

# The AMERICAN LEGION

# Department of France



Volume 12 / Issue 6

June 2014



## DEPARTMENT COMMANDER *James Settle*

ALCON,  
On the 25<sup>th</sup> of May I was able to attend the Memorial Day Ceremony in Saint Avold France. in attendance also were VCAL Brown, VC Kane, SAL Detachment Commander Settle and

Auxiliary Department President Settle. This was another great show of respect and honor for our fallen heroes.

As you know the National Commander, Commander Dellinger, the National Auxiliary President Nancy Brown-Park, and party arrived in Germany to visit with the department of France. I am sure they had a great time here with us, and they received many, many briefings, concerning our warriors. Many thanks to VCAL Brown, and Adjutant Rice for escorting our National Leadership while here in Germany. On the 31st of May, they departed Kaiserslautern en-route to Belgium for a NATO briefing and to visit with Post BE02. I am positive they also had a great time there, Many thanks to BE02 Commander Comrade Schram, and FR01 Commander Comrade Hale for putting together the plan for Nationals visit.

MEMBERSHIP, MEMBERSHIP, MEMBERSHIP. I cannot stress membership enough. It is the bloodline of our organization. It enables us to perform our missions to the Veterans and their Families, and supports not only National Programs but ours also. While you are out there

recruiting, new members do not forget your current members, get them to renew in a timely manner. If you have any questions on membership do not hesitate to contact the Membership Chairman Comrade Brown, at [joedan.pascal1@googlemail.com](mailto:joedan.pascal1@googlemail.com). He can answer your questions and resolve any problems you are having, with membership.

The Department Americanism Chairman Comrade Hackworth needs, your JROTC reports, and any other Americanism items you have. Comrade Hackworth needs this information for his Americanism report to National. You can submit your reports to Comrade Hackworth at the following E-Mail address [carl@hackworth.de](mailto:carl@hackworth.de).

Do not forget the Department Convention is upon us (19-21 June). If you have not made your reservation, contact Comrade Aman at E-Mail [jerrya503@aol.com](mailto:jerrya503@aol.com)

In closing please keep those in harm's way and their families, in your thoughts and prayers also.

James M. Settle / Department Commander

Phone: 07138-67359 / E-Mail: [Pisces@t-online.de](mailto:Pisces@t-online.de)

The Department Web Page is: [www.AmerLegionDeptFrance.org](http://www.AmerLegionDeptFrance.org) / The department has a Face Book page at the following [www.Facebook.com/ALDeptFrance](http://www.Facebook.com/ALDeptFrance). Please visit and like this page. Thanks

*Memorial Day Ceremony 2014  
Lorraine Cemetery, Saint Avold France*



<b>Department Officers</b>			
<b>COMMANDER</b> James M. Settle GR42 <a href="mailto:james.settle@kabelbw.de">james.settle@kabelbw.de</a>	<b>ADJUTANT</b> Maxwell Rice GR79 <a href="mailto:colwichboy@yahoo.com">colwichboy@yahoo.com</a>	<b>NECMAN</b> John Miller GR1982 <a href="mailto:miller-roth@t-online.de">miller-roth@t-online.de</a>	<b>ALT. NECMAN</b> H. Ownby CH01 <a href="mailto:hknowby@aol.com">hknowby@aol.com</a>
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**DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER *Jerry Aman***

Dear Fellow Department of France Members,

In previous convention announcements I asked that participants respond NLT 31 May however the replies to date have not met the number of individuals

that we expect will attend. Perhaps many individuals were either not prepared to pay in advance or had the capability for German bank transfers. Although I did not wish to have to deal with the collection of funds at the convention I have decided that prepayment, (although desirable), will no longer be necessary and payment, in cash, can be made upon arrival however I will need confirmation ASAP of Delegates and participants attending.

When making arrangements with the hotel I told them that by 1 June I could give them a final count of rooms needed and they could have the rest for their guests. My concern now is if I release the remaining rooms that I have asked for we may have accommodation

problems so I will meet with the hotel on Monday and ask for an extension. But I do need some type of confirmation that you will be attending and I'll hold the rooms. If you do tell me that you're coming and then don't show we could be stuck with the room charges. Also let me know if you will only be attending only one day sessions without overnight stays. Registration of DEC Delegates will begin at 1500 on Thursday, 19 June.

“Package” includes hotel overnight stay with breakfast, morning coffee break with pretzel, conference room with beamer, flipchart, projection screen, attendance souvenir, and a 3 course evening meal which will consist of either a small salad or soup, 3 main entrees (Meat, Fish & Vegetarian) and dessert. The package also includes a tip for the waiter or waitresses which will be paid by the convention chairman at the end of the convention. Lunch will be on your own.

Still serving,  
 Jerry Aman, Committee Chairman



## DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER *Stephen A. Ward*

Greetings, Commanders & Legionnaires,

As the Department of France Vice Commander, I have been assigned the following Posts: Riley Leroy Pitts Post GR07, Thomas W. Barnett GR14, John F. Kennedy Post IR63 Facebook site: [www.facebook.com/AmericanLegionIRL](http://www.facebook.com/AmericanLegionIRL) George S. Patton Post GR45, Rotterdam Post NL01, and Portugal (Nunv Alvares Pereira) Post PO-01. Doug Haggan (FODPAL Secretary) is asking the Department and Posts to submit pictures and small articles to the FODPAL website: <http://www.legion.org> Click FODPAL site listed below the Legion Homepage. FODPAL (Foreign and Outlying Departments and Posts of The American Legion) is asking for special programs & events and Facebook sites. The Department of France Newsletters is posted on the FODPAL website. Click Newsletters. Also, listed in the FODPAL Newsletter site is Post IR63 and Portugal Post PO01 (May 2014). Limerick (Ireland) International Veterans Day (May 25, 2014), RSVP: Email: [lanabhfiann2014@mail.com](mailto:lanabhfiann2014@mail.com)

Post GR07 is moving to Mannheim-Kafertal, date to be determined. The Mannheim Post GR07 is planning to support the Vicenza High School JROTC program this year. The next TWB Post 14 meeting is: 11 June 14/7 P.M. (Buedingen) at the Gastatte Schroth (Buedingen Orleshausen). Please send your Post Americanism Reports, to Carl Hacksworth. I talk on Skype every Monday evening. You can reach me on Skype: stephenallenward

The Mayo Peace Park Committee and Mayo County Council have agreed to host the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the World War I Commemoration Day Ceremony at the Mayo Peace Park, County Mayo, Ireland 3 August 14, 2:30 P.M. The burial for Past Post Commander (Father Francis Post IR02) Glen Foy was the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May at the Drumcliff Cemetery (Ireland). He will be greatly missed but we always remember the kind words and gestures from him. We pray for the quick recovery Gino Cantu from Mannheim Post GR07. He is always active with the Children & Youth Programs. SSG Aaron A. Smith Detachment Commander for the U.S. Embassy Lisbon, Portugal plans to dedicate the Heritage Room at the American Embassy to Lance CPL. Joaquim Vaz Rebelo served in the Marine Corps and went above and

beyond the call of duty. Many thanks to the Department of France Commander (James Settle), Department Auxiliary President (Isolde Settle), Department SAL Commander (Joshua Settle), Department VCAL (Joe Brown), and the Department Vice Commander (Liam Kane) visit to the Kaiserslautern Post GR01 luncheon after the Saint Avold Ceremony (25 May). Information about the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony in Normandy, France was sent to the Department of France Adjutant and the FODPAL site. POC: Chuck Steiner His email address: [cjsteiner@aol.com](mailto:cjsteiner@aol.com) If you like a copy of the Spring Post Newsletter from Post IR-63, Dublin, Ireland, please contact [jhshanahan@aol.com](mailto:jhshanahan@aol.com) Post IR-63 has many activities in the coming months, if you like to attend.

I stress the importance of membership in the Posts, Department, and the National Organization. Membership is our Voice on Capitol Hill. Department Membership Chairman (Brown) has sent the 2014 February Membership Stats to the Posts. Please send your Post transmittal to the Department Membership Chairman as soon as possible. I encourage the Posts to transmit each month to the Department Membership Chairman (Joe Dan Brown). Join the Paid Up For Life Program instead of paying Annual dues each Month and receiving renewal notices from National. If you have interest in the Paid Up For Life Program, please contact me at [wardtrans@yahoo.com](mailto:wardtrans@yahoo.com)

The VFW Department of Europe Convention (13 – 15 June 2014) Best Western Hotel Ludwigshafen, Germany, please contact Lance Howard at [lhoward88@yahoo.com](mailto:lhoward88@yahoo.com)

The Department of France Convention is hosted by William D. Nelson Post GR09 (19 – 22 June 2014) Neumaier's Gasthof & Landhotel Hirsch Romerstrasse 31, 89264 Weissenhorn/Attenhofen located near Ulm, please contact Jerry Aman Daytime phone number: 07307-4492, Mobile: 0152-060 26594 email: [Jerrya503@aol.com](mailto:Jerrya503@aol.com) The Department of Europe Adjutant has sent the Department of France Convention information to the Department of Europe Officers, District Officers, Post Commanders, and Post Adjutants.

Commanders & Fellow Legionnaires, many thanks for what you do for your Posts and the communities you serve.

## ***From the Editor...***

*Please send all input for the Department Newsletter to my e-mail address by the end of the month. Please use Word document format. Constructive suggestions to improve the Newsletter are also welcome.*

*I would like to thank the Department Officers and Posts for their input that makes up the newsletter. Especially FODPAL for all their articles.*

*If you want to stay informed on what is happening with YOUR Department you can also visit the following sites, [www.AmerLegionDeptFrance.org](http://www.AmerLegionDeptFrance.org) / [www.Facebook.com/ALDeptFrance](http://www.Facebook.com/ALDeptFrance) / [www.legion.org/fodpal](http://www.legion.org/fodpal)*

*David N. Greaux  
[davidgreaux@t-online.de](mailto:davidgreaux@t-online.de)*

### **DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICER *George Hall***

I am now set up at my home for VA, DAFS, SSA, ACG, CA.  
The address is AmKirchwald 3, 69251 Gaiberg

Phone H 06223 5475  
Phone M 0176 7227 6350  
Email [hallgt@yahoo.com](mailto:hallgt@yahoo.com)



On June 14, 1777, the Continental Congress replaced the British symbols of the Grand Union flag with a new design featuring 13 white stars in a circle on a field of blue and 13 red and white stripes – one for each state. Although it is not certain, this flag may have been made by the Philadelphia seamstress Betsy Ross, who was an official flag maker for the Pennsylvania Navy. The number of stars increased as the new states entered the Union, but the number of stripes stopped at 15 and was later returned to 13.

In June 1886 Bernard Cigrand made his first public proposal for the annual observance of the birth of the flag when he wrote an article titled “The Fourteenth of June” in the old Chicago Argus newspaper. Cigrand’s effort to ensure national observance of Flag Day finally came when President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation calling for a nationwide observance of the event on June 14, 1916. However, Flag Day did not become official until August 1949, when President Harry Truman signed the legislation and proclaimed June 14 as Flag Day. In 1966, Congress also requested that the President issue annually a proclamation designating the week in which June 14 occurs as National Flag Week.

The President is requested to issue each year a proclamation to: call on government officials in the USA to display the flag of the United States on all government buildings on Flag Day; and to urge US residents to observe Flag Day as the anniversary of the adoption on June 14, 1777, by the Continental Congress of the Stars and Stripes as the official flag of the United States.



**DEPARTMENT ADVOCATE *George W. Seeburger***

The IRS has revised its requirement for the Posts to keep DD 214's for all members. The following is a copy of the comment from National...

RAPID FIRE

**MEMBERSHIP**

## Legion efforts influence IRS' DD-214 revision

The American Legion has succeeded in persuading the IRS to revise Section 501(c)19 of the Internal Revenue Code, which requires Legion posts to keep records on file of members' DD-214s – the separation document given by the military to prove honorable service.

The IRS had been fining posts up to \$1,000 per day for not keeping records of veterans' DD-214s or other valid

documentation. The Legion felt it was wrongly targeted, and passed three resolutions at the 95th National Convention in Houston calling on Congress to look into IRS field investigations.

In December, Legion staff and legal representation met with IRS officials to request a change in its internal regulations and guidance. Effective immediately, DD-214s are only required if an agent "possesses information that contradicts documentary information provided (by the VSO) or if the organization fails to satisfy a reasonable request."

The Legion also requested that the IRS appoint district VSO liaisons who would attend department conventions to provide training and other assistance.



In general, the requirement has been dismissed. I cannot define the exceptions listed.

George W. Seeburger  
Judge Advocate

THE AMERICAN LEGION  
NATIONAL COMMANDER DANIEL M. DELLINGER  
VISITS THE DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE

*"DINNER HOSTED BY GR79"*





*“VISIT TO BRUSSELS, BELGIUM HOSTED BY BE02”*

Another great day with the National delegation. You will see a few instant Twitter updates with photos.

The morning pancake breakfast with the Troops and families of USAG Benelux Brussels was a success. Both the National Commander and the National President gave remarks. Food was great: crispy bacon, hash browns and big, thick American pancakes with butter and syrup; all you can eat.



The Legion Riders provided a seven Harley escort to the Flanders Field American Cemetery and Memorial. Upon arrival the National Commander and President were met by the SAL Commander and his members. They then received a historical briefing by the ABMC Superintendent (who is also a BE02 member) in the Gold Star Room followed by the same tour provided to the King of Belgium and POTUS last March.

From the American Cemetery the Legion Riders escorted the Command Van to Paschendaale, where we ate a light lunch and then experienced an excellent guided two-hour tour of the WWI museum to include walking through exact replica trenches.



From there we drove to Ypres (Iepers) to visit the museum gift shop for unique Poppy gifts and then enjoy a traditional Belgian Stew dinner just before participating in the 20:00 "Last Post" ceremony at the Menen Gate which was hosted by the British Legion. A Canadian Delegation laid a wreath and the American Legion National Commander together with the Legion Auxiliary President and BE02 Commander Schram laid a wreath.

And now we are on the long ride back to Brussels.

Tomorrow morning the National Delegation will receive official briefings by LTG David Hogg at NATO Headquarters and also meet with the Deputy Chief of Mission to the US Mission to NATO. Afterwards they will receive an in-depth guided historical tour of the Waterloo battlefields.

More photos will be uploaded to facebook.

Regards, Carl And Joe.



# Father Francis Duffy Post IR02

## *I N V I T A T I O N* *on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June to...*

The Bligh Awards in Castlehackett N.S. at 12.30 & thereafter to the commemoration at Knockma at 4.30 of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Colonel Patrick Kelly who was killed in action on this day in 1864 while leading the Irish Brigade at Petersburg, VA. Dr. John Bligh and Colonel Kelly were half-brothers.

### **Castlehackett N.S.**

**12.30:** The Bligh family to arrive in Castlehackett N.S. to unveil a library plaque & to present the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Dr. John Bligh awards. Born in Castlehackett in 1840, Dr. Bligh (and his brother, Alexander, also a distinguished doctor) was the first person to graduate with a Masters in Surgery Degree from the National Universities. Both he, his brother & Colonel Kelly are past pupils of the school.

Archbishop Dr. Michael Neary, patron of the school, has also been invited to attend this event & his reply is eagerly awaited. To mark this unique U.S./Castlehackett 19<sup>th</sup> century connection, Lt. Col. Sean Cosden, Defense Attaché U.S. Embassy, Dublin, will also be present in the school at 12.30 on June 16<sup>th</sup>.

12.45: Principal Mary Herson to welcome guests to the school in the main hall.

1.00: The Bligh Award Ceremony, followed by a presentation to Francis Bligh (grandson of Dr John Bligh) by three American-born pupils – Fiachra and Iarlaith Costello (grandsons of Anna McHugh, the historian who discovered the Bligh/Castlehackett school link), and Culainn Lynch.

1.45: Light refreshments will be served, accompanied by a musical interlude to be provided by some of the gifted current & past pupils of the school.

2.30 Official school closing. This ceremony in the school will be followed by the unveiling of a stone in honour of Colonel Patrick Kelly at Knockma at 4.30pm.

### **Colonel Kelly stone unveiling at Knockma by Lt. Col. Sean Cosden, Defense Attaché, U.S. Embassy, Dublin.**

4.30pm: A specially commissioned stone will be unveiled at Knockma to commemorate the anniversary of the death of Colonel Patrick Kelly who was killed in action whilst leading the Irish Brigade at Petersburg, VA, on this day, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1864. The unveiling ceremony will be led by Lt. Col. Sean Cosden, Defense Attache, U.S. Embassy, Dublin.

A wreath will also be laid at Knockma in memory of Colonel Kelly by Francis Bligh, the grandson of the Colonel's half-brother, Dr. John Bligh .

All are welcome to this ceremony which will also be attended by the special guests who visited Castlehackett NS earlier as well as by many other interested parties – by neighbours perhaps who knew of the Bligh the Kelly families over the generations, by those who have a lively interest in the numerous Irish connections with, and involvement in, the U.S. Civil War, by those who have long been charmed by the delights of Knockma, and by those who are attracted to history in all of its guises which in this instance encompasses both the local and the international. It will be a day to remember for all who will be present to honour the life of this most remarkable of men, Colonel Patrick Kelly ( 1822 – 1864).

For further information please contact:

Mary Herson: Principal – 091 79 17 08

Anna McHugh: Historian/event coordinator – 087 95 20 790

Mary J. Murphy/Glynn: B o M / PA – 086 27 67 730

Visit Castlehackett NS on [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) & [www.castlehackettns.ie](http://www.castlehackettns.ie).

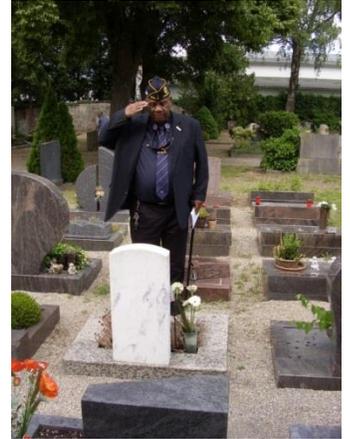
# RHEIN MAIN POST GR05

## Memorial Day 2014 Post GR05 Visits Graves of PEL Members

As usual, there is always a membership push to renew all members from the previous year. Post GR05 has answered that call since February 2009 by only losing one member who didn't renew. For 2014 membership year to date, we have one member who is expired, but we are awaiting his response to our letter kindly requesting that he continue to support Veterans by continuing his support of our Post. Post GR05 membership for 2014 stands at 103.2 % after our last transmittal

In all of the hectic to acquire new members and renew active members, we may not forget our members who have reported to Post Everlasting. We normally visit the graves on Veterans Day and Memorial Day, lay flowers, say a prayer and replace the small American Flag from our last visit.

On Sunday, May 25, 2014, GR05 Vice Commander S. Alvarado and GR05 Historian/Judge Advocate Q. Foster assisted GR05 Commander Moore (who was released from the hospital last Thursday), to place flowers and replace the small American flags from Veterans Day on the 5 graves in our local area. It used to be six, but apparently one grave lease had expired. Post Commander Moore will attempt to find out the circumstances.



GR05 Historian/JA Q. Foster took the attached pictures.

It was also a pleasant surprise to greet one of the widows of one of our PEL members, who happened to be at the grave of her husband. She watched from afar and then expressed her deep appreciation for the laying of flowers and the small flag every Veterans Day and Memorial Day that we place on her husband's grave.

Post GR05 wishes to ask everyone to remember why we celebrate Memorial Day and ask you to thank an active duty service person or National Guard/Reservist for their service to our great Nation.

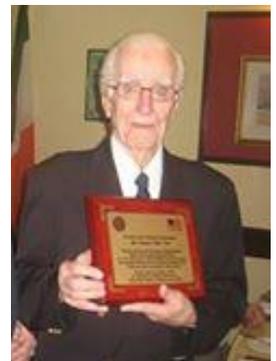
We thank you for your service also and your continued service through your affiliation with The American Legion Family.

Ronald Moore  
Post GR05 Commander  
Past Department of France Commander

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## Post Everlasting †

*With profound sadness we report the passing of Mr. Glen Foy 19 May 2014 at 9:23 AM in Ennis Co Clare. May he Rest in Peace. A U.S. Army Veteran whose war began on Omaha Beach on 10 June 1944. Glen is a past Commander of the American Legion Post IR02 and was a regular and esteemed presence at all commemorative events in Limerick. He was also a lovely man to all and will be greatly missed. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his daughter Frances and son Brendan and family; his friends and indeed the American Legion community whose great loss we share.*



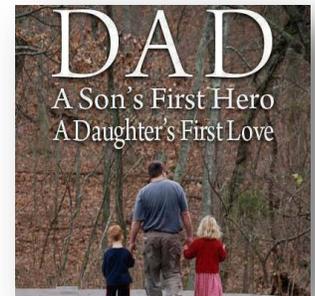
# THOMAS W. BARNETT POST GR14

Memorial Day 2014



## Father's Day 15 June 2014

Father's Day in the United States is on the third Sunday of June. It celebrates the contribution that fathers and father figures make for their children's lives. Its origins may lie in a memorial service held for a large group of men, many of them fathers, who were killed in a mining accident in Monongah, West Virginia in 1907.



### *Father's Day*

*Over the years as we grow old, we remember our father so brave and bold.  
In the garden, leaning on the plow, He would listen to me; I see him now.  
He would give advice and understand; He was always there to lend a hand.  
God made fathers Strong and firm, for he knew our lives would have great concerns.  
So he gave us fathers to teach us to pray, and guide our lives, and show us the way.  
So on his day let's take the time to say "Thanks, dad. I'm glad you're mine."*

*By Mary Frances Bogle*

# Legacy Scholarship Fund- Question To ALL Dept (FR) POSTS... Where is your Legacy Scholarship Donation Can?

Feb – August 2014- Department of France is coordinating donations for the Legacy Scholarship Fund through the Department of France AL PE Messenger Service as follows:

We recruited several Post and messengers over the past years, but we are woefully short of the 100% department participation anticipated. The following is a reminder for Posts and perspective messengers:

- 1) Department of France Pony Express Messenger service is open for all Legion, Auxiliary and S.A.L. organizations, as well as their current members. Posts, Units and Squadrons serve as Way Stations on a best effort basis and collect donations from their members or their communities in their area of operation. This is on a best effort basis with no donation limits or set expectations.
- 2) The first two messengers from each Way Station (each Post Commander automatically becomes a Messenger for his Way Station) receive a Pony Express Badge at no cost from the Dept of France AL PE Coordinator. Department of France AL PE Way Stations and Messengers must register with the Department of France AL PE Coordinator.

Goal is to have all donations moved to any physical Department of France Post by July 31, 2014. The Post will either call me or send an email by evening of July 31st requesting pickup.

I will coordinate to have donations (Checks drawn on U.S. banks, USD money orders or pledges <keep a copy of your pledges please>) picked up to be moved to the Final Collection Point in Frankfurt Germany by August 4th. I will pick up the donations/pledges on August 5th for personal transport to the U.S.

I will ensure that the National Commander receives all envelopes that I receive from Department of France Posts and messengers.

## **Procedure for envelopes containing donations and pledges:**

1) No cash will be moved. Only checks made out to The A.L. Legacy Fund and drawn on U.S. banks, USD money orders or pledges are to be sent in an open envelope with name of Post and total amount of donations/pledges written on the front of envelope. An envelope that is sent by mail because of time constraints may be sealed. The messenger will open it to check contents before transporting.

2) Again, no cash, packages, sealed letters or other items are to be transported by messengers. All envelopes containing donations/pledges are to be left open or opened by the messenger.

3) Messengers are to ensure that they do not move instruments totaling more than \$10,000 when crossing international borders.

4) Department of France Messengers are instructed to deliver any envelopes from Posts with donations/pledges to me personally, either before August 4th or at the National Convention at the beginning of the Convention First Session. These donations should be kept separate from the general Department of France donation. The department still receives credit for all amounts received from Department of France Posts. This however gives Posts the chance to receive recognition for their individual efforts. Donations of \$100 or more receive personal recognition from the National Commander.

I will be in Washington, DC from August 6th to 13th. I then plan to ride straight to Indianapolis and will be at the Legacy Run hotel specified until the Run and I plan to ride the full Run, God willing. This will be my 5th full Run.

Please remember, we do God's Work in caring for our fallen heroes and their children, so let's ride safe and all get where we have to be with no accidents. Ride safe and ride with God.

Also please remember your Messenger's oath that you took when you received your badge.

Ron "Gypsy" Moore  
Department of France AL PE Coordinator

P.S. In case of late donations received after July 31, 2014, it is still possible to mail donations to me so that I receive the donations by August 12th in the U.S. for delivery to the Convention. My address there will be

Ronald Moore, ALPE Coordinator  
4030 19th St. N.E.  
Washington, DC 20018

Effective August 7th, my US cell phone number is 202-375-8769 and will be on 24 hours a day.

If you have any questions, please contact me under [gypsy\\_moore@yahoo.de](mailto:gypsy_moore@yahoo.de) (underscore between gypsy and moore) or mobile telephone +49-172-741-7812.

# 70th anniversary of D-Day and commemorations in Normandy

17 January 2014

Carl W. Hale, Deputy Director - Operations and Programs  
USNATO, Brussels

Dear Mr. Hale,

Thank you for contacting the American Battle Monuments Commission about the 70th anniversary of D-Day and commemorations in Normandy.

In 2013, the French Government announced their basic intention regarding the 70th anniversary commemorations in 2014. In essence, this is what was announced:

- The June 6th international ceremony will be held at Ouistreham on SWORD beach.
- Two bi-national ceremonies will be held at JUNO and OMAHA beaches, respectively.

The French government is lead for planning the international and bi-national D-Day commemorations. Unfortunately, no further information has been released by the French government.

Anyone seeking further information on D-Day ceremonies can find the most recent updates on some of the websites listed below. The official French Government website has a separate section, “espace dédié” or “dedicated area,” for those who are World War II Veterans, media outlets, or tour operators.

- <http://www.le70e-normandie.fr/en> -- The “official” French Government website in French. This is the best website to reference for the national-level ceremonies and other French Government supported events.
- <http://www.the70th-normandy.com> -- The “official” French Government website in English. This is the best website to reference for the national-level ceremonies and other French Government supported events.
- <http://www.abmc.gov/cemeteries/cemeteries/no.php> -- The ABMC website in English. This is the best website for information on events happening in Normandy American Cemetery. The ABMC public affairs team plans on updating the website as new information is available.
- <http://www.normandie-tourisme.fr/articles/70eme-anniversaire-de-la-bataille-de-normandie-1502-1.html> -- The Normandy Tourist Bureau website in French.
- [http://www.dday-overlord.com/eng/commemorations\\_normandy\\_2013\\_program.htm](http://www.dday-overlord.com/eng/commemorations_normandy_2013_program.htm) -- This is a private, non-government website with descriptions of some of the smaller ceremonies in the Normandy region.
- <http://france.usembassy.gov/> -- This is the official site for the U.S. Embassy in Paris. Any American citizen traveling in France is highly encouraged to visit this website for a variety of information and news that may pertain to your visit.

The Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial, located on the cliff overlooking Omaha Beach in the town of Colleville sur Mer, is administered by the American Battle Monuments Commission. ABMC is planning a bi-lateral commemorative ceremony with the French on June 6, 2014 that will be similar to ceremonies conducted each year on Memorial Day.

- The ceremony will be open to the general public and reservations or entry passes will not be needed. Reserved seating will be available for WWII veterans and family members accompanying them. If you are a WWII veteran you can send your request to:

Normandy American Cemetery or  
Unit 9200 Box 1030  
DPO AE 09777

Normandy American Cemetery  
Omaha Beach  
14710 Colleville Sur Mer  
France

Email : [DDay70@abmc.gov](mailto:DDay70@abmc.gov)

Media wishing to cover the ceremony should contact:

- If based in the U.S., please contact Tim Nosal at [nosalt@abmc.gov](mailto:nosalt@abmc.gov)
- If based in Europe or outside the U.S., please contact Anaelle Ferrand [ferranda@abmc.gov](mailto:ferranda@abmc.gov)

Please understand that the time for the ceremony has not been scheduled. Since we do not know the starting time for the main ceremony in Ouistreham, a time cannot be scheduled to avoid a conflict. As soon as the time for the Ouistreham ceremony is released, we will establish the time for the ABMC ceremony. When known, this information will be posted on our website [www.abmc.gov](http://www.abmc.gov).

ABMC's has received many queries asking if the President will attend the ceremony in the American Cemetery. It is not known if there will be a Presidential visit and this information will probably not be released by the White House until a date much closer to the anniversary.



Having said that, should the President attend the ceremony in Normandy American Cemetery, the White House and U.S. Embassy will assume control of the event. As such, the U.S. Embassy, in consultation with the White House, will determine entry and seating requirements including media credentialing. If you have sent requests for reserved seating and passes to ABMC, those requests will be forwarded to the U.S. Embassy for consideration. Please understand that if the ABMC ceremony becomes a Presidential event, ABMC will have no control over entry passes, seating or media credentialing.

We encourage you to check [www.abmc.gov](http://www.abmc.gov) and [www.the70th-normandy.com](http://www.the70th-normandy.com) regularly for updates and new information. Thank you for your understanding and patience.

Sincerely,

*Dan Neese*  
Daniel L. Neese  
Superintendent

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*Hello,*

*My name is Laurie Nedelcu and I work for the Carnavalet Museum, in Paris, France. We're currently preparing an exhibition for the 70th anniversary of the Liberation of Paris, and we're looking for WWII American Veterans that were in Paris during the Liberation in order to collect their testimonies. Do you know of any members, or have any contacts with WWII Veterans, or know people in France or in the US that might be interested in being a part of this project? Any help will be appreciated.*

*Warm Regards,  
Laurie Nedelcu*

[laurielouise89@yahoo.fr](mailto:laurielouise89@yahoo.fr)

# The 90th Annual Department of France Convention

Hosted by GR 09, Neu-Ulm, Germany

19 To 22 June 2014

The William D. Nelson Post GR 09, Neu-Ulm, Germany is hosting the 90<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Department of France from 19 to 22 June 2014. The site selected for this event is Neumaier's Gasthof & Landhotel Hirsch, Römerstraße 31, 89264 Weißenhorn/Attenhofen, The hotel and meeting place is located 20 minutes from the historic city of Ulm.

This modern country gasthof with a typical rustic restaurant is located in the idyllic center of Attenhofen and has 30 rooms available: 22 as single and 8 as double rooms.

Convention costs, offered in "packages" are as follows:

Package #	4 Days, 3 nights (Arrive Thursday, depart Sunday)	
1	Package for single room	279.00
2	Package for double room (Per person)	237.00
	Children in parents room	45.00
	<i>3 days, 2 nights (Arrive Friday, depart Sunday)</i>	
3	Package for single room	188.00
4	Package for double room (Per person in double room)	160.00
	Children in parents room	30.00
	<i>2 days, 1 night (Arrive Saturday, depart Sunday)</i>	
5	Package for single room	97.00
6	Package for double room (Per person in double room)	83.00
	Children in parents room	15.00
7	Single day conference participation (No overnight, evening meal or banquet)	16.00
7	Single night, with breakfast (Either Wednesday or Sunday after convention)	55.00
	Banquet only	26.00

"Package" includes hotel overnight stay with breakfast, morning coffee break with pretzel, conference room with beamer, flipchart, projection screen, attendance souvenir, and a 3 course evening meal which will consist of either a small salad or soup, 3 main entrees (Meat, Fish & Vegetarian) and dessert. The package also includes a tip for the waiter or waitresses which will be paid by the convention chairman at the end of the convention. Lunch will be on your own.

## [Directions to the Department Convention Site](#)

If driving: Autobahns A 8 and A 7 are the main highways bringing you close to our location

On Autobahn **A-8** from Stuttgart take exit (**Ulm-West**) onto highway B-10. Continue on Bundesstrasse B 10 towards **Ulm**, past Ikea, over the Danube river, and past all Ulm and Neu-Ulm exits. At this point B 10 turns into B 28. Continue for approximately 8 km to exit **Senden**. (After exiting follow directions below "**Senden exit**").

If travelling on Autobahn **A-7** either from the North or South leave Autobahn at “**Hittistetten Kreuz**“, onto B-28, signs to Senden, Ulm, Neu-Ulm. At “**Senden exit**” leave B 28 and turn left onto Bundestrasse, direction **Senden**. Drive thru Senden and at end of city limits at stop light turn left, direction **Weissenhorn**. Continue on to **Weissenhorn** approximately 8 km. When entering Weissenhorn stay on main road. After passing thru the traffic circle stay on the main road in the direction of Gunzberg. Attenhofen is 2 km from Weissenhorn. The total driving time after exiting the autobahn at Senden is 20 minutes.

For those arriving by train either the Ulm Hauptbahnhof or Neu-Ulm bahnhof will be your destination. A shuttle service will be provided.

The Stuttgart and Memmingen airports serve Ulm/Neu-Ulm. Contact GR 09 to arrange for pick up.

For those using a GPS the address of the hotel is Römerstrasse 31, 89264 Attenhofen (Coordinates: 48° 19' 37.85" N / 10° 09' 36.21" E). To locate convention site on Google Earth enter “Attenhofen bei Weissenhorn”.

In addition to participating in the convention you may wish to arrive one day early or stay an extra day and enjoy the fine sights of Ulm. Ulm has a history dating back several centuries and has the highest church steeple in the world (143 meters). For those in good physical shape climbing the 768 steps to the top offers a breathtaking view, stretching all the way to the Alps. For more information on items of interest while visiting Ulm/Neu-Ulm check their web site [www.ulm.de](http://www.ulm.de)

Mode of payment will be Bank transfer (Überweisung) to the Volksbank Senden “ULMVDE66” as follows:

**Begünstigten, Name:** Jerome Aman

**IBAN:** DE02 630901000721989004

**BIC:** ULMVDE66

**Betrag:** Downpayment of one day.

**Kunden Reference:** Convention Selection # \_\_\_\_

**Angaben zum Kontoinhaber:** Your name and email address (Email address is so that a receipt/acknowledgement can be emailed to you.

Other methods of payment to be arranged with Committee Chairman

Down payment deadline is Friday, 30 May 2014. . .

Point-Of-Contact is Jerry Aman, Daytime phone number 07307-4492, Mobile 0152 060 26594, email: [Jerrya503@aol.com](mailto:Jerrya503@aol.com).

Jerry Aman  
Convention Chairman/Post Commander, GR 09



## REMINDER TO ALL POSTS...

**Make sure to send in your Americanism reports to Carl Hackworth...**

**Make sure to send in your Children & Youth reports to Gino Cantu...**

**And all other reports to the Department Adjutant as requested.**



## Sick Call

- ❖ Department Historian Ross Shephard (GR79) is in the hospital in Heilbronn. Details will be sent out to the membership.
- ❖ Roy Martin, Second Vice Commander of GR79 apparently took a fall that put him in the hospital. We are waiting for an update on his condition.

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## DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE PAST COMMANDERS CLUB

Who is illegible to join the Department of France Past Commanders Club?

**PAST AND PRESENT** Department Commanders, Department Vice Commanders At Large, Department Vice Commanders, Post Commanders, SAL Detachment Commanders, SAL Squadron Commanders, Auxiliary Department Presidents, Auxiliary Unit Presidents...*so if you were just voted into office you are illegible to join*

Initial dues for the Past Commanders Club is only \$25.00 which will entitle the new member to a Past Commanders Club cap (*YES, the caps are here*), Past Commanders Club pin and membership card

Renewal dues for the Past Commanders Club is only \$10.00 at which time you will receive a membership card for the paid membership year.

Our next meeting will be held at this year's Department of France Convention 19-22 June 2014

**HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE...** *David Greaux, PCC President "1999"*

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# Legion calls for criminal investigations at VA

American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger has called for criminal investigations of all Department of Veterans Affairs employees responsible for “secret” waiting lists at VA hospitals linked to the preventable patient deaths, after a May 28 interim report by VA’s Office of Inspector General found the practice to be “systemic.”

“Now that VA’s Office of Inspector General has confirmed what The American Legion claims, we are calling not only for the resignations of Secretary Shinseki and Under Secretary Hickey, but also the chief administrators of every hospital found guilty of falsifying their waiting lists for patients,” Dellinger said. “We want every VA employee who participated in these cover-ups to be investigated and prosecuted to the full extent of the law if found guilty.”

The report said that reviews at several VA medical facilities have confirmed that dishonest scheduling practices are systemic throughout the Veterans Health Administration.

As of last month, VA’s Office of Inspector General identified about 1,400 veterans waiting to receive primary-care appointments and another 1,700 veterans waiting for such appointments whose names were not in the hospital’s Electronic Waiting List, or any list at all. The Office of Inspector General further noted its investigation has now spread to 42 other locations throughout the VA health care system.

“These findings confirm what we’ve warned of from the very beginning,” Dellinger said. “VA has been hiding the fact it is struggling to meet its own goal of setting appointments for veterans within 14 days. Instead, they lie to veterans by forcing them to wait for months on unofficial lists and some of them may be dying while they wait.”

Dellinger said VA must find a way to immediately get veterans the care they need and clean up the waiting-list scandal. “If VA needs to purchase additional private care to get veterans more timely treatment, then so be it,” he said. “VA already has a budget for fee-

based care, but are they spending the whole budget? If not, that’s where they need to start. Spend every dime of funding set aside for fee-based care, then move ahead from there.”

The Phoenix facility has also been accused by whistleblowers of “cooking the books” and making false reports of wait-times to VA’s Central Office in Washington in order to qualify for big bonuses. The report noted that, while the Central Office listed average patient wait- times in Phoenix at 24 days, VA’s Office of Inspector General’s investigation showed the average to be 115 days.

The report said that veterans “were and continue to be at risk of being forgotten or lost in Phoenix (Health Care System’s) convoluted scheduling process. As a result, these veterans may never obtain a requested or required clinical appointment.”

One consequence of not placing veterans on Electronic Waiting Lists, the report said, “is that the Phoenix HCS leadership significantly understated the time new patients waited for their primary care appointment in their FY 2013 performance appraisal accomplishments, which is one of the factors considered for awards and salary increases.”

“Now that the Office of Inspector General has confirmed that VA employees in Phoenix were lying to veterans and hiding wait lists,” Dellinger said, “we need to see swift, decisive action to ensure that VA is, indeed, capable of meeting its obligations to America’s veterans.”

Dellinger called on VA to immediately implement all recommendations of the Office of Inspector General’s report and to act swiftly to care for the veterans who have already waited far too long for treatment they have earned.

“The American Legion will not allow these veterans to be forgotten while they wait,” Dellinger said. “Neither should the Department of Veterans Affairs.”



A lingering image for any Arlington National Cemetery visitor — more than caissons bearing the soon-to-be-interred or even the white-gloved honor guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is the perfect symmetry of alabaster headstones endlessly arrayed.

The stone sentinels give up their dead only on close inspection to visitors who leave pathways to gingerly step close and read the black lettering etched into marble.

"Christopher David Horton, Spc. U.S. Army, Afghanistan, Oct. 1, 1984, Sept. 9, 2011, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Valiant Warrior, Fearless Sniper" are words on one of more than 900 graves from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars in the cemetery's Section 60.

For the dead — like Horton, killed in a hail of enemy AK-47 fire — the words are a spare summary of sacrifice; what Abraham Lincoln called "the last full measure of devotion."

More than 400,000 are buried here.

The epitaphs, which seem to grow louder with each footfall through the cemetery, are reminders that ever since Union Army Pvt. William Henry Christman became the first to be buried here on May 13, 1864 150 years ago Tuesday — this place has always been less about grandeur, stone and protocol than about people.

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus touched on this theme before a congregation at an Arlington burial service

## After 150 years, Arlington Cemetery still holds secrets

a year ago for two sailors killed in war: "We are joined as Lincoln again reminded us by 'the mystic

chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield, and every patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone.' "

The sailors' remains had been recovered years earlier from the sunken wreckage of the USS Monitor, famed for battling a Confederate ironclad to a draw in 1862.

As the Civil War dead were carried to their Arlington graves, hundreds gathered. Scattered throughout were sailors of today in dress uniforms eager to link with this moment, each crisply saluting from wherever they stood.

The place is about people.

It was the bitterness of Quartermaster Gen. Montgomery Meigs that first led to the cemetery's creation.

Angry that his former mentor, Robert E. Lee, had joined the rebellion and desperate for more space to bury the accumulating dead of the Civil War, Meigs recommended that the Lee estate overlooking Washington be turned into a graveyard. Burials had already begun by the time approval came through on June 15, 1864.

A century later, it was with a simple nod of her head that Jacqueline Kennedy acquiesced to the gravesite for her husband on the slope below the Lee Arlington House. She had insisted that the assassinated president be laid to rest in a public, accessible place because "he belongs to the people."

A half-century after that, it was the outpouring of grief by young widows, parents and battle buddies that led to the only consistent splash of color within 624 acres of cemetery — the balloons, childhood drawings, stuffed Easter bunnies and unopened

bottles of beer left on the graves of Iraq and Afghanistan war dead.

The now-widely recognized Section 60 is a long stroll from popular tourist sites such as the Kennedy grave and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Unlike the deceased retired military that make up most of the 27-30 burials that occur at Arlington each day, the dead of Section 60 were so young, that the grieving here is far more intense.

So it is a place where a grieving father may be seen laying prostrate on his son's grave or where a mother sits in a thunderous downpour unaware that her lawn chair is sinking into a softening earth.

Those who mourn regularly have coalesced into a kind of club, but one that one mother conceded "nobody wants to be in."

For visitors who stroll the walkways or ride the trolleys across the cemetery, there are more stories than a single trip can encompass.

Here are seven seldom-known facts about the people of Arlington National Cemetery:

- For decades, an area south of the cemetery was home to thousands of former slaves. They began filtering into the capital area shortly after Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, hundreds settling near Arlington House. Freedman's Village was born and thriving with a school, hospital and church until disbanded about 1900, the land eventually included in the cemetery. Some 3,200 unmarked contraband graves remain.

- Among the more infrequent of headstones at Arlington are those with gold lettering against the white marble. There are 403. These signify that the buried service member received the highest valor award — a Medal of Honor. One of the more recent belongs to 19-year-old Army Spc. Ross McGinnis, who lowered himself onto a grenade thrown inside the Humvee he was riding in Iraq in 2006.

- When John F. Kennedy was assassinated, his younger brother, Robert, urged that the grave be

adorned with a simple white cross. He was overruled by his brother's widow, Jackie. After Robert was assassinated five years later, he was laid to rest near his brother, the grave marked with a simple, white wooden cross. The same now adorns the nearby grave of Edward "Ted" Kennedy. They are the only two wooden crosses in the cemetery.

- Among 16,000 Civil War dead buried at Arlington, including several hundred Confederate soldiers, is the son of cemetery founder Montgomery Meigs. Lt. John Rodgers Meigs died in a skirmish in October 1864. His father later had him re-interred at Arlington beneath a tomb depicting in statuary the lieutenant's death scene, his body laying in the mud amid trampling hoof-prints of Confederate horses.

- Amid the head-stone covered hills of Arlington is one bare but for three graves representing two generations and two wars. One is the grave of Gen. John "Black Jack" Pershing, who led U.S. forces in World War I. Nearby are two grandsons: John W. Pershing, an Army veteran who died 1998 and Richard W. Pershing, killed in Vietnam in 1968. Along the slopes of the hill are buried troops the elder Pershing commanded.

- Three of the seven service members depicted in the iconic Marine Corps Memorial, showing the flag raising on Iwo Jima, are buried at Arlington. Two, Ira Hayes and Rene Gagnon, survived the battle and lived to see the memorial built just outside the cemetery. The third, Michael Strank, was killed in combat six days after the famous AP photo that inspired the statue was taken.

- A very rare group at the cemetery are the 184 victims of the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon. They are represented as co-mingled, unidentified remains buried under a memorial. There are individual victim graves nearby. One person whose remains were never identified was a 3-year-old girl aboard American Airlines Flight 77 that struck the Pentagon. The site is in a distant southeast corner of the cemetery several hundred feet from the Pentagon. It is unique in Arlington to be buried so close to where death occurred, cemetery officials say.



# CHARLOTTE NORTH CAROLINA

## Site of the 96<sup>th</sup> American Legion National Convention

### August 22<sup>nd</sup> to August 28<sup>th</sup> 2014

If you are planning on attending the National Convention in Charlotte (and I hope to see some new faces in Charlotte) please e-mail me at [dhaggan@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dhaggan@sbcglobal.net) with the following information, **THE DATE YOU WILL ARRIVE AND DEPART, THE PERSON YOU ARE SHARING A ROOM WITH IF ANY, AND ANY SPECIAL ROOM REQUIREMENTS.**

Cutoff for the reservation is 14 July 2014.  
Hope to see you in Charlotte, a good time will be had by all.

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## 2014 Legacy Run route announced

The route plan for the 2014 USAA-sponsored American Legion Legacy Run has been finalized. The Run will traverse 1,336 miles through eight states, eventually ending up in Charlotte, N.C., on Aug. 21, 2014.

The ride leaves Indianapolis on Aug. 17 and will make stops in Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, South Carolina and Georgia before ending up in King's Mountain, N.C. The Legacy Run even will make a stop at The American Legion World Series in Shelby, N.C., on Aug. 19 for the series championship game.

The route is as follows:

Aug. 17 – Indianapolis to Pikeville, Ky. (stops in Florence, Lexington and Stanton, Ky.)

Aug. 18 – Pikeville, Ky., to Danville, Va. (stops in Grundy and Bedford, Va., and Princeton/Bluefield, W.Va.)

Aug. 19 – Danville, Va., to Shelby, N.C. (stops in Winston-Salem, Statesville, Shelby and King's Mountain, N.C.)

Aug. 20 – King's Mountain, N.C., to Buford, Ga. (stops in Waynesville, N.C., and Rabun Gap, Ga.)

Aug. 21 – Buford, Ga., to King's Mountain, N.C. (stops in White Plans and Rock Hill, S.C.)

Eight previous Legacy Runs have raised more than \$4 million for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund, which was established so the children of servicemembers killed on or after Sept. 11, 2001, have the opportunity to pursue a college education.

A variety of hotels are available for at each night's stop during the 2014 USAA-sponsored American Legion Legacy Run. View the list by clicking [here](#). Participants must reserve and book their own rooms; be certain to look for discounts from AARP, The American Legion or others to reduce costs.

These are lodging suggestions only. Ride participants may find other lodging or camping options, often at a less expensive price, by searching online.

Registration is available online [here](#). A printable registration form is available [here](#).

Registration fees are \$50 for riders, and \$25 for passengers and supporters. The latter category is a new addition this year. Non-riding supporters provide much of the resources needed to conduct the Run each year – and all supporting registrations of \$25 or greater will be mailed the full map book set and 2014 American Legion Legacy Run patches. Eight Legacy Runs have raised more than \$4 million for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund, which was established so the children of servicemembers killed on or after Sept. 11, 2001, have the opportunity to pursue a college education. Online registration ends Aug. 9.



## Hagel Renews Push for Pay Cuts, Base Closings

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has pledged to lobby to restore the pay cuts, [Tricare](#) fee increases and base closures that were scuttled by the House Armed Services Committee, Hagel's chief spokesman said Friday.

Hagel was "certainly not pleased" by the HASC markup earlier this week that scuttled much of his overall budget plan, said Rear Adm. John Kirby, the Pentagon press secretary.

Hagel hoped that Congress will "put national security over parochial interests" and "will prove capable of seeing the wisdom of the choices he made" as the 2015 National Defense Authorization Act moves its way through the legislative process, Kirby said.

Hagel also "continues to believe that another round of BRAC (Base Re-Alignment and Closure Commission) is necessary" to shut down excess facilities as the military trims the size of the force, Kirby said.

The HASC markup provided for a \$552 billion base Pentagon budget and \$85 billion for overseas contingency operations while rejecting Hagel's proposal for another round of BRAC. Senate leaders have also warned that any move to close bases had little chance of succeeding in an election year.

As he has said previously, Hagel maintained that he had authority under Title 10 of the U.S. Code on the role of the military to reduce infrastructure without Congressional approval.

"His hope and expectation is that that won't be necessary," Kirby said of Hagel.

However, Hagel's proposals on BRAC "fail to get at whether or not a BRAC round truly would create any savings," said a spokesman for Rep.



Howard "Buck" McKeon, R-Calif., the HASC chairman.

House and Senate Republicans have been at odds with the Defense Department for years on whether the previous round of BRAC in 2005 produced savings.

The HASC markup mandated a military pay raise of 1.8 percent, with a freeze on pay for flag officers. Hagel's proposal would limit the increase to one percent. A survey earlier this week by Military.com showed that nine of 10 active duty troops opposed the pay reduction proposed by the Pentagon.

The markup also eliminated cuts to Tricare, housing allowances and commissary benefits, and provided funding to maintain the [A-10 Thunderbolt](#) at least through next year over Hagel's push to retire the A-10 fleet.

McKeon voted against the amendment to spare the A-10, his spokesman said, but the full committee moved to retain the Warthog. McKeon had favored a proposal to put the A-10s in type-1000 storage, meaning that they would essentially be mothballed but available to return to duty.

Hagel has argued that the difficult cuts he proposed to pay and benefits were necessary to preserve readiness, and his argument was echoed by Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Wash., the ranking HASC Democrat.

"I understand none of the choices we are faced with are popular, or what any of us want, but that does not give us an excuse to undermine our military readiness," Smith said.



The Veterans Affairs Department has long resisted disability claims from service members who said chemical residue left in Vietnam War-era planes that were used to spray defoliants over Southeast Asia caused them severe illnesses, including cancer.

This summer, a panel of independent scientists will try to determine whether those veterans could have been exposed to the toxins in defoliants, including Agent Orange, at a level that would be dangerous to their health.

If the panel, which hosts the first of a series of closed meetings and public hearings on May 15, finds a link, the service members could be eligible for tax-free disability compensation up to several thousand dollars a month.

That's something Wes Carter, a retired Air Force major, believes is long overdue.

"We've got some sick folks that are not allowed to go into the VA," said Carter, a former Oregon resident leading the crusade and who believes his prostate cancer and other disorders are due to his exposure to dioxin, a contaminant found in Agent Orange.

Carter served on C-123s in the Air Force Reserves as a medic from 1974 to 1980. The planes were used to spray millions of gallons of defoliants to destroy crops and eliminate jungle cover used by the North Vietnamese Army and the Vietcong.

The military stopped the spraying by early 1971 over concerns that some defoliants contained compounds harmful to humans. The fleet returned stateside, but Air Force Reserve units continued to fly them on cargo and medevac missions until the early 1980s.

Over the years veterans who flew in those planes have been getting sick, and like many Vietnam veterans, they're blaming the defoliants.

Carter said he found out they still had dried herbicide residue in them after he was diagnosed in 2011 with prostate cancer, one of nearly 20 illnesses VA deems service-connected among Vietnam veterans, due to possible herbicide exposure.

The VA does not require Vietnam veterans to prove they were exposed to the herbicides. Instead, it presumes they were, if they develop certain diseases and disorders linked to those chemicals, and grants them disability compensation benefits.

Service members who served on the planes after their return stateside need to "show on a factual basis that they were exposed in order to receive disability compensation," the VA said in an email statement.

Carter was already receiving VA medical care and disability compensation for injuries he sustained on duty in the 1990s, but the VA denied his claim seeking Agent Orange-related disability pay in 2012.

A VA official wrote in support of the denial that medical studies showed that it was unlikely that dioxin exposure would lead to adverse health effects. Carter said he's appealing, but he said it can take years and he worries that at 67 and with cancer, that's more than he has left.

Other postwar C-123 veterans have successfully appealed similar denials. At least

one C-123 veteran battling cancer was granted benefits without an appeal, but died a short time later.

Carter said the 2,100 veterans who served on the aircraft after the war should get the same benefit of the doubt.

Carter has amassed public documents showing that the Air Force canceled sales of several C-123s in 1996 and smelted them in 2010 over concerns they were still contaminated with herbicide residue, even after they had sat in the Arizona desert for decades.

He has also garnered support from lawmakers and others, such as U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs Director Cameron Smith, Yale Law School researchers and several scientists.

Fred Berman, director of the Toxicology Information Center at Oregon Health and Science University, said the VA "established new laws of chemistry" in denying the C-123 veterans' exposure claims.

In response, he and others co-authored a study in the April issue of the journal *Environmental*

Research that concluded dioxin levels in the aircraft after the war were "likely to have exceeded several available exposure guidelines."

Dr. Terry Walters, deputy chief consultant in the VA's Post Deployment Health group, said she understands the frustration, but the VA is simply following the law. She said Congress provided the presumption for Vietnam veterans because there was no way to measure their actual exposure.

The difference for the postwar C-123 veterans, she said, is that there are dioxin measurements from the planes that can be used to make a risk assessment. "You have to draw the line somewhere," Walters said.

"What we're asking the Institute of Medicine to do is give us a scientific opinion of where that is," Walters said.

The Institute of Medicine, which has conducted congressionally mandated reviews to evaluate research on herbicides used in Vietnam, is scheduled to publish its conclusions in the fall.

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## Obama and Congress Move to Address VA Firestorm

The Obama administration and Congress are moving quickly to respond to a growing political firestorm over allegations of treatment delays and falsified records at veterans' hospitals nationwide.

The top official for veterans' health care resigned Friday, and House Republicans scheduled a vote for Wednesday on legislation that would give Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki greater authority to fire or demote senior executives and administrators at the agency and its 152 medical centers.

The actions came as federal investigators visited a VA hospital in suburban Chicago to look into an allegation that secret lists were used to conceal long



patient wait times for appointments. Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M., meanwhile, called for an investigation into reports that schedulers at a VA medical center in Albuquerque were ordered to falsify patient appointment records.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said the Veterans Affairs Department is suffering from "a systemic, cultural problem" that cannot be solved with piecemeal responses, such as the resignation of a top official.

"What's needed is a total refocusing of the VA on its core mission of serving veterans -- stretching from its top political leadership all the way through to its career civil servants," McCain said Saturday in the weekly Republican radio and Internet address.

Citing news reports that VA managers received performance bonuses even as internal audits revealed lengthy wait times for health care, McCain said top VA officials too often have been "motivated by all the wrong incentives and rewards."

McCain, a Vietnam veteran, said Congress must give VA administrators greater ability to hire and fire those charged with caring for veterans, as well as give veterans greater flexibility in how they get quality care in a timely manner.

Reports of long waits for appointments and processing benefit applications have plagued the VA for years. Officials have shortened benefits backlogs, but allegations of preventable deaths that may be linked to delays at the Phoenix VA hospital have triggered an election-year uproar. A former clinic director said up to 40 veterans died while awaiting treatment at the Phoenix VA hospital, even as hospital staff kept a secret appointment list to mask the delays.

A VA nurse in Cheyenne, Wyoming, was put on leave for allegedly telling employees to falsify appointment records. A VA investigation in December found that staffers at a Fort Collins, Colorado, clinic were trained to make it appear as if veterans got appointments within 14 days, as VA guidelines suggest.

Problems also have been reported in Pennsylvania, Georgia, Missouri, Texas, Florida and others.

Amid a growing outcry, the administration and Congress took steps to reassure the public that problems are being addressed.

Robert Petzel, the VA's undersecretary for health care, had been scheduled to retire this year but instead stepped down Friday. Petzel had said he would remain until the Senate confirmed a

replacement, but a department official said Shinseki asked Petzel to leave immediately.

Republicans denounced the move as a hollow gesture. Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla., chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, called the announcement "the pinnacle of disingenuous political doublespeak." Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, said Shinseki's "reticence to hold fellow bureaucrats at the VA accountable is exactly why we need new leadership that is willing to take swift action to ensure we are living up to our promises to our nation's heroes."

Cornyn is among a handful of Republicans who have called for Shinseki to resign. The American Legion, one of the nation's largest veterans groups, also has called for Shinseki's resignation and called Petzel's departure "a continuation of business as usual."

The White House said President Barack Obama supports Shinseki's decision to remove Petzel and that Obama is "committed to doing all we can to ensure our veterans have access to timely, quality health care."

Petzel's resignation came a day after he and Shinseki were grilled at a four-hour hearing of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, where lawmakers and veteran groups expressed exasperation at long-standing problems.

In his position, Petzel oversaw what officials say is the largest health care delivery system in the U.S. The VA operates 1,700 hospitals, clinics and other facilities around the country, serving about 6.5 million veterans and other beneficiaries each year.

Miller, who wrote the legislation that the House will take up next week, said Congress must act, because the VA is "apparently unwilling to take substantive actions to hold any of its leaders accountable."

Shinseki on Thursday told senators he was "mad as hell" about allegations of severe problems and that he was looking for quick results from a nationwide audit. He has rejected calls for him to resign.



# VFW Department of Europe Convention in Ludwigshafen Germany

**POC for the VFW Department of Europe is: Lance Howard: [lhoward88@yahoo.com](mailto:lhoward88@yahoo.com)**

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BEST WESTERN Hotel Ludwigshafen  
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## **BOOKING - Department of Europe - VFW Convention 2014**

Please reserve the following:

### **Guest Details:**

**Lastname:**

**Firstname:**

**Street:**

**ZIP / City:**

**State:**

**Telephone:**

**Telefax:**

**Email:**

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### **Room reservation:**

**Arrival Date:**

**Departure Date:**

**Room Type:**           0       EUR 51.00 per Single room / night

                              0       EUR 81.00 per Double room / night

Children (0-11 years) sharing parent's room free of charge without extra bed

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