

It Was a Gigantic Salary Increase

By A. Edward Pierce, A/56

The date was June 1, 1942 when the base pay for army privates was increased from \$21. a month to \$50. This was one of the largest percentage salary increases in modern times. It was an increase of 138%, and it most certainly had a positive effect on a very large number of individuals who had been relocated from civilian life to that of the military. It was a morale boost of the first order. Our men and women serving today would welcome a much more modest increase, I am sure. I am even more certain that they merit a raise in pay because of what they are doing to keep us safe and secure.

Since the 12th Armored Division was not activated until September 15, 1942, it is not a stretch to say that all of those with the rank of private were the recipients of this windfall. While the June 1 salary increase was granted, I believe, to all enlisted men, I can't say with any degree of certainty that the increases at all levels of rank amounted to 138%. In all probability, they didn't.

Money has been called filthy lucre. It has also been dubbed the root of all evil. Nevertheless, it has purchasing power, so I know that all members of the military who received the increases were appreciative and thankful.

As an aside and on a totally different subject, in many cases having to resort to the use of a walker or a four-pronged cane to do so, the men and women who served in World War II, Korea, Viet Nam, and other more recent military engagements are more than pleased to stand for the National Anthem. They resort to taking a knee only when scrubbing their floors or when saying their nightly prayers. May it ever be thus.

God bless those that defend us and God bless America now and forever more.