

DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE

March 2026 - Vol. 24 / Nr. 3



DEPARTMENT OFFICERS 2025 - 2026MY

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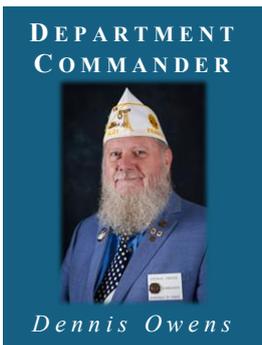
James Settle GR42

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

James Dennis GR30

ADJUTANT EMERITUS

Robert Fuelling FR01



Greetings Department of France,

We are just 14 days away from the Department Oratorical Contest!!! I am hoping that we have at least 7 students competing again this year. Once again it will be hosted by Eifel Post GR20 near Spangdahlem Air Base. Exact address of the competition will be [Bademer Str. 1A, 54657 Gindorf](#) Germany. Registration starts at 11:00 and Competition starts at 12:00.

Remember that all Students need to fill out and sign the Student

Consent Form. Our Department Adjutant sent all Post Commanders and Adjutants this form on 12 Feb. 26. It is Attachment #7 in that email called "Youth Program Participation & Consent Form". I am sure there will be fresh forms to fill out on location if not already accomplished and turned in by then. I truly wish all students great success for this Competition. One lucky winner will be sent to Michigan at Hillsdale College on May 15-17, 2026 for a chance to win \$25,000!

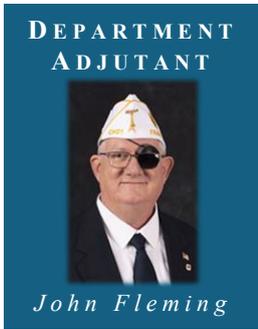
Also, all Post Award Packages are due to our Department Adjutant on 1 April 2026. As far as I am concerned, every Post should be bragging about their successes throughout this past membership year. If you are proud of your Post, then let us know! Our Awards Committee will meet on the

evening of the 11th of April to choose the winners in each category.

Past that, I will see a lot of you on the 20th and the 21st of March for the PSO course that our DSO Frank Phillips will be teaching. It is a very good course and I look forward to attending it again, one never learns enough about helping our Veterans! And the next day I will see many of you at the 3rd DEC at the Golfpark Bachgrund Address: Im Bachgrund 1, 64572 Büttelborn Germany, hosted by those fine Legionnaires in GR05.

Very best wishes all,

Commander Dennis



Greetings Comrades,

Consolidated Post Report (CPR) – is now available on myLegion.org, so please log in and start adding the 2025-2026 Report. This report covers the period 1 June 2025 to 31 May 2026. You can also download a copy of the form if you would like to use it to keep notes of your Posts activities. [CPR](#)

Certification of Officers: Thank you to the Posts who have recently held elections and sent in the Notification forms. I can add all Post Officers to the Post Officers Roster on myLegion.org. Reminder, after Post elections or a change in the Post Officers, it is

required to send two forms to the Department Adjutant.

1. **Notification of Post/Squadron Commanders & Adjutants:** This form must be sent to the Department Adjutant immediately (within 24 hours) after Post elections. The form should be dated the date of the elections/appointment.

2. **Post Officer Certification of Service Form:** This form has been revised and sent to all Posts. It needs to be forwarded to the Department Adjutant as soon as possible after Post elections (within 15 days). The Effective Date of Election of Appointment is the date of the original election or appointment. For example, if an Officer was elected on 1 May 2023 and reelected on 1 May 2024, the Effective Date block will show 1 May 2023.

These forms are critical to keep the current Post Officer informed of Department news. If I do not have the

correct information, your Post may not receive vital information.

Please contact me for any questions or if you need the forms.

Dates to Remember:

2 March 2026, 1900 CET, Commander's Advisory Committee meeting.

21 March 2026, 1300 CET, 3rd DEC, Golfpark Bachgrund Büttelborn-Worfelden, [Im Bachgrund 1, 64572 Büttelborn](#)

5 April 2026, 1400 CET, Commanders and Adjutants meeting.

4 May 2026, 1900 CET, Commander's Advisory Committee meeting.

7 June 2026, 1400 CET, Commanders and Adjutants meeting.

18-21 June 2026, 4th DEC/Convention/1st DEC, Location TBA

Thanks, and best wishes.

John Fleming

Good day everyone.

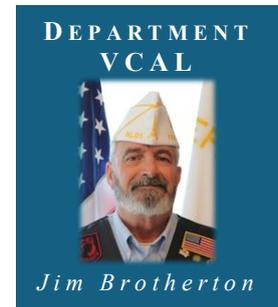
Hope everyone is ready to move into the early spring months? I would first like to thank everyone again who attended or participated in our Mid-Winter Conference (MWC). Whether you were one of our presenters or an attendee, you helped make this MWC a success. This was the first time I can remember that an in-person Conference was held and I feel it was a great success. I have had a lot of positive feedback, and it looks like it could remain a standard part of our Department program.

A reminder about another program coming down the pipeline, our Department Awards program. All Posts Commanders and Adjutants should have received the 2025-2026 Revised Awards Manual. There are some important changes this year and it should be closely reviewed as you prepare your Post award submissions. I also had an email sent to all the Post Commanders, Adjutants and Department Vice Commanders with

the intention of bringing the importance of Posts submitting their Posts and Post members for these awards. I want to stress that several of these awards are to recognize Posts in the different size categories; X-Lgr, Lgr, Medium and Small.

Depending on the size of your Posts, you are only competing against a Post of the same size membership and not against all Posts in the Department. This greatly enhances your chance to have your Post selected for recognition. This not only applies to the Post itself but also to recognize the Commander and Adjutants and others in your Post. It seems it is always the same Posts that submit packages. I sincerely hope we can have more nominations submitted than in the past. If you have questions, please reach out to myself, the Judge Advocate or your Department Vice Commander for clarification.

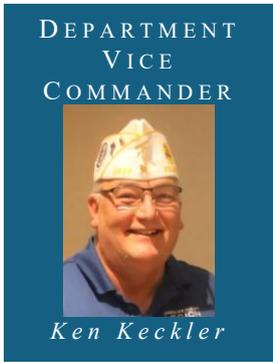
I would like to point out that all award packages must be submitted to the Department Adjutant NLT 1 April, at



which time the packages will be distributed to all members of the Awards Committee for evaluation on 11 April. The results of the evaluations and winners will be made public when we hold our annual Convention in June.

In the meantime, I hope to see as many members as possible at our Department Oratorical contest on 14 March and our 3rd DEC on 21 March hosted by GR05.

Jim Brotherton
Vice Commander at Large



DEPARTMENT
VICE
COMMANDER

Ken Keckler

Call to Action: 2026
Department Oratorical Contest

Comrades,
The time has come to support our youth as they take the stage for the Department Oratorical Contest. This is more than just a speech competition; it's a demonstration of the "Good of the Legion" in action. We need your presence, your support, and your helping hands to make this event a success.

📍 When and Where
Date: March 14, 2026

Location: Eifelpost GR20 Gindorf
Badamer Str. 1a, 54657
Registration: 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Contest Starts: 12:30 PM sharp

👉 Volunteers Needed

We are putting out a call for volunteers for all posts. Whether you've helped before or this is your first time, we need you.

To our Vice Commanders: Please remember that you are authorized to utilize Department Funds to support your travel and participation in this event. Let's ensure every District is represented.

🗃️ Contestants & Registration

I need the names of all contestants as soon as possible. Please submit your candidate names directly to me to ensure we have the program finalized and the certificates ready to go.

🏆 A Special Request: The "Medal" Situation

Due to a computer system outage at Emblem Sales, we will not have new medals available for this year's contest. In true Legionnaire fashion, we are going "old school" and asking for a bit of help from the community.

The Ask: If you have any old or spare medals from previous years, please bring them along. We want to ensure our speakers have something to commemorate their hard work.

📦 Logistics

Don't worry about lunch—food catering will be available on-site. Come hungry and ready to support our talented young orators.

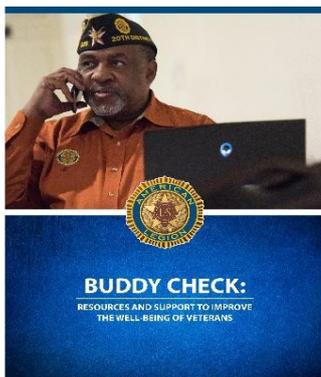
Everything we do is For God and Country and for the continued growth of our youth. If I have missed any details or if you have questions, please reach out to me immediately.

📄 Volunteer Sign-Up Sheet: 2026 Department Oratorical Contest

Date: March 14, 2026 | **Location:** Eifelpost GR20 Gindorf
Director: Ken Keckler

| Role | Responsibility | Volunteer Name | Post # |
|--------------|--|----------------|--------|
| Chairman | Oversees the conduct of the contest. | _____ | _____ |
| Judge 1 | Evaluates content and delivery. | _____ | _____ |
| Judge 2 | Evaluates content and delivery. | _____ | _____ |
| Judge 3 | Evaluates content and delivery. | _____ | _____ |
| Timekeeper 1 | Monitors speech length (Primary). | _____ | _____ |
| Timekeeper 2 | Monitors speech length (Backup). | _____ | _____ |
| Tabulator | Calculates final scores from judges. | _____ | _____ |
| Escort/Usher | Leads contestants to/from the room. | _____ | _____ |
| Sgt-at-Arms | Maintains order and quiet in the hall. | _____ | _____ |
| Registration | Checks in contestants (11:00-12:00). | _____ | _____ |
| Food Service | Assists with catering/refreshments. | _____ | _____ |

For the Good of the Legion, Ken Keckler / Oratorical Director / Vice Commander



BUDDY CHECKS

[Download the Buddy Check Toolkit](#)

to help you connect with Legionnaires and veterans
in your community.

DEPARTMENT
VICE
COMMANDER



Kerwin L. Hester

Brothers, Sisters, and Comrades,

it's that time of year again! You might be wondering what I mean by that. Well, it's time for our Department Awards Program, which aims to honor the dedicated service of our members

to The American Legion while highlighting the core pillars of our organization: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth Programs. We also want to recognize those individuals who have significantly contributed to our recruitment and retention efforts. In the spirit of friendly competition, we encourage all Posts to submit entries across various categories to enhance our community's image and participation. A Post Commander can recommend someone for an award based on their impactful contributions, especially when further recommendations would be redundant. The size categories for Posts are as

follows: X-Large (300+ members), Large (200-299 members), Medium (100-199 members), and Small (15-99 members), with all Posts eligible for awards. Key categories include Department Awards, Membership Awards, Department Committee Awards, and Miscellaneous Trophies and Awards. It's important to provide specific and factual justifications in your recommendations, avoiding vague language or generalities, as this will allow for a proper evaluation of the contributions made. Award nominations are due to the Department Adjutant by the 1st of April.

And as always For God and Country.

REMINDER...ALL NEWSLETTER ARTICLES SHOULD BE TURNED IN BY THE END OF THE MONTH. I WOULD PREFER IF YOU SENT IT IN WORD FORMAT, PDF WOULD ALSO DO. GET THE WORD OUT!

Davidg1959@t-online.de

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DEPARTMENT
NEWSLETTER
EDITOR



David N. Greaux



MARCH 15, 2026
AMERICAN LEGION BIRTHDAY

ON THIS DAY 107 YEARS AGO, MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE CONVENED IN PARIS FOR THE FIRST AMERICAN LEGION CAUCUS.

St. Patrick's Day, celebrated annually on March 17th, commemorates the patron saint of Ireland and marks his death, traditionally observed on this date.

Originally a religious feast day, it has evolved into a global celebration of Irish culture, characterized by parades, wearing green, and festive traditions.





Frank Phillips

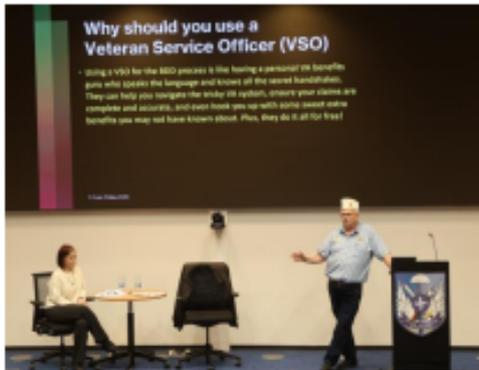
Veterans Service Officers Bring Critical Support to U.S. Personnel in Belgium



SHAPE, Belgium - On February 16, 2026, Veterans Service Officers (VSO) Frank Phillips and Jennifer Schoenhuth visited NATO's Allied Special Operations Forces (SOFCOM) headquarters, near NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied

Powers in Europe (SHAPE) in Belgium. The visit provided vital support to transitioning U.S. service members, overcoming the logistical challenges of accessing VSO assistance in Belgium. For many stationed at SHAPE, meeting with a VSO often requires traveling to Germany or even back to the U.S.

These logistical hurdles can delay access to important benefits, including the Benefits



Delivery at Discharge (BDD) program, which supports veterans in their transition to civilian life.

Phillips, who had already been assisting two SOFCOM members remotely, was able to offer face-to-face consultations during his visit.

"U.S. Navy Commander Jim Roche suggested the idea of bringing the VSOs to SOFCOM for an in-person briefing on the BDD program," Phillips said.

"This allowed service members an opportunity to engage with us directly and learn about the benefits they can access during their transition."

The visit also included a follow-up briefing organized by U.S. Army Captain Erica Loroff, Commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Allied Forces North Battalion, on February 17. Loroff's briefing offered additional support for troops considering retirement or transitioning to civilian life.

In total, Phillips and Schoenhuth met with more than 40 active service members and recent veterans, demonstrating the effectiveness of VSO visits for personnel stationed abroad.



Commander Roche, who is set to retire soon, emphasized the importance of the visit. "Having these VSO briefs, especially with one-on-one time, is crucial for service members here in Belgium," he said.



This successful visit highlights the critical role of Veterans Service Officers in ensuring transitioning service members are informed and able to access the benefits

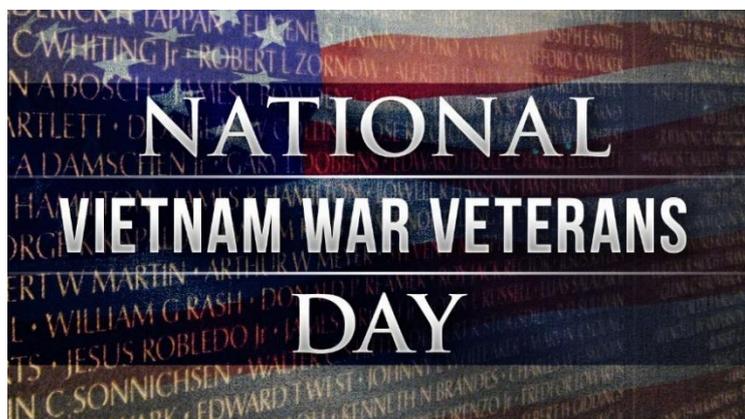
they have earned, regardless of their location. (pictures and text: J10 SOFCOM)

On the 7th of February, Post NL01 did our 2026 High School Oratorical Constitutional Speech Contest. Originally we had four students signed up, but only two were able to compete. These two students were phenomenal!!! AFNORTH High School Sophomore Sophia Wick won our competition with her wonderful speech on the Fourth Amendment. One of the neatest things about these

competitors is they both are Sophomores with siblings who will be in High School next year bringing more competition to Post NL01. Also in the contest was Patrick Roy who did very well with his speeches. Both Students are looking forward to participate again in our contest next year. Good luck to Sophia in the Department Oratorical Contest on the 14th of March 2026 in Gindorf Germany. Our Oratorical

Contest this year was organized and run by our extremely talented Brooklyn Marable. Thanks a Million Brooklyn, You Rock!!!

Dennis Owens
Commander
Margraten Post NL01



National Vietnam War Veterans Day

March 29 is designated as National Vietnam War Veterans Day. This is a time to pay special tribute to the 9 million Americans who served during the Vietnam War era, to the 58,000 names memorialized on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., and to those who never received the recognition they deserved when they returned to America from war.

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GR09 and village officials pay tribute to WW II Americans who perished in plane crash

On Sunday, 22 February the William D. Nelson Post GR 09 conducted its annual memorial service in memory of seven WW II US Army Airmen who died near the village of Pfaffenhofen on 22 February 1945 when their B-17 bomber broke apart in mid-air and crashed during a bombing run to Ulm.

This was the 12th consecutive year that the Neu-Ulm post, together with the village citizens, have participated in this ceremony which has become a tradition; a tradition that GR 09 is proud to carry on.

Joining Post Commander Jerry Aman and nine GR 09 Legionnaires were Dr. Sebastian Sparwasser, Bürgermeister (Mayor) of Pfaffenhofen, Josef Walz,

former Bürgermeister of Pfaffenhofen, Reverend George Oblinger of the Marienfried House of Worship, Reverend Dr. Jonathan Robker, Evangelical Lutheran church, members of the Ulmer Traditional Artillerist and numerous German guests. In his speech Bürgermeister Sparwasser recounted the story of the ill-fated flight of the B-17 and thanked GR 09 for their dedication to maintaining the legacy of this event. Both members of the clergy spoke of the necessity of actions cementing friendship and fellowship in these trying and difficult times. Dr. Robker was especially pleased to participate in the event as his father was a legion member in Louisiana. The Marienfried House of

Worship stands on ground where some of the bombs from the crash exploded.

In conclusion Dr. Sparwasser again asked that GR 09 continue with this tradition and offered his and his village's full support.

Approximately 45 people were in attendance.

Jonathan Darman, renowned historian and author and grandson of the pilot of the crashed plane is currently writing a book on the disaster and lives of the survivors. The book will be released in the Fall of 2026.



Members of the Marienfried enroute to the ceremony



Reverends Robker and Oblinger conferring with Bürgermeister Sparwasser and Post Commander



Laying of wreath at memorial



Some of the GR 09 members present at the ceremony

DAVID CHAVEZ POST GR1982

ANSBACH, GERMANY

Greater Love: Honoring the Four Chaplains



The Four Chaplains are remembered as a powerful symbol of courage, unity, and selfless service. On February 3, 1943, during World War II, the U.S. Army transport ship USAT Dorchester was torpedoed in the North Atlantic. As the ship sank, four Army chaplains: Lt. George L. Fox, Lt. Alexander D. Goode, Lt. John P. Washington, and Lt. Clark

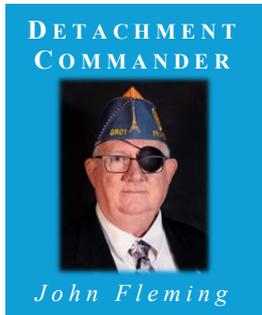
V. Poling gave up their own life jackets so others could survive. Witnesses recalled the chaplains standing together in prayer as the ship went down.

Their sacrifice was recently commemorated on Sunday, February 1st, through a collaborative ceremony hosted by Ansbach's American Legion Post 1982, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Palatinate Chapter, the 9th JROTC Battalion, and the USAG Ansbach Chapel, with attendance by members of the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Posts.

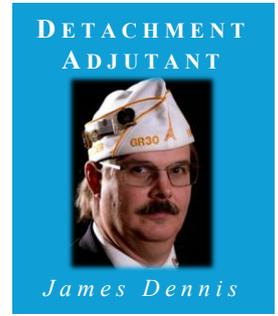
Cadet/CSM Chance Duplessie from the 9th JROTC Battalion served as the narrator, while four cadets lit candles and rendered a slow salute in honor of each chaplain. The DAR Palatinate Chapter provided a commemorative cake. The ceremony was coordinated by American Legion member and DAR Regent Madonna Roberts. American Legion member Mark Duplessie set up the ceremony and served as the chaplain.

“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” — John 15:13

The legacy of the Four Chaplains endures as a timeless reminder that true heroism is found in unity, faith, and selfless service to others



DETACHMENT OF FRANCE



Hello Comrades,

Consolidated Squadron Report (CSR) – is now available on myLegion.org, so please log in and start adding the 2025-2026 Report. This report covers the period 1 June 2025 to 31 May 2026. You can also download a copy of the form if you would like to use it to keep notes of your Posts activities. [CSR](#)

Membership: According to the 26 February 2026 SAL Membership report I received, we are at 88.02% of our 2026 Goal of 167! **We only need 20 Members to Renew to reach 100%!** Please talk to your Squadron

members and ask them to renew. Please talk to your Post members to see if they are eligible. If your Post does not have a Squadron, contact the closest Squadron or the Squadron of your choice and sign up. Talk to family members and sign them up. The Department has over 3000 Members. The Detachment should have at least that many.

3rd DEC: I ask that all Detachment Officers and all Squadrons plan to attend the 3rd DEC on 7 March 2026. Also, if anyone is interested in an Officer position, we have three vacant positions due to Members not paying their annual Dues. We will also be

discussing merging or cancelling some of our Squadrons. This is not something that we do lightly, but we must consider it.

Upcoming Events:
7 March 2026 – 3rd DEC, 1100 CET, Lunch, 1300 CET Meeting at Gasthaus Licht & Luft, Entersweilerstr 51, 67657 Kaiserslautern
6 June 2026 – 4th DEC/Conference/1st DEC, hosted by Kaiserslautern Squadron GR01

John Fleming
Detachment Commander

FOR: All Detachment Officers, Past Detachment Commanders, Committee Chairpersons, Program Directors, Squadron Commanders, Post Commanders and Delegates.

SUBJECT: Official Call for the 3rd Detachment Executive Committee Meeting of membership year 2026.

REFERENCE: Detachment of France Constitution and By-Laws dated 6 June 2021

1. This letter constitutes notification to all addresses that the Detachment Executive Committee meeting will convene at 1300 hours on 7 March 2026 in Kaiserslautern, Germany.

The Detachment Executive Committee will be held in Kaiserslautern, Germany, at GR01, Gasthaus Licht & Luft, Entersweilerstr 51, 67657 Kaiserslautern, Germany. The agenda of business to be considered at the meeting will be provided at the registration desk. Registration for the DEC will begin at 1100 hours on Saturday the 7th of March 2026. The “WebEx” Virtual format will be available for all the members.

2. Representation for the DEC is covered by the Detachment Constitution, Article IX, Section 2, “two (2) representatives from each Squadron of the Detachment which shall be members in good standing within their Squadron and have written delegation from their squadron Commander.

3. The schedule of events follows:

| | | |
|--------------|------------|---------------------|
| 7 March 2026 | 1100- 1200 | Lunch |
| | 1200-1300 | Registration |
| | 1300- | 2 nd DEC |

4. Dress for the DEC is Casual attire.

5. POC is Commander John Fleming E-Mail detachment.fleming@gmail.com

PCC President



Jim Brotherton

Department of France Past Commanders Club 2026MY

PCC Secretary



Richard Simmons

**Who is eligible 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 the office, you are eligible to join

Initial dues for the Past Commanders Club is only \$25.00 / Renewal dues for the Past Commanders Club is only \$10.00

GRAND CHEF DE GARE



DAVID GARCIA

GRAND DU GERMANY



GRAND CORRESPONDANT



DAVID GREAUX

LA SOCIÉTÉ DES QUARANTE HOMMES ET HUIT CHEVAUX (THE SOCIETY OF FORTY MEN AND EIGHT HORSES) IS AN INDEPENDENT, BY INVITATION, HONOR SOCIETY OF AMERICAN VETERANS, MORE COMMONLY KNOWN AS "THE FORTY & EIGHT".

THE FORTY & EIGHT IS COMMITTED TO CHARITABLE AND PATRIOTIC AIMS. OUR PURPOSE IS TO UPHOLD AND DEFEND THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES, TO PROMOTE THE WELL-BEING OF VETERANS, THEIR WIDOWS, WIDOWERS, AND ORPHANS, AND TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN SELECTED CHARITABLE ENDEAVORS, WHICH INCLUDE AMONG OTHERS, PROGRAMS THAT PROMOTE CHILD WELFARE AND NURSES TRAINING.

MEMBERSHIP IS BY INVITATION, AND OPEN ONLY TO HONORABLY DISCHARGED VETERANS AND HONORABLY SERVING MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED

<http://www.fortyandeight.org/>

DATE TO REMEMBER: 23 May 2026 – Grande Elections – GR01 Post Home, Kaiserslautern

This Newsletter approved by the American Legion, Department of France, Department Commander

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Added by the Department Adjutant

DEPARTMENT
VICE COMMANDER



Valerie Préhoda

Greetings to all my DFR comrades-in-arms!

I just returned from a hectic month, mostly stateside, tending to my properties in Texas and my parents' estate, etc...Now that the shock of my mother's passing has subsided, and my father is comfortably settled back in the US, I want to take a moment to thank you for your prayers, kind and gracious words, and support. Means the world to me, and I am grateful.

I'm looking forward to a robust gathering at our upcoming DEC, and the opportunity to present my "250 Challenge" project that DFR may be interested in joining - tune in for that, and in the meantime, Google "Finding George" and/or check out the Finding George Facebook page, and you'll be motivated, I guarantee!

Take care, be good to yourselves and your loved ones, and see you soon."

S/F Valérie Préhoda
Vice Commander