

The AMERICAN LEGION

Department of France



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December 2014

*Wishing One And All
A Merry Christmas*





DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

James Settle

My Fellow Legionaries,

I hope all of you had a safe and very Happy Thanksgiving.

As in the past the Department of France held it's Veterans Day Memorial at Lorrain Memorial Cemetery in Saint Avold France, on the 11th of November. This year I think all were very surprised, there were approximately 150 participants for this Veterans Day Memorial where we normally only have 40 to 50 participants. This year we were strongly supported by the Air Force and the HOGS out of Kaiserslautern area. I do hope this is a trend that will continue through the years. Kaiserslautern Post GR01 once again, also had a great lunch available to those attendees to the Memorial Service returning home, as always great food, and great conversation. Thanks once again GR01 for all you do.

The Department Oratorical Contest, will be conducted in February, hosted by Stuttgart Post GR06, date, time and location will be announced via E-Mail. If you have not already started your Oratorical Program now is the time to, you are running out of time very fast, it is an injustice to your candidate to wait until the last minute to start rehearsals.

The American Legion National Commander Michael D. Helm will be visiting the Department of France from May 29th till June 3rd 2015. If you would like the National Commander to visit your post please

let either myself or the Department Adjutant know, we are working on the itinerary, at this time.

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. I would like to see all our membership renewals completed by December 31st 2014. I encourage and challenge all Commanders, Adjutants, and Membership Chairmen to contact those members who have not renewed for 2015, and have them renew their membership ASAP. If you have any questions on membership do not hesitate to contact the Membership Chairman Comrade Brown, at joedan.pascal1@googlemail.com. He can answer your questions and resolve any problems you are having, with membership.

In closing, I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas, and a Very Happy and prosperous New Year, please stay safe and watch out for one another during this Holiday period. 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: james.settle@kabelbw.de

The Department Web Page is:

www.AmerLegionDeptFrance.org

The department has a Face Book page at the following www.Facebook.com/ALDeptFrance. Please visit and like this page. Thanks







Mike Helm

National Commander

The American Legion

Let's dispel a myth about veterans preference hiring: it is not a handout. The federal government does not give jobs to veterans who lack the training and skills to perform them. If a veteran has the same qualifications as a civilian counterpart for a job opening, current law mandates the veteran get that position.

Why is this fair? Because by volunteering for U.S. military service, young men and women remove themselves from the mainstream workforce and often delay their academic or vocational educations. While they defend America at home and overseas, their high school friends are earning degrees or gaining valuable work experience.

In the course of a single four-year enlistment, a veteran's friends complete their bachelor's degrees; after two such enlistments, some of those friends have completed doctoral studies or residencies, or have been promoted by their bosses.

If an employer with a single job opening can choose between hiring someone with a degree and four years of work experience or a veteran with no degree and no civilian work experience, which would he or she be more likely to hire? Add a service-connected disability, and the veteran's chances become even more bleak.

This is why The American Legion has been loud and clear in sending a message to the Office of Personnel Management and Congress that veterans preference is a policy that must remain in place.

In August, the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) released a report claiming that the laws

relating to veterans preference "invite misunderstandings, confusion, perceptions of wrongdoing, and possibly actual wrongdoing – whether intentional or inadvertent."

While some abuses may exist, that does not justify scrapping any part of the veterans preference policy. Instead, those who show favoritism in federal hiring practices need to be disciplined or fired. Their poor judgment should not become an excuse to deny fair opportunity to veterans.

The MSPB also reported that veterans preference leads to resentment among some civilian federal employees, and that it somehow interferes with the hiring of women.

Frankly, those who object to the policy of veterans preference should consider joining the military and becoming veterans themselves. As for the claim that the policy interferes with the hiring of women, the MSPB has demonstrated no cause-effect relationship; it merely notes that "as use of veterans hiring authorities increased, the percentage of female new hires decreased."

Since 2000, the percentage of women in the federal workforce has dropped by only 1 percent. It's likely that decrease is related to the government hiring fewer employees in general since 2011.

Ask any post-9/11 veteran looking for a job if he or she believes that veterans preference is unfair to federal workers who never served in uniform. See what kind of answer you get.



Doug Haggan

*National Vice Commander
FODPAL Secretary
Past Department of France Commander
"Still Serving America's Veterans...Around the World"*

2014 Veterans Day Parade in New York City





**DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER AT LARGE / MEMBERSHIP
CHAIRMAN *Joe D. Brown***

GR01 Veterans Day 2014



To all Department of France Officers, Past Department
Commanders, Post Commanders and Delegates, Committee
Chairpersons and Program Directors...

The Third Department DEC is planned for 21 March 2015 and
it will be hosted by GR30 / GR42

The Official Call will be sent out at a later date



**DEPARTMENT VICE
COMMANDER**
Stephen A. Ward

Greetings, Commander's & Legionnaires,

As the Department of France Vice Commander, I have been assigned the following Posts: John F. Kennedy Post IR63 Facebook site: www.facebook.com/AmericanLegionIRL Eifel Post GR-20, Riveria Post FR-05, Madrid Post SP-292, 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 Members FODPAL site listed at Quick Links. 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 Commodore John Barry Post IR03 October Newsletter 2014. It's listed in the FODPAL site: www.legion.org Click Membership Click FODPAL Click Newsletters. John F. Kennedy Post IR-63 Thanksgiving Dinner and Annual General Membership Meeting (the family and I plan to attend) November 27, 2014. Also, I plan to conduct a Legion briefing at the Dublin U.S. Embassy (November 28, 2014). I attended the Veterans Observance Ceremony (Demarcation Line), War Museum, blessing of the Post Colors, Veterans speeches in the town square of Rokycany, Czech Republic (14 – 16 November 2014). My friend (Jerry Toole) was buried in the city of Pilsen, Czech Republic (November 7, 2014). Plot # 53 I visited his grave site. Jerry Toole was a past American Legion member.

Also, in the FODPAL site: Kaiserslautern Post GR01 POW/MIA Ceremony on Legion TV. Click FODPAL site. Click Video. In the FODPAL site Click Photos Ireland

National Day of Commemoration, and Post IR03 Commemorates War Dead.

Irish Veterans Charter #1 plans to dedicate (Spring, 2015) to the memory of U.S. SEAL Lt. Michael P. Murphy, Medal of Honor, Afghanistan, 2005. His parents from the States plans to bring the MOH at the dedication ceremony. A special evening dinner is planned at the White House Hotel town of Kinsale (West Cork). Commander Ron Howko (Commodore John Barry Post IR-03) is a guest speaker at the event. For more information of the event, contact Declan Hughes Declan@irishveteans.org or James Sikora james@irishveterans.org

I stress the importance of membership in the Posts, Department, and the National Organization. Membership is our Voice on Capitol Hill. I encourage the Posts to transmit each month to the Department Membership Chairman (Joe Dan Brown). The National Commander asks the Legion Posts to contact their Post members and Unpaid members to renew their Post dues before the 31st of December 2014. Check out the Online Renewal at: www.legion.org

Commanders & Fellow Legionnaires, many thanks for what you do for your Posts and the communities you serve. The Department of France Commander asks to continue membership and Post Renewals. Retention maintains strong membership within the Posts, Department, and the Organization. The Good Fellow Award must be submitted to the Department of France before the 3rd DEC. It's a Recognition Award to a non-member of the Organization who had demonstrated outstanding service (Volunteer work) to the Legion Post. Please prepare the students for the Oratorical Contest (Department level, February 2015), Boy State and Girl State candidate. With a sad note, the family and I will be departing Germany to the States after New Year's. I have been re-assigned to William Beaumont Army Medical Center (El Paso, Texas). I will greatly miss the Commanders and Comrades (Department of France) and Posts. Happy Holiday's to you and your family. God Bless America.

Department Officers - 2015 Membership Year

COMMANDER James M. Settle GR42 james.settle@kabelbw.de	ADJUTANT Maxwell Rice GR79 colwichboy@yahoo.com	NECMAN John Miller GR1982 miller-roth@t-online.de	ALT. NECMAN Liam Kane IR63 commliam@gmail.com
VICE COMMANDER AT LARGE Joe D. Brown GR79 GR03 GR07 GR13 GR30 GR42 & New Post Development Joedan.pascal1@googlemail.com	VICE COMMANDER Stephen Ward GR01 GR20 PO01 FR05 SP292 IR63 wardtrans@yahoo.com	VICE COMMANDER Quincy Foster GR05 GR01 GR02 GR14 FR01 IT01 achange@qcfooster.com	VICE COMMANDER Jerry Aman GR09 GR06 GR1982 CH01 GC01 IR02 BE02 IR03 Jerrya503@aol.com
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SERVICE OFFICER George Hall GR03 hallgt@hotmail.com	JUDGE ADVOCATE George W. Seeburger GR14 gwseeburger@gmx.de		SERGEANT-AT-ARMS Hal Rittenberg GR09 rittenberg@t-online.de



DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER *Quincy Foster*

Greetings to all Legionnaires,

I attended the annual Department (Veterans Day) Memorial at Lorrain Cemetery, Saint Avold France in November. The attendance was greater than expected and it turned out to be a beautiful day, thank God! A good number of Air Force personnel showed up along with several other groups. The HOG's were there in a great number they came from K-Town along with Legion rider and GR01 Legionnaires. VFW was also represented and many families. I was told that this was the best turnout for Veterans Day in a long time. After the Ceremony we were invited to GR01's post home in K-Town for a enjoyable meal and a wonderful Legion family get together. It Turned out all the HOG's showed along with the Department Commander and some Dept. officers, Auxiliary and other Legionnaires all showed up to top off the day. Our thanks to GR01! Also don't forget to visit their

website: <http://www.kaiserlauternamericanlegion.org/>

Myself and Dept. Chaplain Ron Moore took a bus to France 18 November 2014 for their Post Elections on behalf of the Department of France the 19th of November 2014. We returned 20 November 2014. The elections was held at the Pershing Hall in the Myron Herrick room, which is where it all started for the American Legion. I conducted the Election ceremony which was followed by the annual awards ceremony of the Myron Herrick award that was presented to Col. McAloon. Myself and Commander Hale along with a French Ambassador placed flowers at three Plaques located in Pershing Hall. It was really a well-planned and organized day thanks to challenging efforts of Commander Carl Hale, Finance Officer Richard Allen and especially Adjutant Curtis Bartosik who arranged most of this great event. Curtis has also arranged to have the use of the Pershing Hall for meetings three times each year. Everything was a day to remember including the meal for 50 Euro, entertainment and the after party.





DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER *Jerry Aman*

On 11 and 16 November GR 09 members participated in two events honoring WW II fallen American and German soldiers.

On Veterans Day 12 members paid tribute to seven US Army Air Force service members who died when their B-17 "Flying Fortress" bomber, number 44-8015, crashed near the town of Pfaffenhofen, located near Neu-Ulm.

The bomber, assigned to the 452nd Bomber Group, 8th US Air Force, at the Deopham Green Air Field, 15 km southeast of Norwich left the airbase on 22 February 1945 for a bombing run over Germany. Although the aircraft had been "patched up" after being hit with Flak on an earlier mission it was not considered "flight worthy" however the ten member crew volunteered to participate in this important mission and joined 500 other bombers. Because of heavy fog over its assigned target flight # 44-8015 diverted and joined a formation heading to Ulm. Three minutes from its target the flight encountered heavy clouds and the pilot was unable to see the aircraft in front of them and at 17,000 feet encountered the "prop wash" of the aircraft and broke into two parts. Three crewmembers who were standing near the midsection of the aircraft parachuted to safety, the other seven perished in the crash.

After several years of research local German historians Ulrich Seitz and Ralf Kull were able to put together a very interesting account covering the history of the aircraft and crew and in March 2011 the town of Pfaffenhofen placed a stone monument honoring the crew at the site of the crash. Coincidentally the nephew of one of the perished crewmembers happened to be visiting Germany at the time and the town was able to contact him and he was present at the unveiling.

During the wreath laying ceremony the Pfaffenhofen Mayor thanked GR 09 for remembering and honoring these fallen soldiers. GR 09 agreed that they will help maintain the stone monument and will continue with the yearly ceremony.



On 16 November 2013 on German Volkstrauertag (Memorial Day) eleven members of the Post GR 09 participated in a wreath laying ceremony at the Ulm Artillery Monument honoring those soldiers who died fighting in wars.

The Traditional Ulmer Artillery Association was formed in 1909 and since 2009 GR 09 has participated in this solemn affair. With this friendship the American Legion also promotes the understanding of the Legion's principles to our German hosts.

In a speech to the assembled participants Oberstleutnant (Lieutenant Colonel) Werner Christmann thanked Post GR 09 for their presence and support to comrades. After the ceremony all GR 09 members were invited to the Artillery club house for social interaction.





DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN *Ronald Moore*

Greetings Comrades, Sisters and Brothers of the American Legion Family,

Wow, what happened to 2014? The year went by in a flash and all of a sudden there are only 31 days to finish up all of the things that were planned and finally complete all of those "Good Intentions" announced at the beginning of the year or at the acceptance of a new duty. Thank God for those blessings you and your family have received and pray to God for help in your endeavors for the rest of the year.

There are many religious festivities that take place during the month of December. Some we are familiar with, some that may seem strange to us although a fellow veteran may adhere to the faith it incorporates. A short description in alphabetical order:

- Christian- Christmas, celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ and not Santa Claus as Coca Cola would have us believe. During Advent, an additional candle is lit on the four Sundays preceding Christmas.
- Jewish- HANUKAH celebrates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after it was won back from the Syrian Greeks in 164 BC. A special eight branched candlestick with eight candles where one on the first evening, two on the second, etc. are lit in celebration.

The main thing I want to bring to mind is that The American Legion serves all veterans and their families regardless of religion or religious belief. This is a season to think about our loved ones and friends and it is a time of reflection, thankfulness and prayer for

the good that we have received. That is why American Legion chaplains have to operate as non-denominational, non-sectarian officials in all public ceremonies unless officiating at a specified religious function, such as a Christian (at the request of the family) funeral.

It is also a time to think about those who may not be as fortunate as we are. We may be able to celebrate with family and friends, but others may not be able to do so. Look around at our service personnel. veterans and Post members to ensure that every one of them is remembered and included in our celebrations, as well as those who may have lost partners, be sick or in homes.

I wish all of you a very blessed December and a wonderful New Year. May all of your wishes that are good for you be granted. Just remember that Christmas and HANUKAH are religious ceremonies, not competitions to see who can get the most expensive presents. Keep the amount of your credit card debt and Lay-a-Ways at zero or as low as possible, so that your New Year will also be happy.

May God bless you and your family and keep all safe. God bless our servicemen and women, as well as their families, no matter where they serve.

Reverend Ronald Moore,
Department of France Chaplain
S.A.L. Detachment of France Chaplain
Mobile: +49-(0)172-7417812
Email: gypsy_moore@yahoo.de

Special Days/Legion Events: 7th- Remember Pearl Harbor (Dec 7, 1941); 15th- Bill of Rights Day; 20th- Invasion of Panama (Operation Just Cause-1989); 31st- New Year's Eve

Christian Religious Days: 6th- St. Nicholas Day & 2nd Sunday of Advent; 8th- Immaculate Conception (Cath); 12th- Advent Fast begins (Orth); 21st Yule; 25th- Christmas; 28th- Holy Innocents; 31st Watch Night

Jewish Holidays (Year 5775): 17th (Sunset)-24th- HANUKAH

Islamic Holidays: None that I know of.

Please visit the church, temple, synagogue or mosque of your choice.

Post Everlasting reported from Oct 30th to November 27th:

Francis Corrigan, FR01 16 November 2014

Prayers for the Sick & Ill:
George Hall, GR-03 DSO

Joe D. Brown, GR79, PDC and present DVCAL
Liam Kane, IR63 Dept (FR) altNEC
Martin Prak, GR05 PECman
James Settle, GR42 Dept (FR) CDR
George Seeburger, GR14 Dept (FR) JA

are undergoing, were undergoing or were scheduled for, medical treatment.

No other deaths or other illnesses were reported to me, but we continue to pray for those comrades, family members and friends of the Legion who have passed away or are ill.

Department of France American Legion Riders (ALR) and ALPE Messenger Service

We're Department of France Riders, ALPE Messengers and ALPE Way Stations and it all breaks down to one simple question, "What can we do to support our Legion Family, service personnel and veterans?"

OK, it's getting cold, dark and wet, so riding isn't the fun it was on a bright sunny day. Well, most Riders have an alternate means of transportation during the winter months while our trusty steeds are relaxing and recovering from a busy season. But we didn't put away the fact that we are dynamic members of The American Legion family, so we need to continue to promote collections for the American Legacy Scholarship Fund. That is, and remains, the main purpose for the establishment of the ALR Rider program.

Granted Riders, Poker Runs and Legacy Runs are out during the winter months, but why not try raffles and donation cans at all meetings, membership drives and community events. You might not be able to park your

trusty steed in front of the event, but your savoir faire and Rider vest will help generate discussion and interest.

AS I mentioned in the November newsletter, Post Commanders and Adjutants, it is easy to become an ALPE Messenger Way Station, just start collecting donations for the 2015 Legacy Scholarship Fund in your Post and at any membership or community functions. Messengers are not required to be Riders and Posts do not have to have a Riders Chapter to be a Way Station, so it is easy to enhance your community image.

Do you have any questions or suggestions? Just drop me a line.

Merry Christmas and Happy HANUKAH.

Ron "Gypsy" Moore, AL Rider Director and Chief Messenger

Post Everlasting †

I regret to inform you that our Paris Post 1, 42 year PUFLL member, Mr. Francis J. Corrigan, transferred to Post Everlasting on Sunday evening, 16 November 2014. He was a Vietnam era U.S. Army veteran, and 78 years of age. Mr. Corrigan was also a loyal 40&8 member. He was also a Life member of VFW Post 605.

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



DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE PAST COMMANDERS CLUB

Congratulations to Casby Logan as being elected PCC President
For the remaining 2015 Membership Year

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, Past Commanders Club pin and membership card

Renewal dues for the Past Commanders Club is only \$10.00

Our next meeting will be on 21 March 2015 at the Third Legion DEC

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE... *David Greaux, PCC Secretary "2015"*



DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER Gary Miller

The new Finance SOP has been approved and distributed To all Posts. I ask those individuals that have an expense Account to submit their receipts in a timely manner. I know of two Vice Commanders that have expenses That have yet to submit them to me.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES – Finance 14 August 2014

1. MEMORANDUM FOR EXPENSES FOR AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE OFFICERS, POSTS AND/OR OTHER LEGIONNAIRES THAT ARE LISTED ON EACH YEARS BUDGET.
2. MONEY AMOUNTS CAN VARY FROM YEAR TO YEAR IAW THE APPROVED YEARLY BUDGET.
3. RE-IMBURSABLE EXPENSES – TRAVEL, LODGING, MEALS – MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY RECEIPTS.
 - A. VISITS TO OTHERS POSTS
 - B. LEGION CEREMONIES (MEMORIAL DAY, ST. AVOLD, VETERANS DAY, ORATORICAL ETC)
 - C. NATIONAL CONVENTION (NON-CALL IN)-THOSE OFFICERS THAT HAVE A BUDGET.
 - D. NATIONAL COMMANDER’S VISIT (NECMAN, COMMANDER, VCAL, DRIVERS).
 - E. PURCHASE OF APPROVED SUPPLIES.
 - F. OTHER BUDGETED ITEMS (POSTAGE).
 - G. OTHER ITEMS VOTED AND APPROVED AT A DEPT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (DEC) MEETING.
4. ALLOWANCES ARE TO BE PAID TO COMMANDER, ADJUTANT AND FINANCE IAW WITH THE CURRENT YEAR BUDGET.
5. EXPENSES THAT ARE NOT RE-IMBURSABLE
 - A. TRAVEL COSTS TO A DEC MEETING.
 - B. TRAVEL COSTS TO ATTEND THE DEPARTMENT CONVENTION.
 - C. TRAVEL COSTS TO NATIONAL THAT RESULT IN A ‘CALL-IN’. THOSE TRAVEL COSTS THAT NATIONAL PAYS FOR.
6. MEMBERSHIP TRANSMITTALS TO DEPARTMENT SHALL BE SENT TO THE DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN ON A MONTHLY BASIS. THE TRANSMITTALS WILL BE SENT BY MAIL AND AN ELECTRONIC COPY SENT TO THE CHAIRMAN.
 - A. EACH MEMBER TRANSMITTED TO DEPT WILL INCLUDE THE DEPT PER-CAPITA AMOUNT (CURRENTLY \$19.50 PER MEMBER). OF WHICH \$13.50 WILL BE SENT TO NATIONAL FOR EACH MEMBER AND \$6.00 FOR THE DEPT.
7. ONLINE RENEWALS - THE FINANCE OFFICER WILL RECORD ALL ONLNE RENEWALS ON THE 1ST AND THE 16TH OF EACH MONTH. AN EXCEL SPREADSHEET WILL BE MAINTAINED, RECORDING THE NUMBER OF RENEWALS FOR EACH POST AND THE PER-CAPITA MONEY OWED TO THE POSTS FOR EACH RENEWAL FOR THE STATED TIMES FRAMES. THE ONLINE RENEWAL AMOUNTS FOR THE PER-CAPITA PER POST WILL BE CALCULATED AND A CHECK WILL BE SENT FROM DEPT TO EACH POST AT THE END OF EACH QUARTER OF THE CURRENT MEMBERSHIP YEAR. FOR EXAMPLE:
 - A. Post GR06 annual dues are \$30.00 per year.
 - B. Online renewals for the period of 1 July-30 September totaled 50 members.
 - C. \$13.50 of the \$30.00 goes right to National. National will send Dept. a check for \$825.00 (\$16.50 x 50 members). Of that \$825.00 - \$300.00 will be kept by Dept. (\$6.00 for Dept. per-capita for each member x 50). \$825.00 - \$300.00 = \$525.00 check to be sent to Post 6. So for each member renewed online at \$30.00 - \$19.50 is kept by National and the Dept. (\$13.50 for National and \$6.00 for Dept.). The \$30.00 - \$19.50 = \$10.50 owed to Post 6 for each online renewal.

The American Legion

National High School Oratorical Contest

"A constitutional speech contest"

The American Legion Oratorical Contest exists to develop deeper knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school students. Since 1938, the program has presented participants with an academic speaking challenge that teaches important leadership qualities, the history of our nation's laws, the ability to think and speak clearly, and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship.

Young orators earn some of the most generous college scholarships available to high school students. Over \$138,000 in scholarships can be awarded each year. The overall national contest winner gets an \$18,000 scholarship. Second place takes home \$16,000, and third gets \$14,000. Each department (state) winner who is certified into and participates in the national contest's first round receives a \$1,500 scholarship. Those who advance past the first round receive an additional \$1,500 scholarship. The American Legion's National Organization awards the scholarships, which can be used at any college or university in the United States. High school students under age 20 are eligible.

Speaking subjects must be on some aspect of the U.S. Constitution, with some emphasis on the duties and obligations of citizens to our government. Speeches are eight to 10 minutes long; three- to five-minute speeches on an assigned topic also are part of the contest.

The Prepared Oration

The oration must be on some aspect of the Constitution, with emphasis on a citizen's duties and obligations to our government. The same subject and oration used in the department contest must be used in the national contest.

Contestants may have a copy of their prepared oration while waiting in the first holding room. They may consult the copy until they exit to begin the contest. The copy will then be surrendered to the contest official monitoring the first holding room.

Quotations must always be indicated as such. Where quotations are more than 10 words in length, the author's name must be given in the manuscript and cited orally.

It is acceptable to utilize or incorporate short phrases in a foreign language to develop the argument, establish a point, etc. It should be understood that the vast majority of the prepared oration and/or assigned topic must still be delivered in English. Singing is not permitted and will result in immediate disqualification. The contestant may, however, quote a verse(s) of a song(s) provided proper attribution is made.

Assigned Topics

The assigned topic discourse must not consume less than three (3) minutes or more than five (5) minutes for delivery. The purpose of the assigned topic discourse is to test the speaker's knowledge of the subject, the extent of his or her research, and the ability to discuss the topic as related to the basic principles of government under the Constitution.

Assigned Topics for 2015 Oratorical Contest

Amendment 5

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

Amendment 6

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining Witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

Amendment 8

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

Amendment 19

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Rules and Regulations

Eligibility

Eligible participants must be citizens of or lawful permanent residents of the United States. All contestants must be bona fide students herein described as any student under the age of 20 years on the date of the national contest who is presently enrolled in a high school or junior high school (public, parochial, military, private or home school). The curriculum of the school must be considered to be of high school level, commencing with grade 9 and terminating with grade 12. Students must be enrolled in high school or junior high school during the time of participation at any level of The American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest. Contestants must either be legally domiciled within or attend an educational institution within the department that they enter competition. Contestants can enter competition through only one department.

High school students that graduate early during the school year are eligible to compete if they are not enrolled in a college, university, trade school or other institution of higher learning at the time of the department finals contest.

The three finalists of the national contest are ineligible for further participation at any level.

Regulations

The use of notes, amplification, lectern or speaker's stand or any manner of prompting is not permitted. Props are not permitted.

Contestants and audience members may not use any form of electronic/digital data gathering, receiving and/or transmitting equipment.

Contestants must deliver their prepared oration in no fewer than eight minutes and no more than 10 minutes. The assigned topic runs no fewer than three minutes and no more than five minutes.

What to wear

Uniforms are not permitted. Appropriate business attire is required for all contestants. Contestants may not wear awards and medals from previous competitions.

National Finals

The 2015 National Finals is April 10-12 in Indianapolis, at the Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel, 2544 Executive Dr, Indianapolis, IN 46241. Quarterfinal and semifinal contests are scheduled for Saturday, April 11, with the finals scheduled for Sunday, April 12.

All contestants and chaperones will arrive the Friday of the contest weekend. All contestants and chaperones will stay at the official contest hotel.

A mandatory pre-contest orientation session for all contestants will take place the Friday evening of the contest weekend. A banquet honoring all contestants will be Sunday afternoon, following the national championship contest. All contestants and chaperones will depart for home later that afternoon.

State and Local Oratorical Contests

Arrangements for contests leading up to the department finals shall be the responsibility of each American Legion department.

Each department may certify one contestant to the national contest. If for any reason the department finals winner is unable to compete in the national contest, the runner-up may be substituted following approval from the National Americanism Commission. A runner-up accepted into national competition will be entitled to all national awards, entitlements and compensation that the department winner would have received had he or she participated.

Department of France Competition – TBD

Stuttgart Post 6 Competition – Tuesday, 13 Jan. 2015

For more information on the American Legion Oratorical Contest please visit the American Legion National Website at www.legion.org. Post 6 Oratorical Director: Douglas Clemence – refclemence@yahoo.de



The Flanders Field Post BE02 continues to grow in membership and expand new programs. Our Post membership stands now at 70 members, up from 1 member less than 2 years ago. Please visit our Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/American-Legion-Flanders-Fields-Post-BE02/152286224925159>

Our Adopt-a Grave program continues to take notice from numerous newspapers across the United States. The program has been mentioned in newspapers from California to New York. The American Legion Post BE02 family has also adopted a "Known But to God" grave at the Flanders Field American Cemetery. For us, this Unknown Soldier represents all our POWs and Missing In Action.

Post BE02 membership participated in the Trunk or Treat at Chievres Airbase on 31 October. We had over 1000 children and adults visit our table for some treats. A special thanks go out to Comrade Wilcox, Comrade Rodriguez (and wife), Comrade Haigood and Comrade Carter for their help.

The American Legion Riders Chapter also participated in a Trunk or Treat at USAG Brussels compound. In addition to giving treats to the many goblins and ghosts, the Riders also sold hotdogs and hamburgers during the event.

American Legion members from Flanders Field Post BE02 along with members of Venture Crew 511, Daughters of the American Revolution and Sons of the American Legion participated in the Ieper Poppy Parade and ceremony on Armistice Day on 11 November. A video clip of the parade can be seen at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZAHUEVPJPo>

Members of the American Legion Rides "Flanders Field" participated along with the Boy Scouts in the Veterans Day ceremony at the Flanders Field American Cemetery.

The American Legion Post BE02 invited the U.S. community to their "Meet & Greet", at the 3-Star Restaurant on the US Army Garrison Brussels on Saturday, 22 November. This event was for all members, potential members and friends to come together for a little American Legion fellowship. After a fantastic dinner, members helped wrap gifts for the upcoming Orphanage Christmas Party to be held on 17 December.

Post BE02 is proud to announce the chartering of the Venture Crew 511. Venturing is a youth development program of the Boy Scouts of America for young men and women who are 13 and have completed the eighth grade, or age 14 through 20 years of age. Venturing's purpose is to provide positive experiences to help young people mature and to prepare them to become responsible and caring adults. Visit their Facebook page at: https://www.facebook.com/groups/198896706804536/892592327434967/?notif_t=group_activity

Each weekend the American Legion Riders explore the many fascinating cities and sites in Belgium and Northern France. For a view of their adventures, watch the video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E3umq1tRs1Q>





Stuttgart Post GR06

Halloween 2014



Veterans Day 2014



JOHN WAYNE POST GR 79

Thanksgiving 2014





The tide may be turning in the effort to allow all honorably discharged veterans to shop at the online store operated by the Army and Air Force

Exchange Service. “It appears there are no insurmountable hurdles,” said a source familiar with a meeting held 8 OCT between Russell Beland, deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for military manpower and personnel, and officials with the Navy Exchange Service Command, Marine Corps Exchange and AAFES.

In May, AAFES officials submitted a formal proposal to defense officials to allow all honorably discharged veterans to shop online at its exchange store only. The proposal does not extend to brick-and-mortar stores. But concerns subsequently were raised in some quarters within the Defense Department that expanding the online access would lead to “benefit creep” — access for veterans to brick-and-mortar exchange stores and even to other quality-of-life benefits, sources said in August. In the wake of the “very productive meeting” 8 OCT officials from all three exchange services asked defense officials to delay the next meeting of the DoD Executive Resale Board for a couple of weeks to give them time to work on remaining issues, the source said. That meeting was previously scheduled for early November. Information was not immediately available from defense officials confirming whether the meeting has been delayed.

About 90 percent of honorably discharged veterans left the service before qualifying for retirement, and thus don’t qualify for exchange shopping privileges. “Why not give them a modest benefit to honor their service?” said AAFES director Tom Shull, in a previous interview with Military Times. He noted that among this group are many veterans who have deployed four, five or more times to war in the post-9/11 era. The profits that could be generated by this increased customer base would help the active-duty and retired community in several ways, Shull said, to improve the brick-and-mortar stores and also provide more funding to morale, welfare and recreation programs on military bases. AAFES officials contend the decision could be made with a policy change. DoD’s examination of the idea will include a legal review to determine whether that is the case, or whether a change in law would be needed.

AAFES officials are also in ongoing discussions with the Veterans Affairs Department’s Veterans Canteen Service about sharing revenue if the proposal is accepted. AAFES officials have unofficially relaunched the shopmyexchange.com website, providing more predictability for customers that items will be available; easier navigation; fewer clicks to checkout; and same-day shipping for many items. The Navy Exchange also has officially relaunched its shopping website, myNavyExchange.com, but it’s not known whether NEXCOM also will seek to expand shopping privileges for veterans on its site. [Source: MilitaryTimes | Karen Jowers | October 17, 2014]

Sons of The American Legion

The Sons of The American Legion membership for 2015 currently stands at 92,986 members or 26% on October 30, 2014. At present, the Sons are running 2,256 members ahead of this same date last year. Thirty detachments have already achieved this last membership goal for 2015.

The first SAL renewal postcard mailing for the 2015 membership year was mailed on September 30, 2014. Over 311,000 SAL renewal postcards were mailed to every member who has not renewed for 2015. We are receiving many renewals from this first postcard mailing and this should be reflected on the next membership target date on November 14 (35% membership goal).

Legion: No amnesty for illegal immigrants

INDIANAPOLIS (Nov. 20, 2014) -- The head of the nation's largest veterans service organization today questioned the wisdom of the White House putting politics above national security if it carries through with its plan to give amnesty to as many as 5 million illegal immigrants through an executive order.

“At a time when ISIS, al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations are killing innocent Americans, it makes no sense to let our guard down and send a message that the United States is an open, soft target,” American Legion National Commander Michael D. Helm said. “A message was sent during the recent elections, and it clearly wasn't that Americans want amnesty. The American Legion urges the president in the strongest possible terms to put our security, and our citizens' interests and wishes, ahead of providing amnesty for millions of immigrants here illegally.”

Helm – who is on a Far East tour that includes Vietnam, Laos and the Philippines – was just as adamant in stating that The American Legion fully

supports legal immigration. “The United States has benefited enormously from citizens who have obeyed the law in the journey to becoming Americans,” he said. “There have been many prominent Legionnaires who legally migrated from other countries, including one of my recent predecessors, Fang Wong. I just visited with a new American citizen who is the wife of an American government official working in Laos. Her first husband was killed by communists in a re-education camp. She is one of the most patriotic Americans that I have met. My sister-in-law is a U.S. citizen from Panama.

“These patriotic Americans help make our country great. One common characteristic is that they have earned their citizenship the legal way. In fact, we have reached out to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to offer our help in bringing immigrants to full citizenship. Rewarding illegal immigration is a slap in the face to those who have obeyed the law and patiently went through the process.”

Legion Meets on Arlington Expansion:

American Legion Legislative staff, in conjunction with members of the Military Coalition and several other veterans' groups, met with staff from Arlington National Cemetery to discuss future expansion plans and receive an update on the expansion status. One major expansion, the Millennium Project which would expand the northern part of Arlington to increase capacity to extend the life of the cemetery into the 2030's has already broken ground, has full funding in hand and is on track to be completed on schedule in the coming years. A southern expansion project, centered around land ceded to Arlington by the Navy Annex, is more complex. The southern expansion project has more obstacles, including coordination with the surrounding Arlington County over potential land swaps to align parcels of land in a more conducive manner for unified operations. Other concerns included a potential maintenance facility for street cars Arlington was

intending to put on adjacent land, although the street car project in Arlington appears now to have stalled and may be permanently scratched.

In any case, even if both expansion projects are achieved with optimal results, beyond these projects, there is no clear picture for expansion. The nation's centerpiece of honor, Arlington National Cemetery, could run out of space for internments completely in the 2040's or 2050's. Beyond that, officials admit the public will need to decide whether to continue expanding, a process that will get exceedingly expensive in the Northern Virginia real estate market if a contiguous cemetery is to be maintained, or shutting new internments down and maintaining the existing cemetery as a national shrine and monument. These questions will likely be on the minds of a new Commission being formed to examine the future of Arlington National Cemetery.

ISIS Battle Predicted to Last Four Years

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff estimates the U.S.-led fight against Islamic militants in Iraq and Syria will last up to four years.

[Army](#) Gen. Martin Dempsey made the estimate on Wednesday during an interview at Atlantic Media's Defense One conference in Washington, D.C. about the fight against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, or ISIS.

The U.S. started launching airstrikes against ISIS in Iraq and Syria to thwart the organization's advances in some areas, though the militants still control vast parts of northern and western Iraq and eastern Syria.

Under Secretary of Intelligence Mike Vickers later agreed with Dempsey's estimate warning about the time it will take to train a force inside Iraq and Syria to defeat ISIS.

Dempsey first mentioned the timeline in regards to the challenges the military faces in funding the many conflicts across the globe. He listed the deployment of more American troops to Europe and Africa, as well as the "protracted probably three or four year campaign in the Middle East."

ISIS recently circulated video showing a fighter [beheading](#) the American aid worker and former Army [Ranger](#) Peter Kassig, the latest in a series of executions of Western prisoners.

The U.S. has about 1,400 troops in Iraq, most of which are serving as advisers to Iraqi and Kurdish forces in Baghdad and Irbil. President Barack Obama this month authorized the deployment of up to 1,500 more troops to better advise -- and train -- Iraqi forces. The additional service members are expected to deploy to the country over the next 30 to 45 days.

Republicans such as Rep. Howard "Buck" McKeon of California have criticized Obama for refusing to authorize troops to serve in combat roles in the region.

"How can you successfully execute the mission you've been given -- to 'degrade and ultimately destroy' ISIL -- when some of your best options are taken off the table?" the retiring chairman of the House Armed Services Committee [asked](#) Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel at a hearing last week.

Dempsey, who earlier this week returned from a trip to the Middle East, where he met with senior Iraqi political and military leaders, defended the plan of having American troops advise and assist Iraqi forces, which he said have conducted both humanitarian and ground operations.

The general pushed back against criticism that the administration doesn't have a strategy for the mission, known as Operation Inherent Resolve. He cited a 10-page document from the National Security Administration, a 503-page document from combatant commanders, and some 190 planners from 30 nations working at Central Command in Tampa.

"But here's what I'll tell you about the strategy -- it's going to change," he said. "The objective is not going to change ... I'm not obsessing so much about what's in the middle."

When discussing Iraq, Dempsey said, "This is my third shot at Iraq, and that's probably a poor choice of words."

He also blamed himself for not doing a better job of articulating to lawmakers and the public the damage that across-the-board budget cuts will have on the military. "At some level, I haven't been persuasive enough," he said.

The Obama administration has requested \$5.6 billion to conduct military operations against the extremist group. Most of the money would go to the Defense Department.

That's in addition to the Pentagon's fiscal 2015 defense budget of about \$554 billion, including a base budget of \$496 billion and a war budget of about \$59 billion. Congress hasn't yet approved the spending plan for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1.

The Defense Department's proposed spending plan for coming years is tens of billions of dollars more than the budget caps set by the Budget Control Act -- a trend Dempsey suggested is likely to continue. "We need additional topline for the emerging and new requirements," he said, referring to the budget limit.

Dempsey's comments regarding the length of the conflict in Iraq and Syria echoed those made by his successor as Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Raymond Odierno, who in a previous panel said, "We believe that's something that will go on for quite some time -- years, not months."

COMMISSARY FAST FACTS

COMMISSARY VALUE BRAND RETURNS FOR MORE SAVINGS

In response to growing patron demand for products comparable to the low-cost private label items sold in civilian stores, the Defense Commissary Agency is re-energizing an "old friend" known as Commissary Value Brand. Starting in December, commissaries worldwide will highlight about 300 Value Brand products in 33 categories such as frozen vegetables, pizza and entrees; pet foods; health and beauty care; cereals; cleaning supplies; soft drinks; coffee; canned fruit, soup and fish; disposable lunch and storage bags; condiments and more. "We are rolling out a renewed program that will offer consistent, quality, everyday low-cost pricing on name brand products equal to or better than private label items in commercial stores," said DeCA Director and CEO Joseph H. Jeu. Commissary patrons looking for Commissary Value Brand items will see new shelf signage and, in some instances, special displays. Shoppers can go to <http://www.commissaries.com/shopping/value-brand.cfm> for a list of brand items, FAQs and a video of the program.

RING IN THE HOLIDAYS WITH SAVINGS AT YOUR COMMISSARY

The holidays are right around the corner, and special commissary promotions make the season merrier for military members and their families who aim to save money. "We've got some great promotions lined up for the holiday season," said Tracie Russ, DeCA sales director. "Customers will be able to save quite a bit of money for their holiday entertainment and meal needs, thanks to our

industry partners." Patrons are reminded to check the DeCA website, www.commissaries.com, select the "Shopping" link and click on the "Sales & Events" tab for the latest promotions. Customers are asked to check their local commissary for dates and times for all promotions. Overseas stores may have substitute events. For the full story, go to:

http://www.commissaries.com/press_room/press_release/2014/DeCA_65_14.cfm.

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR MILITARY CHILDREN APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE DEC. 15

Applications for the 2015 Scholarships for Military Children Program become available starting Dec. 15 at commissaries worldwide or online at <http://www.militaryscholar.org>. The program awards at least one \$2,000 scholarship at each commissary with qualified applicants. An applicant must be a dependent, unmarried child, younger than 21 - or 23, if enrolled as a full-time student at a college or university - of a service member on active duty, Reserve or Guard member, retiree or survivor of a military member who died while on active duty, or survivor of a retiree. Applications must be turned in to a commissary by close of business Feb. 13, 2015. Packages must be hand-delivered or shipped via U.S. Postal Service or other delivery methods, not emailed or faxed. Applicants should ensure that they and their sponsor are enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System database and have a military ID card. For more information, call Scholarship Managers at 856-616-9311 or email them at:

militaryscholar@scholarshipmanagers.com.

Court Rules Wearing Unearned Medals Is a Crime

Lying about receiving a military medal is protected speech, but there's no right to wear a combat decoration that hasn't been earned, a federal appeals court said Wednesday. The difference, said a divided panel of the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, is that lying is speech, but wearing a medal is conduct, according to a report in the San Francisco Chronicle. The decision in an Idaho case returned the court to a controversy that led to a 2012 Supreme Court ruling and a rewriting of the law by Congress in 2013.

The defendant, Elven Swisher, served in the [Marine Corps](#) from 1954 to 1957, the Chronicle reported. In 2001, he applied for [disability benefits](#), claiming he had been wounded in a secret mission to North Korea in 1955, after the Korean War ended. The [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) granted the request in 2004 after Swisher submitted what appeared to be a military document saying he had been awarded a Silver Star and other medals for his actions.

But the VA learned in 2006 that the document was forged and ordered Swisher to repay the benefits, the paper noted. He was later convicted and sentenced to a year in prison on charges that included stealing government funds and wearing unauthorized medals at a veterans' event.

The appeals court upheld Swisher's conviction in 2009, but he filed a new appeal after the court, in a 2010 case, struck down a federal law that made it a crime to lie about earning military decorations. The U.S. Supreme Court, in a 6-3 ruling, agreed with the Ninth Circuit in June 2012 that the law violated freedom of speech. But three months later, in another case, a different Ninth Circuit panel upheld the ban on wearing unearned military medals.

Congress has since rewritten the law to prohibit lying about military honors for financial gain, while repealing the ban on wearing medals one hasn't earned. But the repeal didn't help Swisher, whose conviction under the former law was upheld Wednesday.

POW/MIA Update



Army Air Forces 1st Lts. William D. Bernier, 28, of Augusta, Mont., Bryant E. Poulsen, 22, of Salt Lake City, Utah, and Herbert V. Young Jr., 23, of Clarkdale, Ariz., and Tech Sgts. Charles L. Johnston, 20, of Pittsburgh, Penn., and Hugh F. Moore, 36, of Elkton, Md., Staff Sgt. John E. Copeland, 21, of Dearing, Kan., and Sgt. Charles A. Gardner, 32, of San Francisco, Calif., have been accounted for and were buried with full military honors.

On April 10, 1944, Bernier, along with 11 other B-24D Liberator crew members took off from Texter Strip, Nazdab Air Field, New Guinea, on a mission to attack an anti-aircraft site at Hansa Bay. The aircraft was shot down by enemy anti-aircraft fire over the Madang Province, New Guinea. Four of the crewmen were able to parachute from the aircraft, but were reported to have died in captivity.

Following World War II, the Army Graves Registration Service (AGRS) conducted investigations and recovered the remains of three of the missing airmen. In May 1949, AGRS concluded the remaining nine crew members were unrecoverable.

In 2001, a U.S.-led team located wreckage of a B-24D that bore the tail number of this aircraft. After several surveys, the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) teams excavated the site and recovered human remains and non-biological material evidence.

To identify the Bernier's remains, scientists from JPAC and the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence and forensic identification tools, including, mitochondrial DNA, which matched Bernier's cousins.

Vermont Teddy Bear Launches New Line of Bears to Help American Legion Programs

Sales of The American Legion bear to support veterans, service members and their communities

INDIANAPOLIS (Nov. 5, 2014) – The [Vermont Teddy Bear Company](#), the nation's largest producer of handcrafted teddy bears, is showing its patriotic colors with the introduction of a new line of limited edition bears to support The American Legion.

Wearing a white T-shirt and uniform cap, both featuring The American Legion emblem, the loveable handmade bear makes a thoughtful gift for a veteran, child or grandchild, or a meaningful keepsake for any Legion member or supporter. The bear's cap can be personalized with a city, state, district, American Legion post or name of choice.

In addition, Vermont Teddy Bear has designed a line of military inspired bears from all five branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, as well as a camouflage bear, also with proceeds to benefit The American Legion.

"We are proud to support The American Legion with our specially designed, one-of-a-kind, military themed bears," said Bill Shouldice, CEO of Vermont Teddy Bear Company. "Our bears have been handmade right here in the USA for more than 30 years, and now we are honored to partner with the nation's largest veterans organization focused on service to veterans, service members and communities."

Twenty percent of proceeds from sales of the bears will be donated to The American Legion to help the organization fulfill its commitment to assist those who have served, and those who are currently serving, in the U.S. Armed Forces, and to promote patriotic values in communities everywhere.

"The American Legion has a broad range of programs for America's children, veterans and military families, and we welcome the support of Vermont Teddy Bear," American Legion National Commander Mike Helm said. "Each purchase of these wonderfully crafted bears directly supports American Legion programs, providing the necessary resources to continue our devotion to our fellow service members and veterans."

These specially designed bears are only available through Dec. 24, 2015. They can be ordered online by visiting www.VermontTeddyBear.com/Legion or by calling toll-free at 1-800-829-BEAR (2327).

About Vermont Teddy Bear Company

Vermont Teddy Bear, the largest hand crafter of Teddy Bears in North America, lovingly designs, stuffs and stitches every Bear in Vermont. For a one-of-a-kind gift that's just as unique as the recipient, every Vermont Teddy Bear can be customized to fit a special life event, occasion or holiday. Orders can be placed by phone at 1.800.829.BEAR, where a friendly Bear Counselor® will assist with selection and personalization, online at www.VermontTeddyBear.com or via mail order catalog.