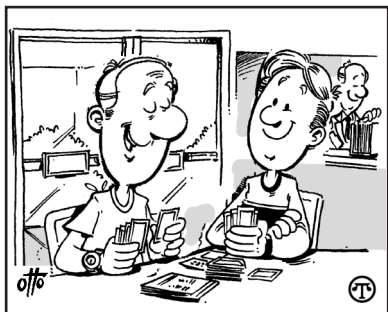


The Best "Thank You"

(NAPSA)—For thousands of veterans who depend on healthcare facilities operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs, it's all too easy to lose touch with the outside world. Many older veterans, often with no place to go, live out their days in VA domiciliaries.



Volunteers who spend time with hospitalized veterans help ease the loneliness in their lives.

That's where hometown volunteers come in. They are the ones who provide the necessary link back to the community. Playing cards with the lonely or watching television with the disabled can greatly improve the lives of these veteran patients.

Established in 1946 to care for America's veterans while they are in VA facilities, VAVS (Veterans Affairs Volunteer Service) is the largest volunteer program in the federal government and is supported by more than 350 organizations including AMVETS, one of the nation's foremost veteran's service membership organizations.

VAVS provides benefits both to the people it serves as well as to those who participate. For many volunteers, this translates into self-fulfillment and self-confidence. Last year, nearly 119,000 volunteers donated more than 13 million hours of service to hospitalized veterans.

To find out more, visit the VA Voluntary Service Web site at www.va.gov/volunteer or call the AMVETS Programs Department at (301) 683-4031.