

REBUILDING

PLAN FOR FIGHTING ANEW THE
FIGHTING FIRE.

(By Sergeant P. J. Gosgrove.)

Up until a few months ago the Medical Department of the U. S. Army had a difficult problem always presenting itself for solution. Not only did this problem materially affect the Medical Department but it also directly concerned the Army as a whole.

Soldiers were being admitted to hospitals all over the country during the first year of our entry into the war—some stricken with disease, some to be operated upon and others brought there as a result of accidents which befell them. Facilities for the treatment of these cases in the hospitals had been admirably and efficiently established, but the treatment of the soldier when out of bed and convalescent did not loom large in the eyes of the Medical Department as a subject for weighty consideration. It was not, therefore, until the convalescent soldiers had, by their very numbers alone, aroused the interest of the Medical Department that action was taken in the matter.

Examination of conditions in the large hospitals revealed two negative truths (1) under existing conditions the patients were convalescing slowly and (2) while in hospital the patients were prone to lose their esprit de corps. Besides, in cases of long drawn out sickness or convalescence the men day and a record of each one's pro-

were, in the words of the Surgeon General, becoming "hospitalized."

An idea was evolved which had for its objects the separate treatment of convalescents, and a concrete result of this idea is seen in the six buildings at the U. S. Army Base Hospital, Camp Greene together with the appointment of a special staff of officers to carry on the work. The section of the Medical Department which deals with the treatment of convalescent soldiers is known as the Reconstruction Department.

In the reconstruction work amongst the men great stress is laid upon the inculcation of military discipline. Instead of the familiar sights of men in pajamas and bath-ropes lounging around the hospital, we now see these same men clothed in regulation uniform and conforming to all the rules which would govern them were they back with their regiments or command. Their day begins at six with the call of Reveille and ends at eleven to the call of Taps. Every hour of the day is occupied according to schedule and each man must participate in whatever drill or exercise his Medical officer assigns him to.

Games are an important part of the daily routine and their association with reconstruction work has been greatly emphasized by the Surgeon General.

Each man is given an individual daily examination before and after the first drill and exercise period of the day and his progress is filed accordingly. No sick-

ness of an acute character is treated in the reconstruction department—all cases requiring treatment are transferred to the hospital proper.

Shower baths are provided in abundance and a maximum of sunlight and fresh air pervade the men's quarters.

While yet in its infancy this new line of work bids fair for success and even to the casual observer much improvement can be noticed in a few days' time in those undergoing the treatment. A visit to the department will find a happy crowd of soldiers, eager and enthusiastic and ever anxious to get away to join their fellows "over there."

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