

The Returning Soldier: How Army Guides Him

Reorientation Program as Aid to
Veterans Facing Readjustments on
Home Front After Battle Training

Use of press, radio, films and lectures in meeting demobilization problems

Exactly how wide is the gap between the thinking of the front-line soldier and that of the civilian? The one lives at close grips with hunger, pain and violent death; the other is going through the war in safety, comfort and a fair degree of luxury. How can the gap between the two be narrowed? These are questions for which the generals are trying to find an answer. The information will shape future Army policies.

The young man going into the Army has a course in orientation to fit him for fighting. He has to be shown what kind of people his enemies are. He has to be told why it is necessary to fight. In



—U. S. Army

GI REQUEST: Combat troops wanted a kiss from a favorite entertainer. Out it went over Army's global air network.

—CIAA



the same manner, the Army is finding that the men returning from war have to be fitted for civilian life. They bring back resentments against men and women who have known little privation and less hardship.

Homecoming plans. Thus, in the midst of the hardest fighting of the war, and long before final victory can be expected, the Army's research agency—a wing of Maj. Gen. F. H. Osborn's Information and Education Division—is busy with studies whose purpose is to collect material to help the homecoming soldier to bridge this gap in thinking.

Long before the big rush for home starts, the Army hopes to have the kinks worked out of its separation system so that the men will be discharged quickly and be given information needed to return to civilian life. They will be told what opportunities await them, what essential helps are available to them as veterans.

Orientation. The job of fitting the men mentally for coming back to civilians who led a pleasant life during the war is one which General Osborn regards as of equal importance to the task of fitting the men for war. Many of the aids that are now used to toughen morale for war may have to be thrown into reverse to soften the soldiers' attitudes for civilian life.

In the present work, lectures, discussions, newspapers, films, radio and newsmaps are used to show the men what they are fighting for and why the job they are doing is important, urgent, vital.

This has meant the creation by the Information and Education Division of a news service which funnels information to 2,000 Army newspapers in addition to *Stars and Stripes*, with 1,000,000 daily circulation, and *Yank*, which publishes simultaneously in 14 separate places overseas and has a paid circulation of 1,560,000. It means a radio system with over 100 Army transmitting stations and 300 other outlets of one kind or another. The top entertainers of the nation give their services. And the entertainment is intermixed with news, educational and orientation material.

And, also highly regarded as a morale factor, the division has created and operates the Armed Forces Institute with the largest student body on earth. It has upward of 400,000 students, nine branches in different parts of the world, and offer several hundred correspondence courses ranging from elementary subjects to upper-level college studies. Colleges and high schools will give postwar credit for these

The research staff provides the Army with a continuing check of the manner in

which its personnel and morale policies are working. At home and in all of the major overseas areas, highly trained and specialized officers study troop attitudes and troop anxieties.

Studies on combat fear helped officers to deal with that problem. Studies on furlough and absence without leave aided in revision of regulations. Similar studies gave the men a hand in shaping the policies that will govern their postwar demobilization.

Thus far, 150 separate surveys have been made, involving 300,000 men. The range of these studies have been: factors involving the morale of infantrymen who have been in combat; how men feel about their food, laundry, clothing; what they hope to do after the war, and whether they expect their wives to work in the postwar world.

A great deal of the present work is aimed at the reorientation job that must be done when fighting ceases. Officers must be able to tell their men why they can't lay down their arms and go right home.



GI SCHOLAR: Foreign language instruction is only one of hundreds of courses offered to servicemen. It has its uses.

