

Right Guide

This column is designated to give official VA answers to veterans' readjustment problems. Send questions to RIGHT GUIDE, 1380 Sepulveda Blvd., Los Angeles 25, California.

If a veteran with service-incurred blindness wants a guide dog the government will not only furnish him one without cost but also will pay all expenses for his training with it before the two start out in the world together.

In fact, all necessary appliances and aids for any service disabled veterans is considered a part of their rehabilitation and given them without charge. A careful study of each individual case is made by the Veterans Administration and no expense is spared to equip and restore him to a normal position with his fellow man.

Eight of the 33 World War II blind veterans in this area have asked for, and received guide dogs. Four of the eight are students; two have vending stands; one is doing a good job on a plumbing factory assembly line and the eighth is an army captain, hasn't chosen his life work as yet. Another blind veteran had a dog for two months but turned him back because, as he said, he has more confidence in his cane than he did in his dog. The eight dog owners differ with him emphatically.

"There are arguments on both sides," according to Dr. F. L. Tibbitts, in charge of vocational guidance for the blind in the area of the Los Angeles VA regional office. "We hear the pros and cons every time our blind men get together. The choice is up to each individual veteran. We counsel and advise, tell him the advantages and disadvantages of guide dogs, but he makes the final choice. In some cases we believe the veteran would make faster progress toward readjustment and normal living with the help of a guide dog. Others would not, but it's up to him."

In addition to the confidence a guide dog gives them, the owners like the companionship of a friend who seems to understand and help him in all circumstances. When approaching danger in traffic, an obstruction or excavation, the dogs are trained to wheel around in front of their masters and block their passage. They will do this also if there is an overhead danger like a low bridge or suspended object. They will not lead their masters under ladders.

Some blind veterans claim they feel much safer in crowds or traffic with a guide dog because a dog makes them more noticeable and, therefore, safer than if they had a cane.

On the other side of the argument, many blind veterans say they would rather learn their way around without dogs. They admit it is harder at first but eventually they have more confidence in themselves if they have learned to go it alone. One veteran says his wife takes him back and forth to work—and he likes this best of all.

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John Loder Co-starring with Hedy Lamarr in "Dis-honored Lady," a Hunt Stromberg Production. United Artists release.	James Cagney Who will soon star in his own production "The Sissy Lamb," a United Artists release.	William Boyd Starring in Hopalong Cassidy Western pictures, released through United Artists.
		
Robert Cummings Starring in "The Chase," a Seymour Nebenzel production. United Artists release.	Dennis O'Keefe Co-starring in "Dis-honored Lady," with Hedy Lamarr, a Hunt Stromberg production.	Charles Rogers Producer of Comed Productions, released through United Artists.
		
Louis Hayward Co-stars with Hedy Lamarr in "The Strange Woman," a Hunt Stromberg Production.	Eddie Albert Starring in Weller Wanger's "Smashup," the story of a woman.	Adolph Menjou Appearing in the Andrew Stone Production "Bachelor's Daughters," released through United Artists.
		
David Bruce Appearing in the Comed Production "The Stag's Out," a United Artists release.	Tommy Dorsey Starring in "The Fabulous Dorelys," a Charles H. Rogers Production, released thru United Artists.	

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