



## Frustrated Veterans! You Bet! We've Been Lied To And Stonewalled Enough

By: Darrell Myers, American Legion Member

Can veterans trust anything that comes out of the office of the Secretary of the VA ever again? Doesn't look like it! Heck, three secretaries of the VA, three different VISN 19 directors, three different hospital scenarios and an unknown number of promises - all broken. We don't have to get hit in the head to tell us veterans that they (the VA) never really intended on building a replacement hospital in Denver! We veterans, have been misled and lied to far too often. Now, the emotions of veterans are running hot and heavy against Secretary Peak's cancellation of the new VA Hospital on the grounds of the old Fitzsimons Army Complex.

With shovels in hand, approximately 150 veterans from as far away as Wyoming, gathered on Sunday, July 20, 2008, in front of the Colorado Veterans Memorial across from the capital building, protesting against the Department of Veterans Affairs and their ill-conceived decision of renting space from the University of Colorado, and having a hospital within a hospital, just to save money.

Rallying behind such slogans as "if the VA can't move dirt then get out of the way, because as veterans we sure know how to," coined by Past National Commander of The American Legion, Tom Bock, and Senator Ken Salazar's statement "now, for the first time, they [the VA] are putting dollars first and veterans' health care second," along with the displeasure for the VA that Congressman Perlmutter felt, sent loud cheers erupting from the crowd as they raised their shovels in a show of support in the fight against the VA's decision.

Frustrated veterans! You bet! Veterans who feel strongly that their government is reneging on their promise to build a modern, up-to-date medical facility on the old Fitzsimons Army Hospital campus to replace the current medical facility located at 1055 Clermont, which can no longer meet the needs of the veterans community. We in Colorado are lucky to have Senator Ken Salazar and Congressman Ed Perlmutter and Tom Tancredo on our side, talking the talk and fighting the fight against the bureaucracy and injustice

being imposed upon us by the VA.

The veteran population doesn't want the government to build a Taj Mahal for a hospital! Not a single story monster that is spread over 30 to 40 acres! WE WANT A STAND-ALONE HOSPITAL! YES! One that is reasonable in size and cost. One that is large enough to support the veteran population far into the future. And it must have the 30-bed Spinal Cord In-



Senator Ken Salazar, shovel in hand leads the protect on July 20, 2008.

jury Unit and a long-term nursing care unit as promised.

Acting Deputy Secretary of the VA Gordon H. Mansfield called a meeting for July 9th to discuss the situation. The congressional staffs of Senator Salazar, Congressman Perlmutter and Tancredo, as well as the major veteran service organizations from Colorado attended this meeting. It was during this meeting that Deputy Secretary Mansfield made the disturbing statement that "the VA is not in the business of building hospitals...we are in the business of providing veterans health care." Health care without a hospital to treat health problems that can only be treated with hospitalization. I guess contractual health care is the wave of the future that awaits us.

There are nearly 1/2 million veterans within the borders of Colorado. But, one must also take into consideration the

number of veterans in Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana, North and South Dakota who utilize the VA facilities in Denver, since it is a Regional facility. If you believe that the number of veterans will decrease once World War II veterans are gone, as suggested by VISN 19 Director Grippen during the May 30th Public Forum held at the CU Medical Center, you will find that you have been sadly misled.

Remember Korea, Viet Nam, Desert Storm, and the dozen other battles and peace-keeping missions that will insure that the number of veterans needing health care will never decrease. And the cost of health care is just a fraction of the money being spent to fight the battles against terrorists - battles that send our troops into a meat grinder that spits them out with massive physical and mental injuries.

Will health care diminish under this unusual concept? Yes! We will become just other patients in a giant cog of a profit-generating center. The special health care skills that veterans need, not only those needs that result from combat injuries, but illnesses that are associated only with military service because of the places they find themselves serving and the type of training undertaken to insure that our military is fit to defend this nation. Health problems that are not normal main stream health issues, but found only in our troops. At the VA, we are patients, treated as patients, by a dedicated VA medical staff. Totally a different situation than what is experienced outside of the VA system, where a veteran is just one more patient that gets pushed through and billed.

Now is the time to act, to stand up for your rights as veterans. Send an email, fax, phone or write your Colorado congressional representative and tell them to Stand up and Support Senator Salazar, Congressman Perlmutter and Tancredo as they take our fight to Washington. Our fight against the current abomination that has been sprung upon us.

Check out the articles written in the July issue of the Internet Observer on our website, [www.coloradolegion.org](http://www.coloradolegion.org) and get a deeper understand of the events leading up to the protest on July 20th.

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## A message from the National Commander

## Old Glory Worthy Of Protection

By: Marty Conatser

In the May issue of the Dispatch, you might have read about Charles Bennett, a Maine Legionnaire who took a stand against a college student placing U.S. Flags on the floor to see if people would step on them. Bennett



Marty Conatser  
National Commander

stood up for the American flag because he fought during the Vietnam War for the principles and ideals that he believes the flag stands for. He stood up for the

flag because he believed it was the right thing to do.

And he stood up for the flag because, under current law, citizens are the only ones willing to stand up for Old Glory.

Since 1989, flag desecration, in any form, has been considered a form of expression, protected under the U.S. Constitution. And since that time, The American Legion has joined with other organizations in the Citizens Flag Alliance to return to the people their right to protect the most sacred symbol of America's principles and values.

The only way it can happen is through a constitutional amendment, which requires a two-thirds majority in both the House and Senate. And we've been close. In June 2006, the last time there was a vote on the

measure, 66 senators put their support behind the flag amendment - just one vote shy of passage.

Things have been quiet on the flag front since then, but that doesn't mean we are finished with this fight. I ask that you continue the fight, too.

In January 2007, Rep. John Murtha, D-Pa., introduced H.J. Res 12, the current version of the flag amendment, to the 110th Congress. The language of the measure remains the same: "The Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States." No legislation has been introduced in the Senate.

Meanwhile, the House measure was referred to the Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights, and Civil Liberties in February 2007, and still remains there. And the reality of the situation is, it likely will remain there until the close of the 110th Congress.

But the issue cannot die there, and The American Legion will make sure it does not. But once again, we need your help.

A list of the House cosponsors of the measure is on Page 9. Contact your senators and representatives. It's easy to do through The American Legion Legislative Action Center, capwiz.com/legion/home/. Ask for their support now and then in the 111th Congress.

Don't bring party politics into it. Protecting the flag shouldn't be a political issue. It's a clear-cut right vs. wrong. It's wrong to desecrate a symbol deemed sacred enough to drape

across the caskets of our soldiers and sailors, our Marines and airmen, our Coast Guardsmen - those who made the ultimate sacrifice to defend our country.

It's wrong to desecrate a symbol that has stood for victory at Iwo Jima and for our resolve in New York City and the Pentagon.

It's wrong to desecrate the most-recognized symbol of freedom in the world - one that for hundreds of years has been a welcoming sign for hundreds of thousands of immigrants, seeking a better way of life and finding it in the United States.

Old Glory deserves to be treated the way it was for 200 years - before flag desecration became legal.

## Resolution 03-2008-CO

**Whereas**, the VA & R Committee of The American Legion, Department of Colorado feels that it is important to recognize those Service Officers that go the extra mile to provide veterans with exceptional care, and **Whereas**, it is appropriate that those Service Officers providing exceptional service to veterans be encouraged to continue to provide exceptional services, and **Whereas**, The American Legion should ensure that Service Officers be recognized for their efforts, and **Whereas**, John McCartney has faithfully served the Department of Col-

orado as the Department Service Officers during the period from 1985 to 2007, and

**Whereas**, the VA & R Committee desires that John McCartney be permanently recognized and appreciation be shown for his long years of service to veterans, now therefore be it,

**Resolved**, by The American Legion Department of Colorado in regular convention convened in Colorado Springs, Colorado June 27 thru 29, 2008 that The American Legion, Department of Colorado's James Lingenfelter Outstanding Service Officers Award be renamed the James Lingenfelter, John McCartney Outstanding Service Officers Award.

## Resolution 05-2008-CO

**Whereas**, The American Legion Department of Colorado has gone to great lengths to recognize the duel members of American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion, and **Whereas**, there are both male and female veterans, and

**Whereas**, female members can and are duel members in the American Legion and in the American Legion Auxiliary, now therefore be it

**Resolved**, The American Legion Department of Colorado in regular convention convened in Colorado Springs, Colorado June 27 thru 29, 2008 The American Legion Department of Colorado shall recognize the duel members from the Auxiliary when ever the duel members of the Sons of The American Legion are recognized in meetings.

## The American Legion Observer

The American Legion Observer is an official publication of The American Legion, Department of Colorado, and is owned exclusively by the Colorado Department. Published Monthly at the Department Headquarters, 7465 East 1st Ave, Ste D Denver, CO 80230. (303) 366-5201. Send correspondence to the above address. Visit us at [www.coloradolegion.org](http://www.coloradolegion.org) or e-mail to [theobserver@coloradolegion.org](mailto:theobserver@coloradolegion.org)

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## Still Serving America

Do you have an ongoing program or activity that serves your community? Do you have a friend or relative that goes above and beyond the call of duty to help others?

Drop us a line and tell us what your story is or how you or this person is demonstrating that they are Still Serving America.

In submitting your information, please be sure to include your full name, address and telephone number. There's a good chance the information you send us will make it into The

Observer. Please send to: Still Serving America, The American Legion, 7465 East 1st Ave. Ste D Denver, CO 80230

## Message from the Department Commander

### Soaring To New Heights

By: Gar Williams

**M**y fellow legionnaires, I would like to start the year by saying Thank You for electing me as your commander for the next year and providing me with an outstanding group of officers and staff to work with. As your Department Commander I can only promise that as Department Officers, we will do our best to work towards what is best for the American Legion and the Department of Colorado.



Gar Williams  
Dept Commander

Those who attended our 89th annual convention in Colorado Springs had an opportunity to meet your Department Officers. Frank McCurdy is your Senior Vice Commander, Thresa Arney, Larry Decker, Jim Gates, Jim Gillis, Jon Gooley, and Jim Park were elected as your Junior Vice Commanders. Paul Erickson was elected to serve another term as your Finance Officer, and Eleanor Allen was re-elected as Historian. Robb Smith was elected SGT at Arms.

Thank you to our immediate Past Commander Tim Grabin and his officers for their service during the past year.

My theme for this year is "Soaring To New Heights," because we have many challenges before us that will largely determine the future of the American Legion.

Once again the "Commander's Project", is to increase the funding for the Colorado Children and Youth Foundation. The Colorado Children and Youth Foundation is an American Legion Non-Profit Corporation established in 2003 to provide funding for the Department's Children and Youth programs from the proceeds of the foundations investments. The foundation still needs to raise approximately eighty five thousand dollars before it can begin funding these worthwhile programs from investment returns. Donations are tax deductible and al-

ways welcome. We encourage every post to do some type of fund raising activity for the Colorado Children and Youth Foundation this year. Every donation, no matter how large or small gets us closer to our goal.

The past few months have created many challenges for the American Legion in Colorado including: The new Secretary of the Veterans Administration decided to scrap the existing plans for the Denver VA Medical Center and outlined his plan for a "hospital within a hospital".

Gasoline has reached a record high price of \$4.26 a gallon, diesel fuel is hovering at \$5.00 a gallon and food prices have raised significantly in the past year. Bingo revenues at many posts are declining.

Attendance at conventions has declined and hotel costs have risen. The American Legion is "doing business" the same way it has for over thirty years. Volunteers have less time to volunteer.

As your department officers, we are committed to improving the Department of Colorado. To improve our department will require us to look at different ways to do things, which brings up the "C" word - CHANGE. We are well aware of the fact that everyone dislikes CHANGE because it disrupts, "the way we have always done things".

That being said, we must all remember that many changes in the past thirty years have vastly improved our lives.

Thirty years ago gas was 79 cents a gallon, the DMS Program was cutting edge technology and this year the program was placed on hold by our national headquarters while they evaluate the program. Microwave Ovens, DVD's, Personal computers, PDA's, the Internet, E-Mail, On Line Purchasing, Cell Phones, I-Pods and Fax Machines hadn't been invented yet. Mimeographed newsletters were the most technologically advanced and best way to communicate with large groups of people, and copies were made with carbon paper not copiers.

We have all survived these technol-

ogy advances, some with more foreboding than others.

The time has come for the American Legion to embrace the "new" technology available to us.

The first of several meetings with the District Commanders was held at the Convention, where some of the challenges facing every post and district were identified. Immediately after the conclusion of the Convention, your officers met with Jin Kong, and Jon Morales of our National Headquarters Staff to discuss how we can meet these challenges. Several promising ideas and concepts were identified, and we are developing methods of evaluating and implementing those ideas.

This year, we have a new department level committee, The Technology Committee, whose mission is: "To look at ways that we can do more of the business of the American Legion with less time and expenditures."

We need your input and ideas on what changes you would like to see in the future.

### VA Announces New Sports Clinic for Newly Injured Veterans

Washington

**O**ne hundred recently injured veterans from around the country will participate in a unique rehabilitative sports experience this September in San Diego, the National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic, sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

"This new rehabilitative event is a therapeutic extension of the superior health care veterans receive in our medical centers each day," said Dr. James B. Peake, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "The sports clinic will strengthen veterans battling back from injury, improving their mental and physical well-being."

The event is open to recently in-

jured veterans who have spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain injuries, certain neurological conditions, amputations, other mobility impairments, or post-traumatic stress disorder. For many injured veterans, this event will provide their first exposure to recreational sports and other activities after being injured.

The National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic will take place September 28th through October 3rd at several venues in the San Diego area. Events include sailing, cycling, surfing, kayaking and track and field events. Admission for the public is free.

Sea World and the San Diego Marriott Hotel and Marina will be the site of the opening and closing ceremonies along with some of the week's events. Other events will be held at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, Kellogg Park in La Jolla Shores, the Embarcadero Marina Park and the Mission Bay Yacht Club.

Recreational sports can be an important part of the therapy for many disabilities. VA is a recognized leader in rehabilitation, with therapeutic programs available at VA health care facilities across the nation.

The event will become the fifth national rehabilitation event offered by VA to promote the healing of body, mind and spirit, joining the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, the National Veterans Golden Age Games and the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

The VA San Diego Healthcare System is hosting the 2008 Summer Sports Clinic. Specific event activities offered will change each year.

For more information about the National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic or to volunteer during the week, visit the clinic Web site at [www.summersportsclinic.va.gov](http://www.summersportsclinic.va.gov).



## Message from the Department NEC

### Phoenix to host 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention

Jeff Luginbuel, National Executive Committeeman

The Department of Arizona will host the 90th Annual Convention in Phoenix August 22-28. For those of you who are not familiar with the gathering, here are a few



Jeff Luginbuel  
Department NEC

facts about the annual event.

The annual National Convention is the governing body of The American Legion. Each of The American Legion's 55 depart-

ments (one in each state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, France, Mexico and the Philippines) is entitled to a minimum of five delegates to the National Convention, plus one delegate for each 1,000 members or major fraction thereof, as of 30 days before the convention. The National Commander, members of the National Executive Committee, all living Past National Commanders, and the five National

Vice Commanders are also delegates to the National Convention.

In addition to all the social events that occur at the convention, there is a great deal of serious business conducted at the event. All national commissions convene at the convention to go over the various resolutions that are generated throughout the year from the post, district, department and national levels. For example, the Americanism Commission will be discussing Resolution No. 10: Change In 2009 American Legion Baseball Tournament Dates; the Convention Commission will go over Resolution No. 24: 2011 National Convention Contract; the Foreign Relations Commission will make a recommendation on Resolution No. 13: War Veterans Committee; the Internal Affairs Commission will make a decision on Resolution No. 23: Amend Internal Revenue Code; and the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission will make recommendations on Resolution No. 15: VA to Adopt Computerized Tomography (CT) Scanning During Compensation and Pension (C&P) Exams as a Minimum Level of Diagnostic Testing for Respiratory

Diseases.

This is a national election year and you can almost guarantee candidates from all parties will be present at the convention to speak to the governing body – specifically the Republican and Democratic Presidential nominees. As in years past, The American Legion welcomes those potential national leaders with open arms.

Not all cities have the capability to host a convention of this size. Convention cities are selected on a basis of a variety of criteria, including, but not limited to, the availability and price of hotel rooms, meeting space, city services and the needs of the national organization and the departments. Bids are accepted from cities that wish to host the convention. The Department of Colorado is in the process of formulating a bid to host a National Convention in the future – look for details in the Observer.

This has been just a small overview of the convention process, an event that started back in 1919 at the first annual convention in Minneapolis, MN, (the 93rd Annual Convention is scheduled to be held in Minneapolis August 26 - September 1, 2011).

If you plan on attending this year's convention in Phoenix, look me up. I will be the skinny guy in a red hat sporting a VA cane.

Until next time, God Bless American Jeffey

### Resolution 12-2008-CO

**Whereas**, membership has been called the "life blood of The American Legion, and

**Whereas**, the Department of Colorado has some 25,000 members, and **Whereas**, there are over 400,000 eligible veterans in Colorado making our market penetration less than 6.25%, and

**Whereas**, the Department of Colorado appoints a membership committee annually with an objective of reaching a nationally established membership goal for the year, and

**Whereas**, the Department of

Colorado has an urgent need to develop a multi-year strategic plan for membership growth, now, therefore be it,

**Resolved**, by The American Legion Department of Colorado in regular convention convened in Colorado Springs, Colorado June 27 thru 29, 2008, that the Department Commander be directed to appoint a commission to study the future of the membership of the Department of Colorado, and be it further

**Resolved**, that this commission operate independently of the 2009 Department Membership Committee and focus entirely on developing a long range strategic membership plan with an ultimate goal of reaching an all time high membership, and be it finally

**Resolved**, that this commission report its findings and recommendations to the Department Executive Committee at the Mid-Year Conference.

### Resolution 09-2008-CO

**Whereas**, with the Global War on Terror, and the two current components, Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraq Freedom, there are more non-traditional soldiers used, reserves and national guard, and

**Whereas**, along with Traumatic Brain Injuries, PTSD is a major by-product of these operations, and

**Whereas**, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or PYSD is an insidious disease that can't be cured, only treated, and

**Whereas**, the earlier the treatment, the better chance veterans will have a more productive life, and

**Whereas**, the VA and DOD don't do an effective job of screening reserve and guard troops for PTSD, now therefore be it

**Resolved**, by The American Legion Department of Colorado in regular convention convened in Colorado Springs, Colorado June 27 thru 29, 2008 that the National Organization of the American Legion petition Congress, the VA and the DOD to institute mandatory psychological screening for all returning reserve and guard troops and that this screening take place at 30, 90, 180 and 365 time frames and also prior to the expiration of their 2 year entitlement to health care from the VA.

## Did you know?



John T. "Jack" & Valerie Horan  
USN-Korea  
Past Commander, LCW Post #1

*As an honorably Discharged Veteran, you and your spouse are entitled to many free benefits through the Federal Government at Fort Logan National cemetery.*

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## From the Department Adjutant

The 89th Annual Department Convention is history. By all accounts it was a success. Not only did we elect new officers for the coming year the convention delegates passed 9 resolutions that will be sent on to our national convention in Phoenix this month.



Pat Smith  
Department Adjutant

You can read all 9 of those resolutions elsewhere in this paper. In addition 6 other resolutions were considered and they too are reprinted for your review.

Since this is a major election year we had a number of congressional candidates appear to speak to our delegates. Bob Schafer for Senate, Mike Coffman for Congress in the 6th district, Hank Eng in the 6th District, Bentley Rayburn in the 5th District and Hal Bidlack in District 5 all showed up to discuss what they will do for veterans should they get elected.

Saturday afternoon was the highlight of the convention with the election of new Department officers. The delegates elected Gar Williams as Commander. Gar is from Craig and belongs to the Steamboat Springs Post 44. He is a U S Army vet with time in the Military Police. He is currently a businessman in Steamboat Springs. His theme this year is "Soaring to New Heights" and he will concentrate on improving our membership, raising funds for the Colorado American Legion Youth Foundation and working to be sure that Veterans in the VISN 19 area are adequately taken care of with their medical needs through the VA medical system. Gar previously served as Sr Vice Commander, Jr Vice Commander and Chairman of the state VA&R Committee in addition to serving on various committees as a member.

The delegates chose Frank McCurdy as the new Sr Vice Commander. Frank is an Air Force veteran with time in fighter planes. He belongs to Post 1 in Denver. He is a retired airline captain and currently sells real estate in the Denver area. He brings his political experience as a former Douglas County Commissioner with him as he assumes his new duties. He will head up the membership effort and vows to bring Colorado into the 21st Century with new computer technology and new methods of communicating.

The delegates elected 6 Jr Vice Commanders. Elected were Jim Gillis, Air

Force veteran from Aurora Post 1992; Jim Gates, Air Force Veteran from Longmont Post 32; Jim Park, Army Veteran from Grand Junction Post 200; Thresa Arney, Navy Veteran from Federal Heights Post 777; Jon Golley, Navy Veteran from Wiggins Post 76; Larry Decker, Navy Veteran from Pueblo West Post 207. They will all serve at the pleasure of the Commander and will be assigned specific districts to work with on all of the Legion programs.

Paul Erickson of Arvada Post 161 was re-elected as our Finance Officer. Tony McCrary of Lakewood Post 178 was re-elected as Chaplain. Eleanor Allen of Denver Post 1 was reelected as Historian. Robb Smith of Loveland Post 15 was elected as Sgt-At-Arms. Darrell Myers was appointed as Department Photographer and Tony DuMosch and Ken Romero were appointed as Asst Sgt-At-Arms.

The testimonial banquet on Saturday evening for Commander Tim Grabin, President Dee Chappell-Haley and SAL Commander Mark Kilstrom featured Rear Admiral Janice M. Hamby, Director of the Commander and Control System of the USNORTHCOM in Colorado Springs. Admiral Hamby has an extensive background in the Navy and was an outstanding speaker. Commander Tim, being an "Old Navy" guy quickly found out that she was not a member of The American Legion and he promptly instructed another "Old Navy" guy Bill Marshall to enroll her in Colorado Springs Post 209, which he did. Welcome to the American Legion Admiral Hamby.

On Sunday morning New Commander Gar held a new officers briefing to lay out the plans for the year. Two new members of the National Staff, Jin Kong and Jon Morales, were there to show our new officers some of the advanced technology for communicating in this new century.

The convention was an excellent time to renew old friendships and meet new Legionnaires. Everyone went away from the convention with a new spirit of commitment to this organization.

### Change of Address

You can now go onto the [www.coloradolegion.org](http://www.coloradolegion.org) web site and change your address. On the left side at the bottom click on the link "Address Change Form." This is a PDF form that when you click on submit will send an email to Department. We will then share that change with your post and the national organization.

### Merchandise

Be sure to check out our web page for our line of veteran related wearing apparel. We have quality branch of service cap, jackets, vests and other items of interest to veterans and their families. You can order right on line. Just click on the Merchandise tab at the top right of the web page.

### Coming Soon

To better know our members and to assist you in getting involved with us we will soon be publishing on our web site a "Member Profile" survey that you can fill out and send back to us. We would like to know some of the basic stuff like branch of military, military occupation, years served, years as a member of the Legion in addition to where your area of interests lie with the Legion. Would you like to serve at the post level on a committee such as Americanism, Boys State, Baseball, and Veterans Assistance or is your interest in the social aspects of our Legion posts. Look for the link on our web site soon and communicate with us.

### Fall Conferences

Printed elsewhere in this paper is a tentative schedule of dates for our annual District Fall Conferences. The real work of this organization is at the post level and the District conferences are the place to meet the leaders of our posts to learn and share what works. This is an excellent opportunity to meet your Department leadership as well. Commander Gar will be at every meeting along with Sr Vice Commander Frank McCurdy and the assigned Jr Vice for those districts. The Department Adjutant will also be there. Don't miss this once a year opportunity to learn more about this great organization. Call your District Commander or Department Headquarters at 1-800-477-1655 for more information.

### National Convention

Thirty-one delegates from Colorado will be attending the national convention in Phoenix August 23-29, 2008. They will elect new national officers in addition to considering resolutions important to this organization and our country. We will report those results in our next edition of *The*

*Observer* in October.

### The Observer On Line

We publish a hard copy of The Observer only 4 times a year because of the tremendous cost for postage and printing but we publish a monthly edition on line every month. So if you want to keep up on a monthly basis visit our web site at [www.coloradolegion.org](http://www.coloradolegion.org). If you would like to receive an email copy of the on-line Observer you can sign up for that on "The Observer" tab on the top of the web page, right next to News and Events Tab. Since this online edition is in full color it tends to get to be a large file so be sure you have a high speed connection to the Internet to get the full benefit of the online edition.

### Web Services

The American Legion Department has our own servers and can provide you, your post or your members with a Web page, multiple email addresses or a storefront all for nominal fees. For our posts that want to get started with their own web page we can get you your own domain name and a simple to use template to post your news and information. If you can use Microsoft Word you can use this template to design a custom web page that reflects the personality of your post. If your post is interested please call or email department at [member@coloradolegion.org](mailto:member@coloradolegion.org) with a CC to [michael@coloradolegion.org](mailto:michael@coloradolegion.org) and we will get right back to you.

### Phone Blast

We have access to a system that will permit you to call all of you members with a pre-recorded phone message. You can use this method to remind your members of your next post meeting or about your annual picnic or about a sick or distressed member. You can accomplish all of this for about \$.02 cents per phone call. This is a real bargain and an excellent form of communication to keep your members involved and informed. Our Sr Vice Commander Frank McCurdy is in charge of this program and can get you connected with the setup for this system. Call Frank here at Department and climb on board with this great communications tool.

## 2008 Veterans Salute To Feature Special Recognition Of Medal Recipients

Group registration is happening now for the City of Aurora's 14th annual Veterans Salute, which is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Nov. 12 at the Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum. The Veterans Salute, presented by the city's Aurora Center for Active Adults, in partnership with Studio 1430 KEZW-AM, Buckley Air Force Base 460th Space Wing, the Colorado Air National Guard 140th Wing, Air Reserve Personnel Center and Aerospace Data Facility, honors military service personnel and their families annually through a ceremony featuring verbal remembrances, patriotic music and military pomp.

Veterans who have served with honors, especially those who have earned medals of valor, will receive special recognition this year.

The event is \$15 per person for veterans and military personnel and \$20 for all others. Call 303-739-7950 for individual tickets, and register early to assure seating.

Reservations for groups of eight or more are available by calling 303-739-7954, but group registration and payment must be completed by

October 3rd.

Check-in and museum tours are scheduled from 9 to 10:45 a.m. prior to the start of the event on Nov. 12. The Wings Over the Rockies Air & Space Museum is located at 7711 E. Academy Blvd. at Lowry.

## The Sawaya Law Firm Specializes In Veterans' Benefits

The U.S. Government through the Department of Veterans Affairs has benefits available for eligible veterans in certain circumstances. There are two main types of benefits available for a veteran with a current medical condition. One is service connected compensation and the other is non-service connected pension. A veteran with an injury or disease that occurred or was aggravated during active military duty may be eligible for service connected compensation.



With the exception of the children, all persons in the picture are firm employees & volunteers for the Memorial Day Parade. This is a photograph at the 2008 Memorial Day Parade in Denver. Michael Sawaya drove his Model-A Ford in the parade & volunteers passed out candy in support of Veterans! Left to Right: Hortencia Ramirez, firm employee; Michael Sawaya, Managing Firm Partner; Veterans' and Social Security Disability Attorneys Kristina Vasold and Katie McClure; Jennifer Spradlin, Firm Administrator; and Jennifer's children Mickenzie Spradlin, and Dominic Spradlin.

While a veteran may be eligible for non-service connected pension if each of the following criteria are met: (1) he or she has served at least 90 days of active duty with at least 1 day during a period of war, and (2) his or her family income is below a yearly amount set by law, and (3) he or she is permanently and totally disabled or are age 65 or older.

War-time periods to determine if criteria (1) is met include the Persian Gulf War which is August 2, 1990 through a date to still to be set; the Vietnam Era which is August 5, 1964 through May 7, 1975; the Korean Conflict occurring June 27, 1950 through January 31, 1955; and World War II includes December 7, 1941 through December 31, 1946.

***A Surviving Spouse, Child, Or Parent Of A Veteran May Also Be Eligible For Some Benefits.***

Recently, the law has changed making it easier for attorneys to assist veterans in these benefit cases. In December 2006, a new Act was signed into law that amended the old law that prohibited the charging of a fee of an attorney or agent before the Board of Veterans' Appeals makes its final decision in the Veteran's case.

Effective June 20, 2007, the new Act permits claimants seeking veterans' benefits to hire and pay an attorney or agent after a notice of disagreement has been filed. The Veterans' Administration (VA) will withhold the attorney's fees from the claimant's past-due benefits at the end of the case and pay the attorney. This makes the process easier on the claimant and the attorney.

The Veterans Administrations is encouraging attorneys to represent veterans by assisting attorneys with educational programs and conferences regarding the new laws.

The Sawaya Law Firm specializes in Veterans' benefits and we are dedicated to informing Veterans of their rights. We also represent persons that are eligible for Social Security Disability.

If persons qualify for V.A. and or S.S.D. benefits, they will receive financial assistance and medical treatment for the rest of their lives. If you feel you may qualify for V.A. or S.S.D. benefits, please contact us at (303) 839-1650.

Someone is also available to take your call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### Change of Address

Use this form to report any change of address

Membership ID # \_\_\_\_\_ Post number \_\_\_\_\_  
(9 digit - found on membership card)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

New Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Effective Date \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Return to:

American Legion Department of Colorado  
7465 E 1st Ave Ste D  
Denver, CO 80230



## Boys State For 2008 Completed

By: Tom Bock, Colorado Boys State Director

**Z**ach Gonzales was elected the 2008 American Legion Colorado Boys State Governor.

Zach was sponsored by Pueblo Post 203 and attends Pueblo East High School. Anthony Grado from Pine Creek High School in Colorado Springs was elected Lt. Governor. Colorado Springs Post 209 sponsored Anthony.

The two US Senators elected this year are Joseph Dingman from Pueblo South High School and William Cartwright from Monarch High School. Pueblo Post

2 sponsored Joseph and Louisville Post 111 sponsored William. The US Senators will represent Colorado American Legion Boys State at Boys Nation in Washington DC.

Thanks to the Denver Elks Lodge #17 for providing college scholarships to these young men. Darrell Meyers representing the Lodge #17 presented Governor Zach Gonzales with a \$750 scholarship, Lt. Governor Anthony Grado a \$500 scholarship and both US Senators William Cartwright and Joseph Dingman \$250 scholarships. This Elks Lodge has sponsored boys and provided scholarships for the past two years. We really appreciate their support.

These young men were the leaders of the 142 boys participating in the 2008 Colorado American Legion Boys State program. Boys from all across our state gathered for one week on the campus of CSU-Pueblo. During the week they created 7 city governments; 2 county governments; 2 political parties complete with party platforms and candidates for state offices; and wrote and debated over 60 bills in their House of Representatives and Senate.

During the week the boys heard presentations and interacted directly

with real elected officials as well. The Mayor of Colorado Springs the Honorable Lionel Rivera, Ms. Donna Thompson a registered parliamentarian, Dan Slater Executive Director of

Squadrons and the Detachment and several corporate sponsors either sponsored boys or contributed money to the 2008 Colorado Boys State program. This program could not survive

without their support and we sincerely thank them.

The Boys State committee has already started meeting in July to make plans for the 2009 program. Our next meeting is set for August 9 at Department Headquarters beginning promptly at 10:00 am. Jim Gillis Chairman and Tom Bock Director lead these monthly planning sessions and they are seeking more members to join in the fun.

So call headquarters 303-366-5201 to let them know if you want to be part of the action.

### Together, We Will Make a Difference!

**A**fter speaking with each of you individually, I have appointed each of you as the chair of committees of the Department of Colorado for the coming year. You have all demonstrated your commitment and dedication to the American Legion, and I thank you for your past service to our organization. You are the members of the Department of Colorado Team that can and will make a difference not only in this year, but a difference that will lead us forward for many years to come. I couldn't ask for a better team to work with in the coming year!

This year the American Legion is faced with many challenges as I outlined in the July issue of the Observer which is available on line. I believe that we can overcome the challenges before us, and we will be able to lead the Department of Colorado forward.



Pictured from left to right; Boys State Senators William Cartwright and Joseph Dingman; Lt Governor Anthony Grado and Governor Zach Gonzales as they are sworn in by Former Aurora Colorado Mayor Paul Tauer.

the Colorado Democrat Party and Jeff Chostner Pueblo County Commissioner all participated throughout the week. They also heard presentations by Dick Sargent on Military Academies, Bob Greene on the Boys State College Credit program and Major Cort Hunt from the Denver MEPS on the DoD ASVAB Career Evaluation Test. The week ended with a very special banquet in honor of the graduates featuring former Mayor of Aurora Paul Tauer delivering a rousing motivational speech and installing the newly elected Boys State officials.

Andrew Harrison of Ft. Collins was recognized as the Colorado Boys State winner of the 2008 Samsung Scholarship. His application was forwarded to national to join with 99 other National Finalist from Boys and Girls State programs from across the United States. He will be competing for one of ten scholarships, each worth an expected \$20,000.

The American Legion Boys State Staff consisted of 23 volunteers participating in this year's program. With an increase of nearly 50% in the number of boys over last year the staff's dedication and commitment to our program is truly appreciated. Fifty-two American Legion Posts, SAL

As your commander I am asking each of you to do a number of things to help the American Legion, veterans, posts, districts and the department:

- \* Regularly meet with your committees.

- \* Provide me with a short outline of your plan of action for this year. This way when we make the Fall Conferences, we can tell the Districts what you will be doing this year.

- \* Keep the membership of the Department up to date on what your committee is doing by providing two articles for the Observer.

- \* Prepare timely reports and submit them in time for publication in the Convention Book.

- \* Provide us with the e-mail address of everyone on your committee. Please send this information to Elaine@coloradolegion.org as soon as possible so that it can be published in the directory.

- \* Communicate with your committee frequently.

- \* Keep the Public Relations Chairman, Darrel Myers, <theobserver@coloradolegion.org> advised of upcoming events so that we can get the word out to our members, veterans and the public.

- \* Last and **Most Importantly** please let me know if you have an idea about anything than can improve the American Legion in Colorado.

The only dumb ideas are those that a person keeps to themselves. I have an "Open Door Policy", I welcome your input, suggestions and comments on any subject.

I am asking every post to conduct a fund raising activity this year to reduce the mortgage on our headquarters building. I challenge each committee to conduct some type of fund raiser to either help retire the mortgage or support the Colorado Children and Youth Foundation. My project for this year is the Colorado Children and Youth Foundation, which will receive the proceeds of the "Commander's Pin" sales and other donations.

Together, we will make a difference!

Gar Williams  
Commander

## Photos From The 2008 Department Convention



Luann Williams places the new service cap of a commander on Gar's head.



These leaders are all smiles and giggles once they realized that they are out of office after passing through that door. There out of here!



Look Gwen, a real admiral. She's got the uniform and everything! Now, I remember when I wanted to be an admiral; but the Navy said I'd have all of the authority I could handle as a deck hand. Man, I always dreamt about being an admiral!



Navy JROTC from Mesa Ridge High School under the leadership of LCDR Don Pletcher presents the Colors during the opening session of the convention.

### Sweepstakes Winners Chart 2008 July Sweepstakes

1st Place	Post 23	6th Place	Post 211
1,000.00		100.00	
Alexis G Wollovetz		Michael Luna	
2nd Place	Post 161	7th Place	Post 10
750.00		100.00	
Dan Lanham		Nathan M. Mackie	
3rd Place	Post 211	8th Place	Post 1
500.00		100.00	
Barry Schweining		Frank Rozich	
4th Place	Post 5	9th Place	Post 211
200.00		100.00	
Kenneth D. Watt		John Young	
5th Place	Post 209	10th Place	Post 1
100.00		100.00	
Jimmy Bowden		Roosevelt McCall	



## More Photos From The 2008 Department Convention



Tykwa Goshay, 2008 Colorado Girls State Governor speaks to the convention delegation.



Anthony Grado, 2008 Colorado Boys State Lt. Governor speaks to the convention delegation



American Legion National Commander Marty Conatser presents a Special Award to Jeffrey Sahli for the daily raising of the American Flag at his Evergreen Elementary School.



Christi Davis, 2008 Colorado Oratorical winner speaks with the convention delegation.

## Resolution 01-2008-CO

**Whereas**, it is now more than five years since America's Armed Forces were ordered to invade a sovereign nation half a world away, absent a Constitutionally required "findings" and Declaration of War by the United States Congress, BEFORE our forces were sent into harm's way, and **Whereas**, it is now more than 57 years since an American president sent our Forces into what was called a "police action" on the Korean peninsula, absent a Congressional Declaration, but pursuant to a United Nations Security Council resolution, establishing a pattern whereby Presidents have engaged our military forces in a variety of limited wars, peacekeeping forays, training and other missions, each time disregarding the Founding Principles embodied in our Constitution, and **Whereas**, the American people, including veterans, have questioned the wisdom as well as the authority of our involvement in these global conflicts, and have discovered that Congress surrendered its sole and exclusive Constitutional powers over 60 years ago, to deliberate, and to Act by Declaration BEFORE a President could engage our Armed Forces around the world, and **Whereas**, discovery of the little known United Nations Participation act of December 20, 1945 and specifically, Section 6, which states that a President "shall not be deemed to require the authorization of the Congress" to supply military personnel to enforce U. N. Security Council resolutions, amounts to a continuing abdication of the Constitutional powers of Congress – by its own hand, and **Whereas**, the Constitution-destroying provisions of section 6 of said UN Participation Act, alone, are significant cause for Congress in the 21st Century to Repeal a perhaps well-intentioned but shortsighted attempt by a Congress in the mid-20th Century, coming four months after the end of World War II hostilities, to empower the experiment of a worldwide assembly to build on freedom rather than tyranny, and to maintain peace between Nations, and six decades of evidence suggests that the grand "Experiment" has failed, and **Whereas**, We the People are the principals of all government, at all levels

and at all times in these United States, and particularly America's veterans, comprising over 3 million members of the American Legion, along with millions of other veterans, are the collective voice of the Posterity, and who by Oath, are committed "to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies both foreign and domestic..." now, therefore, be it **Resolved**, By The American Legion Department of Colorado in regular convention convened in Colorado Springs, Colorado on June 27 thru 29, 2008, that by this Notice and Demand, we hereby implore the Congress of the United States to Repeal the U. N. Participation Act (of December 1945) in its entirety, and to restore unto itself its sole and exclusive Constitutional powers to issue Declarations of War, BEFORE America's Armed Forces are engaged in any foreign entanglements, at any time, and be it further, **Resolved that the Congress**, upon re-establishing its exclusive war powers hereunder, shall include self-executing provisions requiring accountability and commitment, by imposing a recorded vote of each of the 535 members of all future Sessions of the Congress, in both houses assembled, to enact such war powers in accordance with the Constitution

## Resolution 02-2008-CO

**Whereas**, America's Huey Foundation has as its mission to establish and strengthen reconnect efforts with the veterans of the War on Terror, aid in bringing advanced technology to those severely injured, help educate youth to price of freedom, and **Whereas**, the Foundation also seeks to provide educational resources for educators to use in the classroom, support and collaborate with your efforts of other non-profit organizations focused on helping very seriously wounded service members injured while serving in the Global War on Terrorism, and support and collaborate with the efforts of other nonprofit organizations focused on helping the children and spouses of service members killed while serving in the Global War on Terrorism, and **Whereas**, The American Legion will

benefit from supporting this worthy effort and all of the objectives of the America's Huey 091 foundation which are closely aligned with those of the American Legion, now therefore, be it

**Resolved**, by The American Legion Department of Colorado in regular convention convened in Colorado Springs, Colorado June 27 thru 29, 2008, that the American Legion, join with other organizations in supporting the mission of the America's Huey 091 Foundation to establish and strengthen reconnect efforts with veterans of the War on Terror, aid in bringing advanced technology to those severely injured, help educate youth about the price of freedom, and be of further

**Resolved**, That, the American Legion publishes the objectives of the Americas Huey 091 foundation in its bulletins and magazines when appropriate and encourages all American Legion districts and posts to publish the objectives in their publications supporting the missions of America's Huey 091 foundation.

## Resolution 06-2008-CO

**Whereas**, The American Legion is an organization of war veterans who have dedicated themselves to helping their fellow veterans, and

**Whereas**, The American Legion has long fought to get medical help long before the Veterans Administration would recognize the illness, and

**Whereas**, there is a risk to veterans and their families to a new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (nvCJD), sometimes called the human form of "mad cow disease," and

**Whereas**, the FDA has seen the risk great enough to issue additional blood donor criteria due to the theoretical risk, and

**Whereas**, this FDA criteria excludes people that were in Europe including the UK from 1980 to 1996 from giving blood, and

**Whereas**, The American Legion can see the long term effects of this disease, now, therefore be it

**Resolved**, by The American Legion Department of Colorado in regular convention convened in Colorado Springs, Colorado June 27 thru 29, 2008, that the National Office of The American Legion petition the Veter-

ans Administration to research and develop a test for possible infection, treatment and compensation for all that are covered by the FDA blood donor alert of May 28, 2002, and be it further

**Resolved**, that the American Legion sponsor and support legislation to require the VA to recognize the risk to veterans and other families to the new variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (nvCJD), and be it finally,

**Resolved**, that the VA starts research into this disease as outlined by the FDA and that the VA treats and compensates veterans that have nvCJD.

## Resolution 07-2008-CO

**Whereas**, resolution No.35 titled "American Legion Riders as a National Program" was passed at the NEC October 17-18, 2007, and **Whereas**, in April 2007 an Ad-Hoc Committee appointed by the National Commander met in Indianapolis to discuss the future of the ALR as a program based on guidelines developed by the Internal Affairs Commission in 2003, and

**Whereas**, these guidelines, which were validated with minor additions by the Ad-Hoc Committee will serve as the standard under which all current and future ALR groups will operate, and

**Whereas**, the guidelines stated that each department will have control over their Legion Riders Program, and **Whereas**, the Legion Riders Program from Colorado received approval to modify the American Legion Riders logo from emblem sales signed off by Robert Spanogle, and

**Whereas**, this modified American Legion Riders logo is in the constitution and by-laws of the Colorado American Legion Riders Program, and

**Whereas**, the American Legion has allowed each Department to place a state emblem on the American Legion uniform cap, now therefore be it,

**Resolved** by The American Legion Department of Colorado in regular convention convened in Colorado Springs, Colorado June 27 thru 29, 2008 that the National organization of The American Legion recognizes the Colorado modified American Legion Riders logo as the official American Legion Riders logo for Legion Riders in Colorado.



## Resolution 08-2008-CO

**Whereas**, the salute has meant to greet or address with an expression of respect, and

**Whereas**, the salute is to recognize (a superior) with a gesture prescribed by military regulations, as by raising the hand to the cap, and

**Whereas**, the salute is to honor formally and ceremoniously, and

**Whereas**, the salute is also to express warm approval of, commend, salute a fellow Legionnaire for their charity work, and

**Whereas**, the salute becomes a gesture of respect, and

**Whereas**, in the 2008 Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies under the section "Wearing The American Legion Cap Uniform and Regalia," paragraph 2, states "The cap should be worn in a place of worship only by the Guard of Honor, Color Guard and Commander of same while in marching order or standing guard. When returned to and seated in pews, the cap should be removed," and

**Whereas**, paragraph 3 states, "*Legion Posts marching in formation into a place of worship should uncover, at the door, hold the cap with the right hand over the heart (\*) until the arrival in the pews and commanded to take seats, remaining uncovered during the entire service. At the close of the service, upon command, the Post shall arise, the members holding the cap with the right hand over the heart (\*) will march out of the place of worship and recover after marching through the door. NOTE: The hat should be held over the heart as one approaches the casket, and is not at any time worn in a place of worship*

*except by the Guard of Honor, Color Guard or Commander of same while in marching order or standing guard."* and

**Whereas**, in the Military Personal Development states that a person salutes inside a building at an indoor ceremony, and

**Whereas**, The American Legion respects places of worship but the need to show respect for a fellow Legionnaire needs to be done in a manner that follows military customs, now, therefore be it

**Resolved**, by The American Legion Department of Colorado in regular convention convened in Colorado Springs, Colorado June 27 thru 29, 2008 that the Officer's Guide and Manual of Ceremonies be changed as follows:

**Paragraph 3** "*Legion Posts marching in formation into a place of worship should uncover, at the door, hold the cap with the right hand over the heart (\*) until the arrival in the pews and commanded to take seats, remaining uncovered during the entire service. At the close of the service, upon command, the Post shall arise, the members holding the cap with the right hand over the heart (\*) will march out of the place of worship and recover after marching through the door.*

*\*NOTE: The hat should be held over the heart as one approaches the casket, and is not at any time worn in a place of worship except by the Guard of Honor, Color Guard or Commander of same while in marching order or standing guard, and except, if the Legionnaire so desires, place the cap in its proper position on the head, give the proper hand salute, then remove the cap back to the position over the heart and depart from the place of worship."*

## Resolution 10-2008-CO

**Whereas**, we, as a state and nation, are becoming a more mobile society, with fewer people staying in one place all their lives, and

**Whereas**, The Veterans Administration through the VBA, the Veterans Benefit Administration has a huge nationwide backlog of claims, and

**Whereas**, because of this backlog, the different VA Regional Offices are sending or brokering out many of these claims to other Regional Offices to adjudicate, and

**Whereas**, because of this brokering, the originating service office of The American Legion doesn't receive timely notice of any brokered decision or letter from VARO regarding claims, and

**Whereas**, because veterans move from state to state, often while their claim is being adjudicated, and **Whereas**, because of this the service office of The American Legion in the state where the veteran moves is at significant disadvantage because they don't have a complete file on said veteran, so therefore be it

**Resolved**, by The American Legion Department of Colorado in regular convention convened in Colorado Springs, Colorado June 27 thru 29, 2008, that the National Organization of the American Legion launch a feasibility study to address the practicality of a nationwide database system for the various service offices throughout the country where the database management system would require service offices to input the veterans information regarding claims into the system and allow information to be utilized by other service offices around the country to better assist these veterans with their claims.

## Resolution 14-2008-CO

**Whereas**, there are still a large number of Vietnam and Korean War veterans alive with claims in the Veterans Benefit Administration, and

**Whereas**, this population, although shrinking, will still be utilizing the VA healthcare and benefit system for many years to come, and

**Whereas**, The Department of Veter-

ans Affairs is seeing their senior claims processors resign or retire, and **Whereas**, because of this attrition in the ranks, the experience level and knowledge base is also shrinking, and **Whereas**, the people who replace these employees are significantly younger in age and have much less experience, and

**Whereas**, history books and course work in public and private education fail to mention, much less teach, anything about these wars, and

**Whereas**, because of this, the people who decide these claims for benefits don't have any idea of what the troops did during these wars, and **Whereas**, claims for benefits submitted by these groups of veterans are not being adjudicated properly and these veterans are not getting the benefits they may be entitled to, now therefore be it

**Resolved**, by The American Legion Department of Colorado in regular convention convened in Colorado Springs, Colorado June 27 thru 29, 2008, that The American Legion petition the Department of Veterans Affairs through the appropriate Congressional channels to design and implement a special team of VA employees to process claims for these groups of veterans, and be it further **Resolved**, that this team shall be specifically trained to recognize and process the subtle nuances of these somewhat complicated claims.

## Eagle Scout Court of Honor

Post 170 is the sponsor of both Scout Troop and Scout Pack #114, and the Scouting Committee Chair is Anna Orgeron, the Post 170 Adjutant. A Court of Honor was held for Cole Cambell and Nathaniel Ley, who are members of Troop 114, Cuerno Verde District, Rocky Mountain Council, on July 12, 2008.

Nathaniel Ley will be attending college in the fall and will work towards a degree in Computer Technology. Cole Campbell will be heading for Navy basic training in about three weeks. Once he completes basic training he will be sending the application given to him to join Westcliffe Post 170. Post 170 pays dues for active duty members as long as they are on active duty status.

## LEGION COLLEGE

Want to Boost your Legion knowledge???

Increase post membership and attract young veterans ???

Enhance post functions???

Education is your answer.

Attend Legion College November 2008.

For details contact Carol Kennedy [carolskennedy@hotmail.com](mailto:carolskennedy@hotmail.com)

## Resolution 15-2008-CO

**Whereas**, there have been numerous changes in the dynamics of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care delivery that have also shifted care from a distinct inpatient setting to various mediums of outpatient care, and

**Whereas**, VA continues to experience an unprecedented growth in the number of veterans enrolling for VA health care services, and

**Whereas**, that fact also serves true within the VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System (ECHCS), also known as the Denver VA Medical Center (VAMC), and

**Whereas**, in accordance with the original Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) plan, as approved by then VA Secretary Anthony Principi, the outdated Denver VAMC was scheduled to be replaced with a new and larger facility; to be constructed on a new campus near the site of the now defunct Fitzsimons Army Hospital, and

**Whereas**, the Denver VA facility was identified by CARES as the third worst in the nation, and still is, and

**Whereas**, the original plan for construction of a replacement facility located in a separate VA tower to be attached to the CU Anschutz Center on the Fitzsimons campus was turned down by the VA as not a feasible plan and that a stand-alone facility was the only solution to a replacement hospital, and

**Whereas**, a second plan called "Project Eagle" was proposed by then VA Secretary Nicholson that included a stand-alone hospital with a nursing home, 30 bed Spinal Cord Injury Unit and joint operations with Buckley Air Force Base, and

**Whereas**, the current VA Secretary Peake has declared the second plan also unworkable and has now proposed a third plan that includes utilizing rented space within a new tower to be built by the University of Colorado Hospital defined as a "hospital within a hospital" and a separately located Ambulatory Care Center and a split Spinal Cord Injury Center with 12 acute beds located in the bed tower and 18 restorative care beds in the Ambulatory Care Center, and

**Whereas**, The American Legion Department of Colorado consisting of more than 25,000 members representing the more than 450,000 veterans in

Colorado has reviewed the proposal and has called it an "abomination" and not acceptable nor sufficient to meet the needs of the veterans in Colorado and the Rocky Mountain Region, and

**Whereas**, this latest VA proposal is a policy change that creates a model that can lead to the elimination of all stand-alone veterans hospitals throughout the VA Health Care System in favor of "hospital within a hospital" facilities, now therefore be it **Resolved**, by The American Legion Department of Colorado in regular convention convened in Colorado Springs, Colorado on June 27 thru 29, 2008, That The American Legion Department of Colorado go on record opposing the latest VA proposal for a "hospital within a hospital" plan for a replacement facility for the Denver VA Hospital, and be it

**Further Resolved**, that The American Legion Department of Colorado urge the Colorado Congressional Delegation to oppose any efforts to fund the proposed "hospital within a hospital" plan and argue and vote against any bill or amendment offered for the same, and be it

**Further Resolved**, that The American Legion Department of Colorado demand the VA reinstate the plan for a stand-alone replacement hospital and immediately begin construction of a Denver VA Hospital that includes a single site SCIU with at least 30 beds and a VA Veterans Nursing Facility, and be it

**Further Resolved**, that all members of The American Legion Department of Colorado are encouraged to write letters, send emails and call all members of the Colorado Congressional Delegation to urge them to support this position for a replacement facility for the Denver VA Hospital, and be it

**Finally Resolved**, that this resolution be delivered to the entire Colorado Congressional Delegation and be shared with Colorado veteran leadership of the VFW, DAV, PVA, United Veterans Committee of Colorado and all of their member organizations.

## Resolution 13-2008-CO

**Whereas**, The State Veterans Center at Homelake was established in 1889 to care for Civil War veterans; and has cared for veterans of all wars and conflicts since then with great distinction and pride; and

**Whereas**, A portion of the land and mission at Homelake included a State Veterans Cemetery; and

**Whereas**, Veterans have been laid to rest with honor in the hallowed portion known as the Homelake Cemetery; and

**Whereas**, The land for the cemetery has met its limit and now has only eight burial spaces remaining; and

**Whereas**, Veterans from the Global War on Terror, and from other conflicts are still requesting burial space in the Homelake Cemetery; and

**Whereas**, The State of Colorado Department of Human Services owns 17 acres of land immediately adjacent to the north of the cemetery; and

**Whereas**, The Department of Human Services has been asked to provide a plan and funding for a Homelake Veterans Cemetery expansion, to include a columbarium; and

**Whereas**, The Department of Human Services timeline will not coincide with the burial requests, resulting in a stoppage of burials in the very near future; and

**Whereas**, Local farmers and ranchers led by former State Senator Lewis Entz, from Hooper, Colorado have submitted an offer to the Department of Human Services to allow them to offer, free of charge, their equipment and expertise to grade enough acreage immediately north of the cemetery to allow for an additional 300 graves and a columbarium; and

**Whereas**, This same group and local some merchants are also providing irrigation materials and installation as part of their offer; and

**Whereas**, The Department of Humans Services has turned down their offer for these free services, now therefore be it

**Resolved**, by The American Legion Department of Colorado in regular convention convened in Colorado Springs, Colorado June 27 thru 29, 2008, that the Colorado Department of Human Services accept the offer of local farmers and allow this work to take place immediately during the summer of 2008; and be it further **Resolved**, That the Department of Human Service submit a plan and request adequate funding for a planned expansion of the Homelake State Veterans Cemetery by the summer of 2008.

### Fall Conference Dates

Dist 9 & 10	Alamosa	September 13 12:00 Noon Lunch	1:00 pm Meeting
Dist 1 & 8	Pueblo Post 2	September 14 12:00 Noon Lunch	1:00 pm Meeting
Dist 11,12,13,14	Grand Junction	September 20	10:00 am - 4:00 pm
Dist 6	Post 193	September 26	7:00 pm
Dist 5		September 27	
Dist 3		September 28	
Dist 4		October 04	10:00 am
Dist 2	Genoa	October 05	1:00 pm



## Department of Colorado Delegation Goes to 90th National Convention of The American Legion in Phoenix, Arizona

By: PDC R. Tim Grabin, Colorado Chairman for National Convention

What a lifetime experience to gain training, experience, fellowship, knowledge, and wisdom. Your District Delegates will bring back a wealth of knowledge from The 90th National Convention. Colorado Team - remember to wear your Colorado Mountain blue shirt from a couple years back that was decided to be our official national convention shirt. This year we are taking several good resolutions - including PTSD to National Convention thanks to you.

Many families plan their vacation centered on attending National Convention. That can be you. I recall the first time I attended the Colorado Department Convention; I became excited, revitalized and really enjoyed myself. From the convention I had the opportunity as a delegate to go to San Antonio, Texas to my very first

American Legion National Convention. Boy was I ever in for an eye opening. The President of the United States of America spoke along with other distinguished guest! To witness and hear greetings from the very best of our military men and women wearing the uniform; to honor the top Boy Scout of America; National Oratorical winner; and the national winner of the American Legion Baseball.

Conversing with other Legionnaires from around the country is one of the best teachers to better understand and to learn about what works within The American Legion Organization. I believe our success comes through our gifts of time, money, efforts and thoughts. I found it interesting that statistics and people tell our stories. Many families are making The American Legion a family affair through their participation. The American Legion activities and participation in the programs of our **Organization** are vital to the success of each **Post, District and Department**. They also provide the opportunity to build a strong bond with Post Members and the Community.

Training is also important to our success. The National Training Programs, as well as other state sponsored training, can help provide our Members with knowledge to perform well within our posts and communities.

Our National Commander Marty Conatser leads by example and firmly believes that "you get out of The American Legion what you put into it." Our message should be one of working to build a stronger, better organization. I ask that we continue **Serving America**.

Membership Program 2008-2009. Through the years our organization has declined in membership. Therefore, our challenge today twofold: \*Ensure our record of service continues. \*Reverse the decline and "Grow Membership" We must approach recruitment, activation of new posts and retention in a manner that provides opportunities for all members to participate and ensures that each feels

welcome, wanted and needed. To grow American Legion it calls for "Mentoring."

"It's a state of mind that begins with our very thoughts." Through education, knowledge and experience we grow in Wisdom. Find someone to mentor.

Thank you for the opportunity of serving as your Department of Colorado Commander for the year 2007-2008 we have had a great year because of you. If you would like a copy of my year-end report contact Adjutant Pat Smith. My achievements are the results from the investments of others in my life. You make the difference.

It is good to be back home in Canon City as Post 13 Adjutant. I am proud to serve as District 7 Chaplain. I have set my personal goals toward the future within our organization of today and tomorrow.

Team - continue Bridging to Success in making a difference within The Department of Colorado.

## Colorado's State Veterans Nursing Homes Support Fallen Soldier Run

More than 40 residents, clients and staff from Colorado's State and Veterans Nursing Homes demonstrated their support last week for the Run for the Fallen, a cross-country run by a small team of individuals honoring soldiers killed in the war in Iraq. Nursing home staff and residents organized commemorative events on July 6 at the State Veterans Center at Homelake outside of Monte Vista and on July 8 in Central Park in Trinidad.

For nursing home residents, such as Michael Lundy of the Bruce McCandless State Veterans Home in Florence, it was an opportunity to show respect for soldiers who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

"I'm a Vietnam vet, so I understand how important it is to do things like this (Run for the Fallen)," Lundy said. "I don't remember anything like that happening when I got back from Vietnam."

The official runners began their trek June 14 in Fort Irwin, Calif. They reached Monte Vista the evening of July 5 and started Day 22 of their run at the State Veterans Center at Homelake and the Homelake Cemetery. They visited the burial place of two soldiers killed in Iraq: Randy Rosacker, who died March 23, 2003, and Glen Martinez, who died May 2, 2008. Martinez was the son of Homelake nurse Carol Martinez and her husband, Ron Martinez.



Run for the Fallen team members thank supporters from the Bruce McCandless State Veterans Home in Florence: Michael Lundy (seated), a resident and Vietnam veteran, and Jim Barrows, activity director.

Staff and residents from the State Veterans Center at Homelake then conducted a flag-raising ceremony in front of the nursing home. When the official runners took off from Homelake, they were accompanied for a short distance down Soldiers Home Road by a small team of State Veterans Center staff.

"Our residents were very excited about the event," said Mindy Montague, the nursing home administrator at Homelake. "The run ties together soldiers from state to state, showing that where veterans are concerned, there are no barriers."

The Trinidad State Nursing Home organized presentations and a walk in Central Park on July 8. Residents and staff from the Trinidad State Nursing Home and the facility's "Star Club" day program welcomed the official runners as they entered the park. Trinidad Mayor Joseph Reorda, Nursing Home Administrator Lee Burkholder and Run for the Fallen organizer Jon Bellona each spoke to the audience. The Trinidad chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars provided a bugler; the Veterans Club of Las Animas County provided military flags; and Co-

caCola of Trinidad and the nursing home provided refreshments.

Following the presentations, residents and staff from the Bruce McCandless State Veterans Home in Florence completed a commemorative walk around the park in honor of veterans and fallen soldiers.

Vickie Gallegos, the director of nursing at the veteran's home in Florence, heard about the run several months ago and suggested that Colorado's State and Veterans Nursing Homes support the cause.

"We have residents who are veterans from World War II and Vietnam, and they all want to support soldiers who have served in Iraq," Gallegos said. "And for our staff, working with veterans is not just a job, it's a mission."

Also, residents at the State Veterans Home at Fitzsimons in Aurora voted to support the run with a \$50 donation to help cover the cost of American flags that the runners are placing along every mile of their cross-country journey. The resident council at the McCandless facility made a similar donation of \$150.

Bellona, a New Yorker, organized the apolitical run to honor his college roommate, Lt. Michael J. Cleary, who was killed in Iraq in 2005. Bellona and his team plan to reach Arlington National Cemetery on Aug. 24.

## SAL NEC Report

## Robbing Peter And Paul

By: Jim Gelwicks

Recently, I received a button from the Colorado Secretary of State's office proclaiming "I'm Voting in Honor of a Veteran" inscribed with my father's name. It is an attractive button with a striking eagle above the all important wording. The buttons are free on line ([www.elections.colorado.gov/DDefault.aspx?tid=546](http://www.elections.colorado.gov/DDefault.aspx?tid=546)) and mine arrived in the mail a couple of weeks after ordering.

My button underscores why I belong to the Sons of The American Legion. I became active to help our country's veterans. Our veterans need our help. Especially the men and



Jim Gelwicks  
Detachment NEC

women who require medical care today and in the future.

Perhaps, you attended, as I did on April 4, 2007, the Fitzsimons parking lot ceremony. Everyone there said that our desperately needed new VA hospital was buying land and would be built and open in 2011. Everyone included the VA Secretary, Senators, Representatives, Governor, Mayor, health care professionals and veterans service organizations. Just a year later, April 24, 2008, to be exact, not going to happen, not needed. Nearly a half million veterans at that moment went from a grateful nation that cares to one that cares less.

The new idea, that I can only describe as "rent a bed," is totally inadequate. In short, the VA needs a hospital. The University of Colorado needs training and research space to meet Colorado's growing health care needs. Those in charge do not want to spend the money for either facility. Therefore, the VA will rent space from CU in a building not yet built, but paid for by VA rent money. Everything will be smaller and therefore "better." The circle is now complete.

CU gets needed research and training space, but obligated to the VA, which they can't use to meet the fu-

ture needs they anticipate for Colorado. The VA gets fewer beds than they have now to replace a facility that is "too small" today. In addition, the VA rejected in 2004 a partially shared facility in partnership with CU because it did not allow the VA the freedom it need to serve veterans and the 13 acres exclusively for the VA was "too small." Landlords are not as flexible as partners. Go figure.

For spinal cord injuries, the new plan would rent 8 to 18 beds and treat them in various locations. This rejects the comprehensive 30 bed spinal cord facility included in earlier plans. And is a far cry from the anticipated 50 beds needed for the future. Somehow they added one need with another need to get one half. Silly me, I thought one plus one equaled two.

Cheap is not a word that should dominate our veteran's health care or educating future doctors. The "rent a bed" plan is not about getting value for our money, but avoiding the true cost of our needs.

You've heard of "robbing Peter to pay Paul," well this allegory is worse. (By the way, allegory is a fancy word for a story so transparent that only those who spend too much time indoors in Washington, D.C., can't see who represents whom.) Our story is Robbing Peter And Paul To Pay Judas. We have Peter who needs and deserves care. There is Paul who must be trained and develop better treatments. So Judas, seeing the problem, robs both Peter and Paul. Judas tells Peter and Paul that if they just pool their remaining money, they will each have twice what they need. Peter and Paul thank Judas, who leaves before Peter and Paul figure out that neither of their needs are met.

Unfortunately, we cannot help Peter and Paul struggle with failure while Judas lives in a Mediterranean resort. We can make a difference in Fitzsimons Medical Center's future.

Regardless of where we live, Fitzsimons is important to every veteran in Colorado and beyond. Any visit to Denver's Fisher House will not only display cars from throughout Colorado, but New Mexico, Nebraska and Kansas. Each representing fami-

lies associated with veterans needing specialized care in Denver.

Every politician running this fall needs to hear our message loud and clear: the VA needs to build its own comprehensive facility in Fitzsimons now; not another decade from today. Between now and November 4, I plan on talking to every candidate, whether I vote for them or not, running for County Commissioner on up through state legislature to Congress about the need for a stand alone VA Hospital at Fitzsimons including a Nursing facil-

ity and Spinal Cord Injury Unit. If you do the same, they will hear us. Providing less than the best health care to our veterans is not an option regardless of political jurisdiction or belief.



## Adopt-a-Unit Pig Roast



### Additional Info:

- Our adopted unit is the Army Unit FSC 5<sup>th</sup> ENG BN
- They are currently deployed in Iraq
- Your contributions will help to provide this unit with the following items and more:
  - Pre-paid phone cards
  - Personal Care Products
  - Magazines
  - Snacks
  - Games
  - And much, much more
- For a complete list of care package items please visit the following website:

[http://www.usa-usa.org/site/DocServer/CARE\\_PACKAGE\\_IDEAS\\_2008.pdf?docID=1181](http://www.usa-usa.org/site/DocServer/CARE_PACKAGE_IDEAS_2008.pdf?docID=1181)

- Tickets are available now, please contact Post Commander Darren Sagee, or SAL Commander Kevin Keil for tickets.

Taylor Miller Post 21  
500 9<sup>th</sup> St.  
Golden, CO 80401  
303-279-6200



## SAL's Detachment Convention



Detachment Commander Mark Kilstrom left, presents Squadron 70's charter to Post 70 Commander, center along with Alt. NEC Ralph Bozella.



After many years as SAL Detachment Adjutant Rick Baldessari, left, decided to move to greener pastures and was presented a plaque, proclaiming him as Detachment Adjutant Emeritus, by Detachment Commander Mark Kilstrom, right.



Department President Dee Chappell-Haley is presented a check from the SAL Detachment by Commander Mark Kilstrom center, with SAL Adjutant Rick Baldessari in the background.



Department Commander Tim Grabin presents SAL Detachment Commander Mark Kilstrom a plaque commemorating their year leading their great organizations.

## FISHER HOUSE

The Green Team Lawn Care Crew needs your support in raising funds for a new riding mower with a grass/leaf catcher.



This Wards mower was donated by a Post 17 member

Now it's ready for retirement



Time for new equipment like this



Please make donations to **VA&R Mower Fund** & mail to:  
**Jim Gelwicks P O Box 539 Gunnison, CO 80501**  
Detachment of Colorado supported project

### Upcoming Dates 2008—2009 Sons of The American Legion, Detachment of Colorado

November 22, 2004

DEC and Awards Dinner—Denver (Squadron 1)  
DEC at 3 pm, Social hour at 5 pm, Dinner at 6 pm,  
Program and Entertainment

January 23-25, 2008

Mid-year conference—Denver

April 4, 2009

DEC and Child Welfare Dinner—Aurora (Squadron 23)  
DEC at 1 pm., Social hour at 5 pm, Dinner at 6 pm,  
Auction and Entertainment.

June 26-27, 2009

Sons state convention—Site to be announced

## Colorado State Veterans Nursing Home Rifle, Colorado

**Earns National Excellence in Action Award**  
Honored for its commitment to quality care,

CSVNH in Rifle is one of 299 nursing homes  
Nationwide to receive this award.

Presented by My InnerView, leading provider of knowledge-management applications for the senior care profession!



Photo by Linda Vaughn

Colorado State Veterans Nursing Home  
851 E. 5th St.  
Rifle, Colorado 81650  
800-828-4580

"The emotional support and nursing care my father has received has been absolutely outstanding...."

"I specifically want to praise the professionalism, dedication and actions above and beyond the call of a noble cause – taking care of those who served our country in a time of war..."

---David Swanson, son of resident Clarence Swanson

## POW/MIA Flag And The Westcliffe Stampede Rodeo



The local saddle club asked Post 170 if they could use our POW/MIA flag for the opening ceremonies of the Westcliffe Stampede Rodeo held the weekend of 19-20 July.


Traditionally, the ceremony has only been done with the American flag, but through our Americanism Programs, the community has had a better awareness of the significance of the POW/MIA flag.

Several businesses, including the Custer County Courthouse, have asked the post to get the POW/MIA flag for them so that they may fly it on POW/MIA Remembrance Day.

Names of the riders are not known at this time.



Kyra Fininson, center, sang "Put Your Hand Over Your Heart" during the opening session of the convention and is shown with National Commander Marty Conatser, left and then Dept. President Dee.




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