

Halloran Vets' Future Hangs on VA Decision

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By DON SHEARD

Slim hopes of the paralyzed veterans to remain in their "home" at Halloran Hospital dwindled today despite the gallant fight of New York Congressmen, State legislators and an aroused public to gain them a 60-day stay of their eviction.

The Veterans Administration, which ordered their transfer to three far-flung hospitals, despite pledges to keep the paraplegics on Staten Island until Dec. 1952, has not yet answered the Congressional demand that they be kept on until Ft. Hamilton Hospital, Brooklyn, can be readied to receive them.

The final determination is up to Gen. Carl Gray, VA Administrator, to whom Rep. Anfuso, (D.-Brooklyn) and the majority of the New York Congressional delegation addressed an urgent plea in behalf of the 54 crippled veterans.

The Congressman, in a letter, urged Gen. Gray and Gov. Dewey to co-operate, with the view of a 60-day postponement which would give the veterans "time to adjust personal and family affairs."

URGE ALBANY ACTION.

Similar action was taken in Albany, where State Sen. Gittleson, (D.-Brooklyn) heads a seven-man committee which has urged a similar stay.

"We have left no stone unturned. Only Gen. Gray can

make the final decision," Anfuso asserted.

The Air Force, he said, is willing to hold up its plan to occupy the facilities at Sampson, N. Y., which is now occupied by civilian mental cases, which the State plans to move to the buildings now occupied by the paraplegics and other sick veterans at Halloran.

CITIZENS BACK VETS.

With less than two weeks left before the paraplegics are due to be transferred, veterans groups and the average citizen continued to bombard the VA and Gov. Dewey with telegrams and letters, all demanding the disabled vets be given first consideration.

Virtually all pointed out that the paraplegics, who are doomed

to spend the rest of their lives in wheel chairs because of war-shattered spines, want to be sent to Ft. Hamilton Hospital if they cannot stay at Halloran.

By next week 42 paraplegics, who are housed in one wing at Halloran, are expected to be sent to Kingsbridge, which is expanding its facilities, now caring for 50, to care for 100.

State Commissioner of Mental Hygiene Bigelow has directed the superintendent of Willowbrook Hospital, the State's designation of Halloran, to resurvey the needs of the mental patients, to see if the one wing can be retained for the paraplegics' use.

He is expected to give his answer tomorrow.

Feelings of the veterans, meanwhile, were epitomized by Dick Scarafile, 24, of Utica, N. Y., a former Marine, who is paralyzed from the chest down.

"It's a raw deal. There is no other way of looking at it," he said. "We deserve some assurance of permanency. I can't go home. I guess I'll have to go to Kingsbridge, where it's very crowded," he added.

EDUCATION

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Hope for Change of Plans Gone, Halloran Speeds Operation Closedown

By ERWIN ENDRESS

You can hear your footsteps echo in the halls and empty wards of once-teeming Halloran VA Hospital today as the federal facility speeds its transfer timetable with a view to emptying the area by Feb. 15.

Hundreds of nurses, physicians and staff members are aiding in Halloran's Operation Closedown while, in the sickrooms, 131 patients remain of the many thousands which had been treated in this nationally known ex-Army hospital.

While some voices are still raised in opposition to the federal-state agreement to return the facility to its rightful owner, the state, for use as part of Willowbrook State School, a mental hygiene facility, the once-big drive to retain Halloran as a facility for veterans has faded.

No longer is there hope among

the staff members and patients that a change in plans will, somehow, come about. On the contrary, these persons look ahead to new adjustments in hospitals and institutions elsewhere.

EVEN the die-hard paraplegics have "thrown in the towel," however reluctantly. During the past month, they have seen scores of their kind transferred to facilities along the Eastern Seaboard. The 42 still at Halloran know they will soon be transferred to the paraplegic center in Kingsbridge VA Hospital, Bronx.

The question no longer is, "Will we really have to leave?" but rather, "When and where do we go from here?"

This is being asked by both patients and personnel at Halloran.

Officials said 77 of the remaining patients at Halloran soon will be transferred for further treat-

ment to hospitals in Bronx, Brooklyn, White River Junction, Vt., Newington, Conn., and Providence, R. I. The remainder will probably be discharged upon completion of treatment.

THE QUESTION of when the hospital will be completely emptied of patients is still in doubt, although officials say the paraplegics will be the last to leave, and that they will be on their way sometime after Feb. 12, Lincoln's Birthday.

More than 700 employes still remain at Halloran, but today is the end of the two-week pay period, and it is likely hundreds will be transferred to other places next week—or dropped from VA rolls.

At any rate, officials say, Operation Closedown is going according to schedule.

There is no doubt Halloran VA Hospital will fade into history in less than two weeks.