THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL NEWSLETTER

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D. C. DATELINE

On Capitol Hill problems of defense and recession have top priority ... A boom for ballistics and boost for the budget is indicated ... Uncle Sam will do some anti-recession pump priming, hoping for business upswing by late spring -- or as one lawmaker put it: "The hair curlers may be out of business."

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Congressional concern with the race for space is equalled by veterans' interest in the Presidential budget message ... According to advance predictions Ike was set to wield a meat axe on veterans' benefits, but came up with a paring knife.

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If the budget request is approved, major casualty will be 1,758 hospital beds ... These are in VA and contract hospitals, state soldiers' homes and VA domiciliaries; 1,353 are beds used by TB patients. This could result in the closing of some VA tuberculosis hospitals.

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Of Ike's total 1959 budget (fiscal year July 1, 1958, to June 30, 1959) which calls for spending of $73.9 billion, veterans' benefits and services item is just over $5 billion ... This amounts to about $6.75 of every $100 spent by the Federal government ... Which brings out a startling fact ... Percentagewise, veterans' benefits costs are no higher than during the Spanish American War.

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The President (again) told Congress in his budget message he would have a special message soon on veterans' affairs -- contents of which are reported to be based upon segments of the Bradley Commission recommendations ... While some viewed the budget message affecting veterans as innocuous, others termed it "disarming" and took a dim view of things to come.

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One to take the latter view was Congressman Alvin E. O'Konski (R-Wisc.), who told the Nat'l. Legislative Commission: "Unless The American Legion maintains a constant guard, there are those in government who would slough off the entire veterans' benefit program and put it under social security."

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The paring knife strategy -- rumor had it -- was that veterans now on the rolls would be protected, but proposed changes in the law would deny similar benefits to future applicants ... Tone of budget message indicates further reductions in federal benefits and services ... And it is apparent our Economic Commission program is affected vitally in what amounts to an abrupt closing of the housing and home loan guaranty program.

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Speaking at the Nat'l. Legislative Dinner to U. S. Congress in Washington, D. C., Jan. 15, Nat'l. Comdr. John S. Gleason, Jr., said:

"Some individuals, including responsible government officials, would diminish the scope of the present veterans' program, restrict its future availability, and undermine its basic foundation ... all in the name of economy, security and social progress ... The American Legion is determined that this attack will not succeed. We're confident that it won't ... as long as the U. S. Congress has anything to say about it."

G. I.'s on the Job

Rehabilitation Director John J. Corcoran recently appeared before a Special Subcommittee of the House Veterans Affairs and urged enactment of H. R. 9700 which would codify all laws more than ten years old relating to veterans ... Legion backs the bill with minor reservations, which Corcoran made clear.

Also participating for the Legion's staff was Bert Davis, Legislative representative ... Both Corcoran and Davis are attorneys and earned their education under the Legion sponsored G. I. Bill of Rights.

Security

Heated Congressional debate is expected on the adequacy of the defense budget ... Recent and repeated American Legion convention mandates on national security underscore need to maintain adequate preparedness ... It is summed up in Legion statement to the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee: "At all times, national security takes precedence over national economy."

In light of recent events the 1958 defense budget of $38.9 billion and $38.8 billion for 1959 seem conservative ... About a billion more than the modern "normal" defense budget ... Be proud of the Legion's security record, including our convention pleas for upgrading ballistic missile defense and a realistic defense budget, prior to Sputnik and Muttnik. (See Convention Summary, Page 87.)

April 9-11 dates are set for Nat'l. Security Commission meeting in Washington, D. C., according to Nat'l. Security Chrmn. Robert H. Bush, Des Moines, Iowa.

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Blood is a very precious gift ... You'll find that out when you or your loved ones have a need for a blood transfusion ... Posts interested in organizing blood donor programs may write to Dept. or Nat'l. Headquarters for The American Legion Blood Donor booklet ... Plans are outlined and awards for blood donors are illustrated in this newly revised booklet.

Birthday

Plan now for the 39th Anniversary of The American Legion, March 15-17 ... Nat'l. Membership Chairman L. K. Gridley, Peoria, Ill., urges posts to work with their Auxiliary units in arranging community-wide observance of the event ... Legion Birthday is a good time to honor 40-year members ... Brand new birthday co-op advertisement in matrix form is free upon request to Nat'l. Public Relations.

We wouldn't have a birthday to celebrate, if it were not for membership workers ... More than 25,000 have enrolled 12 or more members (prior to Dec. 31) to qualify for the "GLEASON GUNNER" award, toy cannon for Legion cap ... Eight departments have not checked in yet.

Good Example

Where there's a will, there's a way: When you're tempted to make excuses for not bringing in memberships, consider the case of Edward Hommert. Ed, a member of Tri-City Post 113, Granite City, is blind. But he went out (alone and unaided) and signed up 57 new and renewal members ... The Dept. of Illinois is presenting a Citation of Recognition to him. May his example spur the rest of us on to greater effort.

... *Thanks to Jim Gwaltney, Ill. Dept. Adjt.*

Roadblock

Widows and orphans of reservists may have to wait awhile for money due them ... Recent (Legion-earned) decision by Department of Labor granting to them federal employees compensation has been held up ... Bureau of Employees Compensation is asking for a review ... Legion requested denial of this step which would block payments averaging $3,000. Benefits would be effective at reservist's death in addition to six months' gratuity.

Extension

Federal career-minded war disabled veterans have another year to stake a claim on permanent appointments ... Presidential action has extended the conversion period (under Executive Order 10577) to December 31, 1958.

New Low

G. I. home loans hit a new 12-year low in November ... If Congress does not let veterans pay realistic interest rate, as Legion urges, this program is a "dead duck" for the K-War vets who need it most.

Help Wanted

Clarence W. Bird, Legion economic director, points out that unemployment is merely a statistic until it hits home ... What's your post doing about helping vets to get jobs?

Eyes and Ears

The American Legion Nat'l. Field Service fights fears with facts ... To offset statements of our opponents they have to have the right answers ... Example: From January 1952 to July 1957 they interviewed 8,572 non-service connected general medical and surgical patients in 48 V.A. Hospitals ...Through objective interviews they dug up facts sustaining value of hospitalization program for non-service connected veterans.

Back to God

"America must be spiritually strong -- if America is to survive" ... This was the theme of a state Legion chaplains' conference in Indianapolis, Jan. 16-17 ... Rev. Feltham S. James, Charleston, S. C., National Chaplain, headed up the planning sessions of an expanded "Back to God" Program for 1958... In addition to doing the spade work for recent ABC Network (Feb. 1) telecast, the chaplains:

Recommended annual workshops for post chaplains at district and department conferences of commanders and adjutants; pointed up role of parents as primary educators of children; stressed importance of family unit to the spiritual strength of our country; suggested every family should have daily period of prayer, ask God's blessing at every meal, attend church or synagogue of choice regularly.

Youth Should Be Served

Sponsoring an American Legion Junior Baseball team is a real community service project ... Your post should field a team and get local merchants to act as co-sponsors ... It's a shot in the arm for the hometown, the players and the merchants' business ... Lou Brissie, A. L. junior baseball commissioner, reports the new team eligibility forms were well received at recent area conferences -- will simplify team registration.

Bell Ringer

"I want a speech book" ... This was the cryptic note addressed to Nat'l. Headquarters, attached to a $2.00 check ... It took staffers some time to figure out that what the Legionnaire wanted was a 1957 Orations Book, chockful of the winning orations given by the youthful state winners of The A. L. Nat'l. High School Oratorical Contest ... The comrade was right, though ... it makes a dandy "speech book," if you are looking for ideas about the Constitution of the United States ... The booklet contains text of winning orations, plus pictures and background info on the winners ... Your post should purchase one or more copies to present to schools and public libraries ... They'll agree it's a "speech book" that rings a bell.

April is Child Welfare Month

The late W. C. Fields was one person who admitted he hated kids ... This was a publicity gag, of course; such public pop-offs are rare, indeed, on this subject ... That's why you can expect little or no trouble from your local city editor when you ask him to point up April, 1958, as The American Legion's 20th annual observance of Child Welare Month.

Other things to do ... Hold public meetings; invite speaker to discuss youth needs in your community ... Cooperate with other groups engaged in youth activities ... Get the Legion's child welfare story to papers, TV and radio ... Visit children's institutions nearby and offer assistance.

In Memoriam

Want to honor a departed member? ... A contribution to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation Memorial Fund is an excellent way for posts and units to pay their respects ... Gifts will be acknowledged directly to the next of kin through an appropriate memorial card ... Include name and address of donor, name of deceased and name and address of next of kin with your contribution ... Make check out to The American Legion Child Welfare Foundation, P. O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Career Night A Community Service

It takes "know-how" to show how ... Successful men usually have it ... Most of them are willing to share their wealth of experience if properly approached ... The Nat'l. Child Welfare Division suggests you give men of this calibre top billing in setting up a "Career Night" for students anxious to avoid pitfalls of not being prepared for their life work ... Your junior and senior high schools will be glad to cooperate ... It gives the "wheels" of your community a chance to spin their success stories -- makes new friends for The American Legion -- and helps some boy or girl get a good start.

Did You Know?

Four out of ten youngsters entering high school never graduate ... Half of the drop-outs fail to get jobs and are potential delinquents ... Some youngsters just can't carry full academic load ... Reason enough for the current Dept. Child Welfare survey of state child labor and youth employment laws which are antiquated in some states ... New legislation may help ... Part- time job training experience -- under school supervision -- might be a partial solution of this serious problem.

Dates to Remember

Feb. 7-13	Boy Scout Week
12	Lincoln's Birthday (Flag Display)
	Nat'l. Comdr. Address from Lincoln's Tomb, Springfield, Ill. ABC Network, 9:05-9:30 P.M., CST.
22	Washington's Birthday (Flag Day)
25-28	Nat'l. Rehab Conference Hotel Statler, Washington, D.C.
March	Department Oratorical Finals 21st Annual Nat'l. High School Oratorical Contest
15-17	American Legion Birthday
April 9-11	Nat'l. Security Commission meeting, Washington, D.C.

Warning Worth Heeding

A short time ago the French Communist publication PAIX ET LIBERTE wrote as follows: "The Gospel is a much more powerful weapon for the renovation of society than our Marxist view of the world. Yet it is we who shall conquer you in the end ... How can anyone believe in the all-surpassing value of this gospel, if you do not practice it? If you do not spread it? If you sacrifice neither time nor your money for that purpose?"

Lucky Latins

U. S. private enterprise is paying off in Latin America ... The Commerce Department Report on "U. S. Investments In The Latin American Economy" confirms American Legion thinking ... "To halt give-away policy of foreign aid we must encourage a policy of helping others to help themselves" ... It is practical and has the virtue of real economy ... A survey of U. S. firms operating in Latin America demonstrates:

> Book value of U. S. Investments boosted from $3 billion to $7 billion in last 11 years; current production of U. S. firms over $5 billion annually; including exports equal to 30% of all Latin American exports; yearly salaries and taxes amounted to $4 billion; some 625,000 employed, of whom only 9,000 are from the U. S.

By helping to raise the standards of others, our own standards are raised ... Latin America is a good example for U. S. policy throughout rest of the world -- where we are spending some 4 billion dollars annually in economic and military aid.

People-to-People

War veterans of the free world have a common bond ... "People to People" Veterans Committee, headed by Past Nat'l. Comdr. Lewis K. Gough and Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker, will study need for exchange of information between veterans' groups in NATO countries ... Objective: Better understanding -- strengthen mutual NATO ties ...

Seventy-four members of Advertising Men's Post 209 of The American Legion in New York City are planning to make a goodwill visit to the Brussells World Fair under auspices of the People-to-People Foundation.

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