

The Centennial

VOLUME IX EDITION 7

JULY 2019



AMERICAN LEGION NEAL THOMAS JR. CENTENNIAL POST 209

3613 JEANNINE DR. COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80917
719-599-8624

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.LEGION.209.ORG

MEET YOUR 2019 - 2020 OFFICERS!!

2019-2020 American Legion Post 209 Officers

Commander: Lino Calica

Sr. Vice Commander: Joseph Schmidt

Jr. Vice Commander: Desiree Guerra

Adjutant: Jerry Hopper

Treasurer: Mike Barger

Chaplain: Stan Hamamoto

Historian: Mike Wescott

Sgt At Arms: Sarah Tobin

Executive Committeeman: Marvin Weaver Jr.

Judge Advocate: Marvin Weaver Sr.

Service Officer: Art Carter

Building Manager: Art Kimbrel

2019-2020 American Legion Auxiliary Unit 209 Officers

President: Cathy Barger

Vice President: Donna Testorff

Secretary: Pat Weaver

Treasurer: Kellie Hayes

Sgt At Arms: Kris Floyd

Chaplain: Madelyne "Hooty" Newborn

Historian: Royce Hopper

2019-2020 Sons of The American Legion Squadron 209 Officers

Commander: Eric Testorff

Sr. Vice Commander: Michael Wescott

Jr. Vice Commander: Richard Pecoraro

Adjutant: Ken Taylor

Chaplain: Steve Cox

Historian: Evan Schwartzbart

Sgt At Arms: Bob Ingram

Immediate Past Commander: Stan Krazinski

2019-2020 American Legion Riders Post 209 Officers

President: Steve Hayes

Vice President: Tim McDowell

Secretary: Cathy Barger

Treasurer: Kellie Hayes

Road Captain: John Hanchek

Sgt At Arms: Mark Griffin

Pastor: John Coppedge

Communications: Wade Newborn

Historian: Andrew Pearson

Logistics: Mike Sylvester

For God & Country...



We associate ourselves together...

FROM THE DESK & MIND OF THE COMMANDER

As we come to the end of fiscal year 2018-2019, our Post 209 had an exceptional year within our membership program headed by our senior vice Commander Eric Testorff. The Department of Colorado has set the Post membership goal to 1065 members for this fiscal year, with the help of everyone communicating to their friends, neighbors and co-worker about the American Legion, recruiting new member into the American legion, it has given us the opportunity to meet and surpass the Department membership goal of 1065 members, by doing so; we have maintained and captured the number 1 position, as the largest American Legion Post in the state of Colorado. I would like to thank each and every one of you, for your hard work and dedication in working the membership program. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the new legionnaire and their families, who have joined or transferred to Neal Thomas Jr. Centennial Post 209 legion family. Please take time to meet and greet new members and establish a relationship and make them feel at home.

I would like to acknowledge my leadership teams and members from the Legion, Auxiliary, Son of American Legion and American Legion Riders for your support and services. Your skills, teamwork and dedication have made this Post very successful. We had many challenges this year, completed many tasks that has been presented to us, these were not small projects. The American Legion 100 years anniversary Luau, the American Legion 100th year Department of Colorado Convention held at Hotel Elegante, we all worked hard as a team to ensure that the tasks were done to the best of our abilities. I am very proud and honored to be the Post Commander; you have made my job very easy.

The Department Convention has been a great success; Post 209 has seven; legionnaire members in department leadership positions. Dean Noechel is 1 of 4 leaders from Post 209 given the opportunity to be Department Commander in the state of Colorado, also representing Post 209 is Jay Bowen- Alternate National Executive Committeeman, Stan Hamamoto -Department Chaplain, Marvin Weaver – Department Finance Officer, Mike Barger – Department Executive Committee, Joseph Schmidt - Assistant Sergeant at Arms, and Steve Coutant - Department Judge Advocate. Desiree Guerra- Accountant. Also, in leadership positions is Cathy Barger – Department Auxiliary Sergeant at Arms and Donna Rae Reitzel Smith- Department Auxiliary Chaplain.

My goal as your Commander is to be a servant to everyone and helping my fellow Legionnaires, Veterans, and our community. To uphold these attributes, I promise to be **FAT**: **Faithful** to our cause, **Available** when needed and **Teachable** in becoming an asset to the legion. Everyone has something to contribute, and if you are willing to listen and learn, then knowledge, wisdom and understanding will come. If you have any suggestions or ideas that will help improve our attendance at our general meetings, participate in events and functions? Please share your ideas. Have a great summer.

Lino Calica

Post Commander

S.A.L.T. – Serving and Learning Together





FROM THE DESK OF THE SR VICE COMMANDER

I would like to begin by thanking the membership of American Legion Neal Thomas Jr. Centennial Post 209 for their confidence and support by electing me their 2019-2020 Sr. Vice Commander, this is a humbling experience to say the least. I also want to thank past Sr. Vice Commander Eric Testorff for his many years of service to the post and wish him luck as the new SAL Commander. I look forward to the challenges that come with this position and caring on the tradition of surpassing our membership goal. This year I would like to introduce a new strategy and approach to membership. We all have seen the membership slide across the nation, so the question is how do we stop this? I have come up with a 4 Membership points. Engagement, Involvement, Breaking Barriers, and Working the Programs. All four of these membership points are topics I have discussed with other Legionnaires on how we can not only sustain but grow our membership. I realized our members who renew believe in our "WHY" and if we don't show the newer or even older members why it is we do what we do as the American Legion we will lose them forever. Membership is more than paying yearly dues and sometimes I feel that is forgotten. The 2019-2020 Membership Points are:

Engagement:

We are going to be spending a lot of time contacting our entire membership this year, not just about renewing, but more to reach out and to just see how our members are doing. We need to remember all of our members can't make it to post events because they maybe homebound or live too far away, but we always want them to know that they are remembered and appreciated. By engaging our membership, we can better understand their needs and how as The American Legion can help.

Involvement:

Calling and contacting our membership is not the only step, we must be willing to involve our new and older members alike. Find out what drives them, learn their passions and fit them to that. Our involvement can take many shapes from placing a flag at a local cemetery or picking up trash on the side of the road, to serving as commander of the post, the level of involvement is up to individual Legionnaire.

Breaking Barriers:

Welcome new and potential members get to know them, we already share the bond of service. We must be willing to step outside of our comfort zone from time to time to talk to those we normally wouldn't. You may end up making a lifelong friend, but at a minimum you made them feel welcome. Remember you were new once too!

WORKING THE PROGRAMS!

For over 100 years now the American Legion has been focused on service to the community, state, and nation. We offer programs for almost anything related to our four pillars. Let's work together and focus on these programs. Jr. Shooting, Amateur Radio, Flag Advocacy, Oratorical Contest, Boys State, Homeless Veteran Outreach, the list goes on and on. There is something for every member of the American Legion!

By working these four key membership points I believe we can not only continue to be the largest post in the state of Colorado but grow to be one of the largest in the nation. El Paso County is home to over 80,000 Veterans and they too can benefit from what we the American Legion has to offer they just need to be shown.

I leave every member of our post with a challenge, to recruit 1 new member this year. While you are out there, remember what your "WHY" is, share with them the passion of this amazing organization. One new member may not sound like could make a difference, but collectively if we all signed up one new member, we could grow to a post of over 2,000 members! Together we will make 2019-2020 the best year for American Legion Neal Thomas Jr. Centennial Post 209.

Joseph A. Schmidt
Post Sr. Vice Commander





FROM THE DESK OF THE POST JR VICE COMMANDER

American Legion Neal Thomas Jr. Centennial Post 209 Family. I would like to make my first message to you short, but very important. First, I would like to thank you for electing me and entrusting me to fulfil the duties of the office of the Post Jr. Vice Commander. I am excited and ready to work for you! Second, I would like to extend my congratulations to all of the newly elected officers for the 2019-2020 year. I know this is going to be a great year!

As a newer member of our Post, I look forward to meeting and getting to know all of you. We all have a why and we all have a purpose and it is my job to figure out what that is. Every single one of you have a gift and a talent. You all have something special about you that makes you unique. Maybe you like to cook, maybe you can play an instrument, or perhaps you have a passion for community service. Whatever your niche is, you have something to offer our family and not one gift is more important than another. It's kind of like a watch. There are big pieces, but there are also smaller pieces that make the hands turn. Every piece is important even if its not seen. All pieces **MUST** work cohesively together, otherwise, the watch will not operate. The same goes with our Post and Legion Family. We need to work together in order to operate properly.

I promised this would be short so again I want to thank you for the opportunity to represent you and I truly look forward to working with my fellow Officers and especially YOU our membership!!

Desire'e E. Guerra
Post Jr. Vice Commander



FROM THE DESK OF A PAST POST COMMANDER

A Great Convention! You're going to probably read and hear about some of the very positive things that occurred during our Department Convention this past month related to Post 209, but I want to share with you a couple of things on a very personal nature.

I was successful in my re-election to serve another two years as the Alternate National Executive Committeeman for Colorado. I look forward to serving and helping this great organization be an even stronger advocate for our Veterans and their family and to push our agenda in support of our four pillars.

The other significant event that occurred for me at Convention was on Saturday afternoon just prior to elections. At the end of our Resolutions Committee report, Past National Commander Tom Bock read a Resolution from the Past Department Commander's Club endorsing me for National Commander. The Resolution passed unanimously.

What this means is that I will now join others from across the country in the "pool" for consideration. I am not a candidate, just one of a few others whose Department submitted someone for consideration. It doesn't change anything I am currently doing on a National or State level. It merely means I will be looked at as someone to possibly run for National Commander in a few years.

Just being endorsed is a tremendous honor and I am very appreciative to the Legionnaires at our Post and across the Department who believe I may be worthy of consideration. Thank you to all who have supported and continue to support me. I am humbled by your support and will never take this honor for granted. Thank you! I will always work hard to **Be Part Of The Solution!**

Jay Bowen
Past Post Commander



Has God been good to you?



FROM THE DESK OF THE CHAPLAIN

I would like to thank all of you for allowing me to be your post chaplain. I promise that I will try to do my very best to bring you God's word and I will always try to be very compassionate. If anyone has knowledge of a member who is ill or needs to talk to someone, please let me know. I will need their full name, address with zip code and phone number, and the reason why they need my help. I always try to make visits but if not, I cannot, I call them and talk to them and I always send them a card from the post and from me as the post chaplain.

Picture a battle ground strewn with wounded bodies, and you see Bethesda. Imagine a nursing home overcrowded and understaffed, and you see the pool. Call to mind the orphans in Bangladesh or the abandoned in New Delhi, and you see what people saw when they passed Bethesda. As they passed, what did they hear? An endless wave of groans. What did they witness? A field of faceless need. What did they do? Most walked past, ignoring the people. But not GOD----HE is alone----the people needed HIM----SO! HE'S there. Can you picture it?? GOD walking among the suffering and the needy----little do they know that GOD is walking slowly, stepping carefully between the beggar's and the blind. HE still moves stones! These words are from one of my favorite writers, Max Lucado. Here is his prayer: "We're not perfect Father, but we are yours. We're not what we should be, but we do claim you to make salvation and your grace. We ask you to make us every day more and more into the image of your SON, our compassionate Savior." Amen!!!



Here are a few scriptures to think about: Matthew 5: 44-45: "But I say to you love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you. If you do this, you will be true children of your Father in Heaven." Galatians 6: 1-3: "If someone in your group does something wrong, you who are spiritual should go to that person and gently help make him right again. But! Be careful, because you might be tempted to sin, too. By helping each other with your troubles, you truly obey the law of the Lord. If anyone thinks he is important when he really is not, he is only fooling himself." John 3: 16-18: "This is how we know what real love is, the Lord gave his life for all of us. So, we should give our love to our brothers and sisters. Suppose someone has enough to live and sees his brother or sister in need but does not help. Then GOD'S love is not living in that person. My children, we should all love all people not only with words and talk, but by our actions and true caring."

There is a beautiful Mother's Day song: "MOTHER A GIFT FROM GOD." Maybe next time Mother's Day is close I will sing it to all of you Mothers. It is a very beautiful song that tells all about who Mothers really are and what they do for the love of their children. I have said this many times in the past and I will keep saying it: "Our GOD is a loving GOD." No matter what we have done HE always forgives us. Can we really do the same thing to all of our brothers and sisters? Can we do that to our neighbors? One of the Ten Commandments is: "Love thy neighbor as you love yourself." Again, you must be able to love yourself before you can love anyone else.

May GOD's blessing be with all of you and may HE give you all the guidance, comfort and love that you may need. Please keep the faith and HE will not let you down.

MY LAST THREE WORDS TO ALL OF YOU: **GO TO CHURCH!!!**

Pastor Stan Hamamoto
Post Chaplain



From Department



Commander Noechel

Department of Colorado

Dean Noechel, Department Commander
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Colorado Springs, CO 80925

(719) 246-0152
d.noechel@coloradolegion.org

American Legion Post 209 Family,

I am honored and humbled to serve this great Veterans Service Organization, The American Legion Department of Colorado as your 100th Department Commander. This has been quite a journey for me, and I would be remiss if I did not extend my deepest gratitude to those who have mentored me, guided me and believed in me along the way. You all know who you are. I would also like to thank my family for supporting me and allowing me to be so open with my time so I can do what needs to be done to ensure our Department is successful. I would also like to say Thank You to our members and our Post 209 American Legion Family for your support and dedication during my campaign. And last but certainly not least, I want to thank my soon to be Wife, Desiree Guerra. You are my biggest supporter and cheerleader. You have made everything so easy for me to be able to perform the duties of my office and I can't wait to see what this year has in store for us.

American Legion Post 209 you are a Post that a lot of Posts strive to be and you do it every day, supporting our programs and the four pillars of The American Legion and I Commend you all for your hard work and dedication to our great organization.

My Commanders project this year is the Colorado Veterans Assistance Fund, I ask that everyone please support this program with donations to help our brothers and sisters that have given so much and need our help. Did you know that this year so far, we have given almost \$30,000.00 since January 1 in direct aid to our fellow Veterans in need? I chose this program because I have seen the Veterans that come in to request help and let me tell you they need our help. As Veterans, we often wait until the last minute to ask, we are too proud, in a lot of times it puts us in situations that we have no choice but to ask for assistance. My drive and passion to help our brothers and sisters in need is another reason that I have chosen the CVAF as my project for 2019-2020. I trust that you will join me in support of this very important fund.

Will YOU help Me
Re-Ignite Patriotism?

Dean M. Noechel
Commander, Department of Colorado





“TRUE PATRIOTISM
SPRINGS FROM A BELIEF
IN THE DIGNITY OF THE
INDIVIDUAL, FREEDOM
AND EQUALITY NOT ONLY
FOR AMERICANS BUT FOR
ALL PEOPLE ON EARTH...”

— ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

Did you know??

The American Legion's 87th National Commander was elected in Honolulu Hawaii in 2005?

Did you also know that he is from The Department of Colorado?

Thomas L. Bock

American Legion National Commander
2005-2006



We are the Land of the Free
We are the home of the Brave
Let's pay tribute

To our brave American Heroes
On this day and forever

Happy Independence Day!



Reminder: July 4, 2019 Post Picnic

Proud possessors of...



a priceless heritage...



FROM THE DESK OF THE SAL COMMANDER

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am very proud to have been elected as the new Commander of SAL Squadron 209. We have much work ahead as a Squadron, but in recent days, among other things, we have shown our continued dedication to the veteran community with a very important visit to Laurel Manor Nursing Center. Here, we recognized the incoming residents who, during their lives, raised their hand, took the oath and put on the uniform. In these waning years, it is our honor to bring them some recognition for their service to our country.

In addition, Squadron 209 recently participated in the placement of thousands of American flags for Memorial Day on the graves of veterans at Memorial Gardens Cemetery. When placing the flags, we read the grave marker inscription and rendered the hand salute. We are proud to continue the solid relationship between Memorial Gardens and Post 209. If you would like to participate in recognizing our departed heroes, our next event will be Wreaths Across America on the 3rd Saturday in December at MG. All are welcome.

Squadron 209 is also pleased to announce that we will be hosting a fundraiser dinner at Post 209 on July 12th at 6 pm. Our new Junior Vice Commander, Richard Pecoraro, will be in charge of the food for that evening, along with help from other Squadron 209 members. Main item for the dinner is veal cutlets! Come on out and support your Post 209 SAL Squadron!

Eric Testorff
SAL Squadron Commander



**“The Patriot’s blood is the
seed of Freedom’s Tree.”
THOMAS CAMPBELL**





BRINGING A LITTLE SOUTH TO THE WEST

For those who have been frequent readers of these articles, you've heard me mention my Dad from time to time. I want to tell you a little more about him. I think understanding more about my father may give you some insight into me.

Dad was an Arkansas boy. He was born and grew up working cotton fields in Arkansas and Missouri. His early livelihood revolved around chopping and picking cotton on the family farm. It was only after he grew up that he left the farm-life and embarked on another career.

He was born in 1924 and served in the US Army during WWII in the Pacific Theater. Interestingly, his Dad (my grandfather) served in WWII at the same time in Europe. Dad only had a 6th grade formal education (pretty common back then), and he was one of the smartest men I've ever known. He quit school to help work the farm.

He married Mom in 1946 in Bakersfield, CA. Even though Mom was from Arkansas as well, her family had moved there to find work. They had known each other for most of Mom's life (she was 6 years his junior). She was 16 when she married Dad.

Mom and Dad moved to Memphis in June 1953. They had a 6-year-old daughter, 1-year old baby, and a newborn (me) when they moved to the house on a street that bordered the Memphis airport. They lived in that house for 36 years before the airport convinced the city to declare "Imminent Domain" and forced them to move so the airport could expand. Even though my baby sister (1 year younger than me) was born in Arkansas, we were living in that house in Memphis. I think Mom and Dad just wanted us to be born in the same city (Wynne), so as Mom was close to delivering, she spent a lot of time with her parents in the little town of Cherry Valley until my sister was born.

Dad had many "isms" and was quick to share those with all us kids. I think one of his favorite responses when we would ask, "Why don't we have a car with an automatic transmission?" he would merely state, "Why boy, I'd rather live next door to somebody who had a car with an automatic transmission than to own one." That would be the same response when we asked why we didn't have air conditioning in our house or a color TV. I now realize it was because those "luxury" items cost way too much for Dad to even consider. Even though we didn't have air conditioning, we had desk and floor fans for every room in the house, as well as a window fan. Those was plenty because Dad worked for Hunter Fan for more than 40 years. But even though we lived from paycheck to paycheck he would never tell us we were poor. I think that was his way to prevent us from feeling bad, and we never associated with buying our clothes from the "slightly irregular" rack or from something Mom created on her Singer with being poor. We always had plenty of food on the table and shoes on our feet, so we didn't think about being poor. Dad would tell us, "You can't miss what you never had." And that was so true.

Probably the "ism" that resonated most with me was his response any time I wanted to feel sorry for myself about anything. He would listen to me complain for about 15-20 seconds, then he'd say, "Boy, do you know how many people would love to have your problem? They would trade troubles with you right now. They would love to have your problems to deal with if you'd just take theirs." This one piece of advice helps me stay focused and grateful for all the things I have today.

Another "pearl" he would share would be that we need to "pass and re-pass" when talking about someone who had done us wrong. It was his way of saying we should not hold a grudge and hate our neighbor. This was also very sound and Christian-like advice. Although on one occasion as an adult, Dad and I talked about someone he worked with that he really hated. I reminded him of his sage advice to us kids and suggested he should "pass and re-pass." He just looked at me with a small grin and stated, "Do as I say, not as I do."

I could write a book about Dad and the many, many things he taught me that shaped the person I am today. He was my best friend and a great mentor. There's not a day that goes by I don't think about him and often wonder if he would approve of the man, I turned out to be. I am absolutely convinced he is in Heaven today waxing philosophical with St. Peter. And when they opened to Book of Judgement on Edgar Earl Bowen, I'm confident there was something in it that stated, "Here's a man who knew how to "Pass and Re-Pass." He lived an honorable life and never coveted his neighbor's belongings. But now, he doesn't have to feel he'd rather "Live next door to someone who has those luxuries than have them" because he is in a place where all those earned luxuries are his for eternity. I will be very happy if I can be just half the man he was.

IN A CHANGING
WORLD, ONE
THING STAYS
THE SAME:

*The Military
Experience.*

IT'S THE BOND

Between Veterans who have served America, from the fields of Europe to the jungles of Asia to the deserts of the Middle East and everywhere in between!

"WE WILL NOT FAIL

those with whom we've served," was the promise by generations of Veterans. Help us continue the Legacy!

JOIN

Today's American Legion-bonded through service, committed to the future!



**THE
AMERICAN
LEGION**

Neal Thomas Jr.
Centennial Post 209
3613 Jeannine Dr.
Colorado Springs, CO 80917
(719) 599-8624
www.legion209.org

**WAR TIME VETERANS-
JOIN US TODAY!!**

Keeping with the aims & purposes of The American Legion...



July 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Canada Day Post Honor Gd. Training 6:00pm 	2	3	4 Indep. Day Post Picnic! 12:00	5 Price Varies with order Hamdogger 6:00pm 	6
7	8 Post Honor Gd. Training 6:00pm 	9	10	11 Executive Committee Meeting 6:30pm 	12 \$10.00 Meal Auxiliary Dinner-6:00pm RSVP Required! 	13 Membership Meeting Breakfast - 9:00am Meeting - 10:00am 
14	15 Post Honor Gd. Training 6:00pm  ALR Exec. Board 6:00pm 	16	17	18	19 \$14.50 Meal Steak Night! - 6:00pm RSVP Required!   	20
21	22 Post Honor Gd. Training 6:00pm 	23 ALR Monthly Meeting 6:30pm. Social 5:30pm SAL 5:45pm  	24	25	26 \$10.50 Meal Chef's Choice! - 6:00pm RSVP Required!    	27
28	29 Post Honor Gd. Training 6:00pm 	30	31	Notes:		

In the Spirit of Service and Not Self...

