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Rehabilitation School Opened At Hospital.

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Rehabilitation School Opened At the Hospital

(Continued from Page 1)

Army, military correspondence, personnel records and reports, company records and reports and orientation lectures.

As for the last subject, Capt. Boeckman is particularly ambitious, desirous of keeping the men well posted on current events. An impressive array of speakers have already addressed the school. Lt. William V. Davis of the 147th Station Hospital described his experiences at Pearl Harbor. Lt. Perloff spoke about Germany, where he lived before Hitler's rise to power. Cpl. Lucy Schneider, a WAAC, told of the transformation of Germany into the Third Reich, and Lt. Bernard Hollander, assistant trial judge advocate, discussed civil and military law.

Regularly the men are examined thoroughly by Lt. Perloff to ascertain if their condition will permit them to proceed to the more advanced group or be discharged from the school and returned to their regular organizations.

These examinations are particularly important considering the secondary function of the school, which is indeed no less significant than its primary purpose—the gradual re-adaptation of convalescents to the requirements of military life. This second function is to study, under working conditions, soldiers with physical disabilities which prevent the performance of full duty, and to recommend the type of duty compatible with the physical qualifications of the students. Assisting Capt. Boeckman and Lt. Perloff in this phase of the work is Lt. Edward Allis, the school's personnel officer.

Through these studies it may be possible either to correct such disabilities through special physical training, or if the disability proves incurable, to recommend the soldier's assignment to duties commensurate with his physical qualification, or, having determined that the disability precludes further military service, to recommend his discharge on a certificate of disability.

The boys, however, whom this writer saw on his visit to the school, didn't look like moribunds or cripples—quite the contrary, for most of them gave the impression of being sturdy, athletic chaps. When Lt. Perloff asked them how they felt, they declared, positively and cheerfully, that they were feeling fine. And when he wanted to know how they liked the whole idea of Camp Crowder's Rehabilitation School, they said: "It's a swell idea, sir; it's all right with us . . ."

Message
July 29, 1943

NO. 25.

Rehabilitation School Opened At Hospital

By T/3 KLAUS MANN.

The Rehabilitation School at the Station Hospital is something new, not only for Camp Crowder.

It's a special outfit—technically connected with the hospital, but military in its way of life—conceived and conducted for the specific purpose of preparing convalescent soldiers for return to a "duty" status in the shortest period of time.

Formerly it was usual to grant a sick furlough of several weeks to soldiers who had been seriously ill or had undergone a major operation. It turned out, however, that many of the men returned from home in an even poorer shape than they had been in before.

A convalescent needs exercise, special training, a regular, wholesome life. That's what he gets in the Rehabilitation School.

This kind of scheme has been tried out by the British Army, but never before in this country on such a large scale. Of course, convalescent soldier-patients have been taking special exercises in other camp hospitals, too. But, even as convalescents, they continued to live as patients, in hospital wards, together with sick men.

In the Rehabilitation School, however, there are no "patients." The men are called "students" and seem to lead a normal GI life—wearing regulation Army uniforms and being subject to the rules of military discipline. They are, actually, soldiers assigned to a special duty. That special duty is to gain weight, to strengthen their weakened muscles, to become healthy again as quickly as possible.

The school was activated about three weeks ago. It consists now of approximately 150 men occupying four barracks. The commandant is Capt. Franklin P. Boeckman, MAC, with Lt. William H. Perloff, MC, as school surgeon.

Assisting the officers in carrying out the school's program are S/Sgt. Thomas H. Cesena, who is acting as first sergeant, and Sgts. Edgar L. Williams, Keith W. Bush and Henry Grabowski.

The first results of the new set-up are extremely encouraging, as this writer could see when the commandant showed him around the other day. The captain denies modestly that the Rehabilitation School is his brain-child. "It was Major William F. Stanek's idea," he informed the writer. Major Stanek is chief of the orthopedic section at the Station hospital.

During our tour of the school's obstacle course, Capt. Boeckman said: "As you see, we have all the devices in two different versions. One is for our 'primary' groups—those students who have just been turned over to us from the hospital and still are a little shaky—and the other type for the 'advanced' sections who have been with us already for a couple of weeks or so."

And he demonstrated the various obstacles—jungle maze, V-run, hurdle, rope-swing across a trench, cargo-net climb, and others, each in two sizes—one, as it were, for children (that is, for the shaky newcomers), the other, more exacting, for the grown-ups or nearly recovered men.

Both groups—primary and advanced—go swimming together, twice a week, and they have a swell time playing games—basketball and croquet and tennis. Their specialty is softball, and just a few days ago they won a game against the Medics team, which last year won the post championship.

Close order drill and marching on open roads are also part of their physical training program. The hikes they make are not very long, of course—just two or three miles—and they don't carry full packs, rifles and gas masks.

Their days are nicely filled out, from reveille at 6:45 a. m. until retreat at 5:45 p. m. From retreat until bed-check time at 11 o'clock the "students" are free to go wherever they please.

But between those two ceremonies—reveille and retreat—there are quite a few things to do. The barracks have to be kept clean (in fact, this writer found them neater than he has seen many a barrack inhabited by perfectly healthy men), and there is a heavy daily schedule of physical training and calisthenics, plus several hours of school work.

For the program of rehabilitation is supplemented by courses in basic military subjects common to all of the arms and services, such as military courtesy, Articles of War, sex morality lectures, hygiene and sanitation, organization of the

(Continued on Page 5)

ADVICE TO SOLDIERS:

"A Slip of the Lip
May Sink a Ship"