

Have another drink Charlie, come on it won't hurt a bit, or will it?

By Rocco Caponigro

Service members who use alcohol inappropriately often become victims of muggers, con artists and themselves.

Alcohol leaves a person vulnerable. Every drink after the first drink in a given hour goes to the brain, affecting our thinking and our reflexes.

The first part of the brain affected is the frontal lobe. The frontal lobe monitors such important functions as intelligence, judgment, mercy, imagination and compassion.

When intelligence and judgment go out the window, a person forgets how many drinks he has had. He flings his money around, buying drinks for strangers, fighting with them if they don't drink with him and displaying his roll of money for all to see. He also is subject to taking high risks, normally not even considered prudent. He doesn't consider or care that there might be a mugger in the room who will come after him later.

Even if he isn't victimized by a thief, a person whose judgment has been impaired can easily victimize himself. He forgets to consider the consequences of an irrational act. He forgets that if he throws his beer mug through a plate glass window, he'll probably be cooling his heels in the lock-up.

Due to distorted imagination he becomes an invincible gladiator, able to defeat anyone in a fight. In reality, his reflexes are retarded, slowed down, his coordination is shot and he'll be lucky if he doesn't wind up in the emergency room at the nearest hospital.

Even if victorious, he is a loser. Compassion and mercy get lost in the alcoholic fog. He kicks, shoots, stabs, bites his opponent and doesn't quit even when the man is down and helpless. When the fight is over, the charge is no longer assault but aggravated assault or



assault with intent to kill.

When you get drunk, you leave yourself vulnerable. You can be robbed, beaten, humiliated, ridiculed, cheated, arrested, even killed. When you get drunk, you are in no condition to defend your honor, your dignity or your life.

There are other parts of your brain that are affected. Hopefully, we have just whetted your desire to learn more about this central nervous depressant, tolerance-building, addicting drug.

If you need help, seek it. The Army provides professional, confidential treatment free of charge. You are our most important product. We want you well.

(Editors Note: If you have a drinking problem, and would like to talk it over with a counselor, call McNair - 732, or Cambrai-Fritsch - 6506. Mr. Caponigro is the Alcohol and Drug Control Officer at Ft. Lee, VA.)