

The Centennial

VOLUME I EDITION 8

AUGUST 2021



AMERICAN LEGION NEAL THOMAS JR. CENTENNIAL POST 209

3613 JEANNINE DR. COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80917
719-599-8624 WWW.LEGION209.ORG

MEET YOUR 2021 - 2022 OFFICERS!! American Legion Post 209 Officers

Commander: Joseph Schmidt (719) 247-2634	Sr. Vice Commander: Marvin Weaver Jr. (719) 244-3535	Jr. Vice Commander: Steve Hayes (719) 494-7166
Adjutant: Jerry Hopper (918) 953-9980	Finance Officer: Joel Haas (719) 482 4496	Service Officer: Brian Murphy (719) 930- 4147
Chaplain: Brad Henderson (830) 660-4072	Post Exec Committeemen: Art Kimbrel (719) 339-4610	SGT-At-Arms: Tom Foster Email Only
Jude Advocate: Marvin Weaver Sr. (719) 638-4763	Historian: Vaccant N/A	Immed Past Commander: Lino Calica (719) 963-0956

American Legion Auxiliary Unit 209 Officers

President: Royce Hopper 918.953.9993	VP: Cathy Barger 719.290.3163	Secretary: Pat Weaver 719.638.4763	Chaplain: Kay Stephens 330.999.0225
Treasurer: Kellie Hayes 719.494.7167	Historian: Valerie Stephens 330.510.0411	Sgt At Arms: Charyse Schmidt 651.558.6968	Exec. at Large: Jackie Bowen 901.481.0673

Sons of The American Legion Squadron 209 Officers

Commander:	Adjutant: Rick Kettering 813.967.6680	Sgt At Arms: Bob Ingram 480.353.8234	Chaplain: Brad Henderson
Sr. Vice Commander: Brian Wess 719.528.6672	Jr. Vice Commander:	Finance Officer: Ken Taylor 719.461.4047	

American Legion Riders Post 209 Officers

President: Ed Santos	Treasurer: Kellie Hayes 719.494.7167	VP: Drew Pearson 719.329.4357	Road Captain: Tom Foster	Historian: Scott Laudan
Secretary: Mike Sylvester	Sgt At Arms:	Communications: Monk Baylis	Logistics:	

Amateur Radio Club Officers

President: Jon Davis K0YOV	Vice President: George Johnson KE0ALQ	Director: Jim Harris W0EM
Secretary: Harvey LeCato W1JU	Treasurer: Henry Russell KC0NAJ	

We are back to normal (whatever that looks like) for all events at the Post. There are no restrictions mandated by the Federal Government nor the State at this time.

If restrictions are re-introduced or changed in any way, we will adjust as appropriate. We recommend you continue to monitor our website and Facebook page for updates.

Masks are no longer required, but please feel free to wear them if it makes you more comfortable.

Thank you in advance for your understanding and continued support.

Post 209 Family Leadership





FROM THE DESK & MIND OF THE COMMANDER

As Legionnaires we have an innate ability to lead. If you served one term or retired, this skill is taught to each and every one of us and becomes a lasting life lesson we continue to use to this day. After leaving the Army 2016 I realized I missed that leadership role I served in. I coached, trained, and mentored those below me and I too was coached, trained, and mentored by those above me. The greatest part of my career in the Army was when I was training someone and they had that 'ah-ha' moment. In that moment you see that everything you just taught them clicked and they can take this knowledge on and teach someone else.

This is something I love about The American Legion. We continue to coach, train, and mentor those who are new, teaching them why we do what we do on a daily basis. Like the military though we must first volunteer, make ourselves vulnerable and open to learning new things. Many of us have talents we can share with others. I implore each of you to do that. We have opportunities to lead within our Post. Our many committees seek Legionnaires who have a passion and gifts to share them with others. It is your talents and gifts that keep us year after year being the best Post in the state.

There are many different committees within our Post to volunteer for. Membership, Activities, Public Relations, Gaming, and many more. For those unfamiliar with the programs and activities of The American Legion, please go to the National Organization's website at www.legion.org to learn more. If you would like to volunteer for a committee, please contact me or anyone else on the executive committee to find out more.

I want to close with thanking the American Legion Riders for all their hard work this year and to Kellie Hayes for being instrumental in raising over \$12,000 for the legacy Scholarship Fund, because of all of your hard work our Post alone raised almost half of what the entire state raised for the year.

This is a group sharing their gifts and now because of their hard work children's life's will be forever changed. How will you share your gifts? Will you help us change Lives?

Joseph Schmidt
Post Commander



Celebrate

At
American Legion
Neal Thomas Jr. Centennial Post 209

Host your next event with us! With over 2,500 SQFT of venue space this is the perfect location for your next social event!



Rental Features:

- 6 Hour Rental
- In House Catering Available*
- Fully Stocked Bar*
- Muti-Room Sound System
- Dance Floor with Lighting

If you and your family are looking for an affordable option for a wedding, corporate event, retirement party, or any other event, we here at The American Legion Post 209 are ready to assist you in all your event planning needs.

Starting at
\$350!



For More Information

www.legion209.org/contact_us

(719) 599-8624

3613 Jeannine Drive Colorado Springs, CO 80917

*Additional cost may apply



FROM THE DESK OF THE POST ADJUTANT

July has come and gone, The Post picnic on the 4th, was fun. The new membership year has started. I received over 100 membership renewals, along with a couple new applications. This would be a good start for an average American Legion Post in Colorado, but we are not average. We can do a lot better. Come on members of American Legion Neal Thomas Jr Centennial Post 209. We are brothers and sisters. We must show all of Colorado that we are the BEST.

One bonus to renewing now, or convincing others to join The American Legion, is gratitude of those Veterans and Veteran's families who we help. Plus, if you renew or get a new member to sign up between now and the middle of October, you will receive a free dinner in October.

If we reach our membership quota by November 1st, we will hold a drawing for a free "Paid Up For Life" membership. I hope you all make me sorry I disclosed this information by flooding the Post mail box with membership renewals and new membership applications this month.

Jerry Hopper
Post Adjutant



FROM THE DESK OF THE SR. VICE COMMANDER

The 2022 membership year has begun. You should have received your renewal notice in July. The easiest way to stop receiving the notices is to send in your renewal early. There are several ways that you can send in your renewal. You can send it by mail, use the Post website and pay using PayPal, you can go to the National website and renew thru National, or you can bring it to the Post and give your renewal to Jerry.

We have not received our quota for this membership year but it should be around 1,100 members for our Post. The Executive board has decided to provide an incentive to renew early. All members that renew or join prior to November 10th will be entered into a drawing for a Paid Up for Life (PUFL) membership. The sooner you renew you have the chance to never have a need to renew again. For all members that are already PUFL members, don't worry you will also be entered into the drawing and if you win instead of another PUFL membership you will receive \$500. Thanks for everything you do to continue helping veterans and the children and youth in our community.

Marvin Weaver, Jr.
Sr. Vice Commander



Join or Renew Your 2022 Membership Dues by November 10th 2021



For your chance to win a Paid Up For Life Membership!

- Must be a member of American Legion Post 209, CO to be eligible
- Current PUFLL's will be entered into drawing if selected will win \$500
 - Drawing will be on Nov 11th 2021

WE NEED YOUR HELP AT EVENTS AND WITH OUR PROGRAMS! IF YOU CAN GIVE US JUST A COUPLE OF HOURS EACH MONTH, IT WOULD HELP US KEEP OUR PROGRAMS RUNNING. WE REALLY NEED HELP ON THE HONOR GUARD AND WITH OUR JR. SHOOTING PROGRAMS! IF YOU WANT TO HELP, LET US KNOW!



Trivia Night!



Do you want a chance for a free dinner? Or maybe a free beverage?

Do you know what is the longest river in the world?

Do you know what is the largest river in North America?

How about Roy Rogers real name?

What is the President of the United States' address?

If you know the answers to the above and other questions similar to these, or if you fancy yourself a trivia wizard, join us on Friday, 13 August for our Trivia Night event.

The fun will start following dinner that night, around 7:00pm. You must be at the Post for the beginning of the contest; late arrivals will not be allowed to play.

Jay Bowen will serve as Emcee for the event; he claims it would not be fair for him to play because he is the self-proclaimed **Trivia Champion of the World!**

This will be a team event; teams can be as small as one person or up to four (4) can play on a team.

Cost to compete is \$5.00 per person.

Even if you don't want to play, come on out and watch the fun! But you should consider competing in the contest. You never know, your dinner that night might be free!

FROM THE DESK OF OUR FINANCE OFFICER

A motion was made and passed at the July Executive Committee Meeting in honor of Bill Marshall's decades of support to Boys State. Bill did so much for the Boys State program that the Post is going to ensure he sends a young man to Boys State every year. At the beginning of each fiscal year (July), an amount equal to the cost of sending one young man to Boys State will be transferred from the General Fund to the Boys State Fund in Bill's name.

The end of year audit will be conducted soon for the period of March 2021 through June 2021. With the beginning of the fiscal year in full swing, restructuring the accounts has been completed. As I stated in last month's newsletter, this restructure allows for a more streamlined approach to maintaining the Post finances and reduces the number of accounts to track. The restructuring also reduces the number of account-to-account transfers, simplifies the account and expenditure tracking, and reduces the amount of time/effort necessary to maintain/reconcile accounts.

I recently made an inquiry to my engineering manager at the company I work for (a large Defense contractor) regarding the sponsoring of a hole at the upcoming golf tournament. I learned something very interesting that allows me to help the Post even more than I thought. The company I work for has a Community Incentive Program that allows employees to request a donation be made to a local 501(c)3 or 501(c)19 organization that is involved in STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math), military/Veteran, and community support organizations – with heavy emphasis on military/Veteran support. Additionally, I learned that at the end of the year my volunteer hours will also equate to another possible donation to the organization. After being with the company for five years, I just learned this because I asked a simple question – Would _____ want to take advantage of a marketing opportunity by sponsoring a hole at the golf tournament? This is a program that can be used annually, not just the one time. While I know that not every company can or does have a program like this, I recommend that you think about making a simple inquiry to find out. It is a very simple and effective way to help support the Post.

And for my normal closing statement, the Post needs your help in identifying new fundraising ideas. We are still working to get back to pre-COVID status in order to keep supporting OUR Veterans in the community. Any fundraising idea – big, small, unconventional – is worth consideration to help us get there.

Joel Haas
Finance Officer



FROM THE DESK OF THE UNIT PRESIDENT



July was a very busy month for our Unit. Once again, our members stepped up to help with the Friday night dinners, the Pony Express/Legacy Run, the Girls State Sponsor Dinner, & various other events. The Auxiliary members truly practice the mission statement of Service, Not Self.

This month, we will have some members attending the National Convention in Phoenix, Arizona August 27th-September 2nd. I wish them all safe travels & look forward to their report about the Convention once they return.

As we move closer toward the fall, watch for emails about the Craft Fair. We will be needing volunteers in various positions such as; work party volunteers, set up, working the Auxiliary booth, etc. If you are interested, please let us know! The more hands & ideas the better.

I would like to take a moment to ask that if you have any fundraising ideas, ideas for the betterment of the Post or Unit, or any suggestions, please reach out to us to let us know. We have a new Unit email address, alaux209@yahoo.com. If you would like to get some type of communication to your Unit Executive board, please email us, call one of us, or reach out to us in person. We are all part of the American Legion Auxiliary & we are all here to help each other.

Happy Birthday to our following members who were born in August: Nancy Bunker, Mary Fitzgerald, Ginger Hayes, Janel Kelly, Lynn Ortega, Mary Wilke

Have a great August!

Serving Our Veterans Proudly!

Royce Hopper
Unit President



FROM OUR SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION COMMANDER

As the Interim Acting Commander for our Sons of the American Legion, Neil Thomas Jr. Centennial Squadron 209 following the resignation for personal reasons of our Past Commander Michael Wescott, I would first like to thank Michael for his prolific & dedicated volunteer service not just to the SAL, but to the Honor Guard and the entire Post over past years.

The Sons of the American Legion exists to allow male decedents to join & serve as members of the American Legion Family in honor of our immediate familial ancestors who have served our great country. It exists also to help mentor & instill in the future generations of young men the Constitutional & Historical values of Citizenship & Service consistent with supporting the 4 Pillars of the American Legion. (Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation; National Security; Americanism; Children & Youth)

We Honor the Past & Help Forge the Future.

As our SAL Squadron moves forward into the 2022 membership renewal season, we focus on overcoming the challenges posed by the recent pandemic to build a reinvigorated Squadron that seeks to not only honor the past, but also help forge the future through an active & engaged membership where our more seasoned members can help instruct and mentor our more youthful members to “a sense of individual obligation to the Community, State and Nation.”

Squadron 209 was honored to sponsor one of the several young ladies who our Post Family sent to Girls State this year and I’m excited to report that not only did Griffin serve as “Mayor “of the Town of “Confidence” but that she also recently learned she will be attending the U.S. Air Force Academy, where her brother currently attends, beginning in 2022. We can be very proud to have sponsored such a sharp and dynamic young woman.

I’m also very pleased to report that SAL Squadron 209 & Post 209 were again recently awarded & recognized for the 2020-2021 year for being over 100% donation contribution to the American Legion Child Welfare Foundation. Since 1954 CWF provides grants to qualified recipients for projects or programs related to improving the general welfare of US children.

To date, over \$18 million has been awarded by the CWF to organizations to assist the children of our country.

The \$1,500 collected & donated by Squadron 209 on behalf of the Post 209 Family is the equivalent to approximately \$25 per SAL Squadron 209 Member and about \$1.30 per member of the Post 209 Family.

We should not, however, overlook the very generous & consistent donations from individual SAL Squadron 209 members like Norm Moyer that go a long way to helping us exceed our goal.

While, to be sure this is an ongoing accomplishment to be proud of for our Squadron & Post, I would like to challenge members of our Post Family to make use of the Child Welfare Fund Piggy Banks on the dining tables at Post dinners and events as a more useful resting place for spare change to do good rather than cluttering the tops of dressers or automobile coin holders.

As we focus on the beginning of the 2022 Membership Renewal Season, we would like to offer our Special Recognition & Thanks to SAL Squadron 209 Members with 10 Years & Over of Continuous Membership as of 2021:

10-14 Years:

Brandon Bowen – 10 Years	Evan Schwarzbart – 10 Years	Robert Bowen – 11 Years
John Bowen Jr. – 10 Years	Donald Schuck – 10 Years	John Bowen Sr. – 11 Years
Kyle Bowen – 10 Years	Tyrel Willison – 10 Years	John Sanders – 14 Years

15-19 Years:

Tom Ortega – 16 Years	Dean Noechel – 17 Years
-----------------------	-------------------------

Very Special Recognition To Our Longest Continuous Member:

David Mitchell – 22 Years

Brian Wess
SAL Commander



FROM OUR SERVICE OFFICER

My name is Brian Murphy and I am your new Service Officer. I would first like to thank Art “AJ” Carter for serving as my predecessor, and for allowing me to ask for his assistance from time to time as I settle into this role. I served in the US NAVY from 1987-1993 as a Corpsman. Corpsmen serve the NAVY and the US MARINE CORPS in hospitals, and aboard ships and submarines, and in the field around the globe.

I served during the Desert Storm era, and worked with Sailors and Marines returning from the first Gulf War. I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker with the Department of Veterans Affairs, and have been with the VA for almost 10 years. My current role is assisting transitioning service members from the ARMY and Air Force who have been injured or otherwise are separating service to connect to VA and Tri-Care. Prior to my role, I worked as a Vet Center counselor with the VA, assisting combat Veterans with issues such as PTSD, depression, anxiety, etc. I am here to assist Veterans in helping them get the services and benefits they need and have so rightly earned. It is my honor to help in any way I can! I look forward to meeting with you and seeing you at the Legion Post!

Brian Murphy
Post Service Officer



THE AMERICAN LEGION AMATEUR RADIO CLUB (TALARC)

Devoted to the Hobby and Art of Amateur Radio and Promoting the Legion

Brought to you by TALARC

What is Ham Radio?

Amateur Radio (ham radio) is a popular **hobby and service** that brings people, electronics and communication together. People use ham radio to **talk across town, around the world**, or even into space, all without the Internet or cell phones.

It's fun, social, educational, and can be a lifeline during times of need.

Want more information?

Call, email or text me.

73 (Best regards) – Harvey W 1 J U 331-1212 mbca@comcast.net



FROM OUR AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS

Saddle up and Ride 'em Cowboy!

Wanted to highlight our widely successful Annual Pony Express Run that raised over \$12,000 for the American Legion Legacy Fund. That's over 50% of what has been raised in the state. The riders are maintaining a really busy month with numerous ride events every weekend. Runs since the last newsletter were the Fairplay Independence Day Parade in support of the ALR 172, ALR 38 Poker Run and our ALR 209 Poker Run. This is continuing to be a really great start to the riding season.

Numbers

38 members

 113 service/volunteer hours

 154 cage hours

 890 riding hours

Ed Santos
ALR President



WE PUT THE “FUN” IN FUNDRAISER!

There are many reasons we could cite how we became the largest Post in Colorado. Things like our always current and informative website (legion209.org), our great Post Home and the dinners we provide, the fact that our Auxiliary, SAL Squadron, and Riders all work together with the Legionnaires in all activities, and even the fact that our Post leadership ages range from 30-something year olds to more seasoned Veterans.

While all of the above is reason enough to explain our success, we can also add that our members understand what it means to give and support our programs. The most recent example is the Pony Express fundraiser. This Legion Rider event included Riders from across the state to ride in support of the children of our Fallen Heroes and those Veterans with 50% or more disabilities giving their children an opportunity to seek higher education through scholarships as needed.

The last stop for the Pony Express was at Post 209. These amazing Riders comprised of Legionnaires, Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion members rolled into the parking lot the afternoon of 17 July with saddlebags full of donations they collected along the way. The final count has not been fully determined because there is still money being collected, we have already more than doubled the amount our Department donated in 2019 (no money was collected for 2020 due to the pandemic and cancellation of our National Convention).

So, you may be wondering about the “fun” part. A few months ago, Kellie Hayes, our Unit 209 and District 7 Treasurer came up with an idea to help the cause. She began advertising members could make a donation in the name of anyone they choose. All that was needed to start a donation bucket was \$20. The people who had the top three money-collected buckets would have to run a Stick-Horse race around our Post 209 Parking Lot. There were seven buckets collecting money; our ALR State Chairman, Steve “Lunchbox” Butner, our ALR State Vice Chairman, Steve “Hands” Hayes, Past Department Commander Jay “The Real Jay Bowen” Bowen, Past National Commander Tom “The PNC” Bock, current Post Commander Joseph “the Urban Cowboy” Schmidt, Past Department Auxiliary President Chris (I don’t know her nickname) Harvey, and our current Department Commander Chip “Nitschke” Kossow.

Money was dropped into the buckets for a few months. Kellie even took the “stables” to our Department Convention and collected money for the buckets from our Legion family from around the state. When it came time to saddle up the riders, Lunchbox, Hands, and The Real Jay Bowen climbed on their respective Stick-Ponies. The race ended with Hands coming in first, but I think the video suggested he may tripped Lunchbox to gain and maintain the lead. Jay’s horse couldn’t run straight so he ended up in third place (yes, that’s also last place).

But the real winners that day were the kids of our Fallen Heroes. Thanks almost entirely to Kellie’s marketing and constant advertisements, along with the help from our dedicated and loyal group of members, the Post 209 family raised more than \$12k (\$7,465 was raised for the Stick-Horse race alone), which is more than our entire Department raised in 2019.



The Jockey’s readying their steeds for the big race. Chip “Nitschke” watches Jay “The Real Jay Bowen,” Steve “Lunchbox” (a.k.a. Tutu Man), and Steve “Hands” to ensure no steroids are given to the ponies prior to the race. Joe “the Urban Cowboy” (a.k.a. the Pooper Scooper Walker) is in the background. The Urban Cowboy won the honor of “clean up” by coming in last place in donations.

Our Pony Express team!



Kellie and Joe presenting the “ceremonial check” to Lunchbox (this was before the final count was available).

FROM OUR HONOR GUARD CAPTAIN

At the July Executive Committee Meeting, I was appointed by the Post Commander to be the Honor Guard Captain. Apparently, I either did not learn my lesson the first time around about “volunteering,” or did not think that having just the position of Finance Officer was challenging enough. Of course, there is a third (and most likely) option – I was asked to serve and I will do what I can to serve OUR Veterans and OUR community as long as I am afforded the privilege.

While being a member of the Honor Guard is not for everyone, for many different reasons, it is a way for Post members to serve OUR Veterans and OUR community. I look at how much busier the Honor Guard is and the amount of public acknowledgement of the service we perform for OUR Veterans is when compared to two years ago when I joined the team. When I learned of the Honor Guard right after joining Post 209 back in July 2019, I knew immediately that I wanted to help out and *give back* to the Legion and OUR Veterans, partially because of how my first exposure to the American Legion happened.

My first exposure to the American Legion was six years prior to joining the American Legion and Post 209. In July 2013, my Dad, an Army Vietnam Veteran, passed away as a result of Parkinson’s disease (Agent Orange). While my brother and I helped our Step-Mom make the funeral arrangements, the funeral director asked about military service and if “final honors” were desired. It was obviously an immediate “YES” from all three of us. The morning of my Dad’s funeral service, 11 guys in white shirts and blue caps arrived at the funeral home. I had the opportunity to talk with them and learned they were part of the Honor Guard from the local American Legion Post and were there to provide my Dad with his Final Honors. It turned out that not only did my Dad know them from being a member of their Post (I had no idea, he never said anything), but he also went to high school with most of them. At the cemetery the Honor Guard performed the three rifle volleys, played Taps, folded the flag and presented it to my Step-Mom, and presented me the

expended rounds. Even though I spent nine and a half years in the Army, this was my first time experiencing a Final Honors for a fallen Veteran. I now find it quite impressive that a small rural Ohio American Legion Post with a membership of under 300 was able to provide a full Honor Guard team, as well as having another 6 Honor Guard members on standby to be pallbearers if requested.

Why did I just provide this story? Well, it connects how/why I decided that I wanted to serve OUR Veterans and *give back* for what the American Legion gave my Dad and family. One of the very first Final Honors I participated in at Pikes Peak National Cemetery (actual two in one day), I had the honor of presenting the expended rounds to the family. At that moment, I knew what my face must have looked like when I was being presented the expended rounds from my Dad's funeral six years earlier. I imagine that the Legionnaire presenting the rounds back then was feeling what I was feeling at that moment – pride. Pride for being a part of providing the Final Honors for the Veteran and for including the family in recognizing the Veteran's service. Since then, I have had the privilege to be a part of providing very many Veterans their earned and well-deserved Final Honors, to present the expended rounds to many family members, and the very special privilege of folding and presenting the flag on multiple occasions. Being at a Veteran's Final Honors where you are a part of firing the rifle volleys, playing Taps, presenting the expended rounds, or the ultimate honor of folding and presenting the flag provides a feeling that words cannot describe.

While not everyone has a lot of time to participate in the Honor Guard, all someone needs is the time to participate a night or two for training meetings and just one event a month. A meeting or two and one event a month is only 3-5 hours. Those 3-5 hours makes a difference for a Veteran and their family. Those 3-5 hours a month can also make a difference for you! If 10 to 15 members of the Legion, Sons, or Auxiliary *gave back* with 3-5 hours a month, the Honor Guard could possibly double the number of Final Honors we participate in – and more importantly not have to turn down requests. Even if you do not have 3-5 hours a month, you can still help the Honor Guard by telling others in the Legion, Sons, or Auxiliary (Post 209 or other posts in the area) about what the Honor Guard does and the importance of growing in order to meet the increase of requests to support OUR Veterans. If you or anyone you know might be interested in supporting the Honor Guard, reach out to me at: (719) 482-4496 or honor.guard@legion209.org.

Time to wrap this up before it starts to look like a book, or one of Jay's *Bringing A Little South To The West* articles (which, in reality, are actually quite entertaining). The Honor Guard has participated in **73** events so far this year, with more upcoming events on the calendar and requests coming in almost daily (unfortunately, with too many having to be turned down). We have provided Final Honors for 64 Veterans, presented the Colors for 5 events, participated in 2 ceremonies at Pikes Peak National Cemetery, and presented a new flag to an elementary school.

Now the math majors are probably scratching their heads since that only adds up to 72. The Honor Guard also received a very last-minute special request from the Ted Nugent Kamp for Kids in Granite, CO (just outside of Leadville) to present a talk about the importance of honoring the flag and how important it is to Veterans. Two members went to the event and addressed about 85 kids ranging from 5 to 17 years old and approximately 25 adult volunteers. We provided the symbolism of the American Flag, a brief history and the meaning of each part of the flag, the importance of respecting the flag, and why Americans should honor the flag. We had the opportunity to give the importance of the flag to Veterans in general and for ourselves. During the talk we asked and received questions from the kids. They were very interested and engaged during the time we were there. While we were talking with some of the adults afterwards, they expressed their amazement about how the kids were so quiet, interested/engaged, and sitting still the entire time. They have

never seen that kind of behavior during the lunchtime presentation/talk in the 11-year history of the Kamp being held in Colorado. Previously, the kids have not shown an interest and spend the time talking and moving about during the presentations. It is a great feeling to know that our talk (basically centered around two of the American Legion's Pillars: Americanism, Children & Youth) had such an impact on these kids. Unfortunately, Ted Nugent was not there this year. However, we have been asked to support the Kamp's lunchtime talks/presentations each year going forward – especially when Ted Nugent is present so that he can hear about what OUR Honor Guard does for OUR Veterans and OUR community.

Joel Haas
Honor Guard Captain



FROM OUR POST CHAPLAIN

The following poem is dedicated to our teachers as they prepare for the new school year ahead.

Teachers Two by Two

God said to Noah as he prepared to embark,
“How many teachers do you have on the ark?”
Noah looked at his list. “We have two surveyors,
Two lawyers, two doctors, and two aging soothsayers,
Two dentists, two writers, two preachers,
Two builders, two sellers...but apparently no teachers.”

“No teachers?” said God, “then how do you plan
To pass along knowledge while we look for dry land?
This isn't a cruise, Noah, it's not a vacation.
It's more important than ever to learn multiplication,
And biology, and music and literature and fitness,
And woodworking, too, as you are my witness.”

“But God”, said Noah, “good teachers are rare,
And you expect me to find a compatible pair?
We're shoving off tomorrow or as soon as we can.
There's not time to prepare a complete lesson plan.
I have zebras and cheetahs to get on the boat,
And we're missing one fox, and an Angora goat.”

So God said to Noah, “Here's what I will do.
I'll look over my files for a teacher or two.
You go on with the business of filling the ship.
I'll find you some teachers to take on the trip.
I know where to look, or at least where to start:
When you need a good teacher, look first in the heart.”

The clouds were building, and it was starting to rain.
The passengers on board were starting to complain.
It was humid and crowded and dirty and stinking,
The lawyers were suing, the writers were drinking.
The ark was now filled with all kinds of creatures,
Except for two wise and experienced teachers.

Then a man and a woman appeared on the scene.
They seemed sure of themselves; very calm and serene.
They stepped on the boat and drew lots of strange looks
As they began to distribute outlines and workbooks.
“We’re teachers”, they said, “not saviors or sages.
Your assignment for tomorrow is the first thirty pages.”

Glenn Dromgoole

Brad Henderson
Chaplain



VETERANS HELPING VETERANS

The often inexplicable serendipity that occurs amongst those engaged in the challenging task of assisting our homeless and at risk veterans is often such that one can only attribute the amazing results beyond simple coincidence to the higher universal power that is the architect of us all.

One such story comes from American Legion Neal Thomas Jr. Centennial Post 209 (Legion209.org) in Colorado Springs where 4 members of its Legion Family volunteer service on the El Paso County Homeless Veterans Coalition’s (www.EPCHVC.org) Executive & Advisory Boards.

Recently the EPCHVC received a call from one of its partner organizations, the Veterans Administration’s (VA) Homeless Office, about a chronically homeless veteran they had been working to assist for 6 years. Chronic homelessness has been defined as a single individual (or head of household) with a disabling condition that has experienced homelessness for longer than a year, during which time the individual may have lived in a shelter, safe haven, or a place not meant for human habitation. In the case of this veteran, the “place not meant for human habitation” was the veteran’s car, a 2000 Chrysler 300M. He had been living in his car for numerous years and it is uncertain just how long it had been inoperable.

During his first encounter with the VA staff the veteran struggled to communicate. His words were garbled and his thought content was reflective of the constant state of living daily life in crisis trying to find safe shelter and food.

The VA’s case manager, Kevin Bishop, and the housing team continued to work with the veteran to overcome his mental, emotional & physical challenges and eventually convinced him to enroll for the HUD-VASH program, which he was finally admitted into. The HUD-VASH program is a joint federal agency program that pays a major portion of a veteran’s rent allowing him to live in an apartment he could not afford without financial assistance. Once admitted to this program, Mr. Bishop was able to get the veteran into an apartment; however, the veteran was reluctant to abandon his inoperable vehicle which he was unable to move to the apartment complex, but to which he had become very emotionally attached as it had served as his sole place of refuge and home to all his belongings for years.

At this point, Mr. Bishop reached out to the EPCHVC to see about obtaining financial assistance to get the veteran’s car repaired. The EPCHVC is a Non-Profit, All Volunteer coalition of representatives from many El Paso County & Pikes Peak Region Colorado organizations that provide a wide variety of support to the community of veterans in the local area.

The EPCHVC contacted one of their approved partner vendors; in this case veteran owned and operated local auto repair facility, Patriot Auto Repair. Mr. Bishop worked with the veteran over Memorial Day weekend to have the vehicle towed to Patriot Auto, clean out the vehicle & temporarily move his belongings from the vehicle interior. Once mechanics evaluated the vehicle



it was estimated that it would cost over \$6,700, well beyond the vehicle's worth, to have the veteran's car repaired to the level of making it operational & safe.

After a discussion between the EPCHVC's Board Chairman & Post 209 Dual Member, Brian Wess and Treasurer, John Crouse, they put out a call for assistance to the members of the EPCHVC's Executive and Advisory board who represent over a dozen different organizations: "does anyone have a vehicle in good working order that they want to donate to a veteran?"

Two members of American Legion Post 209, who are also EPCHVC Board members, responded. Just days before, Kellie Hayes and Andy Gilbert had become aware of a recently passed American Legion Member & Korean War Bronze Star/Purple Heart Veteran, Francis "Bud" Powell, who loved the Legion and its mission so much that he made it known to his family he wanted all his worldly possessions possible bequeathed to the Legion's good works. One of these possessions was a 1999 Jeep Cherokee.

Enter Post 209 Commander, Joe Schmidt & SFC Thomas Guthrie, Post 209 Member & 4th Infantry Division HQ G4 at Fort Carson, who went out to evaluate the condition of the 1999 Jeep Cherokee, that had been sitting idle, to ascertain if it would be able to meet the veteran's needs. The vehicle was found to be in very serviceable condition and over the weekend it was brought to Post 209 where Andy G. & Brian W. then moved it to Patriot Auto so that it could be evaluated for any necessary service.

On Monday, mechanics looked over the Jeep Cherokee and found that it was in need of mostly minor service that would amount to about \$2,400 in repairs. In yet another astounding twist of fortune, the EPCHVC had recently learned that approximately \$2,000 previously allocated to assist another veteran in need, representing the final monies available from a State of Colorado Veterans Assistance Grant whose fiscal year was to end on 30 June, was not going to be used as that veteran's situation had resolved through other means. EPCHVC Treasurer, John Crouse, put the case to the EPCHVC Executive Board over e-mail for a formal vote of approval where the motion passed unopposed.

The veteran was then introduced to what would become his new vehicle and was convinced to part with his "home" & refuge of the past 6 years. The old Chrysler was towed away for scrap for which the veteran received \$350.00 in cash. This amount ended up being sufficient money for the veteran to pay for his registration and insurance on his "New" 1999 Jeep Cherokee.



The culmination of this wonderful story of the right people, right circumstances coming together at just the right place & time is that a chronically homeless veteran is now living in a federally subsidized apartment and is also driving (not living in) a safe and operational vehicle.

Mr. Bishop has communicated that the veteran is showing a dramatic improvement with his mental health and functioning. He says this improvement is indicative of the mental & emotional impacts of stress in crisis and the difference a stable home and access to reliable transportation can have on a person's life.

The progress the veteran has shown could only have been accomplished with the dedicated, unselfish cooperation and collaboration of multiple individuals and agencies all focused on assisting a veteran off the street and ensuring he has a safe, sustainable permanent place to live... and a departed American Legion Member who made the choice to leave this world with a final act of kindness to another brother in arms.

Brian Wess



**THANK YOU POST 209
FAMILY MEMBERS FOR
YOUR CONTINUED
SUPPORT AND SERVICE TO
OUR VETERANS AND
COMMUNITY!**

NEAL THOMAS, JR.-CENTENNIAL POST 209 GOLF TOURNAMENT



Where? King's Deer Golf Club, Monument, CO

When? Sunday, 22 August, 2021

Time? Player Check-in 7:00 am

Shotgun Start 8:00 am

Scramble Tournament (Rules Announced Prior to Start
of Play)

Cost? \$100/Person

Entry Fee includes: Green Fees, Range Balls, Golf Cart,
and Awards' Luncheon.

Donations and Sponsorships Appreciated and
Encouraged.

Event Coordinator, Joseph Schmidt – 651 328-9029

Email: josephschmidt@ymail.com



AMERICAN LEGION POST 209

THE PREEMINENT VOICE FOR VETERANS • COLORADO SPRINGS, CO



WALK OF HONOR

Buy A Brick Fundraiser!

We are re-introducing an exciting fundraiser for our Post. We are partnering with Polar Engraving to offer our members, family, friends, and our corporate Veteran-friendly supporters an opportunity to purchase an engraved brick to adorn our landscaping project we are working. The engraving uses the same technology as used on tombstones so it's extremely durable. Here are some FAQs:

- **What Are We Having?** A Brick Fundraising Event
- **Why?** To Further Funding of our American Legion Programs
- **What Size Are the Bricks?** 4"x 8" or 8"x 8" bricks for individuals, and 8"x 8" or 12"x 12" bricks for our corporate supporters.
- **What are the Costs for the Individual Bricks?** Prices vary depending on size, style and lettering desired, but typically range from \$75 to \$200. For the 8x8 or 12x12 bricks, you can add a second emblem. Contact the Adjutant for ordering details. There is **NO** additional cost for the second emblem on the larger bricks.
- **What are the Costs for the Corporate/Veteran Supporter Bricks?** Again, prices vary depending on size, style, and lettering but typically range from \$125 to \$500.
- **What is the Difference between Individual and Corporate Bricks?** Individual bricks are identified for Veterans, and family members of Veterans wishing to purchase a brick to honor their Veteran. The corporate bricks are for our Veteran-friendly supporters and businesses who wish to show their continued support to our Nation's heroes by purchasing a brick.
- **Is the Brick Purchase Restricted to Members of the Post 209 Family?** No. We encourage members to buy a brick for themselves as a lasting memory of their association with Post 209. We also welcome anyone to purchase a brick for their Veteran loved one, or to show their support to our Veterans.
- **Can I Buy a 12"x 12" Brick for Myself/Loved One?** Absolutely!
- **Where Do I Go to Buy a Brick?** We have a link on our website. Just visit legion209.org and click on "Walk of Honor." Or, you can visit <http://polarengraving.com/ALPost209> to buy your brick. The site is very user-friendly and will walk you through the design and purchase. You will be able to see a preview of your brick before finalizing the purchase.
- **How Do I Pay For the Brick?** We have the site setup to accept payment via PayPal or by check. PayPal is an extremely safe way to purchase a brick and you don't need a PayPal account to use it.
- **Where Will the Brick Be Shipped?** All bricks will be shipped to the Post. We will notify you when it arrives and you are welcome to stop by and see the brick you have purchased.
- **What Will Become of My Brick?** It will be placed near the Flagpole at the Post and will be part of the landscaping design we are working. If you are a landscaper or know a good one (preferably a Veteran), have them contact our Adjutant.
- **How Long Will this Fundraiser Effort Last?** We plan to only sell as many bricks as needed for the first phase of the landscaping project. Currently, that is anticipated to be 600 bricks, but that number may change depending on brick sizes purchased and the final design approved by the Post.
- **Will I Have an Opportunity to Buy a Brick Later?** Quite possibly. It depends on what is decided/approved for the next phase of our project.



Order your brick(s) now to ensure you get one in Phase One of our project. If you buy multiple bricks, let our Adjutant know and we will make certain they are all placed together.

BRINGING A LITTLE SOUTH TO THE WEST



With the recent passing of our Independence Day holiday and listening to the thousands of fireworks going off all night, it brought back some pretty fond memories.

Growing up in the south we didn't have the selection of fireworks we have today. As I recall, our fireworks choices included Black Cat Firecrackers, Cherry Bombs, M80's, both of which are now illegal, Roman Candles, Bottle Rockets, and Sparklers. For me, having an M80 or Cherry Bomb was a rarity although we did get them on occasion. When we did, we were VERY careful how we set them off. The crowd I hung out with never did anything foolish like putting them in the school bathroom commodes as I'm certain you've heard about over the years. We would use them to blow things up like cans, often trying to see how high we could launch the can.

Now the firecrackers were a different story. While there were many brands of firecrackers, our preference was always the Black Cats. We liked the looks of them and we believed they packed just a little more punch than most brands. And we weren't as careful when setting them off. Actually, we were often pretty reckless and extremely lucky none of us ever got badly hurt. We'd set them off one at a time, or occasionally we'd tie them all together and set them to fire sequentially off each other. That was fun to watch.

Most of the time, we'd light and throw them pretending they were Hand Grenades. I remember on one occasion, the fuse was a little short and burned too quickly. The firecracker went off just as I was about to release it from my hand. My index finger and thumb went numb for about an hour. Thankfully, that was the one and only time a firecracker went off in my hand. See, I'm not as dumb as I look. 😊

The Bottle Rockets were fun. Their long thin stick fit perfectly inside an empty Coke bottle with the Rocket portion just at the top of the bottle. We'd just light the fuse and step back. The Rocket would soar for about 100 feet, then explode...most of the time. On a few occasions, the Rocket would shoot up and then nothing. I remember one time we decided to just push the stick into the ground because we didn't want to take the time to find an empty Coke bottle. Either we stuck the stick too far into the ground or there just wasn't enough "umph" from the Rocket because it never left the ground. After that incident, we always took the time to get a bottle to serve as the Rocket Launcher.

Roman Candles were also a big hit. We'd light them up and marvel at the different colored fireballs that left the tube. They never went very far, maybe 10 feet, but it was very fun to watch. And I would never tell you we aimed the Roman Candles at anyone because that would be irresponsible. And we all know 10-year old kids are NOT irresponsible. We'd heard stories of the Roman Candles blowing up, but in all the years we shot them, we never had that happen. Were we just lucky, or was it an Urban Legend?











Probably everyone's favorite was the Sparklers. These thin metallic handled fireworks were about a foot long and had about 8" of what appeared to be some sort of combustible batter. We'd light them up and watch the fuse burn slowly emitting bright streaks of what appeared to be electric arcs. They would burn for a couple of minutes and we'd often have sword fights while they burned. The arcs were not harmful. The only time you'd get hurt with a Sparkler was if you touched the burning batter base. Yes, this is the voice of experience talking.

All of this for about \$20 or less. That was the good ole days before someone figured out the law of supply and demand. The popularity of Fireworks appears to grow year after year. And so has the prices. I remember back about 1998, my brother-in-law spent just over \$300 for Fireworks. He brought them over to our house in the Arkansas country-side and we set them off. We had completely expended his \$300 cache of Fireworks in about 15 minutes. \$300 in 15 minutes! That ended my love affair with Fireworks. I don't believe I'm cheap, but I can have a lot more fun for \$300 than watching fire burn. And spend more time doing it. Unless I'm in Vegas. \$300 could last me all day, or it could also be gone in 60 seconds. Hmm. Sounds like a good name for a movie, huh?

Jay Bowen

Past Post Commander



August 2021						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Troop 77 Mtg. 6:30pm	3	4	5 Executive Committee Meeting 6:30pm 	6 Price Varies w/Menu Hamdogger 6:00pm 	7
8	9 Troop 77 Mtg. 6:30pm Post Honor Gd. Training 6:00pm 	10	11	12	13 \$10.00 Meal ALR Dinner - 6:00pm RSVP Required!  Trivia Night!	14 Membership Meeting B'fast - 9:00/Mtg - 10:00  
15	16 Troop 77 Mtg. 6:30pm	17 ALR Exec. Board 6:00pm 	18	19	20 \$15.00 Meal Steak Night! 6:00pm RSVP Required! 	21
22 Post 209 Golf Tournament! 7:30am Kings Deer GC	23 Troop 77 Mtg. 6:30pm Post Honor Gd. Training 6:00pm 	24 ALR/SAL Monthly Mtng 6:30pm. Social 5:30pm SAL 5:45pm  	25	26  TALARC EC Mtg. 5:00p	27 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">National Convention - Phoenix</div>	28 Healing Warriors! 9:00am - 2:00pm
29 <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">National Convention - Phoenix</div>	30 Troop 77 Mtg. 6:30pm	31	Notes: Chef's Choice cancelled in August, many volunteer help will be in Phoenix! Game Night cancelled until further notice due to lack of support.			

September Events of Note:

Labor Day! – 6 September

Trivia Night! – 10 September

9/11 20th Anniversary – 11 September

First Day of Fall – 22 September