



# Centennial Post 209

P. O. Box 15461  
Colorado Springs, CO 80935

How  
209?

FELLOW LEGIONNAIRES:

Things are beginning to look brighter for Post 209. Our last meeting showed quite an improvement over the past, 18 members showed up. At least it shows that more of you want to get involved.

At almost every meeting or conference, the emphasis is on membership. If each member of 209 would recruit at least one new member we could achieve an all time high by January. Remember its members that get the job done. Members talk to Congressmen and VA officials to maintain our rights as veterans.

We are entering the holiday season and the American Legion plays a big role. Stop and take a good look at the many veterans that need our help. The more of us that get involved, the more veterans we can reach to make this holiday season a joyous occasion for all.

Being that there will be no meeting in December June and I would like to take this opportunity to wish each and every Legionnaire a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Stay safe and have a good time, but remember we want to see all of you come January.

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

NEAL L. THOMAS JR.  
Commander

## SPEAKERS HIGHLIGHT PROBLEMS CONFRONTING VETS, CHILDREN:

Cincinnati (ALNS) -- The current Federal Fiscal policy as it relates to veterans benefits and the need for a nationwide information network for the location of missing children were prime topics of two speakers who presented major addresses to the 68th National Convention of the American Legion here.

Budget proposals for veterans' programs in 1987 came under attack from Sen. Dennis DeConcini, D-Arizona, who termed the initial proposals by the Reagan Administration "... far and away the worst budget submitted in the last 15 years."

In DeConcini's view the original budget proposals took the American dream away from veterans. "It zeroed out Veterans Job Training. It tried to aze the new G.I. Bill... a program that returns \$7 to the treasury for every dollar spent," the senator said.

Those budget proposals were not accepted by the US House and Senate. "Thanks to our efforts, that budget is dead - and it should be," he said.

He had some strong questions for the Reagan Administration. "How fair is it to slash veterans' services at the same time you want to jack up foreign aid by 8.5 percent? How fair is it to slash veterans programs at the same time you want IRS money increased by almost \$1 Billion? How fair is it to slash veterans' programs at the same time you request an 8 percent leap in defense? he questioned.

DeConcini told the nearly 4,000 Legionnaires on the convention floor that veterans "have never let American down. American cannot, we must not, abandon them now or in the years to come."

Also addressing the second day general session of the Legion Convention in Cincinnati was John Walsh, president of the Adam Walsh Child Resource Center in Florida.

Walsh emphasized the importance of a national network which will share information about missing children. Currently, the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) receives reports about missing children from 33 states.

California, a state with one of the highest incidences of missing children, established its Missing Children's Clearinghouse in late August, after years of effort on the part of Walsh and leaders from around the country.

"In March of 1984, 16,500 automobiles were reported stolen in California and entered in the NCIC computer for national attention. Children who were missing were not even given the same respect," Walsh said. "Now we can only hope that the state's new clearinghouse will help the hundreds of kids in California who need to be protected.

Walsh decried the fact that help on the federal level has been easier to come by than at the state level. "What we have are 50 little federal kingdoms out ther," he said. "Our battle has been a tough one and the states with laws addressing the growing problem of missing and exploited children do not always do the most they can. But to do nothing is a disgrace.

States are only recently conducting background checks on the people who work and come in contact with the nation's children. "If you brush down a sweatly race horse, or are a lawyer, you probably will not have to go through a state or federal background check, if you teach, or are in charge of a Boy Scout Troop, or are a foster parent you probably will," Walsh told

"If 250,000 to 500,000 persons are homeless in the U.S. on a given night, and one third of those are veterans, then there are at least 80,000 to 160,000 veterans with severe unemployment problems who are not ranked among the statistics," Egan said.

Egan and Rhoades told the House Veterans affairs subcommittee on Education, Training and Employment that the safety net is simply not there for far too many people in the United States, including veterans. Addressing the problem successfully requires a coordinated effort by Federal, State, and Local governments.

The Legion representatives praised the U.S. Department of Labor plans for a job for homeless veterans program. But cautioned that it will do little if the continued efforts to eliminate the veterans Jobs Training Act and the vet centers programs will have a devastating impact on the success of the JHV plan, they said.

Also important in the success of getting homeless veterans some help is a commitment by the veterans administration and other federal agencies to coordinate activities and cooperate as they seek to help the veteran.

Psychiatric problems found in the homeless population in general are also evident in those who are veterans. The VA's cost containment policy of using diagnostic related groups (DRG) to deal with VA psychiatric patients has led to a great many veterans being discharged onto the street without the tools to help them deal with day-to-day life.

Under the DRG system, facilities are penalized each year - through the loss of allocated resources, personnel, or both - If patients are hospitalized in excess of the number of days prescribed by a DRG model for certain categories of mental illness.

"This constitutes a potent incentive to discharge patients prematurely to avoid fiscal penalties," The Legion testimony stated. When chronically mentally ill patients are discharged prematurely, they have a potential for becoming homeless unless community resources are in place to help them. Too often, the Legion representative said, those facilities are not there.

"The lack of private sector community mental health centers similar to the vet centers around the country makes it unwise to discontinue many of the Vet Centers with the heaviest contact by homeless veterans, Egan said.

At the 1986 National Convention of the American Legion in Cincinnati, delegates adopted a resolution pledging the legion's support to help those veterans who are homeless in America.

#### CONGRESS APPROVES BILL FOR KOREA WAR MEMORIAL:

Washington (ALNS) - Congress has approved Legislation calling for the construction of a memorial to those Americans who fought during the Korean War. The action, coming just before adjournment of the 99th Congress, gives the American Battle Monuments Commission responsibility for the construction of the memorial.

The legislation specifies that the President shall appoint a panel of 12 Korean War veterans to advise the Battle Monument Commission on the design, site selection, and placement of the memorial. The panel also will encourage private contributions which will be necessary for the construction of the memorial.

Congress appropriated one million dollars for the monument. Half of that amount will be used for design and site selection. The remainder cannot be used until private donations, sufficient to complete the memorial, are raised from private and corporate sources.

Officials estimate that \$3.5 million will be needed to finish construction of the memorial.

American Legion National Commander James P. Dean, a Korean War veteran, praised the members of congress who supported this legislation. "Veterans of the Korean War era have long been this nation's forgotten warriors," he said. "They came home and asked for very little. Now it seems that they will finally receive the recognition they so richly deserve."

More than 12 pieces of legislation proposing such a memorial have been introduced in congress over the last 5 years. This bill represents a compromise on the viewpoint of how the memorial should be built, and who should be responsible for its construction.

Delegates to the Legion's 1986 National Convention in Cincinnati adopted a resolution asserting support for "immediate Congressional passage of pending legislation providing partial funding" to defray partial cost of the project, and asking that the American Battle Monuments Commission "be made the responsible agency for the design, planning, and construction of a Korean War veterans memorial in the Washington area."

The Korean War is the only U.S. conflict since the revolutionary war to which there is no memorial.

#### NEW LAW INTENSIFIES NATION'S DRUG WAR:

Washington (ALNS) - The nations war on drugs has been intensified with the signing of legislation - supported by the American Legion - which will channel \$1.7 billion into anti-drug activities.

The new law - Public Law 99-570 - will bolster local and federal law enforcement efforts, stiffen penalties for traffickers, and launch an educational and medical campaign aimed at reducing user demand.

Of the amount authorized for the anti-drug effort, \$200 million has been earmarked for information programs and \$241 million for treatment. The veterans administration will receive an additional \$10.2 million for its alcohol and drug abuse programs.

The bill - HR-5484 - was passed late in the 99th congress. In late September, National Commander James P. Dean met with President Reagan and presented him information about the American Legion's drug awareness programs.

"Today those same veterans... Those very same veterans ... are facing almost the exact same situation. Only this time it isn't rehabilitation or re-assimilation into society that is the threat to this aging veteran population ... it's the lack of adequate funding for health care facilities and the professional staff to operate those facilities."

He described the continuing erosion of veteran benefits, the most recent being the recent VA regulations for implementation of the means test which is applied to non-service-connected veterans seeking health care. When Congress established the means test, it also wrote into the law that the VA "shall" provide medical care for certain categories of veterans. However, the VA's subsequent regulations flew in the face of congressional mandate, saying that such care "shall" be provided, if space is available.

As its session just prior to the Legions 1986 National Convention in Cincinnati, The NEC authorized the taking of legal action against the VA to ensure that every qualified veteran is guaranteed the unqualified right to hospital care mandated by statute.

Dean explained to the NEC that the statistical evidence being sought is essential if the Legion is to demonstrate that qualified veterans have standing to sue, that is, will suffer some injury as a result of the negative interpretation of the regulations by the VA.

"At the moment," Dean declared, "there is no greater challenge presented to the American Legion than to care for him or her who has borne the battle." The National Executive Committee has recognized the challenge by its firm and uncompromising stand, and, as your Commander, I shall lead the fight."

#### THOUSANDS OF VETERANS AMONG NATIONS HOMELESS:

Washington (ALNS) - Of the nearly 2 million persons who find themselves without a place to stay during a year, nearly one-third of them may be veterans under 40 years old, The American Legion has told congress.

Legion representatives recently outlined for the nations' lawmakers this quiet, but growing, problem of the nations homeless which includes so many men and women who served their country.

"This must present a strange guardary for those critics of the veteran's services system in the U.S. who claim that veterans already have too many services," The Legion testified.

The test, presented by Economics Director Dennis K. Rhoades and Deputy Legislative Director Paul S. Egan, called on the Congress to focus new attention on the problems of the homeless, especially homeless veterans. The Legion officials pointed out that proposed reductions in the jobs programs, suggested changes in readjustment counseling and changes and general reductions in VA medical treatment programs are forcing many veterans onto the nations streets. While some indicators show that unemployment among Vietnam veterans is improving, the figures do not reflect the people who have given up and quit looking for work, or those who work part time because fulltime work is not available.

the convention delegates. "When we recently submitted Florida teacher to background checks, we found 39 had records of some form of child abuse. We have been spending a lot of time burdening our children with the responsibility of protecting themselves, that's a myth. We are adult, and it is our responsibility to protect our kids."

#### LEGION CHALLENGES VA INTERPRETATION OF MEANS TEST LAW:

Indianapolis (ALNS) -- The American Legion has embarked on an intensive campaign to gather evidence, which will become the organization ammunition in its battle to defend the rights of veterans in need of VA health care.

The American Legion VA health care user survey will mobilize department (state) commanders and members of the National Executive Committee in forming and leading reporting teams for each VA hospital in their respective states.

Through its various departments (state organizations) the Legion will conduct a survey of those seeking VA health care to determine the extend of veterans being denied hospital care because 1) there is no space available at the VA medical center (VAMC) or at nearby VAMCs or Department of Defense facilities with sharing arrangement; and 2) the VA contends it has no authority to contract with a private hospital for the veterans' care mandated by statute.

In each department, every VA facility will be visited by a 5-member reporting team during the coming weeks. Each reporter will be assigned a specific day, and will report his findings to his team captain, who in turn, will report to his NEC member. The reports from throughout the nation will be analyzed and evaluated in Washington D.C. to form the basis for a body of specific case histories to be presented to congressional and budget officials.

In his opening remarks to the semi-annual meeting of the National Executive meeting; National Commander James P. "Jimmy" Dean sounded the call to arms for the intensive grassroots effort not unlike that which helped bring about the G.I. Bill of Rights some four decades ago.

"Today - in the Year of our Lord 1986 - the time has come to take off the gloves and show congress how its 'most enlightened system of earned benefits bestowed by a grateful nation on its defenders' is being torn apart by misinterpretation, misunderstanding and misguided policy. The time has come to stop taking."

Referring to the Legions work at the close of World War II in documenting cases of Veteran's in need of, but unable to receive, medical care or other readjustment benefits, Dean said the challenge at hand was to come once again to the aid of these veterans as they become older.

Forty years ago, "Dean reminded the NEC," the veterans of World War I - our founders - confronted a situation which was, simply unacceptable to the American Legion. I'm referring to the miserable conditions which were awaiting the returning veterans of World War II ... no facilities for health care ... no facilities for rehabilitation ... no provisions made for reintegrating these citizen soldiers into american society.

Commander Dean offered the President the Legions help in getting drug awareness information to the nations youth through the organizations Children & Youth Program. The problem of Alcohol and drug abuse among the nations young people has been a major area of concern of the Legion for several years.

"The drug problem is often a family problem," Dean told the President. "We believe that it can be addressed at the family and peer level, rather than spend so much time and effort on looking people up. We have to dry up the demand."

In support of the Commander's observations concerning the drug abuse problem Eugene V. Lindquist, chairman of the Legion's National Commission on Children & Youth stated, We cannot overstate the magnitude of the drug abuse problem in our society today nor can we overstate the importance of drug education in the family setting.

"We now have a prime opportunity to do this as we approach the most celebrated holiday seasons of the year. Thanksgiving and Christmas are times set aside for families to reunite and share those most special feelings of love and unity. The president has just signed a massive anti-drug bill into law. Let's do our part in our community and families to stress its importance to our young people."

#### BITS AND PEICES:

No meeting in December, however an executive meeting is scheduled for 14 December 1986, at Neal Thomas' house at 7 P.M.

District is looking for volunteer's for Honor Guard, Contact Tom Bender at 574-4322.

American Legion Insurance forms are available, Contact George Wood 574-0339.

New Legionnaire Gary Horn is offering 10% discount on already low prices for any dental work your family may need. It's well worth a phone call, we have had nothing but good comments from some of our Legion friends who have seen Gary. 634-4803

If you haven't sent your 87 dues in yet please do so soon.

Fellow Legionnaires:

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For God & Country  
M.L.J.



~~P. D. Post~~

Speakers Highlight problems confronting Vets,  
Children.

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### Legion Challenges VA interpretation of MVA's Test Law

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Returning to the Legion's work at the close of

World War II in documenting cases of Veterans in need of, but unable to receive, medical care or other readjustment benefits, Dean said the challenge at hand was to come once again to the aid of these veterans as they become older.

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"This must present a strange quandary for those critics of the veteran's services system in the U.S. who claim that veterans already have too many services," the Legion testified.

The text, presented by Economics Director Dennis K. Rhoades and Deputy Legislative Director Paul S. Eggen, called on the Congress to focus new attention on the problems of the homeless, especially homeless veterans. The Legion officials pointed out that proposed reductions in the jobs programs, suggested changes in readjustment counseling, and charge and general reductions in VA medical treatment programs are forcing many veterans onto the nation's streets.



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Commander Deen observed the President the Legion's help in getting drug awareness information to the nation's youth through the organization's Children & Youth Program. The problem of Alcohol and drug abuse among the nation's young people has been a major area of concern of the Legion for several years.

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In support of the Commander's observations concerning the drug abuse problem, Eugene V. Lindquist, chairman of the Legion's National Commission on Children & Youth stated, "We cannot overstate the magnitude of the drug abuse problem in our society today nor can we overstate the importance of drug education in the family setting."

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## Life Plan increases Benefits During '87.

Indianapolis (ALNS) - A 15 percent "across-the-board" increase in death benefits paid in 1987 has been approved for the American Legion Life Insurance and Trust Committee, has announced.

Chairman Pobel pointed out that the approval of the added benefits by the Legion's National Executive Committee marks the 18<sup>th</sup> time since the inception of the Life Insurance Plan in 1958 that an increase in the annual amount of protection offered by the program has been granted. The increase in benefits comes at no increase in premium.

Also effective Jan 1, 1987, the present maximum coverage of 12 units will be increased to fourteen (14) units. A unit of Life insurance is the amount of coverage available according to the applicant's age.

The basic insurance rates remain unchanged from those introduced at the Plan's inception in 1958.

## Bits and Pieces.

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DISTRICT is looking for volunteer's for Honor Guard, CONTACT Tom Bender AT 574-4322.

American Legion Insurance Firm's ARE AVAILABLE CONTACT George Wood, 574-0339

New Legionnaire Gary Horn is offering 10% discount on already low prices if you need ANY DENTAL work done. IT'S WELL WORTH A PHONE CALL, WE ALREADY HAVE A FEW UTILIZING HIS SERVICES AND HEAR NOTHING BUT POSITIVE COMMENTS.

IF you haven't sent your dues Box 87 in please do so soon.

Be looking for more information on The American Legion Oratorical Contest AND THE 4 CORNERS BEAUTY PAGEANT coming soon.

Let's all TAKE A LITTLE EXTRA CARE OVER THE UPCOMING HOLIDAYS. WE WANT TO SEE YOU IN JANUARY.