



Centennial Post 209

P.O. Box 15461

Colorado Springs, CO 80935

APRIL 1986 NEWSLETTER

Fellow Legionnaires,

We are rapidly approaching that time of the Legion year that most of the really important events occur. The next significant event will occur this month with the election of new post officers for the ensuing year. This will be followed by the installation Banquet in May. Also in May we will have the District Convention in Canon City. The 10th of May will be Leadership College Day at Peterson AFB - NCO Club. This is an event that all new - incoming post officers should plan to attend. There will be an array of knowledgeable Legionnaires present to answer any and all of your questions that you have been harboring. Even things you always wanted to know but were ashamed to ask. Plan to attend. The next major event will be the Boys State week in June. If there are those of you who aren't working and would like to spend a week with an exciting group of young future leaders and serve as counselors to them, please let me know. We are in dire need of counselors at Boys State. It's a week of free room and board at USC campus in Pueblo Colo. and an opportunity for you to learn an awful lot about the legislative processes. Consider it if you have the time. Later in the month of June we will be having the Dept. of Colo annual Convention in Arvada Colo. Why not plan now to attend. It's really a lot of fun and an opportunity to meet some really neat Legionnaires from the entire state Legion family. Also the National Commander Dale Renaud will be in attendance in Arvada. Here's an opportunity to have an informal chat with the National Commander.

There are an awful lot of significant changes occurring in Veteran's benefits due to the recent inactment of the Gramm-Rudman Act. We need to increase our membership to present a united and formidable force to confront legislators regarding the erosion of Veterans Benefits. Every member must recruit a new member.

Plan now to be present at the next meeting (April 17, 1980 - Rustic Hills meeting room - 7 p.m.) to elect your new officers or assume an office as chairmand of the many committees available. Lets make this year a great Legion year with full participation by all of the post members. Together we can really make things happen and put Centennial Post 209 over the top.

If you desire to serve in an elected office Contact Max Hayer and let your wishes be know. Max is chairing the nominating committee. I hope to see all of you at the meeting 17 April 1985. I am sure that most of you know by now that Legionnaire June Reid and I were married on 15 March 1986 at my mother's home in Florida. We had a wonderful Honeymoon in the Bahamas and are now back home and hard at work in behalf of the Post.

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY

NEAL L. THOMAS, JR
Commander

FURTHER LEGIONARRIES

The bad news keeps coming up for Veteran's every day of the week Example -- Budget Crunch Hits Vet Job Program: "The FEP Budget crunch is taking its toll among vet job training and related programs, Members of the economic commissions were told during the American Legion's 26th annual Washington Conference. Legions Testimony Blasts Cuts in VA: Congress will like to resret any action which endangers the veterans administration medical care. Legion Sends Msg to Congress: "Stop Fiddling with Vet Benefits." There were no bugles sounding charge, there were no whistles blown or signal flares fired. But even without the audible or visual signals, the American Legion mounted a concentrated drive on Tuesday, Feburay 25, to carry American Legion commander Dale L. Renaud said, "We're going to let Americans, Her legistators, and Her Vets know that enough is enough! The time has come to cut out this nonsense of fiddling with vet benifits!" Renaud further said "Today we are marshalling our forces. We have added to our membership rolls 140,000 more vets than were members at this time one year ago -- and our ranks are growing each day. Renaud further declares, "I have had it. I will not standby and see the most needy of American vets -- the very sick, the very old, and the very poor -- be denied their earned benefits, and I certainly don't believe my 28 million fellow Vets across this land will sit still for it either. Most of them won't ever set foot in a VA Hospital but neither would a one of them stand by as a needy comrade is turned away." Renaud recounted. "The sad truth;is that the further away from war this nation moves the resoluat~~ion~~ of vets dacrifices grows more dim," " We the American Legion has drawn the line, this is where we stand and by every right granted by the people of the nation to hear Vets, We will not be ignored."

A Reduction in Medial Services: (1) Due to both a shorage of health care providers and budget limitations, the US Army Community Hospital, Fort Carson will be forced to curtail selected outpatient services to retirees and their dependents beginning 31 March 1986. (2) The Internal Medicine Service and the Ophthalmology Service will no longer

be able to provide outpatient care to new retired patients and their dependents. A new patient is defined as a patient who has either not received care at the Fort Carson Army Community Hospital or has not had a return visit for at least three months. (3) Currently there is no satisfactory solution to our health care dilemma. In certain clinics, the waiting period for an appointment is approximately six weeks. The demand for health services has continually increased over the past years while the resources available to the MEDDAC have remained essentially the same. We have requested assistance from Health Services Command, but unfortunately we are not the only MEDDAC in need of additional resources. Although the curtailment of these services to the retired population is regrettably, it is my only remaining option to insure that the health care provided to our beneficiaries is both safe and of a quality level. (4) MG Bartlett has been extremely helpful in our fight for additional resources and is attempting to acquire supplemental funding for selected hospital operations. (5) How long will the curtailment last? We're not sure; perhaps three months or more. What alternative sources of care exist? Air Force Academy Hospital, Peterson Air Force Base Medical Clinic, and Fitzsimons Army Medical Center. Realistically, CHAMPUS is the most available source since the other military facilities are also backlogged. (6) What if you have an emergency? All emergency referrals will be accepted, regardless of status. SIGNED: FREEMAN HOWARD, M.D., Colonel, M.C., Commanding.

Do you want to lose 30% of your retirement pay? It could cost you that over 10 years unless you act now!

It is extremely important for retirees and survivor benefits recipients to understand that a previously authorized 3.1% cost of living adjustment (COLA) which was due beginning with the 1 January 1986 paycheck has been suspended by the GRAMM-RUDMAN-HOLLINGS Law (PL 99-177). That suspension may become a permanent cancellation if so legislated by Congress.

Social Security, VA compensation and VA Pension Recipients will continue to receive cost of living adjustments. Citing discriminatory and unjust treatment of military retirees and their survivors, two congressmen have introduced bills to correct the situation. HR 4025 would exempt military and civilian retirees from automatic COLA cuts, and HR 4057 would restore the COLA retroactive to 1 December 1985. The cumulative effect of no or greatly reduced COLAs can, over time, drastically reduce the value (purchasing power) of earned military retirement pay and survivor benefits, for example, assuming a modest 3% inflation rate annually, in 10 years your purchasing power would be reduced by 30%. In other words, if you are currently receiving \$1,000.00 per month, in 10 years it will be worth only \$700.00. Putting it another way, this \$300 monthly loss translates to \$3600 annually and that amount would:

Purchase 3600 gallons of gasoline @1.00 per gallon
Make 7 house payments @ \$500 per month
Buy 70 baskets of groceries @\$50 per basket
Pay utility bills for 3 years @ \$100 per month



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IT IS YOUR RIGHT TO EXPRESS YOUR VIEWS TO YOUR CONGRESSMEN
AND SENATORS AS THEY PREPARE TO DECIDE THE FUTURE OF YOUR RETIREMENT
PAY OR SURVIVOR BENEFITS BY EITHER SUPPORTING OR NOT SUPPORTING HR
4025 AND HR 4057. YOU ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE
OF YOUR RIGHT TO CONTACT IMMEDIATELY, YOUR CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS
IF YOU WISH TO CONTINUE RECEIVING COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENTS WHICH
COUNTERACT THE EFFECTS OF INFLATION.

You may also tell President Regan how you feel through a mailgram.
To do so, call toll free 1-800-325-6000 and ask for Operator 40.
Tell Operator 40 to send the military equity message to President
Regan in your name. A \$4.00 charge will appear on your phone account.

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