

THE CONGRESSIONAL FRONT
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TERMINAL LEAVE PAY FOR GI'S.

Doubtless you've heard a great deal about legislation pending in Congress for the payment of terminal leave pay to enlisted men of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. In fact, it became a spirited issue that finally resulted in the enactment of legislation which authorized such pay. What "terminal leave pay" really means is pay to enlisted men to compensate them for a leave of absence or a furlough which they could not take while in service, either because of the difficulties involved or because they were in a theatre of operations where it simply could not be provided. In other words it's a sort of vacation pay. Under the law as it heretofore existed, a commissioned officer who did not or could not take leave of absence from his duties from time to time was permitted to let such credit for leave of absence accumulate and when the time came for him to be separated from the service, he could take an extended leave before actual separation and receive his pay during that time. In some cases, it amounted to as much as 4 months so that during that time, he was actually receiving full pay but not performing any service. The GI's had no such privileges because there was no provision in law for it.

PROVISIONS OF THE BILL.

At long last, however, both House and Senate passed the GI Terminal Leave Bill. It provided that a GI would be entitled to leave at the rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ days per month with a maximum of 120 days. Whatever leaves of absence he may have taken while in the service would naturally be deducted. This $2\frac{1}{2}$ days per month was figured on a basis of whatever his regular base pay might be for his particular grade plus 70¢ per day for rations plus \$1.25 per day in the case of a man who had dependents. This total would be multiplied by $2\frac{1}{2}$ days for each month and then multiplied by the number of months in service. From the resulting amount, a deduction would be made for the leaves of absence actually taken. It is estimated that the smallest amount would be .5 and the largest amount would be about \$500 for the Army and a somewhat larger amount for the Navy.

CONFLICT ARISES.

As the House passed this Bill, it called for payment in cash. In the case of the Senate Bill, payment would be made in cash where the amount due was \$50 or less, and in non-negotiable bonds with a maturity of 5 years in the case of larger amounts. Quite a number of conferences were held between House and Senate to come to a compromise. In its final form, the Senate proposal to pay in non-negotiable bonds prevailed. There was, however, one modification. The bonds could be negotiated and used before the 5-year period was up if they were used by the enlisted man to pay premiums on insurance in the National Service Life Insurance Company.

COST AND PROCEDURE

It is estimated that somewhere between 15 and 16 million enlisted men will be entitled to this pay. The estimated gross amount is a little less than $2\frac{3}{4}$ billion dollars. Average amount which each will receive will be about \$160 or \$170. Forms will be prepared and distributed through all post offices on which application can be made. Since this matter was never covered by legislation before, the Bill contains a provision that in the future, terminal leave for enlisted men will be limited to a total of 90 days.