

6 Congressmen Urge VA to Keep Paraplegics Here

By DON SHEARD

Aroused by the plight of the 87 paralyzed veterans who face ouster from Halloran Hospital, six New York and New Jersey Congressmen called on the Veterans Administration to extend the lease or house them together under one roof in the Metropolitan Area.

Their concerted action followed a storm of protest by veterans organizations and civic leaders who demanded that the men, most of whom are doomed to spend the rest of their lives in wheel chairs, be kept together in order to main their morale.

The paraplegics vainly appealed to the Veterans Administration to be kept together, but they are being dispersed to hospitals in the Bronx, Massachusetts and Virginia. Many of them were transferred last week and the rest must be out by Feb. 15.

Rep. Rooney (D.), of Brooklyn, promised to do all he

Continued on Page 6, Column 3.

Dispossessed From Halloran:

Keep Paraplegics Here, Solons Urge

By DON SHEARD

Continued from First Page

could to prevent the closing of Halloran, on Staten Island, recognized as the country's outstanding paraplegic center.

"I have interceded in this matter and shall continue to do all I can to prevent the premature closing of Halloran Hospital, which would work a hardship on the paraplegics and other veterans," he said.

Rep. Coudert (R.), of the 17th Congressional District in Manhattan, called on the Veterans Administration for the complete background of the dispossession of the veterans and said he would advise the paraplegics of his moves.

He was joined by two upstate Representatives, Bernard W. Kearney, of Gloversville, a past State Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Kenneth B. Keating, of Rochester.

Kearney stated that he would ask the Veterans Administration if they could house the paraplegics in the recently opened Brooklyn V. A. Hospital at Fort Hamilton.

Two New Jersey Representatives, Charles A. Wolverton (R.), of Camden, and Robert W. Kean (R.), of Livingston, are to take up the transferral of the men with the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

"I am taking the matter up with the committee at the earliest opportunity and will do everything possible," Wolverton wrote to the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association, 99 Park ave.

The support of the Congressmen was greeted with elation by Robert Moss, executive secretary of the association, who last week led 35 paralyzed members of the group in a protest parade.

It was the first concrete evidence of support in Washington after a flood of telegrams by heads of veterans' organizations, the paraplegics themselves and indignant citizens, to President Truman, Gov. Dewey and Gen. Carl R. Gray, Administrator of Veterans' Affairs, went unanswered.

State Hard-Pressed

The paraplegics, most of them in their middle twenties, had been promised by the Veterans Administration that they could remain at Halloran Hospital until Dec. 31, 1952, when a new center was to be completed in Manhattan.

Originally built as an institution for the care of mentally retarded children and elderly mental cases by New York State, it was turned over to the Federal Government as a veterans hospital early in World War II.

The State, hard pressed for space to care for the nearly 2,000 children, after the Air Force had requisitioned their facilities at Sampson, N. Y., negotiated a return by Feb. 15 of the space occupied by the paraplegics and general medical and tubercular veterans.

Many of the paraplegics have all ready been transferred to the Kingsbridge V. A. Hospital in the Bronx, which is pressed for space, and others have been sent to Framingham, Mass., and Richmond, Va.

The despondency of the men at Halloran was reflected in the attitude of Joseph Kleipe, 35, whose spine was shattered in the Battle of the Bulge in 1944. His wife and their seven-year-old son live at 77 Evergreen ave., Bloomfield, N. J.

After five operations, he is learning to walk, after a fashion, on crutches.

"It seems that just when you get set in a hospital and the doctors know your case, you get moved and they start all over again," he said bitterly.

"Moving to Kingsbridge will be a great hardship to me. After five operations I'll never be right again. Now I'll have to get new doctors and start in all over again."

Many of the men had established apartments near Halloran at great personal expense. Now they must give them up or make the long trip daily to the Bronx.