

November 86

VETERANS DAY

Veterans Day 1986 takes on even greater significance than considered in the context which includes its origin and the recurring efforts to make major changes in the nations program of veteran benefits.

From November 11, 1918, the date of the World War I Armistice which established the tradition for this observance, the veteran population has grown to more than 25 million today. Throughout the United States there are more than 25 million Americans - men and women - who have served honorably in the uniform of our country during one or more wars of the twentieth century. They have written chapters of history underscored with valor and sacrifice in thousands of obscure places throughout the world.

In the finest tradition as set forth by our founding fathers, these gallant Americans have served their nation through their performance of duty. They have fulfilled the highest obligation of their citizenship, sometimes with their lives.

But the service of these citizen-soldiers soldiers to their country and mankind did not end

with the exchange of military uniform for civilian clothing. America's veterans have demonstrated an employ stability and responsibility in our society, reflecting their great respect for the heritage of their ~~entire~~ citizenship.

As we pause in our daily routine to observe Veterans Day, November 11, let us consider how we, as Americans, can honor those who have served our nation.

29 First, and foremost, we can respond simply by being Americans — Americans ^{that} ~~who~~ are present — Americans ^{that} ~~who~~ will express in completely understandable terms and actions our support of reasonable and effective solutions to those problems.

At the same time, let us reaffirm that our nation's strength and greatness rests on a foundation that declares "veteran" is an honorable ~~word~~ individual.

30 As an expression of its gratitude for the sacrifice of veterans in preserving our heritage, this nation has established a program of benefits — medical, hospital, compensatory, etc. — appropriate to the veterans' respective service contribution.

Now, There are developments which would seriously weaken, if not destroy, this concept.

This, Veterans Day should remind us that, thanks to those who answered their country's call, this nation has endured periods of trial, peril, and despair. We can give greater meaning to the day by advising our lawmakers that America's spirit of justice demands that there be no threats to the ~~the~~ integrity of the nation's program of benefits for veterans.

Fellow Legionnaires

As we approach another Veterans Day it's once again time to renew our fervor and reestablish our faith in the proven ability of our organization.

By the time you receive this newsletter we will have a new slate of legislators. Did you vote for the candidate that you felt was the best qualified and dedicated to the cause of veterans and their needs? If so, I am sure you feel good about your decision. Whatever decision you made, obviously you can't change it now. I only hope that each Legionnaire can honestly state that "I did my duty and voted".

Over the weekend we, Colorado Springs, hosted the Department Mid-Winter Conference at the Clarion Hotel, Oct 31 - Nov 2, 1986. We had a beautiful turnout in spite of the adverse weather. During the entire Conference the emphasis was on Membership. The American Legion is in dire need of an impressive membership to once again demand the benefits and rights due Veterans. To give you an example of how it works, the Department of Colorado sponsored a resolution to reverse a decision that had instituted the placement of flat Headstone grave markers in lieu

of the upright headstones. Colorado Legionnaires contacted Jim Wirth to sponsor a bill to correct this inequity to our veterans who happen to be buried in graveyards in snow covered areas. Wirth sponsored the Bill and Armstrong likewise sponsored it in the Senate. It passed and as of January 1987, grave markers will once again be upright. Imagine the things we could change if we had 35 or 40,000 Legionnaires in Colorado. We can do it because we have over 400,000 Veterans in the state of Colorado, most of them along the front range. If each Colorado Legionnaire recruited just one new Legionnaire this year, we would have 42,000 members by year end.

Legionnaires, we are in trouble. There is a concerted effort underway to strip organizations such as ours of their "Tax Exempt Status". Several posts throughout the state are being challenged concerning their right to "Tax Exempt Status". We need to carefully check all of our charitable endeavors and carefully record these efforts. If you really want to know what's happening come out to the post meeting 20 Nov 86!

What is Centennial Post 209 going to do this year to make their mark on the pages of history? We have an Oratorical Contest coming up very shortly, followed by a Beauty Pageant. The Regional Pageant will be held here in Colo Spgs at the 4-Corners Meeting. After this we will

be sending boys to Boy State. How well we perform during these upcoming events will depend in large measure on how well the members of post 209 ~~state~~ participate and contribute to the overall effort.

I was made to feel very proud this past weekend during the Mid-Winter Conference when I turned in (14) fourteen new and renewal memberships and (1) one permanent membership to put post 209 at 74% of God for the 1986-87 year. We are doing great and I am very proud of your performance. If you haven't mailed in your renewal membership please do so now. We need you!!!

We're on the right track gang. Together we can make it proudly.

For God and Country

Wesley L. Thomas, Sr.
Commander

Unemployment rate stays higher for vets who served in SE Asia

WASHINGTON (AP) - Vietnam War veterans who served in Southeast Asia have a significantly higher unemployment rate than veterans of the same period of hostilities who served elsewhere.

According to figures released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 6.9 percent of those veterans who served in the theater are unemployed, compared to 5.4 percent of the Vietnam-era veterans.

More striking is the fact that service-connected disabled Vietnam War veterans have a 9.2 percent unemployment rate, with the rate for veterans who are not disabled standing at just 6 percent overall. Slightly more than half of all veterans with service-connected disabilities were in the labor force, compared with more than 77 percent among those without disabilities.

Black veterans bore the highest rate of unemployment - 12.9 percent for all veterans and 14.1 percent among Black Vietnam theater veterans.

"It is clear that even with the economy recovering from the dark days of just a few years ago, many veterans of the Vietnam War are experiencing persistent problems in finding career-oriented jobs," said Bruce Thiesen, Chairman of The American Regions National Economics Commission.

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TEEN SUICIDE RATE CLIMBS:

INDIANAPOLIS (APNS) IN THE PAST 25 YEARS, SUICIDE AMONG TEENAGERS AND ~~YOUTH~~ YOUNG ADULTS HAS GROWN FROM AN OCCASIONAL TRAGIC INCIDENT INTO AN EPIDEMIC KILLER. ACCORDING TO THE MOST RECENT STATISTICS THE SUICIDE RATE FOR PERSONS UNDER 21 HAS TRIPLED SINCE 1955.

CURRENT DATA SHOWS THAT SUICIDE IS THE SECOND LARGEST CAUSE OF DEATH AMONG YOUNG PERSONS. IN FACT, STATICS SHOW THAT IN THE PAST HOUR, AT LEAST ONE AMERICAN TEENAGER OR YOUNG ADULT KILLED THEMSELVES, AND AS MANY AS 40 MORE ATTEMPTED SUICIDE. IN THE NEXT HOUR, MORE WILL DIE OR BE SCARRED FOR LIFE.

LEGISLATORS ARE URGED TO BECOME INVOLVED IN EDUCATING INDIVIDUALS IN THE PREVENTION OF TEENAGE SUICIDE.

AGENT ORANGE COMP. NOT IN NEAR FUTURE.

WASHINGTON D. C. (APNS) - ALTHOUGH AN OUT OF COURT SETTLEMENT HAS ESTABLISHED A FUND WHICH HAS GROWN TO MORE THAN \$200 MILLION TO PAY CLAIMS RESULTING FROM AGENT ORANGE EXPOSURE, COMPENSATION FOR VETERANS WHO THINK THEY ARE SUFFERING THE EFFECTS OF THE HERBICIDE IS STILL SOMETIME IN THE FUTURE.

A DECISION LAST YEAR BY CHIEF JUDGE JACK B. WEINSTEIN OF THE U.S. DISTRICT COURT, EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, SET UP A PAYMENT PROGRAM FOR VETERANS WHO ~~WERE~~ SUFFERED DISSESSES OR DEATH ATTRIBUTED TO EXPOSURE TO AGENT ORANGE. JUDGE WEINSTEIN'S DECISION

(3)
set up a fund of \$150 million to pay these claims over a 10-year period.

The NATIONAL Foundation for Vietnam Veterans and their families has also been established to provide benefits matching grants and funding for research, counseling services, and other forms of assistance yet to be determined for Vietnam veterans and their families.

However, challenges to the settlement are under appeal, and a decision is still a number of months away. The foundation's advisory board did not want to raise anyone's expectations, but has provided a general guide to the line who will receive money from this account:

1. The claimant must have been in Vietnam during the period of 1962 to 1971.
2. He or she must suffer from long-term total disabilities as defined by the Social Security Administration - or the veteran must have died. The cause of disability or death cannot be from trauma, but must have been caused by disease.
3. The veteran must have served in an area where Agent Orange was used or in a job which required that the decontant be handled.
4. Under the plan, disabled veterans will receive periodic payments until the end of the program. Death benefits will be paid in a lump sum.

VETERANS who have NOT participated so far still may become part of the proceedings. Information on applying for benefits is available by calling one of the following toll free numbers.

(800) 645-1355 (outside N.Y.)
(800) 832-1303 (IN N.Y.)

OR by writing to: Agent Orange Computer Center,
P.O. Box 905, Smithtown, N.Y. 11787

Pushers 'murderers' of America's kids, U.S. official says.

CINCINNATI, (APUS) - Calling drug pushers "murderers of America's children," Gary B. Bauer, Under Secretary of Education told members of the American Legion's National Americanism Commission that the current Administration has declared war on drugs. The commission met prior to the start of the 68th National Convention of the Legion in Cincinnati.

"Make no mistake about it, the drug peddlers who make our streets unsafe, who exploit our children, who bankroll the terrorists in Latin America, are guilty of murdering our children just as surely as if they put a gun to their heads and pulled the trigger," Bauer said.

Legionnaires were told that the ~~Reagan~~ Reagan Administration and the Department of Education will not rest until the scourge of drug pushers is eliminated from America's schools, playgrounds, and neighborhoods.

"We are at a crucial turning point. Thirty-seven different Federal agencies are now working to get

This problem under control," Bauer says. "Federal spending for drug law enforcement will ~~be~~ virtually triple from \$70 million in 1981 to an anticipated \$2.1 billion in 1987."

Bauer told legionnaires that it is their responsibility to tell their communities that the responsibility of educating America's children rest with E.A.C. America.

VETERAN BENEFIT CUTBACKS, HARMFUL TO ENTIRE NATION, COMMANDER TELLS CONGRESS.

Washington (CALNS) - All Americans will suffer if veterans' benefits are reduced further, the National Commander of the American Legion told Congress.

Testifying September 23 before both the House and Senate Committees on Veterans Affairs, ~~Sen.~~ James P. "Jimmy" Dean said cutting Veterans Administration health care benefits is shortsighted, because, "what happens to veterans happens to all Americans - only sooner."

The Legion's No. 1 spokesman reminded, "Veterans are not alone in having a stake in the outcome. All Americans benefit, if only indirectly, from the affiliations, the discoveries, and the progress being made by the VA in the course of caring for veterans, and all Americans stand to lose if the system is further eroded."

Commander Dean's testimony before the two committees came during the waning weeks of the 99th Session of Congress, served to put the nation's lawmakers on notice that the American Legion will closely monitor the

the application of new health care rules imposed by them and implemented by the V.A.

"We believe that the intent of Congress has been misinterpreted in the regulations applying the means test to elderly veterans," Commander Dean said. "We will continue to seek clarification of the law's intent - an accurate picture of its human effects - and sufficient funding to assure that when available care depends on available space, the space is there."

The increasing number of homeless veterans also concerns the legion, Dean said. He associated significant blame for this problem with management techniques that result in "premature discharge" of veterans onto the streets of the nation's cities.

New and efficient management initiatives certainly deserve careful consideration, Dean told the committee members, but he emphasized that the legion will not support any measure that results in short term savings at the expense of proper patient care.

Dean also cited the continuing and unique problems of Vietnam veterans, declaring "Vietnam veterans who show symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder have problems with physicians who fail to diagnose the condition, an adjudicator who fails to authorize appropriate compensation. The American legion finds these difficulties unnecessary and unacceptable."

In his first appearance before Congress after his election to the legion's highest office, Dean also emphasized the legion support for those veterans

who suffer from symptoms of problems associated with exposure to Agent Orange.

Doan criticized Reagan Administration plans to limit assistance to veterans who want to start a business or who need help in finding work. "We believe it to be a proper role for the federal government to enforce veterans' preference and oversee existing federal programs to assist veterans in the marketplace," he said.

The VA home loan program, which Doan said has made home ownership a reality for millions of Americans and generated "awesome economic activity" for the nation, also is threatened by the Administration. Doan pledged American Legion opposition to any plan to increase the fee a veteran must pay in order to get a VA-backed loan.

The National Commanders' Testimony was the beginning of what may be an active year for the Legion on Capitol Hill. The American Legion was alone in its opposition to the Congressionally mandated means test, which requires non-services connected disabled veterans seeking VA medical care to prove financial need.

Despite the passage of the law containing the means test, the Legion will call on its volunteers in the field to monitor hospitals and medical facilities to ensure that veterans who need care are

receiving it. The organization also will watch for further attempts to reduce further the overall VA budget.

"VA program funding has played no role in

contributing to the (current fiscal) crisis." Comman-
Dore told the committee. "VA has been a model
of cost effectiveness and efficiency. If all
the agencies of the Federal government had
operated, over the years, with the same
efficiency, there would be no Federal budget
deficit today. There would be a surplus."

VETERANS DAY ACTIVITIES

6:30 Post 51 A.V. BREAKFAST

Memorial Park 11:00 SERVICES
AT THE ROCK

VFW 3917 BACK 6:30

November 1986

Auxiliary Corner

Ladies,

Nothing but "Good" news this month. Our Tuesday night raffle was great last month. It will enable us to send donations to the Veterans hospitals for Christmas.

Again, congratulations to the best unit in Colorado (I know I'm biased)! I sincerely appreciate the efforts of the members ~~at this contribution~~ to Mid-Winter Conference Gift Shop. The Nat. Northwestern Division Vice President, Virginia Gorsuch commended Unit 209 on their contributions both in quantity and variety. Special thanks to Connie Wood for her work on the doilies for our unit effort. To Virginia Bradford for six beautiful doll tree ornaments; Melissa Bradford for two loaves of pumpkin bread with lots of raisins and nuts. Last but not least, Pat Rodriguez who donated two scrumptious fruit cakes, full of fruit and pecans!

I am happy to say, we had 140%

membership goal at Mid-Winter, which was the highest in the State. We received no certificate; however, because it was not received in adequate time to be posted. Let's be more diligent ladies.

The "Get-Acquainted Tea" was lovely. We had a great day weather-wise. A lot of good tasting, beautiful food was consumed by all. Past Dept. President Rose Skarin; Dist 7 Aux. President Betty Andrews and Past Pres of Unit 5 Aux. and Gold Star Mother Jean Ives, spent an enjoyable afternoon sharing their experiences in the Auxiliary with us. A question and answer session was held in a relaxed atmosphere. The Tea was enjoyed by all.

The Garage sale has been postponed due to lack of articles to be sold.

Our next project will be a Bizarre, chaired by Virginia

Bradford. We are looking for any crafts contributions. If you are like me and not gifted in the Arts, just find your local store and purchase a craft. Bring it to our meeting (3rd Thurs, 7pm Rustic Hills Mall - ~~7th~~) and Virginia, Melissa or Connie will help us with it.

We are encouraged, things are moving on. Thanks to everyone for helping with the Tea. Those who were out of town, we appreciate your support also. (Thanks, Gossie) Together, we can fulfill our commitment to the Veteran program and we are doing just that! See you on Nov 26th! Remember, we are a Unit, Under God, Fulfilling a Commitment!

June Thomas
President