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Leo Spears & the History of Chiropractors in the Military (& Veterans' Affairs)

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Color Code:

Red & Magenta: questionable or uncertain information

Green: for emphasis

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CHRONOLOGY

1924 (July 19): **FHN** [13(24)] prints:

-Billy Brownell DC of the District of Columbia Branch of the **UCA** writes to **BJ** to note work of **Leo L. Spears** and Jim **Greggerson** to lobby Congress for chiropractic care of hospitalized veterans (p. 5)

1924 (Oct 25): **FHN** [14(6)] notes:

-letter from **Leo L Spears** DC of Dever to **BJ** on 10/6/24 re: his campaign to have chiropractic care provided to veterans; notes he has personally written more than 1400 letters to last 3 presidents and many congressmen and senators; notes "P.S. - I won my case in the civil courts. The judge demanded the medical board to return my license to me." (p. 4)

1925 (Mar): **Bulletin of the ACA** [2(2)] notes:

-"Special Dispatch to *The Graphic*, Washington, March 30 (p. 16):

US DENIES DISABLED VETS FREE CARE BY CHIROPRACTORS:

In answer to scores of appeals by disabled veterans to the United States Veterans' Bureau for treatment by chiropractors or osteopaths, bureau attaches have made known that under the law veterans must pay for such treatments.

It is pointed out that free hospital or clinical treatment for veterans must be administered by physicians graduated from the recognized medical schools, and further, all government physicians must pass a civil service examination.

The law further provides that the government is prohibited from paying other than recognized medical practitioners for services rendered veterans. Any effort to change the existing restrictions it was indicated, would result in the most strenuous opposition from medical associations all over the country.

1925 (Apr/May): **Bulletin of the ACA** [2(3-4)] notes:

-**Leo L Spears** DC discusses (p. 10):

...the fight I have been waging for three years to force the US Veterans' Bureau to supply Chiropractic adjustments to the disabled veterans at government expense, which fight has already cost me over \$8,000 with no hopes of it ever benefiting me personally. Through proper channels I went directly into the US Congress during its last session and had a sufficient number of pledges to have gotten Chiropractic included in the soldier legislation act had a congressional bloc not prevented the bill from getting upon the floor.....

....Get in touch with every disabled patient and friend you can and have them join a local chapter of the Disabled Veterans' Organization of the World War, and ask to be appointed committeeman to the National Convention being held in Omaha, June 22 to 27. Once in Omaha they are to support Geo. B West for National Commander, and our resolution regarding Chiropractic. The **DAV** is the organization that determines what kind of soldier

legislation shall or shall not be passed in Congress....If necessary you would lend financial support toward the sending of patients as committeemen and remember that you must work in a hurry. Delinquent action will be worse than useless. If you are a disabled man join a local chapter yourself so you can help appoint your patients as committeemen.

Next. One of our greatest handicaps in Washington was the contention of the Veterans' Bureau and of Congressmen that there was no evidence of a demand for Chiropractic. Now it is up to us to supply that evidence in abundance. So get busy immediately, please, and get everyone of your present and former ex-service patients to put in separate requests for a refund for adjustments already taken and for authority to take more. The requests for authority to take additional adjustments should state the benefits received from adjustments already taken. Address them to Gen. Frank Hines, Director US Veterans' Bureau, Washington DC, so they will be on file there when we need them. It is also likely that authority will be issued within the next few weeks, as treat pressure is being exerted and two refunds for Chiropractic have already been made...

1925 (July-Aug): **Bulletin of the ACA** [2(6-7)] notes:

-**Leo L Spears** DC authors "On with the good work," considers **ACA's** efforts to obtain chiropractic care for **veterans** through the **United States Veterans' Bureau**; notes (pp. 4, 11):

The **Universal Chiropractors' Association** had the first opportunity to take up this fight....But I am sorry to relate that although its president and directors were heartily in favor of the fight, **due to its being a purely insurance organization, the UCA by-laws did not permit such an undertaking...**

1925 (Sept): **Bulletin of the ACA** [2(8)] notes:

-George B West [DC?] authors: "Advancing Democracy"; considers chiropractic care for military **veterans**, recommends letter writing to Congressmen, recruiting other, non-DC **veterans** to write to Congress (p. 4)

-**Leo L Spears** DC authors "How selfishness of the medical trust is preventing our disabled **veterans** from regaining their health"; Spears is a "Member of the Disabled Veterans of the World War" (pp. 10, 12)

1925 (Oct/Nov): **Bulletin of the ACA** [2(9-10)]:

-**Leo L Spears** DC authors continuation from Sept issue of "How selfishness of the medical trust is preventing our disabled veterans from regaining their health" (pp. 3-4)

-(p. 9):

IMPORTANT NOTICE by Dr **Leo L Spears**: When the **ACA** endorsed the fight that I have been making to force the US Government to recognize Chiropractic and supply it to the disabled World War Veterans, ti promised both its financial and moral support to the very limit. But realizing that the **ACA** being a young organization is scarcely able to undertake the financing of such a tremendous and expensive project, I have decided to continue to

carry the financial burden myself. Therefore, the **ACA** is hereby released from its financial obligations in this fight. It has cost me many thousands of dollars already and will no doubt cost me at least ten thousand dollars more during the coming session of Congress. But since we have already won so closely to victory we must not stop until it is ours. Had the short session of Congress last year been a long one our legal battles would already be over. This year we must not falter at any price. But if we would win to victory we must have the moral support of every Chiropractor.

1925 (Dec): **Bulletin of the ACA** [2(11)] notes:

-Leo L **Spears** DC authors continuation from Oct/Nov issue of "How selfishness of the medical trust is preventing our disabled veterans from regaining their health" (pp. 3-4)

1926 (Apr): **Bulletin of the ACA** [3(4)] notes:

-**FR Margetts** DC, LLB, **ACA** president, authors "Honor the dead by justice to the living", a plea for government support of chiropractic care for **veterans**; notes the efforts of Mr. **George B West** and Dr. **Leo L Spears** (p. 8)

-**George B West**, "Bachelor of Science, Colorado Agricultural College," authors "**Disabled Veterans**"; urges letter writing campaign to Congressmen and Senators to pass H.R. 10240 "to give the veterans non-medical treatment" (p. 14)

1927: Sir Herbert Atkinson Barker publishes his auto-biography, **Leaves from my life**, discusses his knighting by the King for services to Royal Army rejectees and veterans of World War I; Barker is a London bonesetter

1928 (May): **Bulletin of the ACA** [5(3)] notes:

-(p. 23) from the *Denver Post*, March 27, 1928:

SPEARS LOSES IN NEW FIGHT FOR LICENSE

Leo Spears, Denver chiropractor, lost the fifth round of his fight Tuesday, to escape cancellation of his license to practice in Colorado....

Revocation of **Spears'** license was ordered by the medical board as a result of an advertisement he published in a Denver paper accusing the veterans' bureau of responsibility for the death of an ex-service man. The *Denver Post* refused to print the ad.

1930 (Aug/Sept): **The Hawkeye Chiropractor** [5(9)], L.M. Rogers, D.C., editor, includes:

-“Dr. Slocum receives honor: heads International Chiropractic Congress” (pp. 1, 5); notes Slocum succeeds J. Ralph John, D.C. of Hollywood CA as president of **ICC**; includes:

...At the Denver Convention various projects were begun. One project was the raising of \$2,000,000 in the State of California for the general furtherment of the organization's work. Another project started during the meeting was the planning of a \$100,000 hospital for Denver, also for the benefit of the Profession...



NCA leaders (Drs. W.H. McNichols, O.A. Ohlson & Frank O. Logic) meet in circa 1945 with Leo Spears, D.C. at Spears Hospital in Denver to consider transfer of hospital to Chiropractic Research Foundation (today's FCER) as a research center



Standing L-R: Neal Bishop, D.C.; F. Lorne Wheaton, D.C.; George Hariman, D.C.; W.H. McNichols, D.C.; Gordon M. Goodfellow, D.C., N.D. Seated L-R: O.A. Ohlson, D.C.; Frank O. Logic, D.C.; Leo L. Spears, D.C.; Loren M. Rogers, D.C.

1950 (Feb): **JNCA** [20(2)] includes:

-“News flashes: Colorado: Denied Rule Over Spears” (p. 36); includes:

The Colorado supreme court recently spiked Attorney General John W. Metzger's attempt to give the state board of health administrative control over Spears Chiropractic Sanitarium. The high court denied Metzger's motion to set aside a supersedeas...

1955 (Dec): **ICA International Review of Chiropractic** [10(6)] includes:

-“The multi-million-dollar lawsuits of Dr. Spears” (pp. 10-11); includes photograph of Dr. Leo Spears:



Spears LL. War is in the air. *The Chiropractic Journal* (NCA) 1938 (Oct); 7(10): 7-



?Senate hearings at Spears Hospital?

1956 (June): *ICA International Review of Chiropractic* [10(12)] includes:

-“Obituaries: Leo Spears, D.C. (p. 22)

1958 (Jan): *JNCA* [28(1)] includes:

-“INDIANA CHIROPRACTORS DISCLAIM SPEARS’ AD” (p. 23):

Dr. James C. Ploch, vice-president of Indiana Chiropractors’ Association, said today a Denver group is “saturating Southern Indiana with tabloid newspaper advertising.”

The group putting out this material, Spears Chiropractic Sanitarium and Hospital, Denver, has no connection with Indiana chiropractors, Dr. Ploch said. “It is not in keeping with the standards and ethics of the Indiana Chiropractors’ Association or the Indiana Board of Medical Registration and Examination, which governs all healing arts in the state,” Dr. Ploch added. - From the Evansville (Ind.) Press, Nov. 30, 1957.

1962 (Sept/Oct): *Digest of Chiropractic Economics* [5(2)] includes:

-“Tradition continues at Spears Hospital seminar” (pp. 8-9); includes photo of Spears nephews and W.O. Womer, D.C., radiologist

1965 (Sept/Oct): *Digest of Chiropractic Economics* [8(2)] includes:

-“Spears Hospital 1965 educational seminar at Denver, Colorado” (p. 40); includes **photo** of gathering in front of hospital

1965 (Nov/Dec): *Digest of Chiropractic Economics* [8(3)] includes:

-Paul Smallie, D.C authors “World-Wide Reports” (p. 5); includes:

POSTURE QUEEN

World Posture Queen, Brenda Mitchem, has enrolled in Logan Basic College of Chiropractic, St. Louis, Missouri, in accordance with her announced intention of becoming a chiropractor. She is still available for meetings and other gatherings, Dr. Clair O’Dell, Exec. Dir. of World Pageant, assures the profession. – Spears Sanigram.

1979 (Mar/Apr): *Digest of Chiropractic Economics* [21(5)] includes:

-Dan & Howard Spears author “A personal message to doctors of chiropractic” (p. 12); solicit referrals to Spears Hospital

References:

Rehm WS. Who was who in chiropractic: a necrology. In Dzaman F et al. (Eds.): *Who's who in chiropractic*. Second Edition. Littleton CO: Who's Who in Chiropractic International Publishing Co., 1980