board points out, "the government should prepare a shelf of public works to be used in case of need." It hopes, however, that job opportunities for the veteran will offer a real choice rather than have a job thrust upon him by necessity and asks for "the best kind of information, counselling, and employment service that the organized resources of the country can provide."

14 National Resources Planning Board, Demobilization and Readjustment, June 1943, p. 6.

15 Ibid., p. 46.
CHAPTER IV

THE HOME SERVICE PROGRAM OF THE AMERICAN RED CROSS

Home Service of the American Red Cross feels that it has a definite responsibility to the ex-serviceman and wants to help him with his individual problems in leaving service and coming back to civilian life. Red Cross is not a new agency to the serviceman. He has seen its representatives at work in camps in this country and in the battle areas overseas. Until recently one of its field directors interviewed each man before he was discharged and made a direct referral to his local Chapter. With the ever increasing number of discharges this program became too big to handle so that now the Red Cross is able only to see a selected number of men. However, all men on leaving the service are given information concerning the resources available to them so that they are aware that the Red Cross stands ready "offering consultation and guidance in personal and family problems", and is willing to give financial assistance where needed.

"The responsibility of Home Service is to assist active and ex-servicemen and their families in meeting those needs or problems which have arisen from the man's service in the armed forces." This is in brief the policy of Home Service.

1 Home Service, Services to the Armed Forces, A.R.C. 1214.

2 Home Service Program for Servicemen and Ex-Servicemen and their Families. Mimeographed statement by Boston Metropolitan Chapter, American Red Cross.
In this thesis the author is confining her study to the application of this policy to the ex-serviceman.

The ex-serviceman may receive financial assistance from the time of his discharge until the first payment of his claim comes through. If the claim is denied or if the payment is inadequate, financial assistance is terminated with the referral of the man to the community agency capable of rendering assistance. Brief recurrent needs of an extraordinary nature may be met by Home Service if no community resource is available. However, Home Service in stating its responsibility in the adjustment period also recognizes

that the interests of discharged ex-servicemen are best served when consideration of them as a group requiring special attention is replaced as soon as possible by service through normal community life and the local agency facilities.  

It must be emphasized that financial assistance is not available to the able-bodied, to those with a non-service connected disability or to those appealing an unfavorable decision of their claim for benefits. But all these are eligible to receive information concerning community resources and may have the service of referral.

The ex-serviceman can receive help from Home Service in establishing his eligibility for government benefits. It will

3 Ibid. Supplementary statement, p. 1.
help him gather his evidence with as much speed as possible to alleviate a long period in which the man might begin to feel neglected and feel that the government which so easily sent him off to war was not willing to help compensate for injuries sustained.

In The Boston Metropolitan Chapter, Home Service has seen approximately 3,000 ex-servicemen during the past year. In general, the requests coming to this office have been for medical or psychiatric care, vocational counselling and financial assistance. As a policy

Home Service cannot assume responsibility for providing such specialized services as psychiatric care, vocational training, child placement, legal aid, and employment service, but will assist applicants in obtaining these services from the proper sources.  

According to Mr. Anderson, Director of the Boston Metropolitan Chapter, the existing community agencies are equipped to do the job of medical and psychiatric examination. But he called for a coordination and integration of the community's best efforts in vocational counselling and trained case work skill in interviewing the man asking for this kind of help.

The Boston Chapter has a cooperative arrangement with

4 Home Service Program, op. cit., p. 2.
the other community agencies in referring and accepting cases. Home Service does not want to take the place of existing agencies but instead feels that the veteran will more readily feel himself a part of his community again when he asks and receives the services of a community resource. Red Cross probably symbolizes service life to him and is a link with that life from which he has broken. In his adjustment process he will use Red Cross Home Service as an aid, but as part of civilian living again he will want and has the right to expect assistance through normal channels. In this feeling the private family agencies in Boston concur and are accepting referrals from Home Service of ex-servicemen and their families for financial assistance and service.

Home Service has a representative at the Boston Information and Reception Center for Servicemen. As originally planned her work there was to interpret Home Service policy and procedure to the veterans and to the other agency representatives. However, as she is the only social worker in the Center to date any problem requiring the knowledge and skill of a social worker is brought to her for solution.

In summation, Home Service of the American Red Cross, through its Chapters, specifically related here to Boston, provides financial assistance and varied case work services to the discharged serviceman who is disabled or who wants to
present a claim to the Veterans Bureau. To the able-bodied it acts as a referral center to the various resources the community offers for advice and assistance.
CHAPTER V
THE STATE COMMITTEE

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts concerned with the problem of the veteran felt that there was a need to head up the various programs existing within the State confines to avoid confusion and duplication of effort. On November 18, 1943, W. Rea Long, State Commissioner of Aid and Pensions, presented a plan for a State Advisory Committee to formulate plans and suggest methods of operation to local committees which are to be appointed by the mayors and selectmen of the cities and towns of the Commonwealth. This committee is called the Massachusetts Rehabilitation and Reemployment Committee. It was created by Governor Saltonstall and Mr. Long is Chairman. The members of the committee serve on a volunteer basis with the exception of a paid secretary. It was found to be necessary after a survey of the needs of returning servicemen had been studied by a group of representative leaders.

The work of the Committee is one of coordination, i.e., it will serve as a guide to all the local public and private agencies in their task of dealing with the veteran. It is responsible for furnishing to local committees all information

1 The Boston Globe, November 18, 1943.
pertaining to veterans' privileges and rights. It is also furnishing the veteran himself with information as to the various resources for his help and guidance.

The members of the Committee are representatives of the Federal agencies working in the area, plus representatives of State agencies whose business is to help the veteran. The main Committee is divided into sub-committees to deal with specific problems, such as medical care, legal advice, rehabilitation, government benefits and employment.

On December 15, 1943 a letter from the Governor was sent to all the cities and towns outlining the plans of the Committee and suggesting that each local community open its own reception and information center for veterans with an advisory committee patterned after the State plan.

The State Committee hopes that the local committees will use their set-up as a guide but adapt it to the specific needs of their own localities, adding to their memberships leaders in various fields capable of contributing to the success of rehabilitating the returning serviceman.

In asking for the formation of local committees that will be guided by the State Committee, Chairman Long had in mind that there is need to see that duplication of work is avoided and that the confusion which prevailed in dealing with the veterans of World War I be eliminated.

The centers set up under local committees should be able to counsel ex-servicemen in regard to government claims and
help them in presenting their claims to the Veterans' Administration, give them information about education and vocational training programs open to them and advise them about financial assistance if necessary. To do this it will be necessary for each committee to compile a list of Federal, State and local agencies with a description of each agency's work. The State Committee will be responsible for keeping the local committees posted on all Federal, State and local agencies with a description of each agency's work. The State Committee will be responsible for keeping the local committees posted on all Federal and State laws and regulations.

Under jurisdiction of the State, also, comes the responsibility of giving vocational training to veterans not qualified to receive it under the Veterans' Administration. Many veterans are being discharged who cannot qualify for vocational training because their disabilities were not incurred while in service. These men can qualify under the State Board of Vocational Education Program. This program is a joint Federal - State project and the "services include vocational training, medical or surgical treatment, occupational and physical therapy, and prosthetic appliances." While receiving such training the veteran is not entitled to benefits as a matter of right but assistance is provided if necessary.

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on a basis of individual need. The program is operated by the Rehabilitation and Vocational Training Division of the State Department of Education and is supervised and financed by the Federal Security Agency. This program was announced in a presidential message to Congress last October.

CHAPTER VI
THE WORCESTER PLAN

During his years as Commissioner of Soldier's Relief in the City of Worcester, Herbert L. Scarles had ample opportunity to view the effects of World War I on the men who served in the armed forces. A veteran himself he saw with dismay other veterans hanging around Worcester's public parks and streets begging for dimes, of no value to themselves or to the community. When this second world war was underway he began to think that the community had a distinct responsibility to the man who would return from the armed forces. He felt that the Soldier's Relief Department was the ideal agency to work out and head up a program to guide the veteran through his readjustment to civilian life. When he took his plan to Mayor William A. Bennett he met with enthusiastic response and a committee representing the agencies he felt were closely connected with the problem was established. The members are the Commissioner of Soldier's Relief, who was appointed chairman, the Superintendent of the Worcester City Hospital, the Supervisor of the Worcester Memorial Hospital, the Supervisor of the Worcester State Hospital, a physician from the staff of the St. Vincent Hospital, a representative of the Worcester District Medical Society, the Director of the Worcester Boys' Trade School and the Vice President of Norton Company, Worcester's leading industry. The industrial secretary of the Worcester Chamber of
Commerce has met with the committee.

From the meetings of this Committee evolved the Worcester Soldiers' Relief Rehabilitation Clinic which was established September 1, 1943 with Mr. Scarles as Director. It was at first a branch activity of the Soldiers' Relief Department but now the activities of the clinic and the regular work of the Soldiers' Relief Department are merged into one office. The name is in the process of change and will shortly be known as the Veterans' Service Department of the City of Worcester. This new name will alleviate the feelings a veteran might have in approaching an office that had the word relief in its title.

It was felt that the Soldiers' Relief Department was the logical agency to carry out the work of the clinic because it is well known in the city and the one to which the returning soldier was most apt to turn for advice and information or to which other agencies would refer him. The committee felt that the promptness with which a veteran is referred is important in the treatment process. It does not want him to encounter disappointments in job finding that will make him discouraged and become a liability to himself, his family and his community. The selection of the Soldiers' Relief Department took into consideration that no new legislation would have to be enacted as that department had the facilities and authority to expand its work to include the veterans of World War II.
Mr. Scarles, as Chairman, believed that rehabilitation of the serviceman is a full time job for responsible people and should not be left to the well intentioned but sporadic attempts of interested citizens. As a city agency, the Veterans' Service Department has the authority to get information without red tape and to preserve permanent records. Mr. Scarles sees the private social agencies as aids in his plan. Representatives of these agencies have met with him and are anxious to give their time and services to the veterans. They are not, however, officially participating in the clinic's work.

When a serviceman comes to the office he is met by a receptionist. It was intended that the receptionist be a trained social worker but as none were available, someone familiar with the work of the department is being utilized. The receptionist obtains facts concerning the soldier with as little questioning as possible. Here is recorded the fact of his honorable discharge which is his sole credential entitling him to all the services of the department. From this interview it is hoped to discover the feelings of the veteran, whether he has will power to pick up life's battle anew, despite his handicap; whether he expects to return to his old job or is agreeable to taking some course of vocational readjustment so as to enter a new type of employment. If he is disposed to give up the battle and throw himself wholly on the community
for whatever it has to hand out, this attitude is quickly discovered.¹

At the completion of this interview the veteran is examined by a physician in a modern examining room with a nurse in attendance. This set-up is arranged to give the man a feeling that he is receiving the individual attention he would have in going to a private physician of his own choice. If the examination shows a need for specialized and intensive treatment the man is sent, at the city's expense, to one of the clinics of the hospitals cooperating in this plan. The ability of a man to work and the type and degree of work he can do is established by the examining physician or by the hospital clinic after he has been treated. This medical statement is then the basis for vocational counselling and reemployment. "The man, if he is at all cooperative, is not left to shift for himself until he is fully able to do so, even if it requires his re-education or re-training."²

At this point a trained field worker visits the man at home. If he wants to return to his former job he may contact the firm himself or the field worker may do it for him. The advisability of having the worker do it is to assure the employer that the man is able to resume his work. If there is any doubt as to the man's physical or mental ability a report will

² Ibid., p. 41.
be sent him from the Veterans' Service Department. If the man does not want to return to his old type of work or is not capable of doing it, the Department offers him the service of a trained vocational guidance worker. At present a worker from the Worcester Boys' Club is giving two days a week to this work. The ordinary person does not realize the variety and extent of positions that even the severely handicapped can fill. Discouragement might set in unless someone who knows the employment trends, the skills and training necessary for specific jobs and the economic market interviews and gives the veteran the information and opportunity for the retraining that he may need.

To mention an extreme, for the purpose of illustration, there is a class of employees called 'tea tasters' because they sit around a table and taste the flavor of tea so as to give it the proper rating before it goes on the domestic market. Few men would stay on the trail long enough to hunt down a job as uncommon, regardless of how ably they could do the work, but there are many uncommon jobs along the trail, and it is the community's responsibility to stay by the veteran until he gets the job.

Under the Worcester plan the returned serviceman is given advice on any government service to which he is entitled. Legal aid is provided when necessary and relief is given.'to

3 Ibid.
tide the man and his family during the period of readjustment until he becomes self-supporting." A Religious Advisory Consulting Board is part of the plan, also. It consists of representatives of the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish religions who will work with the Rehabilitation and Vocational Guidance departments and to whom individual veterans will be referred for personal consultation with the religious leader of his denomination. This board was established to reach those men presenting personality problems or who are not cooperating with the field worker.

The Worcester plan is endeavoring through dealing with each returning serviceman separately to assist him to fit back into civilian life, thus helping to discharge the home front's obligations and gratitude to its soldiers. In the words of Mr. Scarles,

> We feel that this is definitely a community responsibility wherein we have an already operating department as a part of our official City Government established to render services and assistance to all veterans, their dependents and needy parents. We are able under the program to bring all functions and services pertaining to these men under one roof, centrally located, where these people may receive all services in whatever form without leaving the confines of this Department.

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4 Herbert L. Scarles, Soldiers' Relief Department, mimeographed statement.

5 Ibid., p. 4.
CHAPTER VII

NEWTON'S CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE

On November 1, 1943, a research committee of the Newton Community Council made a detailed report to the Council of the facilities in Newton for the returning serviceman. This committee had evolved as the result of a growing awareness on the part of Newton's civic and private social agencies that the problem of their men and women returning from war was on their doorstep and that some intelligent plan should be worked out to render assistance in the adjustment process. The report stated that at that time the Rehabilitation Committeemen of the Selective Service Board and the Red Cross with the help of the Community agencies were able to cope with the problem of rehabilitation because the number of veterans was small and the job opportunities were plentiful. However, it was felt that there was a decided need to plan for the time when war would be over and a great influx of veterans would be seeking guidance. The Committee felt the problem was too large for merely local agencies and urged the support and cooperation of private and public agencies and asked for federal and state planning. However, it was decided that the local community could start the ball rolling.

The problem, as seen by Newton, divides itself into four categories, jobs, education, health, and personal problems; each separate, but all having a common bond in their need for
expert counselling.

The Committee made specific recommendations, chief of which was the establishment of a central committee composed of representative citizens of Newton. This committee's work would be to coordinate existing facilities to avoid duplication of work and protect the veteran from being shunted from one agency to another. Furthermore, it was suggested that the committee could catalogue all educational facilities and keep abreast of new opportunities under federal auspices, not only in educational fields but in all areas that would be related to the veteran. In doing this it suggested utilization of a corps of capable volunteers plus the public and private agencies of Newton.

Another recommendation was that the committee should not remain static but be flexible enough to tackle new problems as they arose.

In forming such a group it was suggested that it should be composed of seven to which additional members, as chairmen of special activities, could be added as needed. Two members should be the Mayor of Newton and the Chairman of the Community Council. From the group a chairman would be selected who would be conversant with the work of social agencies, have the confidence of civic and industrial leaders and be able to recruit as aides representatives of business, education, religious and professional groups. There would be one paid executive, a per-
son with experience in personnel work and one who would have the respect of all groups.

It was also recommended that the work of the committee should stem from the Community Council and be financed by the Community Chest.

With these definite recommendations as a basis the people of Newton have established the "Citizens' Advisory Committee for Returning Veterans". As it is functioning now, the Committee follows the suggested plan of Governor Saltonstall which he outlined in a letter to all the cities and towns of the Commonwealth on December 1, 1943.

The committee members are six in number, plus the Chairman, and are outstanding citizens of Newton. They represent business, professional and civic groups. The Committee is supplemented by a group of business executives who are also employers. The Executive Secretary is Mr. John Wheelock who has been Executive Secretary of the Newton Public Safety Committee and is conversant with the business and professional groups in the city.

The first work of the Committee was to prepare and send out a questionnaire to the next of kin of the man in service asking about his education, occupational history, training in service and his aspirations for the period after the war. A smaller but similar one was sent to the man himself to get his personal views. It is interesting to note how closely the
answers of the serviceman followed those of his parents or wife.

When the man is discharged the Committee receives notification from the Selective Service Board and from the Red Cross. Immediately a letter over the Chairman's signature is sent out telling him about the Committee and making its resources available.

In the first interview with the veteran practical questions concerning his insurance, claims for government benefits, mustering out pay, etc., are asked. He is also questioned about his physical condition and if there is any doubt about his ability to work an examination is suggested. The Committee decided against requiring this medical check-up because the members felt the man probably was tired of the routine examinations given in service. However, if he wants this service it is available. There is a physician at the Committee's office at appointed times. Referral to hospitals or clinics can be arranged if necessary.

One of the specific services the Committee gives is the photostating of the man's discharge papers. Feeling that these are his most valuable possessions the Committee arranged with the Soldiers' Relief Department to have two copies made, one is returned to the veteran with the original and the other is kept on file in case he may lose both original and copy and find he has need for it at a later date.
The Committee through its individual members is qualified to give legal advice, advice on insurance, advice on the government benefits to which the veteran is entitled. A job may be found for him by the Committee or he may be referred to the United States Employment Service if he does not want to resume his former employment.

The Committee looks upon itself as a referral agency. Its stated purpose is to make available to all veterans the local, State and Federal agencies set up to aid them in personal, educational, health and employment problems. It does not consider itself as a permanent agency but is planning to function only as long as there is need for a central clearing house to steer the ex-serviceman on the right road to adjustment to civilian life.

The New England Mutual Life Insurance Company, learning of the Citizens' Advisory Committee For Returning Veterans, recommended a study of the plan to their employees suggesting that they cooperate with any group in their own community in establishing a similar plan. It also published in pamphlet form a description of "The Newton Plan for Reestablishing Demobilized Veterans" and recommended it to the Mayors of America.
CHAPTER VIII

THE CANTON SERVICEMEN'S AND WOMEN'S
HOME COMING FUND COMMITTEE

When Canton's servicemen and women return from the wars they are going to be told that a fund of several thousand dollars is all theirs to do with as they wish. The longer the war lasts, the bigger the fund is going to be.

This is not idle fancy but is the result of planning by the citizens of this town of 6,381 people. The idea was first conceived in the fall of 1943 by Richard H. Henley, Selectman, who is also a coordinator of welding training at the Fore River Shipyards in Quincy. It came about as the result of a manpower shortage in the local industries. Mr. Henley put before a group of his fellow townsmen a plan to organize a group of men and women who would pledge to work four hours a night at least once a week in some war industry, the compensation for their labor being turned into a common fund to be used for their men and women who would return from the war. Thus was formed the Canton Servicemen's and Women's Home Coming Fund Committee.

The members are engaged in various war and essential industries. Mothers of families who have worked all day, rising

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1 The Boston Sunday Globe, Feature Section, January 30, 1944, p. 5.
A page with text that is not legible due to the quality of the image.
at early hours to get their men off to work, hie themselves off one night a week, and some more frequently, to do their stint for their relatives and neighbors serving in the armed forces. Men, who have worked all day at their own laborious jobs, report at night to some local firm and put in their hours for the fund. Personally they are all getting a good bit of satisfaction from this organized team-play that is already showing concrete results. According to Harold B. Capen, who is town treasurer and also treasurer of the fund, the money is being raised by the rank and file of the people. There has been no attempt to ask for outright grants from the wealthy.

The bulk of the men and women turning in four hours or more weekly for the benefit of the fund are far from being in the upper income tax brackets. Some of them could do nicely with some of the checks they pass in so willingly each week. 2

The fund has been supplemented by the running of social events, such as whist parties, dances, a minstrel show and a bazaar. This gives all the citizens of Canton a chance to feel that they are helping in post-war plans for their returning servicemen.

The exact disposition of the fund has not been decided. The committee will leave it up to the veterans themselves as to how it will be spent. Perhaps it will be given in a lump sum to help build up an organization or it may be distributed

2 Ibid.
individually as a sort of nest egg. This latter idea has popular appeal as the committee feels that this plan will enable it to assist each soldier rapidly if he has need to ask for financial help.

At Christmas time the fund was dipped into to send a five dollar check to each man and woman in service. Some of these checks were returned with the request they be put back into the fund. Others kept them and from the letters that came back to the committee the gift aroused a feeling of gratitude to the folks back home, not only for the material remembrance but for the spirit it stood for - a spirit of home front participation in their efforts and a feeling that these efforts would not be forgotten when hostilities ceased.

Besides this Home Coming Fund Committee, the town of Canton is thinking of job opportunities for their soldiers. Last year $50,000 was laid aside for post-war public works and in the town meeting this year an equal sum was approved. This money will be used when the war is over and restrictions on building materials are lifted.

Canton's plan is based on the good neighbor policy characteristic of many communities. It is a participation of patriotic families and friends of servicemen in the work of speeding victory and making the victory worthwhile to the men who come back.
Cognizant of the problems that servicemen would have to face on return to civilian life, the Boston Council of Social Agencies appointed a committee on September 1, 1943 to study the situation and see what needs could be met by existing agencies and what was being left undone. The survey revealed that there were no adequate resources for occupational information and vocational counselling. To bridge this gap an office was opened on November 1, 1943 in order that these men and women (veterans) may have a center at local level where they may have interpreted to them the services offered by Army Emergency Relief, the Reemployment Committeemen of Selective Service, the Veterans' Representative at United States Employment, and at Civil Service, the Home Service of the American Red Cross, Soldiers' Relief, and other national and state organizations. In addition, many of them are unfamiliar with the various Community Fund agencies which may help them or their families with more immediate solution of some pressing problem while they are waiting the outcome of Governmental machinery which of necessity frequently takes what to the individual seems a long time.  

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1 Community Information Center, Monthly Bulletin, Massachusetts Society for Mental Hygiene, December, 1943, pp. 6-7.
The Center was staffed with a director, a man of experience in job counselling, a secretary and a veteran who acted as a receptionist. Various social agencies lent staff members on a volunteer basis one day a week. These people trained in the techniques of interviewing and aware of the social and health agencies in the area, interviewed the man and gave him information regarding agencies that could help him with specific problems. An arrangement was worked out with local hospitals where the veteran could get a physical check-up to determine his physical assets and liabilities for employment. These interviewers then referred the man to the Vocational Department of the Center. This department was staffed by trained vocational counsellors supplied by local educational institutions who talked with the serviceman about his occupational problems, arranged for aptitude tests when necessary, interpreted the local employment market and made definite recommendations regarding the use of Federal and local agencies.

In December, 1943, Mayor Tobin of Boston announced the formation of a local advisory committee and a center for returning servicemen, to be known as Boston's Reception and Information Center for Veterans. He invited the Boston Council of Social Agencies to move into the Boston Center and assume responsibility of handling the information, personal counselling, and occupational counselling departments. He further announced that:
the following organizations, in addition to the Council, have accepted his invitation to use space and provide services at the new Center: American Red Cross, War Manpower Commission and United States Employment Service, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Spanish War Veterans, Disabled War Veterans, Soldiers Relief, and Army Emergency Relief. 2

The Center was put under the directorship of John E. Delay, Commander of the American Legion, who described the Center as a city proposition in which all social agencies would take part so that it would not be a hit or miss affair but would be able to give the veteran the service he needs within the confines of the center.

The set-up of the Center underwent a change, however, at the instigation of veteran organizations. "The Suffolk County Council, Veterans of Foreign Wars, will seek to bar the use of the Boston Council of Social Agencies from the veterans set-up through restrictions and other appropriate action." This followed the action of other veterans' organizations who objected to the social agencies' proposed work in the Center in that it was conceived by them as an investigating process that would not be welcomed by the veteran.


3 John E. Delay, talk given at Elliot Hall, Boston, February 18, 1944.

4 The Boston Post, February 26, 1944, p. 1.

5 Ibid.
This meant that the Boston Council of Social Agencies was forced to alter the plans that originally were formulated for helping the veteran. Under the new arrangement the Council agreed to staff, equip and operate an Employment Counselling Unit, not as a job placement service but to counsel the men in regard to choosing the best possible job in the light of their abilities and the economic market.

The Council did not feel it was a wise move to separate the personal counseling part of the staff from the job counseling but in the interests of cooperation agreed to do this. The Mayor and his Advisory Committee planned to use social workers from the Department of Public Welfare and the Social Service Department of the Boston City Hospital as interviewers for men with personal problems. To date, and the Center has been open since May 22, 1944, there is no social worker at the Center with the exception of the Red Cross representative upon whose shoulders has fallen the task of any social work problem that has come up.

The Council and the Vocational Counselling Unit is concerned as to the value of its work when it is separated from the personal counselling unit, particularly with men coming to it who are not yet ready for work and who could benefit by the services of an interviewer trained to help people discover their real desires. The difficulties of some veterans will need to be interpreted to employers but as the center now exists there is no provision for this service.
CHAPTER X
CONCLUSIONS

An editorial in Fortune, October, 1943, warns against looking upon the returning soldier as a problem child. There is justification in such a warning. No man who has risked his life, willingly or unwillingly, that his country's ideals may be preserved wants to be met on his return by a suspicious civilian population that expects the worst of him in the way of maladjustment and discontent. Dr. Harry C. Solomon, head of the Boston Psychopathic Hospital and professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, is quoted in the Boston Evening Globe as follows:

But whatever his need, the man who has been through what our men have in this war should be met on his return with the honest respect of an equal, not with maudlin sentimentality. He should have a comradely, friendly, honest appreciation of what he has done for us. We should not make a hero of him or overprotect him. We should accept him as an ordinary human being. The wife or sweetheart who flaunts herself as being saner or more normal than the returned soldier will be giving him great provocation to knock her block off!  

The success of the readjustment of the returned veteran depends, to a large extent, upon the individual


himself, upon the sort of person he was before he went into service. The normal, well-adjusted man will be able to satisfactorily recreate a place for himself in civilian life.

However, there is another side to this picture. Some of the men returning to civilian life were problem children before they left for the armed services. Some of them never did have satisfactory adjustments in their personal lives. "Many of them who have made borderline adjustments in civilian life have been forced to withdraw from military life suffering from exaggerated forms of their earlier difficulties." They quarreled with their wives, neglected their children, deserted their families, lost one job after another, or perhaps, never obtained one. These very men will cry loudest that their country has let them down. They will provide fertile soil for the nurturing of seeds of discontent. They will be vulnerable to every crack pot scheme that the nation at large is so anxious to avoid.

This is the place where social service can render an invaluable service to the nation. Skilled through long years of dealing with numerous "problem children" and problem men and women, trained case workers can and are willing to try to help


these men effect satisfactory personal adjustments so that they can make use of the rehabilitation and training programs available to them and thus will be able to find their niche in the post-war economy the nation is trying to build.

There is another group to which case workers can render service. That is the group of men who had a normally satisfactory civilian life but who under the stress and strains of service life whether in actual combat or not, broke down and are being discharged. As Dr. Whitehead of the Lovell General Hospital pointed out, these men will need help to regain their self-esteem. They are showing feelings of failure at having disappointed themselves, their families, their fellow soldiers and their country. They don't want to face their families and their community. Moreover those who were victims of combat neurosis appear to be developing an increased sense of dependency and passivity. Anxiety can be present long after hospital treatment is discontinued and some new civilian difficulty can cause "battle dreams" and intensified "startle" reactions to recur. Now just giving such men jobs for which they are technically or professionally capable or giving them training consistent with their inherent abilities is obviously not going to be the whole answer. The community owes them more than that. It owes them the service of a qualified person who

5 Duncan Whitehead, Talk given at Eliot Hall, Boston, February 18, 1944.
has the time to sit down with each individual for a thorough exploration of his personal problems and in this way supportive treatment aiming at enabling the man to establish himself can be instituted. This qualified person is the social case worker who knows the value of the individual approach and has skill in using it.

What about the family to which the serviceman returns? Are wives, sweethearts, parents and other relatives prepared to deal with the restlessness he brings with him? Will they be able to take his warranted or perhaps unwarranted criticism of the home front? There will be a good deal of family friction if their families do not have an understanding attitude.

Social workers have been helping for years to improve family relationships. Their services now can well be given to the families of veterans to show them how an honest appreciation of what their husband, sweetheart or son has been through will help in his ultimate readjustment to civilian life. A man will not feel satisfied with a sentimental acclaim. He wants solid understanding of the experiences he has faced and he wants it more from his family than from any other source. What if his town or fraternal organization hands him a job on a silver platter? Will this compensate for the fact that his wife, smug in her ideas of normal living, is not willing to give ear to the thoughts he had and the ideals he formed while away. War brings changes in its wake. The civilian
front will have to adapt itself to these changes. Some will need help in adapting and this help is being offered by social service agencies.

However, from the foregoing chapters it is quite obvious that the plans now in force are not utilizing to any extent the services of social work. There is little "opportunity to discuss his (the veterans) problem with those who are not only well informed in regard to resources but skilled in helping individuals to meet their problems", which, as the Mental Hygiene Bulletin stated, is "an important first step in eliminating the difficulties which the ex-serviceman or serviceman faces in readjustment to civilian life."

The average citizen sees the problem as one of plentiful jobs but, according to Dr. Overholser, this is not enough. There is a need for sympathy and understanding. As Mr. Anderson pointed out there is a need for skilled service to know when a man is ready for a job. But are the programs described giving this service?


7 Ibid.

8 Winfred Overholser, "Some Responses of the Human Organism to Environmental Stress", paper read at Boston University's Institute on Post-War Problems, March 11, 1944.

As you will note, the present governmental provisions for returned veterans largely concern themselves with the problem of reemployment for discharged soldiers. This is, perhaps, due to the present manpower shortage, as well as the long history of depression prior to the war. There is little emphasis on the psychiatric features of rehabilitation, except for veterans' hospital treatment and the possibility of developing extensive service under official state rehabilitation programs.  

Programs that feel that social agencies have no part in the picture except perhaps to help carry out the plan of others, or that feel that a thorough job of rehabilitation can be done if the man "cooperates", are not doing the best job for the men coming home. Untrained interviewers cannot recognize the ambivalent feelings of a man accustomed to the regimentation of service life when he is faced with the problem of employment. Wanting, yet not wanting a job, he may fail miserably in several good opportunities. How long is sympathy going to be given him if the men trying to help him do not recognize his symptoms? "Those of us at home need not be sentimental but these lads should have good scientific handling. We need to be patient with tempers, instabilities and the like."  

Social workers do not want to do the whole job of rehabilitating the veteran. They are well aware that they could  

10 Cunningham, op. cit., p. 3.  
11 Solomon, op. cit., p. 4.
not do it all. But they do want to use their skills and techniques where they know they can be useful. It is vital to treat each man as an individual and in view of his total personality and experience judge the effect of war upon him. This is the work of social service and just as business leaders do not expect social workers to grasp the intricacies of production graphs and the like, so social workers do not expect business men, although perhaps veterans themselves, to be able to explore personality patterns. The community will fail in its responsibilities to its sons and daughters who have given so much that the community might live, if it does not utilize every last man or woman who has a worth-while contribution to make toward helping the returning servicemen fit back into civilian life.

It is the individual approach to the veteran's problem that is necessary if the community is to do a good job of making the serviceman an integral part of civilian life again. Therefore, this study is meant to show to what extent social case work concepts and practices have entered into the various plans and the need for further extension of social services to the returning serviceman.

Approved,

Richard A. Conant, Dean
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