

RAVENTHORPE

A KORERO REPORT

THERE IS bush on the hills and streams which are good for bathing. The sun warms you, blisters you even. But in this military camp there is no drill. There are rambles and walks but no route marches, and billiard cues instead of rifles. You may go home every week-end if the journey isn't too far; there are films and concerts and dances but no work unless you volunteer. And they still pay you every second week.

A military camp? This is a military camp. There's no catch about it. It's the Raventhorpe Convalescent Depot, about twenty-six miles from Auckland.

Here Army and Air Force patients are able to recuperate from the time they leave their beds until they are recovered and fit. Walking cases only are taken. From camps and hospitals in New Zealand, servicemen are directed here for specialized convalescent treatment. There's plenty to eat, lots of time for sleep, tons of leave; there's a lot more as well. Physio-therapy, using the latest equipment, is important; but don't be frightened by the word—application is pleasant, results successful. With a programme as varied and interesting as possible, time passes quickly. "It's been nice having you: come again sometime." The sergeant-major shakes hands, says good-bye. His words are a sort of joke. Men who leave Raventhorpe don't usually return—not because they don't want to, but because there is no need.

Men home from service overseas and who are in need of treatment are not directed to this depot: they have to ask to be sent. The reason is the authorities feel that returned personnel wish to be near their homes and families; the result is out-patient treatment at public hospitals, often for a long time—



a time much longer than would be needed at Raventhorpe. Advantages of controlled convalescent treatment over out-patient attendance are so many for it to be preferable for men to visit their families and afterwards to apply for admission to the depot. Results show time and worry are saved.

Few overseas servicemen have heard of Raventhorpe and its facilities. They do not know they have to ask for admission. It is for this reason the number of patients is about only one-third that there is room for (and of these only 20 per cent. are returned men). It is for this reason this article has been written.

Patients have complaints from hernias to fevers. Post-operative cases and muscular troubles are the most common. On admission, the patient is examined by one of the two staff doctors and, depending on the type of complaint, put into one of five groups. A specialized physical training instructor is in charge of each group. At least once a week, if necessary more often, the patient is examined by the doctor with the P.T. instructor present; each makes his report and future treatment is agreed on. This close liaison among doctor, P.T. instructor, and masseuse gives the patient every chance.

The P.T. includes exercises and games outdoors and in the fully equipped gymnasium. A large playing field gives plenty of room for sport. There are swimming pools, courts for badminton, and three tennis courts will be ready this summer.