

Dispossessed by VA:

## Paraplegics Take Appeal to Public



**A MOST WORTHY APPEAL . . .** On the phone is MURRAY DAVIDSBERG, of the Bronx, whose spine was crushed in Metz. What he wants to talk about is this: he and the 86 other paraplegics at Halloran Hospital DON'T WANT TO BE SHIFTED to other institutions.

Journal-American Photo by Joe Lyons.

By DON SHEARD

Paralyzed war veterans, doomed to a lifetime in wheel-chairs, today appealed for public support in their fight against being evicted from Halloran Hospital and dispersed to institutions far from their homes.

The 87 paraplegics must be out of Halloran on Staten Island by Feb. 15 and the Veterans Administration, ignoring a storm of protests, already has begun to transfer some of them to Cushing Hospital, Framingham, Mass.; McGuire Hospital, Richmond, Va., and crowded Kingsbridge Hospital, Bronx.

Heads of service organizations condemned the transfers as a betrayal of promises made to the paraplegics by the Veterans Administration that they could remain at Halloran until the new Manhattan Veterans Hospital is completed by the end of next year.

Protests have gone out to President Truman, Gov. Dewey and Veterans Administrator Carl Gray, but thus far there has

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not been a single official move to save the crippled veterans from being uprooted from their homes, families and friends.

Robert Moss, executive secretary of the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association, 99 Park ave., declared:

**"Only the powerful voice of an aroused public can help us win our battle. We are going to need everybody's help."**

Moss, himself a paralyzed infantry veteran who saw service in Italy, suggested that the public send wires or letters of protest to Truman, Dewey, Gray and Senators and Representatives.

Moss declared the paraplegics occupy only two wings of the mammoth Halloran establishment and that an extension of time by Dewey would make it unnecessary to dispossess them.

Because of the VA's promise that they would not be moved until the end of 1952, many of the paralyzed veterans established apartments on Staten Island at great expense so that they could live and get daily treatment at Halloran.

But New York State early in January decided to requisition Halloran although the VA holds a lease on it until Dec. 31, 1952.

This was part of a deal whereby the State surrendered to the Air Forces the Sampson, N. Y., Naval Air Bases, where a number of elderly mental patients were quartered. These patients will now go to Halloran.

### 'Setting the Patients Back'

Some 55 of the paraplegics at Halloran are going to Kingsbridge Hospital, which is admittedly overcrowded and lacks the facilities that Halloran possesses. Nurses and doctors freely admit that the shift is setting the patients back.

**"Any way you look at it, it just isn't good. The men are gloomy and it's affecting their health,"** said Murray Davidsberg, 26, a patient there for five years.

Murray fought with the infantry from the beaches of Normandy, through France, Holland, Belgium and Germany, only to have his spine smashed by a truck in Metz in 1945. He has been paralyzed from the waist down since.

From Monday to Friday, he receives medical attention and exercises in the gym or travels around the spacious grounds when the weather is good. On weekends he goes home to visit his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Davidsberg at 1511 Sheridan ave., Bronx.

**"I know for a fact that they don't have facilities for the men at Kingsbridge, where I will have to go,"** he said.

**"Parking space is at a premium and cars are an important factor in our lives.**

**"It takes a long time to train the personnel and they get to know the men and their needs.**

**"Only three of the corps are going to Kingsbridge. The rest are being dispersed or getting new jobs.**

**"They could transfer us en masse to the Veterans Hospital at Ft. Hamilton, Brooklyn. Breaking us up like this is bad for the men."**

Many of the men, who can live at home, have married and have set up apartments near the hospital. They will either have to give them up or make the long and difficult trip to Kingsbridge for treatment.

**"It is unfair to have the established friendships broken up when it is apparently not necessary,"** said Moss, who today dispatched letters of protest to the Congressmen of New York and New Jersey.

**"When so much has been lost it is vital to hold on to what is left and what is attempted to be regained,"** he said.

**"Our pleas to Washington have been ignored. But we will not be ignored. We demand a 100% job."**