

CALLING THE COMMUNITY



Re-Establishment—Whose Job?

PROBLEMS?

Four, five, six years Service, and now back in civvy circulation! Strange? Maybe a little, temporarily. Problems? Who hasn't!

You want a job—you need training to get the one that will prove satisfying with reasonable promise of permanency. You married whilst in the services and you haven't a home of your own. Little personal problems are cropping up in unexpected places. There are times when you feel unsure how to approach them—a bit out of touch. These sort of things can be bewildering to the "soldier from the wars returning. . . ."

But Servicemen and women have not been left to solve these problems alone. Facilities have been built up for their benefit, to help in their general re-establishment in civilian life, through a number of governmental agencies. That is as it should be but to be successful and satisfying, re-establishment of servicemen and women cannot be regarded as the sole responsibility of governmental bodies or selective sections in the community.

EVERYBODY'S JOB.

Re-establishment is everybody's job, the butcher's, the baker's, the candlestick maker's—yours and mine, we're all in it—or should be.

Our Forces in the field fought for principles affecting all of us, not just a few in particular. On the Home Front the effort was different but not less vital.

Team work won the war—in post-war the lesson is obvious surely, and there is a splendid example of team spirit in the work of **Repatriation Local Committees**. What are they?

THE BRIDGE

To thousands of ex-members of the Forces and their families, Repatriation Local Committees have been "guide philosopher and friend" through the years, for the first was formed after World War I, closely following the establishment of the Repatriation Department, some 27 years ago, whose founders recognised at the outset that no matter how efficient and sympathetic the administration of a public department may be, its activities must be restricted to procedures which do not always meet the individual case of hardship, or the unusual situation.



To supplement the official Repatriation Scheme, citizen support was needed, and it came in full measure, for here was post-war work that could be done by those voluntary bodies, individuals and organisations that had given such splendid service during the war years of 1914-18.

So in war's aftermath the Repatriation Local Committees became heir to these various associations, a bridge between the Repatriation Department and the returning veteran.

Hundreds of these Committees grew out of the Community all over Australia, and did invaluable work in helping to solve the problems of individual adjustment. Some of the Repatriation Local Committees have persisted through the years and have developed patterns of co-operative action, serving their communities well.

Repatriation Local Committees Are Needed—NOW.

Now at the end of World War II there is even greater need for the community to respond and help to establish more Repatriation Committees, extend their influence and increase flexibility to meet particular needs in ever broader fields.

The work they have done in the past cannot be overestimated, but there is even greater urgency to intensify their work in the important present and vital future. Throughout Australia today there are over 550 Repatriation Local Committees, made up of citizens from all walks of life, co-operating with governmental agencies and amplifying their work, deeply concerned with the welfare of returning Servicemen and women, anxious to see that they are integrated into their communities, welcomed home, not only with bunting and brass bands, but with practical evidence of gratitude and the determination that the years filched from them by war shall be made good as far as that is possible.

It is the job of his neighbourhood to see that a veteran gets on to his social feet and is welded into the social pattern so there are no sharp edges between service and civilian life.

Before he went away it may be that he belonged to a cricket club; tennis or golf might have been his week-end relaxations. Perhaps he was workshop organiser for his Union, the secretary of a Church society or perhaps a member of a Little Theatre group—whatever it might have been the Repatriation Local Committee can be the channel through which our ex-Servicemen and women can renew their various social relationships and weave their lives once more into a civilian community.

Five hundred and fifty Repatriation Local Committees in the Commonwealth is good, but two thousand would be better, and that is the target for 1946. To give practical expression to the gratitude we must all feel towards the men and women who made it possible to walk the earth a free people, there can be no better way than taking an active part in campaigning for and helping to develop a Repatriation Local Committee in your own District.

HOW IT IS DONE—COMMUNITY IN ACTION.

You will receive every assistance and encouragement from the Repatriation Commission, and to help in the preliminary organisation of a Local Committee notes for guidance have been prepared and may be obtained from the Deputy Commissioner of Repatriation in any State Capital. Though it is not intended to duplicate the work of that booklet here, it might be of interest to set down briefly the way in which a Repatriation Local Committee came into being in Geraldton, Western Australia. It could be the beginning, with variations, of any one of the 550 Repatriation Local Committees which have as their common objective—community effort towards helping ex-Servicemen and women, not in any mechanical fashion but by being genuinely interested in the



solving of problems, which might arise for those who have been away for a number of years from normal living and their own business—away on the community's business of fighting a war.

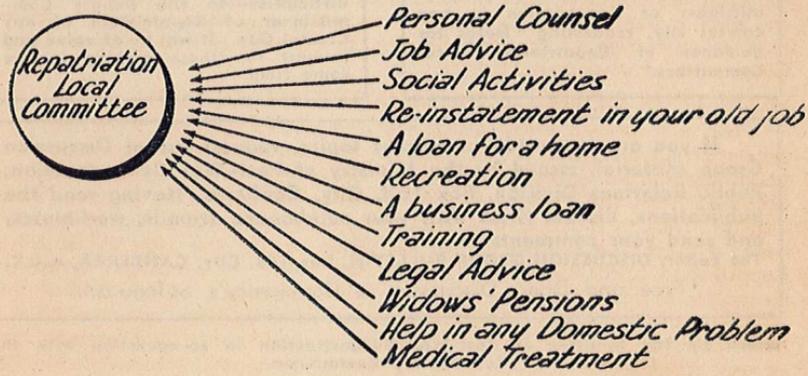
On a recent Wednesday night—it was the 19th April, 1946—representative citizens of Geraldton, Western Australia, gathered together for the purpose of forming a Repatriation Committee in their district. The Mayor had called the meeting, and amongst those present were members of the R.S.S.A.I.L.A., the district agricultural adviser, a representative of the Geraldton Traders' Association, the Town Clerk, executives of the Chamber of Commerce, Councillors, and other interested citizens and voluntary bodies. Officers of the Repatriation Commission, Commonwealth Employment Service, and Post-War Reconstruction travelled from Perth to attend, so that the meeting might be told of the ways in which Repatriation Local Committees could be aided in their work. After general discussion a Committee was formed from those present, and this is indicative of the democratic way in which these Committees come into being. They are not restricted in composition to any particular number, and to meet special needs individuals may be co-opted; an elected executive body of seven works in the closest relationship with the Committee.

And so at Geraldton, W.A. another Repatriation Local Committee has been launched and yet another community goes into action to "serve those who served you".

Perhaps it doesn't sound very exciting put down in cold print, but it is. It's the living proof of neighbourliness, the acceptance of mutual responsibility, the team spirit, the chance of the individual to find understanding help and guidance in the solution of his problems through his community. Repatriation Local Committees have done and are doing invaluable work. In the years ahead they have limitless possibilities. Give them your support, interest yourself in their work, make it yours either directly or through your local activities. There's no "cut and dried" plan, but the notes for the guidance of those who want to help in Repatriation Local Committee development provide the framework into which can be fitted the particular approach. Apply to the Deputy Commissioner of Repatriation in your State, and a copy of these notes will be sent to you.

TO EX-SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN.

If you have a Repatriation Local Committee in your district, channel your enquiries through it; make it your focal point in seeking advice. Here are some of the ways in which your Repatriation Local Committee can serve you.

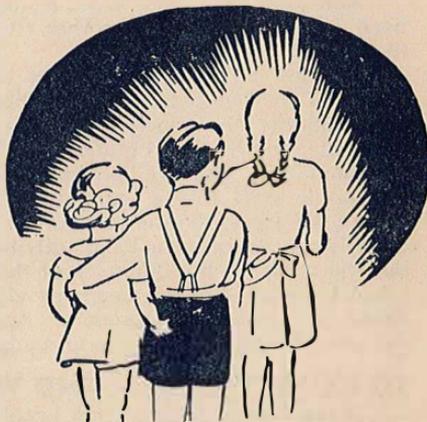


If there is not a Repatriation Local Committee in your district why not help in pioneering one?

Many of you may feel jaded after your years of war service and hesitant about taking on anything that means attending meetings and the like, but try to remember that your experience and viewpoint is not only valuable, but absolutely necessary in presenting the Service angle on the problems of Re-establishment and Rehabilitation which may come before a Repatriation Local Committee. Your community needs your specialised service knowledge; you need their friendliness; talking over common problems together is a good basis for common effort. Perhaps you will be a little impatient about the "talking things over" angle. You want to get things done. Right, but achievement is made up of three things usually—thought, discussion, action. You know plenty about action—Greece, Crete, El Alomein, New Guinea, Borneo. Your fathers knew about it too—Flanders, Gallipoli. They added on imperishable word to our language—ANZAC.

It is because of these things that we must accept all the opportunities that discussion offers as a prelude to working together in our communities, towards the common end, that the next generation may not know the kind of action you and your fathers have known.

Maybe you feel a little weary of phrases like "new order"—"one world", "safe for Democracy", and so on. That's not hard to understand. Support and interest in a Repatriation Local Committee may seem unimportant, even tame against the background of swift-moving international issues, but it is only to such modest efforts, multiplied in the community and projected into national and international relationships, that we may look for a new and better future, where children may grow up with their faces towards the sun in a warless world.



If you need information on Repatriation Local Committees you should apply to the Deputy Commissioner of Repatriation in any capital city, requesting "Notes for guidance of Repatriation Local Committees."

Send the story of your REPATRIATION LOCAL COMMITTEE—your activities—successes and difficulties—to the Deputy Commissioner of Repatriation in any Capital City. It will be of value and interest to others working in the same field.

If you are interested in current topics, request list of Discussion Group Material, issued by the Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction, Public Relations Division, Box 168, City, Canberra. Having read the publications, discuss them with your neighbours, friends, workmates, and send your comments to—
The Editor, DISCUSSION GROUP BULLETIN, Box 168, City, CANBERRA, A.C.T.

"Free and Open Discussion is Democracy's Safeguard."

Issued by the Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction in co-operation with the Repatriation Commission.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR RE-ESTABLISHMENT BENEFITS?

Free copies of the following re-establishment publications are available from the Offices of the Ministry of Post-War Reconstruction in each State:—

"Return to Civil Life," a 55-page handbook of information.

RE-ESTABLISHMENT PAMPHLETS—

1. Training Scheme.
2. Housing.
3. Reconstruction Training In Industry.
4. Farms for Fighting Men.
5. Information for Employers.
6. War Widows' Entitlements.
7. Legal Aid.
8. Servicewomen and Civil Life.
9. On Guard.
10. Loans for Re-establishment in Agriculture.
11. Rural Training.
12. Pitfalls of Land Settlement.

Occupational Pamphlets.—Details of requirements and opportunities in various trades and professions; nature of work, salary and general conditions, personal qualifications required, method of entry, educational qualifications, training and cost, where to apply.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES BULLETINS PROGRESS OF DEMOBILISATION AND RE-ESTABLISHMENT BULLETINS

Copies of the Appeal issued by the Prime Minister on his departure for London, and supporting statements by the Minister for Post-War Reconstruction, Service leaders and employers' and employees' Associations.

Illustrated pamphlets on stories of re-establishment:—

"ON WITH THE JOB"

"STRICTLY PERSONAL"

QUESTION AND ANSWER PAMPHLETS

"GOULBURN HAS A PLAN"

"RE-ESTABLISHMENT AND THE EMPLOYER"