

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY EXHIBITION

OPENS AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The process of restoring soldiers and civilians to physical and mental health through occupational therapy, specifically prescribed for each individual case by a professional therapist, will be shown in an exhibition opening to the public Wednesday, June 2, at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street. The exhibition, which will be held under the auspices of the Museum's Armed Services Program in collaboration with the American Occupational Therapy Association, will be shown in the Auditorium Gallery of the Museum and will remain open through September 19.

The exhibition will consist of arts and crafts work made by patients themselves (in many cases the label will explain the case history of the patient); painting and sculpture by patients; photographs of occupational therapy in the last war; and enlarged photographs of civilians and soldiers disabled in the present war engaged in various activities under the direction of a professional therapist. As the exhibition has been designed to clarify for the public the role of the occupational therapist in wartime, the wall panels illustrating the various aspects of therapy will be accompanied by detailed captions giving specific answers to questions many people are asking today, such as: What is occupational therapy? Who is qualified to practice it and as a result of what specific training? What is the history of occupational therapy in the last, in this war, in civilian life? What schools for therapy are authorized by The Therapy Association?

The scope and variety of the exhibition may be indicated in the following examples of activities and objects by the patients:

- Photograph. Clay modeling to restore flexibility and use of hands burned in airplane crash in current war.
- Photograph. Jig saw run by bicycle operated by patient to restore flexibility to stiff knees burned in airplane crash in current war.
- Photograph. Bicycle sander operated by patient machine-gunned on Guadalcanal, to exercise his injured leg.
- Photograph. Drill to restore use of hands burned in airplane crash in current war.

- Dog Carved in wood. Patient who had attempted suicide by slashing wrist with knife was faced with problem of using knife for constructive instead of destructive purposes. He became so interested in wood-carving as a result of this first attempt that he continued it as a hobby when discharged from the hospital.
- Linen luncheon set. Ship's officer, so deeply depressed he took no interest in anything, eventually became fascinated with the mechanism of a loom by watching another patient at work. A loom was left in his room. He not only began to work with it but obtained books on weaving and learned to design his own patterns. Through this work he became completely rehabilitated and is now commanding his own ship in the war.
- Woven bag. The work on the material for this bag, made by a 72-year-old Swedish woman who had never done weaving before, helped to restore the flexibility of a fractured hip and knee.
- Woven scarf. Made on primitive loom by mentally disturbed boy who regained the power to concentrate through his effort to keep the edges of his work and the tension even.
- Leather bridge case. Made by schizophrenic after much occupational therapy work had enabled him to sit down and concentrate long enough to produce an article of this kind.
- Clay sculpture. This model of a woman's head is a first attempt by an injured seaman who found he liked this form of self-expression so well that he has continued modeling since his discharge from the hospital.
- Furniture. Oilcloth and wool furniture designed and made by group of little girls 5 to 8 years old in an orthopedic ward.
- Hooked rug. Injured seaman made the original design for this rug from marine life illustrations in National Geographic Magazine.
- Lace work. Woman of 33, so nervous she dared not attempt any kind of work, became interested in watching lace workers in the hospital. The therapist gave her a lesson and she learned quickly. She has mastered 45 different patterns of lace, never loses interest, is more contented and much less nervous.
- Wood toy locomotive. Made by young girl with badly injured hand.
- Needlework doll. Made by 104-year-old woman who did a great deal of ordinary flat-surface needlework and then conceived the idea of making a three-dimensional figure. The design of the doll is entirely her own.
- Petit point tapestry. Made by 20-year-old mentally retarded girl with emotional instability and inability to adjust herself. Her hands were so large and clumsy that when occupational therapy treatment was prescribed, no fine work was given her, but she watched other girls doing very fine needlework and one day asked for a small piece of canvas so closely woven that anyone else would have needed a magnifying glass to work on it. This girl, however, turned out the exquisitely fine and delicate piece of work shown in the exhibition. The accomplishment of this fine work seemed to satisfy her one ambition, which may have been to prove to herself and others that she could do as well or better than the other girls, in spite of her handicap. She was never again a behaviour problem.

Tapestry mat. Made by 55-year-old laborer suffering from general paresis. He had been seclusive, depressed and unstable but the successful completion of this object stimulated his pride and feeling of accomplishment.

Finger painting. A series made by a young man who had been a patient in a state hospital. After being released he asked and was given permission to use the clinic's facilities for occupational therapy; whenever he felt his old illness approaching he went to the clinic and used these facilities, finding release in finger-painting. Eventually he recovered sufficiently to obtain a job and to marry.

At the exhibition will be shown a list of schools in occupational therapy approved by the American Occupational Therapy Association and the Council on Medical Educational and Hospitals of the American Medical Association. A three-year course is necessary to become a graduate therapist. A six to eight weeks' course is now given for those who wish to become assistants working under the supervision of a graduate therapist.

The exhibition has been planned and installed, with the active collaboration of the American Occupational Therapy Association, by Mrs. Guy Misson, Assistant Director of the Armed Services Program of the Museum. The installation has been designed by Frank Vitullo of the Department of Exhibitions.