



Centennial Post 209

P.O. Box 15461
Colorado Springs, CO 80935

MAY 1986

Fellow Legionnaires

As it occurs in all things, the time has come for a change. As of this Newsletter I will pass into the realm of the Past Commander. It is with sincere pride and no regrets that I relinquish this position to someone who hopefully can take the post to new heights.

Over the past two years as your Commander, I have had some exciting and exhilarating moments and I have had a couple of moments of sheer terror. Nevertheless, I must say that overall it has been a successful two years. It is customary to make mistakes as you grow to maturity and I honestly feel that the mistakes we made over the past two years were really "Growing Pains." We have learned an awful lot through trial and error and we have prospered as a result of it. I will not elaborate at this time but I will expound at length at the upcoming Installation Banquet on May 23, 1986.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every member of Centennial Post 209 for their confidence in electing me twice over as their Commander and for the splendid support you gave me during my tenure in office. I only hope and pray that you will also support your newly elected Commander and slate of officers as eventually as you have me. I felt that due to my commitment to an organization associated with my job who elected me as its new President, effective 16 May 1986 and my continued commitment to the Department of Colorado American Legion as a Jr Vice Commander that it was imperative that I pass the reigns of leadership of the post to younger and very capable hands. I am not defecting from the post but assuming a greater role of responsibility as your post Adjutant. I look forward to seeing all of you at the Installation Banquet. I would appreciate being able to extend to each of you my sincere thanks for your support for the past two years. If you possible can, please plan to attend and give your new commander the support you gave me.

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY
NEAL L. THOMAS, JR.
Commander

At our last meeting April 17, 1986 new post officers were elected. Let's show them all the support that we can to make Centennial Post 209 the best ever. Those elected were:

Post Commander
Sr. Vice Commander
Jr. Vice Commander
Adjutant
Finance Officer
Chaplain
Historian
Sgt-At-Arms
Executive Committeeman

John A. Kovar
Joe A. Rodriguez
Larry L. Johnson
Neal L. Thomas Jr.
Matthew E. Knieriem
Harold E. Reese
George A. Wood
Thomas H. Bender
Max J. Hoyer

All officers will be sworn in at the Installation Banquet, 23 May 1986. Reservations must be made by 16 May 1986. Banquet will be held at the Old Knights of Columbus Hall on the corner of Galley Rd and Ford St. Price will be \$10.00 per person and the menu is Prime Rib. Reservations can be made with Larry Johnson 576-3845. Cocktails start at 630 P.M. Dinner starts at 7 P.M.

PRESIDENT SIGNS FY86 BUDGET BILL; LIMITS PLACED ON VA MEDICAL CARE

Washington (ALNS) -- The American Legion has sharply criticized the 1986 federal budget bill signed into law April 7 by President Regan.

"The Administration has won a victory at the expense of this nation's veterans," declared National Commander Dale L. Renaud after the President signed the legislation. "This bill will do little to solve the nation's fiscal crisis, but will go a long way toward disenfranchising veterans who look to the VA for medical care they earned through their service. Apparently, the Administration looks at VA health care as 'free,' with no regard to the price paid by veterans."

The Presidential signature to the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986 ended for a while one of the most aggressive legislative efforts the Legion has undertaken.

The legislation, which passed the Congress nearly halfway through the fiscal year for which it sets spending targets, for the first time severely limits a veteran's access to medical care provided by the VA.

Non-service-connected disabled veterans will be required to defray the cost of VA health care if their annual incomes are greater than \$20,000 with no dependents, or \$25,000 with one dependent. These veterans will be forced to pay the Medicare deductible of \$492 for the first 90 days of care, and half of that amount for each successive 90-day stay. These same restrictions will apply to veterans in VA nursing homes.

VA outpatients, and those receiving home health care, will have to pay 20 percent of the VA average daily rate, not to exceed the \$492 Medicare deductible in any 90-day period.

In addition, the VA will be able to recover costs from private medical insurance companies (third part reimbursement) if veterans have that coverage.

Renaud had sent a letter Mar 21 to President Regan, urging him to veto the bill "because of its expected failure to produce the level of savings projected by those who support the measure."

The VA will continue to provide medical care for service-connected disable veterans, Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange, veterans exposed to ionizing radiation from nuclear explosions, former prisoners of war, and veterans of the Spanish-American War, the Mexican Border period, or World War I.

Theoretically, the new income provisions should not affect the number of non-service-connected disabled and over-65 veterans who seek VA health care. The Legion contended throughout the argument surrounding this legislation that the non-service-connected disabled who turn to the VA for medical services are among the oldest, sickest, and poorest of the nation's war veterans.

The VA has resisted the Legion's requests for an accurate patient census, which would show just who is using the agency's health care system.

"I can assure the Administration that The American Legion will be watching the VA in the coming months," Renaud said. "We'll be watching for delays in treatment. We will look for denial of health care for those to whom it is entitled, and we will try to ensure that the extraordinary burden of paper work which will be required of these old, sick, poor veterans will not prevent them from receiving the care they have earned."

"Although the Legion was the only veterans' group to oppose this plan, we sincerely believe we will be vindicated. It will become apparent that the promised savings are only illusory, and the government should attack the real causes of the national debt, rather than further burdening the nation's veterans."

The VA's new administration, Thomas K. Turnage, will be required to prescribe regulations which will determine the new guidelines. By this fall, he will have to submit to the Veterans Affairs Committees of both the House and Senate a progress report on these new regulations.

Included in his report will have to be a detailed breakdown of costs and the amount of receipts and collections. Other reports will be required to further document the progress of these measures.

Also included in the budget reconciliation measure is authorization for the Small Business Administration which nevertheless is slated for extinction, and a provision trying the release of highway funds to the states on the provision that they increase the minimum drinking age to 21 years.

LATEST VA CENSUS COUNTS 24 MILLION WAR VETERANS

Washington (ALNS) -- At the end of the fiscal year 1985 last Sept. 30, there were nearly 24 million wartime veterans living in the United States and Puerto Rico, the Veterans Administration has reported.

The largest group of wartime veterans in the VA's semiannual report remains those who served in World War II, with 10,399,000. Next are the veterans of the Vietnam War, 8,271,000.

Korean War veterans make up the third largest group with just more than 5 million. At the end of last September, there were 208,000 surviving veterans of World War I.

The median age of the U.S. and Puerto Rican veterans was listed at 52.9 years by the VA report. About 25 percent are under age 40; there are 57 percent between 40 and 64; and the rest are older than 65. The median age of World War II veterans is 64.2 years.

Eight states have more than one million veterans each; California heads the list with 2.9 million. Following in order are New York, Texas, Pennsylvania, Florida, Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan.

NOTES OF INTEREST:

- 10 May Leadership College, Peterson AFB, NCO Club
Registration begins 0800. Lots of good
information available. Plan to attend.
- 11 May Mother's Day
- 17 May Armed Forces Day Peterson AFB 10 A.M. til 4 P.M.
This years theme Gramm-Rudman Act. Hanager #1
area Static Display, Marching units, plus.
Should proved to be an interesting day.
- 23 May Installation Banquet, Old Knights of Columbus
Hall, 630 Cocktails, 700 Dinner, Reservations
by 16 May 86.
- 25 May District 7 Convention, Canon City
- 26 May Memorial Day, Services in Memorial Park at
1100 Plan to attend.

AUXILIARY CORNER

At our last meeting 17 April 1986 the Auxiliary also held elections, those that were chosen to serve were:

President	June Thomas
Vice President	Ruth Hornik
Secretary	Virginia Bradford
Treasurer	Marjorie Johnson

Auxiliary Unit 209 is ending its first year, with its first president, Mrs. Ellen Teson. With only a few months in office, Ellen worked hard for the unit through her endeavor in Bingo Raffles. She, and those who helped sell tickets, brought about substantial returns to the unit. This was Unit 209's only project since it was chartered in December 1985. We are looking forward to bigger goals and many more projects in 1986. The unit will accept its responsibility to meet the needs for Children and Youth Programs and Veterans Assistance and Rehabilitation Programs. This means work and workers. Ladies you are important to the unit. You can contribute, even at home, by participating as a member. We need members and their ideas, crafts, baking etc. Give us your support and help us aid the veteran who has biven so much. Our prayers in Sympathy to the Teson Family during the loss of Ellen's brother.

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY
JUNE THOMAS
Chaplain

JUST A NOTE: Every Tuesday evening at 7 p.m. we hold our major fund raiser. Help is always needed. Hope to see you there.

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THE AMERICAN LEGION
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