

The Centennial



VOLUME 37 EDITION 12

December 2015

Mail: P.O. Box 25334, Colorado Springs, Co 80936-5334

Post: 3613 Jeannine Dr., Colorado Springs, Co 80917-8002

Telephone 719-599-8624

Email: centennialtwozeronline@yahoo.com

Website: www.legion209.org



From the Desk and Mind of the Commander



In observing this time to pay respect to our Veterans, Post 209 demonstrated to the community we care about our Veterans and what they have done for the country.

“Be the light that helps others see”

Our members participated in the Veteran’s Parade; our Color and Honor guard stood up and showed respect to those that did not make it home; our members found the time to stand in front of others and communicate their experiences; and the Post supported a Welcome home to one of our Veterans. These acts showed to others the strength of our membership and our Legion Family. Please tell others of our family and how we help support Veterans.

Now it is time to plan for the next few months and how we as a Post can end the year stronger than ever. In talking with the leadership team and the Executive Committee, we are on a path of meeting our membership goal. We are trending well with membership, but there is a need for more members this year. We need to have all of our members know that it is essential to have our members renew before the end of the year. Why?

“Always be there for the people who matter the most to you”

As many of you have noted in the last few months of articles, Post 209 needs to increase annual dues. The increase is needed to help us continue our mission, which is to help support Veterans. As we have expressed about in the last few months, the increase is the first in almost 10 years. With this increase, we as a Post will be able to help more Veterans through support, provide more events and services at our Post home, demonstrate to the community how it important to support Veterans, and how to continue the needs, in the future, of the Post to include Boys State, Oratorical Contest, and Holiday season food drives. This is our mission and the annual objective is to meet the needs of as many Veterans as possible. In talking to others, we will be able to give more to our members over the year.

For myself, I have become a graduate of the National American Legion College. From this long and busy week, I learned more about the American Legion and developed some ideas to help me become more involved in the American Legion. I want to be a strength and voice for our Veterans and especially to our Veterans within Colorado. I have met many Veterans who are struggling with their needs and benefits. I, too, am struggling with obtaining benefits from the VA. This is no longer acceptable and I want to be a changing agent for our current and future Veterans. I want them to know there are people available to help them get what they have earned from their service to this country. We also, owe it to them for their service.

“Never let a difficult situation bring out the worst in you. Be strong and choose to be positive”

How can you help? Renew your membership before the end of the year and the increase will not be seen until the 2017 membership year, beginning July 2016. Your renewal now will help us continue to help Veterans and their family.

The membership goal for our Post this year is 1000 members. I challenge all of us to surpass that and become the largest Post in Colorado. Achieving this task will show others Posts how to be united as a force, meet the needs of Veterans, show our strength as a Legion family, and continue to develop networks to serve Veterans. In the past months, the latter has allowed us to support Veterans and their families in finding homes, obtaining jobs, and helping meet their family needs. As the holiday season continues, this is a time for giving and helping others. Be thankful for our skills and grateful for those that we can help and support.

For God and Country, in God We Trust

Reservations and RSVP go to Jackie Bowen (574-1223) jackiebowen2005@yahoo.com or Kariann Smith (520)-784-3193 kariannsmith@me.com



From the Unit 209 President

Jackie Bowen

Welcome to our newest member Carleigh Berry. She is the daughter of Legionnaire Wesley Berry. Wesley is the soldier we held the "Welcome Home" celebration for on November 7th. Wesley was honored with care packages from our Past Department Junior Auxiliary President Ayanna Espinola and oh so many hugs! The care packages were things that Ayanna had packed and sent to him but they were returned to her because he had returned home. Thank you Ayanna for all you do and have done for our Veterans.

We had a wonderful time at the Buzz Cut Challenge held at our Post Home. We have been told that currently our Post raised more money nationwide than any other Post or city. You may have noticed a little something different about Art, our club manager, at the monthly breakfast. He has been wearing a cap ever since the Buzz Cut challenge. Hmm, I wonder why? He gave Kellie Hayes a challenge of raising \$200 in order for him to get a buzz cut. Well the cap speaks loudly to this challenge. Word of warning, don't mess with Kellie, she got \$240. J The money we raised will go to the Colorado Veterans Kids' Fund.

Becky Hall and Jackie Burd stepped up to lead our Jr Auxiliary girls. Look for more information to come concerning meetings, etc. I have been wanting to get our Juniors active for a long time. Thank you Ladies for stepping up.

MERRY CHRISTMAS! Dec 12th, we will have our annual Christmas party instead of our monthly meeting. This will be a potluck beginning at 4:00pm and we will have gift bags for the kids, ages 1 to 12. Please RSVP ASAP with the ages and gender of your children so we can make sure no one leaves without a gift bag. **Please bring a wrapped gift for your child/children with their name on it so they will have a gift to receive from Santa.** There will be games for the kids and a story time also.

Serving Our Veterans Proudly!

MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Calling All Juniors...Auxiliary

Becky Hall

To all Parents, Grandparents, Aunts and Uncles that have Junior members, we will be starting meetings for Juniors in January. The Juniors will learn Flag Etiquette, Flag Ceremonies, earn badges, raise money for the National President's scholarship, and go on field trips. We will put together care packages, and will do Christmas cards for Soldiers overseas, and Veterans at nursing homes for the Juniors to deliver.

Hope to see you on Saturday, January 9th after the Auxiliary meeting is over 11:00am.

Becky Hall and Jackie Burd will be the leaders. If you have any question you can contact one of us at:

Becky Hall 719-231-0597
Jackie Burd 719-590-6615



Over forty friends and family members along with the Instructors attended the Young Guns Graduation and Awards night Wednesday evening November 4th, 2015. The evening began with remarks from our Post Commander Greg Smith who commended the shooters on their achievement.

Guests in attendance were then introduced by Young Guns President Ken Taylor. In attendance were Janie Palubin from the Colorado Springs Friends of NRA and Franklyn Blaha from Ben Lomond Gun Club. Janie was thanked for the contributions to our program made by the FNRA and Franklyn later gave a presentation on the Youth Program at Ben Lomond.

After the blessing, pizza, salad and soda was enjoyed by all. The class was then introduced one at a time to receive their completion certificates and other awards. The top four shooters received "TOP SHOT" awards and one BULLSEYE AWARD was given for hitting a 10x during the class competition. NRA Marksmanship Awards were given to five shooters who are previous graduates of our Junior Shooting Program. One shooter received both Marksman and Marksman 1st Class Awards, two shooters received Marksman 1st Class Awards and two shooters received Sharpshooter Awards. One of the Sharpshooters received all Nine Bars in the Sharpshooter Category and will now begin working on an Expert Badge.

This is the fifth Young Guns graduating class and brings the total to 46 graduates at Post 209. It was a great evening and all shooters are to be commended for their achievement and the effort they put into the class. Thanks also go out to our Instructors who make it all possible.

The next Junior Shooting class at Post 209 will begin on February 10th, 2016. This class still has openings but will fill up fast. If you would like information about classes please contact Ken Taylor at 719-761-4047 or email at adjutantsal209@gmail.com



Christmas Party at Post 209!



Join us at Post 209 on 12 December at 4:00pm for our annual Christmas party. The dress is casual, and the meal is potluck. So bring your favorite holiday dish, and make certain there's enough to feed everyone in your group plus a couple of others so we can sample your offering.

Rumors are growing that we will have a very special guest join us before the evening ends. He plans to stop by on his way north to get ready for the big night. So bring the kids! If you are planning to bring the little ones, please also bring a small, inexpensive wrapped gift with their name on it so the big guy will have something to hand out during the visit. RSVP to Jackie with the number of kids ages 1 to 12 in your group no later than 9 December. Include the gender of the young ones you plan to bring.

This promises to be a good time for young and old alike as we celebrate "The reason for the season." The party will serve as our monthly meeting in December, so don't show up at 9:00 that morning expecting breakfast.

Hope to see you there, and Merry Christmas!



From The Commander Squadron 209

Rick Kettering

On the 7th of November Squadron 209 participated in the Veteran's Day Parade. I was pleased and honored to walk with all of the junior members that were there. We even had some on the float as well. Their participation in the parade helped them meet goals for The Ten Ideals. These young men are the future of The Sons of The American Legion and I am glad to see them get involved.

Our Squadron is now at 100% on membership and over 70% on renewals, but we can't stop there. I know there are members eligible for both the Legion as well as the SAL, there are even members that are either eligible to be triple members or already are.



Just like the Legion, membership is what fuels the programs the SAL strives to do every year. And that is to support our military and our Veterans as well as their families any way we can.

Lastly, I want to remind everyone that due to the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays we will not be having our regular meetings in November and December. Our next scheduled meeting will be on 26 Jan 2016. I want to wish all a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas.

For God and Country,
Rick Kettering



FROM THE ADJUTANT

Marvin Weaver, Jr.

I would first like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I hope you have a safe holiday season and enjoy this time of the year with family and friends. The Post will be having the Annual Christmas Party on December 12th and rumor has it a special guest will be making an appearance; I hope to see you there. Please RSVP by December 9th so we can get a headcount of kids coming.

As you know by now national has increased the per capita and with this we have had to raise our dues. The increase will be coming January 1st. One way to beat the increase is to renew by December 31st if you have not already renewed. We have a goal this year of 1,000 members and we are still 250 short of that goal. A couple other ways to beat the increase is to become Paid-Up-For-Life (PUFL) or to apply for Colorado Advanced membership Payment Plan (CAMPP). If you would like more information on either of these programs, please contact me.

We have had an incredible year and I look forward to seeing what we can do in the next year with all of your help. Post 209 is recognized by the Department and Nationally as a Post who is growing and doing great things. That is because of members such as yourself and what you bring to our Post. Thank you for all that you do for us, our Veterans, and the community.



**From the Jr. Vice Commander
Mike Barger**

This has been a really busy year for Post 209. From the numerous people that we've helped with getting assistance on VA and other Veteran issues, to assisting people that need just a little boost to get them through to their next paycheck. The BBQ that the Riders provided for the Veterans at McCandless Veterans' home in July, the Ice Cream social at McCandless in August, All Patients Day in Pueblo in September, the Veterans Stand Down (246 Veterans assisted) in October, the Food Drive that the ALR is doing for the holiday season, to events that the Post was honored to host. Just to name a few, the Convention in June, the Tribute to the Fallen Torch Run in July from Oregon to South Dakota, the ALR with their Inaugural Poker Run. Included in these volunteer events are the endless people that stepped up to provide this Post with meals on Friday nights. Art, our chef and the Auxiliary members are awesome, and without them these meals wouldn't get provided with a smiling face. Also, the ALR dinners have been a huge success, and without them stepping up to cook for us all we wouldn't have another night of good food and company. With this Post ever growing, we need to continue to get more people involved with our events, so the new people will feel that this is their second family. Without you all, we wouldn't be "The little Post going places and doing big things." Now that the holiday season is upon us, let's all take some time to reflect on all we've done and all we've touched with our hospitality and generosity, and keep all our troops in your thoughts and prayers. Many of them will be away from their family during this time, and when called upon will do it without hesitation. Without them, we would not be a free society and we wouldn't enjoy this time of year with our families.

What's happening at the Post this next month?

There will be no General Membership meeting in December, for December 12th will be the day that Santa comes to visit Post 209. This event will start at 4 pm, and will be a potluck event so please be sure to bring something that can feed 2 to 3 more people than what you are bringing for your family. Also bring in your children and grandchildren so they can sit on Santa's lap and let him know what they'd like to have under their Christmas tree this year. If you are bringing a child to see Santa, please be sure to bring a wrapped gift for each child you bring so Santa can give it to them. Also, let Jackie know if the child is a boy or girl, so we can ensure that they get an appropriate gift bag.

May everyone have a safe and joyous holiday season and may we come back after the holiday season with the same spirit and desire to help others that need assistance as we have this year.

Remember, we serve God, Family and The Legion, always keeping in mind our fellow Legionaries who are in need of some help along the way...



**From our Judge Advocate
Chuck Zeitvogel**

It's the holiday season and time to shop, celebrate Hanukkah, Christmas, and Kwanzaa. I like the idea of being cheerful and to use this special time of year to look on the bright side of things and reflect as this year ends.

I'm thinking of a saying learned years ago while a Scout Leader spending a week at Camp Alexander near Lake George, Colorado. It goes like this: **Good, Better, Best, never let it rest until Good is Better and Better is Best.** That saying has stayed with me for many years and it continually reminds me to keep trying to improve in whatever capacity I find myself. It also reminds me of our American Legion Post 209. Post 209 in my opinion has continually strived to do good and taking that to the next level better and on to best. We members can be proud of the dynamic leadership that Post 209 has had over the past years meeting and overcoming numerous challenges from its beginning. Post 209 is considered by many to now being the best in Colorado.

Happy Holidays! Adopt the saying suggested as it helps in maintaining a positive attitude ... Good–Better–Best, Never Let it Rest–Until Good is Better–and Better is Best.



FROM THE CHAPLAIN'S DESK

Pastor Stan

I have some good news for all, and that is I am now an ordained minister of Jesus Christ. I have received my ordination certificate. I just found out what the process is for me to be considered for National Chaplain. The Post has endorsed me and so did the District at its last meeting. Now my name goes into the pool and the committee will discuss all of the people who are in this pool and make their selection. So, as you can see this could take years to come to a head. But I guess that big P word (patience) is one thing that I must have.

As the year comes to an end, we all should be thankful for all that we have. God so loved the world that HE gave us HIS only SON who died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus Christ did not say it is only for the rich or the poor, it is for everyone, YES! Each and every-one of us. It does not matter who we are or what we are. HE died for all of us. As you eat your Christmas dinner and open your gifts, think and pray for what you see in front of you. Your wife, children, grandchildren and friends. GOD gave this all to you. HE did not pick and choose who gets what. Just think of all of the men and women who died so that we can have the freedom that we have. They did not know anyone of us, but yet they gave their lives so that we can have the freedom we have. This is what Jesus Christ has done for us, HE gave HIS life on the cross so that we cannot be blamed for our sins. He took it upon HIMSELF so that we would not have to suffer for them.

December 25th is the date when Jesus Christ was born. It is a time of celebration and joy. Think of all of the many people who do not have a hot meal to eat and have a warm shelter to sleep in. GOD gave you everything that you have and sometimes it alright to share this with others that do not have it. I would like to wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May God's blessings be with you and your family. Have a great time but be sure that you stay safe. Say a prayer for all of those that have blessed your life this past year. Give thanks to God for all that HE has done for you and your family. Pray for the men and women who are not able to be at home for this holiday season. Pray for the families that they have left behind. Pray for all of the men and women who died so that we can enjoy the freedom we have. Pray that next year will be a good one for our Post and the community it serves and most of all, the Veterans, and their families who need it. GOD BLESS YOU AND MAY HE KEEP YOU SAFE ALWAYS.

My last three words to all of you are: **GO TO CHURCH!!!!!!**

Shalom,



2016 Membership Drive

Senior Vice Commander Lino Calica

Currently, Post 209 membership dues are \$35.00. We have not had an increase since 2007. Due to inflation and the higher cost for utilities there is a need to raise dues. At our November general membership meeting, Commander Smith presented an increase for dues. It was approved by an overwhelming majority of the membership present to increase the dues from \$35.00 to \$45.00, effective January 1, 2016. If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2016, please do so by December 31, 2015 before the increase is in effect. We have surpassed the Department's target goal of 65% in November. We are currently standing at 74 percent or 742 members who has renewed or signed up as new members. Our next goal is 75% on 13 December.

I ask for your support in recruiting, and reaching out to our Veterans and families in the community. Post 209 cannot achieve or succeed in reaching this goal without you. As you recruit, briefly address the different programs within the American Legion, the American Legion Auxiliary for spouses and daughters, the Sons of American Legion for Veteran's sons, grandsons and great grandsons, the American Legion Riders, if they have an interest in motorcycles, and the Young Guns, for students ages 10 to 18 who are interested in shooting guns and gun safety. The key to growth and success at Centennial Post 209 is to lead by example and to serve the needs of our Veterans and families. Remember the 3R's:

RECRUIT- New members, **RETAIN** - Existing Members, **REBUILD** - For the Future.

Mahalo nui loa, (Thank you)



American Legion Riders Gregory Smith, Vice President Post 209 ALR

It is that time of year that we become involved in community volunteerism and support of veterans through the homeless veteran's coalition, Veterans Day parade, honor and respect with presenting colors and rifle team service.



The team has been trained by our Color guard Captain, Gunny Raines. He has put a great team together and has made sure that they continue to represent this post with the upmost dignity and professionalism.

The Rifle team has been available to our community and veterans' families when needed. They continue to provide a service during Veterans' Day at TREA and to those families who have lost a veteran.

During the Veterans' Day parade, the American Legion Riders were able to ride as a group and display our skills with motorcycle safety in the community.

As you know, promoting motorcycle safety is part of our mission and preamble for the American Legion Riders.

Their position in the parade led the American Legion Centennial Post 209 Legion Family, which included the American Legion Riders, Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Scouts from Pac 24 and 386, and Color and Honor Guard.



Prior to the cold and snow, The American Legion Riders were able to participate in the Toys for Tots toy drive. The event was held at the Pikes Peak Harley Davidson parking lot. The ride to the event was enjoyable knowing that the group was delivering toys to those that needed support and caring in the upcoming season.

There were several rider groups, clubs, and motorcycle teams who brought toys to the location. It was a great feeling to see the compassion and comradeship within the community. We may have different styles, colors, and missions; however, the end game is for the kids. The Marine Corps did well and made it worth the ride. The passion to help kids is never wavering.

What a strength within our post and community. Even though the snow may hinder riding on two wheels, it will not hinder our mission to help the community, kids, families, and veterans during this season of thanksgiving and sharing with others.



Sailor's Night Before Christmas

'Twas the night before Christmas, the ship was out steaming,

Sailors stood watch while others were dreaming.
They lived in a crowd with racks tight and small,
In a 80-man berthing, cramped one and all.

I had come down the stack with presents to give,
And to see inside just who might perhaps live.
I looked all about, a strange sight did I see,
No tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.

No stockings were hung, shined boots close at hand,
On the bulkhead hung pictures of a far distant land.
They had medals and badges and awards of all kind,
And a sober thought came into my mind.

For this place was different, so dark and so dreary,
I had found the house of a Sailor, once I saw clearly.
A Sailor lay sleeping, silent and alone,
Curled up in a rack and dreaming of home.

The face was so gentle, the room squared away,
This was the United States Sailor today.
This was the hero I saw on TV,
Defending our country so we could be free.

I realized the families that I would visit this night,
Owed their lives to these Sailors lay willing to fight.
Soon round the world, the children would play,
And grownups would celebrate on Christmas Day.

They all enjoyed freedom each day of the year,
Because of the Sailor, like the one lying here.
I couldn't help wonder how many lay alone,
On a cold Christmas Eve on a sea, far from home.

The very thought brought a tear to my eye,
I dropped to my knees and started to cry.
The Sailor awakened and I heard a calm voice,
"Santa, don't cry, this life is my choice."

"Defending the seas all days of the year,
So others may live and be free with no fear."
I thought for a moment, what a difficult road,
To live a life guided by honor and code.

After all it's Christmas Eve and the ship's underway!
But freedom isn't free and it's sailors who pay.
The Sailor say's to our country "be free and sleep tight,
No harm will come, not on my watch and not on this night.

The Sailor rolled over and drifted to sleep,
I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.
I kept watch for hours, so silent, so still,
I watched as the Sailor shivered from the night's cold chill.

I didn't want to leave on that cold dark night,
This guardian of honor so willing to fight.
The Sailor rolled over and with a voice strong and sure,
Commanded, "Carry on Santa, It's Christmas, and All is Secure!"

Rusty L. Bower, US NAVY Senior Chief (retired)





From the Historian; A Stand-Down Veteran's Story

Eric Testorff

The 2015 Veterans' Stand-Down has come and gone, and The American Legion was there, playing a big part in the annual outreach to homeless Veterans. This is a time and place where Veterans fighting a daily battle on the streets for warmth, shelter, security and sustenance, can come and "stand down" for a day. Veterans are offered showers, haircuts, warm clothes, and connections with those who can help with the V.A., legal issues, and other aid. Many of these Veterans are in a life-and-death struggle with substance abuse, depression and PTSD. Many who come to the Stand-Down are helped, but end up back on the streets; back in the same dire straits as before. However, a few-a precious few are able to envision a different path, and lift themselves out of the endless cycle of hunger, danger and addiction.

One such survivor is "John." A Navy veteran, John had been homeless since 2004. He is also a Veteran of multiple Stand-Downs. In most years, he went back to the streets, back to the old life and old dangers, because John was addicted to heroin. Working as a day laborer, making just enough to feed his addiction, he was sleeping in parking lots in his truck. He had burned his bridges with family and friends. He was estranged from the people who had mattered before in his life. As John put it, "Any virtue that was good, that was God-given, I destroyed."

Finally, in 2011, John came to the realization that his addiction "would ultimately result in either prison or death." With this hard reality at his feet, he made a decision that would start him back on the road of the living. He decided to bring about his own withdrawal from heroin, and to kick out the master that had ruled his life for so long.

John pitched his tent in the Pike National Forest on New Years Eve. He was determined that the New Year would mean a new life, or he would die trying. "The withdrawal was horrible. It was like somebody snapping your bones. For the longest time, I was in my tent with absolutely no strength to get up. At one point, a Park Ranger investigated and lifted the flap to my tent. I explained what I was trying to do. I feared I was busted, and would be dragged back to the old life, but he closed the flap and said 'I'll come back.'" The Ranger did eventually come back, but it was not to arrest John and take him away. He simply helped him find his keys-something John had been unable to do. "I was at my lowest point, and felt as though I had come from a place of ashes. It must have been divine intervention that helped me live through it, and place one foot in front of the other, step after step."

After coming down from the forest, John knew his life wouldn't truly change until he asked for help. He got on the waiting list for the VASH (Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing) program. He was driven to V.A. appointments. He ate food from the food bank. He worked on-again, off-again. He met all the qualifications to stay on a VASH voucher. But deep inside, John knew that he had once again created a lifestyle that set him up for dependency and failure. He knew things had to change. He realized that, "you've got to be willing to help yourself." John was ready for the next step.

And that next step came at the 2014 Stand Down. I watched as John shook hands with Andy Gilbert of American Legion Centennial Post 209, and Dean Casey, Service Officer for the American Legion Department of Colorado. Before them was a man ready to make a change, and these two Legionnaires stood ready to help.

Among the other things that John came away with from the Stand Down was an appointment with Dean to help with his paperwork in filing for V.A. disability compensation. On the way to his appointment at Colorado Legion Headquarters, the person driving him mentioned a job opportunity with a truck driving school. John realized, "Because of my relationship with the Legion, doors began to open, and kept opening." He became a Legion member. "In fact, my initial membership dues were sponsored by the Post 209 Legion Auxiliary," and John saw the doors open even more.

An important door that opened was his introduction to Andy Gilbert: President of Post 209's ALR, and a local business owner. "Andy offered friendship, a role model, a paycheck, accountability, and the kind of unconditional love that helped me to move on. We started fresh from Day One." As Andy puts it: "The Legion must be an organization that reaches out to help both the recipient, who wants to overcome what they must overcome, and also the business community willing to commit to Veterans despite the challenges from the street."

John adds, "At Post 209, I now have encouragement from you guys-a place to belong, and to witness the things that the Legion models: the giving of time, talent and treasure to something larger than myself. This Post has been consistent. I have had encouragement from every Post 209 member I have met."

Eventually, the opportunity with the truck driving school did materialize, and John seized the moment. "Rather than feeling like the constant recipient of the good graces of others, I feel like I have a chance. Now, I feel like I have the opportunity to pay it forward, and I am to the point where I am thinking... 'Who are we helping next?'"

BRINGING A LITTLE SOUTH TO THE WEST

Immediate Past Post Commander Jay Bowen

The Christmas season probably does more to bring back fond memories of growing up in the South than any other time of year. It was an opportunity for everyone in the family to come together for a huge meal of Turkey and Ham with all the “fixin’s,” gifts under the tree, parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles and cousins, and the occasional surprise distant cousin dropping in to say hello. And there was mistletoe.

It’s still a little difficult for me to adjust to the Christmas season without seeing mistletoe strategically placed around the house. I remember the mistletoe hanging from the ceiling fan in the living room and also across the doorway frame leading to the kitchen. When I was old enough and bold enough to bring a girl home to meet the family, it was my license to share a little kiss with her in public without getting scolded for doing so. It was traditional and expected. Isn’t it interesting how a parasite could gain so much importance and popularity?

I believe it was almost as much fun gathering the mistletoe as it was “using” it to steal a kiss not only from my girlfriend “du jour” but from any other friend visiting my sister. We would take our shotguns and walk out into the woods near our grandparents’ houses in Arkansas. By this time of year all the leaves had changed to a golden color and fallen to the ground. Trees were bare except for the dense cluster of green, typically mid-way up and extending out on a tree limb. There was no one type of tree that sprouted a clump of mistletoe; we found them in oaks, maples, and most other trees. Parasites don’t really care what kind of tree they attached to, as long as it can absorb nutrients it will thrive. So we would tromp through the woods looking for the mass growing out on a tree limb. If you’re not paying attention, you can mistake a mistletoe clump for a squirrel’s nest. Once you’ve found the mistletoe, all you have to do is fire a shot into the clump with something like #6 or even #4 shot. Because the mistletoe is attached to very small limbs it is easy to shoot through them and break off a large chunk. We would collect a box full and head home to share with family and friends and break out the “Scotch Tape” to hang the mistletoe around the house. You don’t hang mistletoe to get a kiss from a parent, grandparent or aunt; it is for the friends of your sister who come over or as I mentioned, for the very special someone (for that particular day) you bring home to meet Mom and Dad. And it was to take to school to get a little kiss from that girl you were too scared to even say hello to any other time of the school year. We would take a handful to school to pass around, mostly to find out if we were also to be a recipient of a kiss from that special or secret someone. Nobody ever thought of selling mistletoe back home because it was so plentiful and everyone had shotguns so they could go get them whenever they wanted. When I left home and first saw it for sale, I just laughed and then got a little upset that I didn’t think about doing it. Wow, city folks will buy anything. You can even buy fake mistletoe. Not certain why, but you can. I guess it’s like fake flowers and plants. Some folks are just lazy, or maybe they don’t own a shotgun.

There are many things I took for granted while growing up in the South. I guess I thought everyone had two sets of grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins, and everyone came together to celebrate the birth of Jesus. But I learned after leaving home this is not always the case. I still love this time of year more than any other. And it’s still a time for family to come together, celebrate Christ’s birth, see family I haven’t seen in a year (sometimes), and gain 5 pounds. Man, I’m hungry. Merry Christmas everyone!

Challenge Accepted!

Post 209 and Colorado Springs was only 1 of 20 cities across the country invited to participate in The American Legion’s National fundraiser’s Buzz Cut Challenge. We were notified in October and asked to participate and given 3 weeks to prepare and advertise. This one day event resulted raising \$3,200 for the Colorado Veterans’ Kids Fund. Thanks to Great Clips for partnering with us and matching the money we raised. The next time you see our Commander and ALR President, along with several other Post members, tell them thanks for stepping up! By the way, Post 209 leads the Nation in money raised during this event.



Post Officers 2015-2016

Office	Name	Telephone
Commander	Gregory Smith	520-784-3555
Sr. Vice Cdr	Lino Calica	719-963-0956
Jr. Vice Cdr	Mike Barger	719-290-3218
Adjutant	Marvin Weaver, Jr.	719-244-3535
Finance Officer	Rusty Bower	719-649-0654
Chaplain	Stan Hamamoto	719-322-6959
Sergeant-at-Arms	Don Shuck	719-575-0539
Historian	Eric Testorff	719-510-4177
Post Executive Committeeman	Jay Bowen	901-484-7193
Service Officer	Lyle Hagelberg	719-231-2364
Judge Advocate	Chuck Zeitvogel	719-531-0546
Club Manager	Art Kimbrel	719-339-4610



ALR Officers 2014-2015

Office	Name	Telephone
President	Andy Gilbert	719-231-6696
Vice President	Gregory Smith	520-784-3555
Secretary	Cecelia Hamm	720-474-9332
Treasurer	Rusty Bower	719-649-0654
Sgt-At-Arms	Lino Calica	719-963-0956
Road Captain	Mike Barger	719-290-3218



Auxiliary Officers 2015-2016

Office	Name	Telephone
President	Jackie Bowen	719-574-1223
Vice President	Cathy Barger	719-290-3163
Secretary	Lynn Thomas	719-392-1510
Treasurer	Kellie Hayes	719-494-7167
Chaplain	Joan Ciani	719-579-9194
Sergeant-At-Arms	Donna Testorff	719-510-4567
Historian	Kari Ann Smith	520-784-3193



Sons of The American Legion 2015-2016

Office	Name	Telephone
Commander	Rick Kettering	813-967-6680
Sr. Vice Commander	Marv Weaver	719-244-3535
Jr. Vice Commander	Ronny Ross	719-493-2583
Adjutant	Ken Taylor	719-495-8190
Finance Officer	Rusty Bower	719-649-0654
Sgt-At-Arms	Steve P. Cox	970-580-8191
Chaplain	Christopher Keith	719-382-7845
Historian	Eric Testorff	719-510-4177

See Back Page for December 2015 Calendar

~ January 2016 ~						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Happy New Year!	2
3	4	5	6	7 Executive Committee Meeting 6:30pm	8 ALR Dinner - 6:00pm RSVP Required!	9 Membership Meeting Breakfast - 9:00am Meeting - 10:00am
10	11	12	13	14	15 Steak Night - 6:00pm RSVP Required!	16
17	18 Martin Luther King Day! ALR Executive Board 6:00pm	19	20	21 Department Mid-Year Conference 21-24	22 Fish/CFSI! - 6:00pm RSVP Required!	23 Department Mid-Year Conference 21-24
24 Department Mid-Year Conference 21-24	25	26 ALR Monthly Meeting 6:30pm. Social 5:30pm SAL 6:00pm	27	28	29	30
31	Notes: Hamdogger Night Cancelled! Department Mid-Year Conference 21-24, Longmont CFS on 22 January is Chicken Fried Steak					

~ February 2016 ~						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Groundhog Day	3	4 Executive Committee Meeting 6:30pm	5 Hamdogger 6:00pm	6
7 Super Bowl Sunday	8	9	10	11	12 ALR Dinner - 6:00pm RSVP Required!	13 Membership Meeting Breakfast - 9:00am Meeting - 10:00am
14 Valentine's Day!	15 President's Day! ALR Executive Board 6:00pm	16	17	18	19 Steak Night - 6:00pm RSVP Required!	20
21	22	23 ALR Monthly Meeting 6:30pm. Social 5:30pm SAL 6:00pm	24	25	26 Fish/CFSI! - 6:00pm RSVP Required!	27
28	29	Notes: CFS on 26 February is Chicken Fried Steak				



THE AMERICAN LEGION
CENTENNIAL POST 209
P.O. BOX 25334
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80936-5334

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COLORADO SPGS, CO
PERMIT NO. 192

~ December 2015 ~						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 Executive Committee Meeting 6:30pm 	4 Hamdogger 6:00pm 	5
6	7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance	8	9	10	11 ALR Dinner - 6:00pm RSVP Required! 	12 Post Christmas Party - 4:00pm Potluck!   
13	14 ALR Executive Board 6:00pm 	15	16	17	18 Steak Night - 6:00pm RSVP Required!   	19
20	21	22 Winter Solstice (Northern) ALR Monthly Meeting 6:30pm. Social 5:30pm 	23	24	25 Merry Christmas! 	26
27	28	29	30	31	Notes: Monthly Legion Meeting Cancelled! Monthly SAL Meeting Cancelled!	