

## Their Red Cross Remembers Them

**M**EN separated from their pay records, and left without a cent, men who have not heard from their homes for months, parents or wives who have lost touch with sons and husbands, wounded men in hospital—all these are helped by the American National Red Cross, the single organisation which has responsibility for the personal welfare of U.S. troops overseas. William J. Enders, Field Director of the Military and Naval Welfare Service in Wellington recently gave *The Listener* some information about the scope of the undertaking.

"Perhaps a man comes in and tells us his wife back home is ill, and got no funds; we cable to our people in the U.S. and instruct that money should be forwarded. If a man's mail has gone astray, we get reports from his home town, or vice versa, we report on the man's position if his people ask us to. There are facilities for sending flowers or candy to the folks back home, and we can arrange for marriages—where they are necessary—to be carried out by proxy.

"Just a while back we heard that your own men in the Middle East were short of reading matter, so I contacted our national headquarters and now we're authorised to supply U.S. reading material to your men."

### The "Grey Ladies"

Men in hospital are visited regularly by volunteer workers—"Grey Ladies" they are called, but this has nothing to do with the colour of their hair—and little cards ("Brief Service Cards") are filled in with messages for home.

Occasionally the message has its humorous side. One man filled in his own name, and the address for the destination, and his whole message consisted of four words: "Would like a sweater."

Another wrote: "Dear Mom, feeling fine, hope you are well too, time is short so must cease, love." And another: "I still in the hospital a getting a long fine, can walk around some now, love."

Reassuring news for some one was contained in a message which said, "No feathers but resting comfortably." But there was a slight disappointment in the message, "Scenery is wonderful, no grass skirts."

The buffer between Red Cross executives and the men who come in wanting things done is a New Zealand musician known to 2YA listeners—Cara Hall, whose photograph appeared in *The Listener* recently. She makes it her job to be friendly to anyone who comes to the counter and to be helpful in all the problems that present themselves.

Outside the office, American National Red Cross sees to the provision of comforts for men in hospital—reading matter, personal requirements, occupational therapy, and entertainment. About 20 films a week are shown in one place, and there is a weekly stage variety show. Convalescents and others are placed in private homes which have offered hospitality. There are also lectures for those who are well enough to hear them.

The syllabus of a series now being given at a mobile naval hospital shows a wide variety of talks the purpose of which is to acquaint the men with the character of the country they are in.

NEW ZEALAND LISTENER, FEBRUARY 26



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