



Spiritual Welfare Commission

EV. LUTHERAN JOINT SYNOD OF WISCONSIN AND OTHER STATES
FOR MEN AND WOMEN IN MILITARY SERVICE



PEACE AND THE S. W. C.

By Rev. E. R. Blakesell

Peace does not mean the end of the S. W. C. With cessation of hostilities, the S. W. C., instead of "folding-up," must now "follow-up" and intensify its efforts to maintain contact with the servicemen and women of our country who will continue to serve at home and abroad in the occupational and reconstructional forces. More particularly must the S. W. C. intensify its efforts in behalf of the spiritual welfare of thousands of our servicemen, of whom many will for months and years be confined to hospitals, convalescent and rehabilitation centers. For them, peace will not erase painful and significant memories.

Our Synod's spiritual literature mailing program will now, more than ever, prove its worth in encouraging and strengthening such, who far from being able to continue to serve in time of peace under the monotony of military duty without the emotional stimulus and tension of war and battle conditions. Particularly now will they need that which the Word of God can bring them, as it has in the past years of blood and carnage.

While every effort is being made to provide personal pastoral ministrations for the hospitalized scattered in hundreds of hospital areas, yet for them the spiritual literature mailing program of the S. W. C. must continue to provide an unbroken contact with every man, until such time as the respective congregations can take care of their spiritual needs.

Our Synod's mailing program the past five years, in serving more than 1,200,000 service men and women, is too well known to require further explanation. However, not so well known are the efforts of the S. W. C. to provide personal ministrations for the casualties of war. At present our Synod's sick and wounded, numbering over 1,200, are scattered throughout this country in 304 different hospitals and localities. These are regular personal ministrations from 210 Synodical conference pastors, some full-time and others part-time. As the physical effects of war and years of battlefield living conditions, in many cases now dormant, become active in various forms of incapacitation, the number of hospitalized servicemen will increase, so that the work of the S. W. C. in peace time will of necessity require intensification and expansion in particular.

At present wherever there are larger concentrations of our hospitalized, our contact pastors of our Synod are providing personal ministrations. In other areas, regular calls are made and transfer records to our office led by our part-time contact pastors. This follow-up of the transferred and hospitalized is an important future part of the S. W. C.'s work. Our obligations and privileges make a plea for the whole-hearted support of this work. The following pages pictorialize a small portion of our efforts in hospitals and veterans administration facilities.



Office

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FROM A HOSPITAL IN AUSTRIA . . .

Dear Friends: This is the first time I have taken advantage of the mails to thank you very much for the services you and your organization have rendered me in this far-off land. I have just left the hospital and while in the hospital I received quite a few letters and sermons from you and found them very interesting and they fed my soul with the nourishment it was seeking. One of your pamphlets I must have read a hundred times. Lying on a sick bed, unable to move, lowers one's morale, but I found strength in your sermons and prayers. Accept my humble apologies for not writing sooner. Your Friend, . . .



FROM A GENERAL HOSPITAL . . . Dear Friends in Christ: Last November 20 I wrote a letter to you and enclosed a money order and entrusted it to one of my buddies. On December 4 I was seriously wounded and was sent back to the United States. Today I received this letter I wrote to you on November 20. I feel sure this money order is still O.K. and I am sending it on to you again. This is in appreciation for all the fine letters I have received from you. It means very much while one is in combat. The only comfort one can have is to know, "Lo, I am with you always." May God give His blessing on your splendid work. Your Friend . . .



FROM THE PACIFIC . . . Dear Sirs: I wish to thank you for the literature and spiritual booklets that have reached me always, no matter where my army duties took me. During the past months my copies have been shared and my buddies and I read each one and then usually a discussion follows. We are always trying to apply the lessons we learn to our daily life. Thanking you again. Sincerely, . . .

Dear Sirs: I have been receiving your very fine spiritual literature for over two years now and would like to tell you how very much I have always enjoyed reading it. I was overseas in the Pacific for over sixteen months and during that time your material always reached me and most of the time very promptly, which is a "pat on the back" for your very efficient mailing system. By doing such work you are doing much to keep Christian boys, who are serving our country, in contact with their church at home and not to forget their Christianity which they were taught. Sincerely, your friend, . . .