

# LORE OF THE LEGION



"AM INVITING ENLISTED MEN."

- LT. COL. ERIC FISHER WOOD, IN A TELEGRAM TO  
LT. COL. THEODORE ROOSEVELT JR.

ON THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE "MORALE CONFERENCE" THEY  
PLANNED FOR MARCH 15-17, 1919, WOULD BE BIGGER THAN  
EXPECTED

NO ONE IS SURE HOW MANY MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE ARE IN PARIS FOR THE CAUCUS  
THAT ESTABLISHES THE AMERICAN LEGION.

EXPECTING ABOUT 300, MORE THAN 1,100 ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE VENTURED IN FROM THEIR DISMAL, COLD  
AND MUDDY DIVISION CAMPS ACROSS EUROPE.

THE FOUNDERS, IN PLANNING THE CAUCUS, ARE ALL OFFICERS...

BUT THEY ARE CONVINCED THAT A NEW ASSOCIATION  
WON'T WORK IF IT IS PERCEIVED AS AN OFFICERS' CLUB.

EARLIER ATTEMPTS TO ORGANIZE ASSOCIATIONS OF GREAT WAR  
VETERANS "HAD FAILED, EITHER BECAUSE THE INITIATORS HAD  
SOME PERSONAL AIM IN VIEW...

"OR BECAUSE THEY WERE INSUFFICIENTLY REPRESENTATIVE  
OF ALL CLASSES AND UNITS OF THE ARMY..."

"LIMITED TO ONE UNIT OR SECTION OF THE COUNTRY, OR TO  
ONE TRANSVERSAL STRATA OF THE A.E.F., AS FOR INSTANCE  
ONE MOVEMENT COMPOSED SOLELY OF OFFICERS."

LT. COL. LEMUEL BOLLES, SOON TO BECOME THE FIRST  
AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL ADJUTANT...

IS CREDITED FOR MAKING THE MOTION AT THE PARIS  
CAUCUS TO "DECLARE ALL DISTINCTIONS OF MILITARY  
RANK OUT OF ORDER."



HISTORIAN RICHARD SEELYE JONES WOULD LATER WRITE...

"NO GENERALS AND COLONELS, SERGEANTS AND PRIVATES. THERE  
WOULD BE NO TITLES, NO SALUTING, NO RANK. *JUST DELEGATES.*"

THIS BEGINS AN ENDURING VALUE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION.

RANK, SINCE THEN, IS DEEMED UNIMPORTANT TO THE PURPOSES  
OF WHAT BECOMES THE LARGEST ORGANIZATION OF VETERANS  
IN AMERICA...

**THIS MONTH CELEBRATING  
ITS 107TH BIRTHDAY!**

