

Foundation of American Legion Laid Seventeen Years Ago

AMERICANISM BASIC TENET OF MEMBERS

Perpetuation of Friendships, Aid to Disabled, Blocking of Bolshevism Among Foremost Aims.

When, in the closing months of the World war, it became apparent that a successful conclusion of the conflict was drawing near, the thought became general in the American ranks that the men who had served should join together in an organization which would perpetuate the incidents and friendships of that service, provide for the future welfare of the disabled and keep alive in the years of peace the same spirit of devotion to America and American principles that bore our arms to victory in time of war.

In the driving campaign of those last few months of 1918, there was no time for the men in the ranks to formulate those ideals into a program of action, so it remained for a group of twenty men, typical field officers of the American Expeditionary Force, to transmit the desire and hopes of the A. E. F. to general headquarters.

Lieut. Col. Theodore Roosevelt was one of that group. He urged that the time had arrived to begin crystallization of the dream of the men in the field, the foundation of an enduring organization of the veterans of the World war. The group of twenty immediately took steps to bring together into a larger conference representative spokesmen, both officers and men from the ranks, of the American forces in France. That was in February, 1919, three months after the armistice.

Started in Paris Heroic methods were pursued to

get the message around to all of the troops, with the result that in March, 1919, no less than 1,000 officers and enlisted men assembled in the Cirque de Paris, in the French capital, to lay the first foundation for the embryonic veterans' organization. That memorable meeting has gone down in history as "The Paris Caucus." Colonel Roosevelt, who served as chairman of the temporary committee, already had returned to the United States to promote interest in the organization among the troops at home, and Eric Fisher Wood called the meeting to order in his place.

Bennett C. Clark (now United States senator from Missouri) was elected temporary chairman. The name adopted for the new organization was "The American Legion." Tentative aims and purposes were outlined and a temporary constitution was adopted, but commitment to permanent policies was postponed until, when the American forces returned home, a great caucus could be held in the United States, at which would be represented every branch of the service and every state in the Union.

An executive committee of 100 was elected to complete organization in the A. E. F. and arrange for the grand caucus in the United States, with Milton J. Foreman as chairman and George A. White, secretary. Every member of the A. E. F. automatically was made a member of the organization pending completion of plans and a subcommittee of seventeen, headed by Chairman Clark, was sent to the United States to effect organization among the forces at home.

The national caucus was held in St. Louis, May 8, 9 and 10, 1919. Colonel Roosevelt calling it to order. Roosevelt declined a unanimous election as chairman and Henry D. Lindsay of Texas then was chosen.

Temporary national headquarters were opened in New York City and in September, 1919, a national charter was granted by congress.

The charter convention was held in Minneapolis, November 10, 11 and 12. It approved the acts of the temporary organization and

adopted a permanent constitution. With this fund and the contributions of individual posts, the Legion now spends more than \$1,000,000 a year in direct aid to the orphans of veterans who are in need. Indeed, in the presence of existing unemployment, the Legion's help is extended to the children of living veterans, also, who are without employment or other income. In 1935, the Legion spent \$1,027,734.44 in direct financial aid to 256,549 children.

Keeping faith with the pledge in the preamble of its constitution, the Legion has a vast community service, education and law and order program. Legion posts have built community houses, swimming pools, playgrounds and parks throughout the country; they have furnished ambulances and special mechanical equipment for the treatment of such diseases as infantile paralysis, all donated to their communities. This year each of the more than 11,200 posts is definitely committed to complete at least one community service project.

The Legion is now embarked upon a campaign of crime suppression and law observance, working in close cooperation with federal, state and municipal law enforcement officials. It also has undertaken an aggressive national campaign to reduce the toll of accidents in traffic and promote education in public safety.

Americanism Dominant From its foundation, the Legion has stood unqualifiedly for a true spirit of Americanism. It holds the welfare of the United States to be its primary duty. To that end it is engaged in a bitter war against communism and all other alien "isms" which seek the overthrow of the American form of government. The Legion was responsible for having many states which previously had no laws governing subversive political organizations, to adopt laws denying the right of any group standing for the overthrow of the government by force to have a candidate for public office appear on an official ballot.

In this same field, the Legion is working vigorously to direct youth activities into proper American channels. It has organized Junior Baseball leagues throughout the

country. Each year more than 500,000 boys compete on the diamond for baseball honors, the season concluding with a national championship tournament.

The American Legion always has stood for an adequate national defense. It seeks no military program which might be used for aggression or would establish militarism in the United States. For the army it has asked an establishment only large enough to repel invasion, for the navy a fleet of full strength allowed by treaty, and an air force sufficient to protect the country against invasion or bombing attacks from the air. The Legion's program substantially has been adopted. It is the Legion's position that such a national defense program will promote peace on the ground that a reasonably armed America will not invite attack, with no danger of this country waging a war of aggression.

It also is expected that in this session the Legion will see fulfilled its dream of a Universal Service law which, in time of war, will give the government the service of industry, capital and manpower on an equal basis, without special privilege or profit for anyone. This was one of the first laws the Legion sought and for twelve years since it has been fighting consistently for its adoption. This, too, is hailed as a movement toward peace because, by making war a profitless business, one strong motive for war is destroyed.

Membership in the Legion is limited to American soldiers, sailors, Marines and nurses who saw active service during the actual fighting days of the World war, which is between April 6, 1917 and November 11, 1918.

HELDMAN, KRAMER WIN TENNIS TITLES JULIUS, Ind., Aug. 10.—(AP)—Julius Heldman of Hollywood, Calif., defeated Joseph Hunt of Los Angeles in one of the biggest tennis upsets of the year to win the national junior singles title last Saturday 1-6, 6-2, 3-6, 6-1, 6-1. John Kramer of Monticello, Calif., won the national boys' tennis singles championship upsetting William Dmstedter of Milburn, N. J., in the final round, 6-2, 7-5.

Expected Here For Convention



American Legion and American Legion Auxiliary members are coming from far and near to attend the 18th annual convention of the Oregon department American Legion, which opens in Roseburg Thursday. Above (top row) H. L. Challaux, national Americanism director; Jerrold Owen, editor of the Oregon Legionnaire, who has been seriously ill but who writes that he expects to be here, Bottom row, left to right, Oscar W. Worthweine, national vice-commander, who lives in Boise, Idaho; Gladys Turnbull, president of the state auxiliary.

DISARMAMENT PLEA OF U. S. IGNORED

PORTLAND, Aug. 10.—(AP)—America has been the world's "goat for 12 years," Rear Admiral Clark H. Woodward, commander of destroyers aboard the naval contingent harbored here last week, said in remarking that world powers are paying no attention to America's disarmament pleas.

The admiral said a force composed of alien enemies living within the country, foreign agents, professional pacifists and communists are conducting a treacherous campaign to mould American public sentiment against adequate defenses. "But I think a lot of people in all sections of the country are now more interested in the navy than ever before," he said. "This has been brought about by speakers on national defense and press parades telling the truth about our lack of proper defense. Fortunately for America, and for the world, I might say, our armed forces, especially the navy, are being systematically built up to their proper strength."

DRUM CORPS TO BE HEARD OVER KRNR

The Umpqua post, American Legion, drum corps will be heard at 7 o'clock Wednesday evening in a radio program from Station KRNR. The drum corps, which is preparing for participation in the forthcoming state convention of the American Legion, will appear at the radio station in behalf of the ticket sale in advance of the drum corps competition, a feature event of the convention.

The local organization, while it will take an active part in parades and other convention features, will not participate in the contest for the various prizes, following the usual custom in which the corps of the host post is not a contender for honors.

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Three Whole Hours of Special Entertainment

- DON'T MISS "ELMER" "YELMER" and "HOMER"
- THREE STORY ANIMALS
- SPECIAL DANCING and NOVELTY ACTS
- JUNIOR DRUM CORPS DRILLS
- GIGANTIC CLOWNS
- MUSICAL NOVELTIES

WEDNESDAY EVENING, FINLAY FIELD

8:00 P. M.

Dances! Carnival! Dugouts! Every Night

Junior Legion Baseball Championship Games, Finlay Field 3 p. m., Thursday and Friday. WASHINGTON vs. OREGON

BIG LEGION GRAND PARADE DOWN TOWN THURSDAY 8:15 P. M.

MIDNIGHT MATINEE FEATURING "MAJOR BLOWS" INDIAN THEATRE THUR. 11 p.m.

Sponsored and Supervised by the American Legion Convention Commission

