

Legionnaires,

Feb 87

LAST MONTH'S MEETING WAS CANCELLED BY ACTS OF NATURE. THIS IS SOMETHING WE CAN'T CONTROL AND I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND AND WILL REACT BY MAKING CERTAIN THAT YOU WILL BE PRESENT AT THE UPCOMING MEETING 19 FEB 87.

CONGRATULATIONS TO EACH OF YOU FOR YOUR EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF THE RECENTLY ACCOMPLISHED MILESTONE OF A 100% MEMBERSHIP. BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY, "WE HAVEN'T REACHED OUR FULL POTENTIAL IN MEMBERSHIP." FROM THIS POINT FORWARD WE CAN ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING THAT WE ENVISION IN THE REALM OF MEMBERSHIP. IT'S ALL UP TO US, WHAT WILL IT BE?? LET'S REALLY SET AN ALL-TIME HIGH BY EACH MEMBER GETTING AT LEAST ONE (1) MEMBER BEFORE DEPARTMENT CONVENTION IN JUNE. I HAVE ALREADY ACCEPTED A CHALLENGE OF (10) TEN NEW MEMBERS BEFORE THE CONVENTION.

ON 17 FEBRUARY 1987 I WILL BE DEPARTING ENROUTE TO WASHINGTON DC TO MEET WITH THE RECENTLY ELECTED COLORADO DELEGATION. THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT MEETING FOR THE LEGIONNAIRES OF COLORADO WITH THEIR CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION BECAUSE AT THIS TIME WE CAN EXPRESS THE NEEDS OF COLORADO VETERANS THAT REMAIN UNFULFILLED. FURTHERMORE, WE HOPE TO IMPRESS UPON THE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION FROM COLORADO THE NEEDS OF

(2)
The growing numbers of Homeless Veterans. In Calcasieu this is a real problem and its a problem that's not likely to diminish without considerable effort on the part of concerned Legislators.

During the past month I have had occasion to visit with a Developer/Contractor, Neal Jones, who has presented a requested portrayal of a possible post home. The request that I made to him was for a possible long-term lease facility, due to our inability to purchase a facility. The presentation will also be presented to the post later when we have a formidable plan in being.

In our last Newsletter I indicated the need for assistance at our Bingo Games. Included with the newsletter was a questionnaire pertaining to when it was feasible to help out in a variety of ways. I sincerely hope that each of you took the time to do some soul searching and decided to help out. Together, we can make it work for all of us.

I am happy to report that our Adjutant George Wood is home from the hospital and doing fine. Don't overload him with work. Welcome Home Guy and TAKE IT EASY (ENTER INFO AT END OF LETTER.)

(3)

SOON IT WILL BE TIME TO SELECT NEW OFFICERS TO GUIDE AND LEAD THIS POST THROUGH THE UPCOMING YEAR. Surely there are those of you who would like to offer your abilities to continue the programs of the post. The Nominating Committee will be contacting you shortly regarding your desires for holding office. We need willing able-bodied individuals to take the reins of leadership and lead the post through the upcoming crucial year ahead. If you feel so inclined please let the nominating committee know your desires. I can no longer serve as your Post Commander and respectfully ask your indulgence in my future endeavor as I pursue the chief of fire of Senior Vice Commander at Department level.

Hoping that I will see a full house at the upcoming meeting on 19 February 1987, 7:00pm Sharp, Rustic Hills Mall Community Room.

See God and Country

Wear L. Thomas, Jr
Commander.

BOTH DAVE THOMAS AND GYM REESE WILL BE GOING INTO THE HOSPITAL ~~AT 12:00 AM~~ THE 1ST WEEK OF FEBRUARY. GOOD LUCK GUYS.

Hello Ladies,

February 1987

Seems as though Mother Nature decided we all needed an additional month to complete reports, so she cancelled the Jan meeting with a snow storm!! However, Unit 209's business must be taken care of.

It is imperative that we meet before the regular meeting of 19 February 1987. All those who can come to a meeting at my house on 12 February 87, please call me at 392-1510 to confirm. Bring any reports, poems, etc.; your participation will be appreciated.

I am looking forward to our regular meeting on 19 February 87 at the Rustic Hills Mall at 7:00 pm. Bring a new member with you. Remember, we are building our membership, and striving to be ---

"A Unit, Under God, fulfilling a Commitment"

June Thomas
Unit 209 President

NEWS LETTER FOR FEBRUARY 1964

REGULATIONS GOVERN EMBLEM USE:

"There shines The Emblem of The American Legion. It is your badge of distinction, honor, and service. It stands for God and Country, and the highest rights of mankind."

from The Initiation Ceremony

So begins the instructions into the significance and symbolism attached to the Emblem of the American Legion for those being received into membership. All members should remember on review that portion of the instructions, and also be aware of the following facts:

- 1) The Emblem of The American Legion is fully copyrighted.
- 2) The Emblem of The American Legion is fully patented.
- 3) The Emblem of The American Legion is protected by Federal law making a criminal offense of its use without formal approval of the National Organization.

Many Legionnaires and Legion Posts have the impression they may use the Emblem in any way they desire. NO!

The use of The Emblem by Posts, intermediate organizations (district, counties, etc), and departments is limited to its reprint or reproduction on stationery, publications, notices,

pinneads, etc.

Any other use of The Emblem or The Name "The American Legion," except as appears on merchandise obtained through National Emblem sales, must have the approval of The National Adjutant, (American Legion Post must first have the approval of their respective departments before submitting their request to The National Adjutant, The American Legion, P. O. Box 1255 Indianapolis IN: 46206).

Veterans Reminded of VA Burial Benefits:

The Veterans Administration reminds former servicemen and women that awareness of VA burial benefits can often spare the family of a deceased veteran anxiety and financial hardship following the veteran's death.

Interment in a national cemetery is available to veterans discharged under conditions other than dishonorable. Also eligible under certain guidelines, are a veteran's spouse and minor children.

VA will furnish a headstone or marker to memorialize a veteran or mark the grave of a veteran buried in a national, state, or private cemetery. VA will also provide markers to eligible dependents interred in a national or state veterans cemetery.

A memorial marker or headstone for veterans whose remains have not been

Recovered or identified is also provided by the VA. This includes those who were buried at sea, those whose bodies were donated to science, and those who were cremated and the ashes scattered. A memorial section in national cemeteries honors these veterans.

The VA provides, if death is not service connected, a burial allowance of \$300 if the veteran was entitled at the time of death to VA compensation or pension payments or died in a VA medical facility. This allowance may also be available in cases of certain indigent veterans whose remains are unclaimed.

A plot or interment allowance of \$150 is also available if the veteran is entitled to the burial allowance, or served during a war period, or was discharged or retired from service because of a disability which was incurred or aggravated in the line of duty. A veteran buried in a national or other federal cemetery, however, is not eligible for this plot allowance. The plot allowance may be paid to a state if the veteran was buried in a state veterans' cemetery.

If the veteran's death is service connected, VA will pay an amount not to exceed \$1,100 in lieu of the burial and plot allowance.

V.A. will also provide:

* An American flag for use in covering a casket.

* A reimbursement for part of the cost of a private headstone or marker bought after the veteran's death and placed on the grave of a veteran. The current amount is \$71, the average cost of government headstones purchased by VA, and,

* A memorial certificate bearing the signature of the President, expressing the nation's recognition of the deceased veteran's service.

Legion closes Active Year of Capitol Hill Testimony:

Washington ALNS - The American Legion's National Legislative Division said the ground work for submission or actually delivered testimony 36 times in 1986, 13 of these involved presentations when the Legion was the only major veterans organization involved during the last session of the 99th Congress. As the 100th Congress convenes, the Legion's legislative staff is looking forward to another year of active participation in the legislative process.

"Our load never gets lighter," said Ed Phillips Riggins, the director of the Legislative Division, "Each year we seem to be involved in more issues, and those issues tend to get more and more complex."

Come are the days when the organization tended

To testify almost exclusively on issues directly related to veterans affairs. Now the Legion appears on issues dealing with foreign relations, national security, and economics in addition to an extensive array of topics which impact on the nation's veterans.

"The fiscal climate we're in has really had an effect on the types of things we have gotten involved in," Gary Sammons, the chairman of the National Legislative Commission. "For the past 5 or 6 years we have seen very clearly that when the administration wants to cut programs, veterans' programs as well" as other popular legion supported programs tend to float to the top of the list. Our people have to be aware of the ways that vital programs can be secured, and I think we are doing an excellent job."

Chairman Sammons cites legion efforts to prevent disability compensation from being taxed, and the fact that the Veterans Administration budget has not taken the punishment some budget writers wanted to deal to the V.A.

The division works closely with all of the other legion divisions and program areas to ensure that the legion's 182 resolutions are represented in Capitol Hill.

"Testimony frequently comes from the divisions, and we coordinate those statements to be certain that everything is consistent," Riggan said.

The Legion has been commended by the Congress and the White House for its work on drug and alcohol abuse, child pornography and other of the organization's children and youth programs. But, it's not always bouquets that are thrown the Legion's way.

As Federal dollars become more limited with each passing year, the American Legion often finds itself at odds with the administration with certain congressional camps. Controversies over recent years have included means test and third party reimbursement standards for veterans health care, expenditures for defense weaponry, foreign policy treatment of Central America, and numerous budget skirmishes on critical programs.

"Our positions reflect the best judgment of our membership, and we promote those positions on Capitol Hill with the understanding that we will be actively opposed on many issues," Sammons said. "Although we don't invite controversy we recognize it as a very real part of doing business in Washington where there is an intense competition for Federal funds."

"Sammons and Riggins stress the importance of the Consolidated Post Report form as a vital tool in the Legion's lobbying efforts.

"Only about half of the posts submit the Report forms," Riggins said. That gives us information to work with, but, it would be great

is more took the time to fill the things out.

"For example, the forms provided us with critical information when we were trying to maintain the organization's eligibility for non-profit postal rates. We were able to show the amount of volunteer time our people give to their communities, a presentation that has also been made to defend certain income tax advantages available to our organization and its members.

The American Legion National Headquarters staff includes five registered lobbyists. The Legislative Division is the organization's central contact with the Congress, and serves to coordinate all legion activities on Capitol Hill.

"The American Legion has had a legislative presence in Washington since the 1920s," Sammons said. "We have won a lot of battles and we have lost a few, but we have kept fighting for the interests of our members, and we will continue to do that."

Vets affected by changes proposed for Job Service:

Washington (APNS) - Changes in the way the Federal public employment service operates will have a profound effect on the obligation to give maximum job placement service to veterans, the American Legion has declared.

Testifying at a Department of Labor public hearing in San Francisco, Bruce Thieson, chairman

of The Legion's Economic Commission, said that the Labor Department's intention to continue its commitment to veterans, regardless of changes, was NOT enough.

"I wish it were that simple," Thieson said. "Any changes will have a profound effect, either intentionally or inadvertently, on the capability of the system ... to provide maximum job placement and job training services to veterans."

"It is one thing for a Federal law to require parity services; it is quite another to assure that state and local agencies will observe those mandates."

Thieson recently testified at one of four regional hearings about the future of the Employment Service. Additional hearings were conducted in Reno, Atlanta, and Washington D.C.

The Department of Labor is expected to propose turning over the total policy and operational authority for the Employment Service to the states, and funding the program through block grants. The American Legion opposes this move because states traditionally have not given veterans the preference they enjoy at the Federal level.

"We are afraid that if the Federal government loses control of the Employment Service, veterans - those who often need the service most - will be lost in the shuffle," said Economic

Dennis K. Rhoades, "Congress has consistently expressed its belief that veterans are entitled to priority treatment, and we will do whatever is necessary to maintain that position."

Region Representatives were present at each of the hearings, and the Departments of Florida, Utah, North Carolina, and New Jersey submitted testimony at the hearings in their areas.

Officials of the Labor Department were surprised at the participation of veterans' groups, and also at the level of support for the Employment Service system by witnesses at the hearings.

Thiesen said that providing the states with block grants would only compound the problems with the Employment Service.

"The Department of Labor, in its budget submissions, and the Congress, in its appropriations have been starving the ES system for years. The ES can meet the labor challenges of the future if sufficient resources are provided for it to do so, and if the Department is willing to provide the leadership to the system."

Roger Semerad, Assistant Secretary of Labor for employment and training, supports the department's efforts to turn - or "devolve" - the operation of the program over to the states. Despite obvious opposition to the proposal, Semerad said that eventually state and local members of veterans' groups will see the wisdom of the

support devolution.

"Secretary Sencand may be too optimistic," Rhoads declared. "Saying a program is right does not make it right, and this program is not good for the Employment Service and it is surely not good for veterans."

The change in control of the U.S. Senate as the result of November's election also casts doubt on the efforts to develop the service. Ironically, the public hearings may now take on greater importance.

"It was critically important that the Legion and other interested veterans' groups were able to get their concerns on the record at the hearings," Rhoads explained. "But we have to watch carefully over the next few months to make sure that our message get through to Capitol Hill."

From The ADJUTANT:

Membership is climbing and we are at an all time high. However it is because of a couple of members. Recruitment is a team effort and we all should try to recruit at least one new member.

The Post is looking better and better, plans for the Post home are making right along and we will be letting you know more at future meetings. So plan to attend.

I would like to express my sincere
Thanks to all members who gave me and
Courie so much support during my hospitalization
to us it went more than we can express.
A special Thanks to Commander Thomas and
Bill Henson.

IT will be awhile before I am fully back
on my feet again but be assured that
I will keep things rolling as much as I
can.

Again Thanks to All.

Bits and Pieces.

We still have a few members who need
to renew their membership. Check your
cards and send in your \$20.00 as soon as
possible.

General membership meeting 19 February 1987,
Rustic Hills Mall next to Bird Paradise.
7 P.M. Please to attend.

Executive Board meeting

Two of our members will be going
in the hospital in February. Dave Thomas
and Gym Rose. Let's all get out to see
them. They have my support all the way.