

WIDE RANGE OF CIVIL DEFENSE ACTIVITIES is dramatized by this array of insignia designating representative units.

# Where Are We Going With Civil Defense?

By PAT ZISKA, *Democrat and Chronicle Staff Reporter*

More than 1,000 Civil Defense directors from across the nation, meeting here this week, will be given an opportunity to observe an aggressive, rapidly growing CD organization which is considered one of the country's finest.

The directors are arriving today for the week-long 12th annual Conference of the U.S. Civil Defense Council which opens tomorrow in the Community War Memorial.

Monroe County Civil Defense Director Robert N. Abbott will be general chairman of the conference, which will bring to Rochester defense experts from Washington, all of the 50 states and most of the nation's larger cities.

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**ABBOTT YESTERDAY** took time from his duties as host to summarize the current status of CD locally and nationally and to take a look at his program's future goals.

The 47-year-old director heads a 22-member staff here which operates on a \$217,000 annual budget authorized by the Board of Supervisors.

He pointed out that in the nine years since he has served as director of the consolidated city-county office, CD has grown from an infant with an idealistic goal and little else, to a mature, coordinated, nation-wide entity which is daily implementing its goals by concrete action.

Civil Defense, he added, grew up only during the past two years.

Under provisions of the Federal Civil Defense Act of 1950, responsibility for the program was to be exercised jointly by federal and state governments.

Without centralized guidance the growing up process came slowly.

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**THEN** in 1961, CD came of age.

First, responsibility for its operation was transferred to the Defense De-

partment by a presidential order of July 20, 1961. The program is now supervised by Stuart L. Pittman, assistant secretary of Defense for Civil Defense.

Pittman will arrive Thursday and address the conference at 2 p.m.

In December, 1961 the Defense Department announced a long-range national fallout shelter program geared to establishing 235,000,000 shelter spaces.

The national figure follows for daytime and nighttime population concentration and for projected population growth.

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**THE FIRST TOOL** given to CD to achieve this goal was an authorization for a nationwide survey to locate existing buildings that could serve as public shelters.

"Two years ago when the Berlin crisis occurred, Monroe County had no public

shelters," Abbott said, "and even one year ago when the Cuban crisis flared we only had shelters people had built in their homes."

Within the past year the local picture has brightened, he added.

Once the local survey was finished, Abbott's staff began canvassing owners of large buildings and convincing them of the need for permitting CD to set up shelter spaces.

So far, 392 building owners in the county have agreed to let Abbott's staff set up and supply the spaces.

The organization first puts up a sign on the building showing that shelter areas are available inside.

Then the staff begins moving in a two-week supply of food and water for each space.

Cost of the food and water supplies per space is less than \$3, Abbott said.

CD experts figure 10 square feet of space is

needed for each person and a two-week supply of food and water takes up 1.5 cubic feet per person.

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**SUPPLIES** are trucked here from Seneca Ordnance Depot in Romulus and placed in the buildings by five laborers employed by Abbott.

Since stocking began last March, 115,000 spaces in 190 buildings have been provided.

Abbott is hopeful the stocking will continue at the rate of 20,000 spaces per month.

His staff is continuing to contact building owners.

Abbott figures there are about 500 usable buildings in the county with a capacity of 451,000 spaces.

Four of the seven state-approved shelters built in schools around the state are in Monroe County.

They are Saint Pius School with a capacity of

478 students; Harley School with a capacity of 305 students; Pittsford Junior High School with a capacity of 865 students and Crane Elementary School in the Rush-Henrietta School District with a capacity of 800 students.

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**ABBOTT SAYS** his staff intends to continue its intensive education program.

The local CD office at 61 Main St. E. has more than 40 films available for use by civic groups.

About 600 persons per year are trained to aid doctors in time of emergency.

They are selected from among the thousands who take basic first aid courses.

Courses are also conducted for registered nurses in disaster nursing.

Auxiliary police (now about 2,500 strong in the county) are trained in a special 80-hour course conducted at the Rochester Police-Fire Training Academy.

Monroe County is training CD men for the new field of radiological defense.

Volunteers are taught how to monitor radioactive fallout with geiger counters.

There are now 72 stations in the county equipped for such detection. The stations are spotted in town halls, hospitals, and police and fire stations.

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**BUT WITH ALL THIS,** Abbot feels his most important job is to educate the general public.

"We want to give people the facts about the dangers of fallout with the realistic approach that there is something we can do to counteract its affects. We have to offset this 'On the Beach' fatalism."

To Abbott, civil defense means common sense.

"This is the message," he says, "that we have to get across to the public."

