Department Commander John Shanahan

National Convention 2016: As this article is being written, we’ve just concluded a very busy week with the Department of France delegation at the 98th Annual Convention of the American Legion in Cincinnati. The convention concluded with the election of Charles E. Schmidt of Oregon as National Commander and five new National Vice Commanders, including Vincent J. Troila of New York, whose assigned area of responsibility includes the Department of France. The convention had a number of speakers, including Secretary of Veterans Affairs Bob McDonald, who provided a comprehensive picture of work within the VA to reduce wait times, hold employees accountable and reduce delays in processing disability claims. General Joseph Dunford, USMC, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, spoke on military force manpower and current policies to identify and reduce threats to reduce national security, including cybersecurity.

As this is presidential election year, we had presentations from Hillary Clinton, the Democratic nominee, and Donald Trump, the Republican nominee. As you know, the American Legion makes no political endorsements. It does publish a statement of legislative policies and priorities and encourages members to measure all candidates and their positions against that statement (“Our Pillars, Your Platform” – available for download on the Legion’s website – www.legion.org).

Very importantly, the Convention and its Committees (I served on the Membership Committee) presented and adopted a number of legislative proposals to improve health care, services and benefits to veterans. This is a huge body of work and my briefcase has a folder that’s more than an inch thick with initiatives that the Legion is working on for you. I’m bringing it back for the Department’s committee chairmen to use and to engage with each of you and your Posts on. My assessment of the convention is that it is a very important event to every veteran and well worth the time and travel to attend. I absolutely encourage every member who is able to do so to go next year (August 18 – 24, 2017, Reno, NV). You’ll find it time and money well spent.

Overseas Voting: I want to remind every member that the first and most important contribution that we can make to the Americanism initiative is to vote this November. Go to the Federal Voting Assistance Program’s website (www.fvap.gov), sign up and make sure that you are registered and ready to cast your overseas ballot. It’s quick, it’s easy and it’s important.
**Update on the Work of the Ad-Hoc Committee:** I met with this committee on Monday, 29 August to present oral testimony on the importance of maintaining the independence and organizational integrity of the Department of France. My testimony, along with that of Department representatives from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Alaska and U.S. Virgin Islands, underscored the uniqueness of our Department and the challenges that we face, especially in communicating across the length and breadth of Europe and including our members in the United States and now in Thailand. We discussed telecommunications technology and prospects for video conferencing as approaches to these challenges. Chairman Bill Dettweiler of Louisiana was very open and welcoming of ideas to address the Legion’s challenges in staying in touch with foreign departments and indicated that, in addition to the status quo option, the Legion would consider assigning National Vice Commanders to conduct foreign department visitations as a hands-on approach to local problem solving. This committee will continue its work into next year and we’ll have more to report as we know it.

**Membership Transmittals:** I cannot emphasize enough the importance of completing and sending your membership transmittals to Asst. Adjutant John Fleming IN ADVANCE of the following National membership schedule dates. Remember -- our Department officers have to check over transmittals and prepare checks to send to National, and our mail service lead time to National is a week or more. Bottom line – your 50% transmittal should be in the mail NOW.

### 2016 - 2017 NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP TARGET DATES

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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Early Bird/NEF Kickoff</td>
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<td>Fall Meetings</td>
<td>October 12, 2016</td>
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<td>Veterans Day</td>
<td>November 16, 2016</td>
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<td>Pearl Harbor Day</td>
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<td>Legion Birthday</td>
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<td>Children &amp; Youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Armed Forces Day</td>
<td>May 10, 2017</td>
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Membership Chairmen, Adjutants and Commanders -- please keep this schedule handy and ensure that you follow it carefully.

**Plan Now for the 2nd DEC:** Adjutant Max Rice has released the call for the 2nd DEC to be held at **1300 on Saturday, 22 October** at the **Post Home for John Wayne Post GR-79 in Heilbron, Germany**. Every Post is entitled to two voting delegates. Please make every effort to attend. Delegate registration will start 1100 on the day. Overnight accommodations may be secured at several local guesthouses. Please ask if you need recommendations.

**The Centennial Coin Programme:** A Centennial coin has been produced by the Department of France and delivery has been made just a few days ago. This is a fund-raising program for the Department. Coins will sell for $5/€5 in any quantity and may be shipped for an additional charge of $2/€2 each. Further details on the program, including ordering, designation of POCs and the credit card payment facility available, are included on a Centennial coin flyer below. Sincere congratulations to NECLady Nola Maloney and John Purdy for organizing this programme at no cost to the Department and to VCAL Joseph Schram for arranging the credit card facility.

**Plan Now for Fall Programs and Activities:** Summer is over, school is back in session and all Posts and Legionnaires should be well along in planning for Fall programs and activities. You will see a number of them announced in this Newsletter. Plan now to take part – or organize your own. What’s better than our Posts hosting Oktoberfest in Germany? Don’t
forget to be on the lookout for new member prospects that you can sign up on the spot. Veterans Day (Armistice Day) is just ahead in November. Have you made your plans yet? Whatever you do, I encourage you to take a few pictures and to report the event. You can (and should) make it a part of your Consolidated Post Report and part of your Post’s annual program goals. Always remember to target events to serving personnel and veterans – and always sign them up!

Don’t hesitate to contact me or one of the Department officers if you have any questions or require further information. Make plans now to spend the day with us in Heilbronn next month. You can collect your coins there -- a great Christmas present idea -- and save the shipping fees!

**Congratulations to New NEC Members:** With the national officer elections concluded, the new members of the NEC were seated today following the close of the National Convention. Say congratulations to our own NECLady Nola Maloney and ALT-NECMan James Settle for officially taking office today. I know you’ll be an important link to National for the Department and I congratulate you and wish you well for your upcoming work.

For God and Country, *John*

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**Department Officers - 2017 Membership Year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMANDER</th>
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<th>ALT. NECMAN</th>
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<td>Laura Buckner BE02</td>
<td>Gary Miller GR06</td>
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<td>James Settle GR42</td>
<td>Robert Fuelling FR01</td>
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NOW AVAILABLE !!!

The American Legion Centennial Coin

This special commemorative coin is issued by the Department of France, the birthplace of the American Legion from its founding in 1919.

The front of the coin is executed in a vibrant, deep blue, with gold lettering and the official logo of the Legion Centennial. The reverse shows the Legion family emblems against a bright gold background and the motto of the American Legion ringed in blue: For God and Country – Still Serving

Coin prices: €5/$5 each, plus €2/$2 shipping cost per coin, total €7/$7 for each coin if shipped. Send your order and US Dollar or Euro bank transfer payable to “Dept. of France, American Legion”

Ordering By US Check (No European or Foreign Checks)

Send to:  
American Legion Post BE02  
Attn: Centennial Coins  
Unit 28100, Box 017  
APO AE 09714

Or:  
Joseph Schram  
attn: Centennial Coins  
Meersenstraat 33 C2  
8310 Assebroek

➤ PayPal: Paypal.me/JosephSchram
➤ Foreign Bank Transfer: ING Account: IBAN: BE98 3774 3999 7693 -- BIC: BBRUBEBB
➤ US Bank Transfer: Andrews Federal Credit Union – Routing #: 255074111  
American Legion Post BE02 - Account #: 82019102

Europe and All Outside USA  
Contact: Joseph Schram  
American Legion Post BE-02  
Unit 28100, Box 017  
APO AE 09714  
Email: vcal.schram@gmail.com  
Phone: +32-479-178539

All USA  
Contact: Nola Maloney  
Department of France NEC Rep.  
10095 N. Mill Crossing Way  
Tucson Arizona 85743 USA  
Email: NECMaloney@gmail.com  
Phone: +1-928-235-1291
The founders of The American Legion had a vision for the organization when they first gathered in 1919. Nearly 100 years later, newly elected American Legion National Commander Charlie Schmidt said it’s the job of current Legionnaires to make sure that vision continues.

“Our time and responsibility is here for us, you and I, …to ensure that that vision is passed on to the next generation of veterans to insure those who have borne the battle, and their families, will be cared for by a grateful nation,” Schmidt told Legion family members on Sept. 1 at the Legion’s national convention in Cincinnati. “You and I must leave our footprints on today’s American Legion.

“Our Founding Fathers had a vision for America and its veterans. That vision is still relevant today. As long as there are conflicts around the world, our nation must be prepared to defend those vital interests to our nation and our allies with a strong and capable military. Where there are active-duty, Guard and Reserve personnel, and veterans, there will always be a need for The American Legion. You and I have inherited that vision.”

A previous member of Story-Hardin Post 164 in Craig, Mo., and current life member of Harney County Post 63 in Burns, Ore., Schmidt said being a member of a post puts Legionnaires in the role of stakeholders in the organization.

“With that comes a voice and a vote,” he said. “Also with the card comes a responsibility – a responsibility to our individual post, to fellow members and veterans to make something good happen in The American Legion by getting involved. It is unthinkable of a post charter petitioned for cancellation because no one will step up to a position of leadership.

“Each of us has a niche or forte to bring to this great organization. If we collectively combine our special talents and invest them throughout our posts, we will strengthen our American Legion and continue to make positive things happen.”

A past post and department commander who has held multiple national appointments – including National Executive Committeeman since 2005 – Schmidt served in the U.S. Air Force from 1965-1993, retiring at the rank of major after serving in both the enlisted and officer corps. Schmidt then implemented the Air Force’s Total Quality Management (TQM) program at Lowry Technical Training Center in Denver before moving to Oregon and working at Harney County Federal Credit Union. He eventually retired as executive vice president and now is Oregon’s first-ever national commander.
This year Schmidt wants to raise $1 million for the Legion’s service officer training program and $1 million for the Temporary Financial Assistance program, which provides non-repayable cash grants to children of eligible veterans to help maintain the basic needs of their children, such as shelter, utilities, clothing, food and medical care in times of need.

“Training our service officers is vital because of the great and substantial number of backlogged claims existing today,” Schmidt said. “It is our job to take care of veterans and take care of their families. Touching the lives of veterans and their families is who we are. I know I can count on your support to aid veterans and children.”

Schmidt asked Legionnaires to share with Congress the Legion’s support for an amendment to protect the U.S. flag from physical desecration, as well as to promote flag history and etiquette in classrooms in their communities. Posts should be the leader in establishing and promoting observances, especially Veterans Day, in communities and schools, he said.

He also called on members of the organization to encourage citizens to vote in the upcoming November election while remaining non-partisan. And he asked posts to work with parents, schools, organizations and sponsors to increase student participation in the Legion’s various youth programs.

“Our reward will be seeing students in our communities bettering themselves and their future because The American Legion gave them a chance,” Schmidt said. “America needs a strong citizenry, and The American Legion has the programs to help facilitate that.”

Schmidt reiterated the organization’s position that the Department of Veterans Affairs is a system worth saving. “The VA was created to take care of veterans, and there is no other system that understands veterans’ needs (as well as VA does),” Schmidt said. “I look forward to working on your behalf with the VA and Secretary (Bob) McDonald in the coming months in a dialogue of openness and sincerity.”

Calling member participation an important part of the Legion’s membership program, Schmidt challenged Legionnaires to sign up one new member and renew one current member.

“If you (do) you will hear from me,” he said. “If you sign three new members up you will receive the commander’s membership pin. Your department can compete for a monetary award ($1,500) within your region by signing up the most new members during the period Jan. 1, 2017, thru May 31, 2017. I doubt there is a department that couldn’t use additional resources to further their membership efforts.”

Schmidt said the Legion is steeped in history and asked members to “accentuate the positives” in the coming months. “We have so many programs and initiatives that have become the benchmark for patriotism, service and sacrifice,” he said. “Good things are happening in our posts (and) in every department every day. Share it throughout your communities through social media and other means. Document those good things in your Consolidated Post Report. Every post deserves the credit for their programs and accomplishments.

“I am truly honored, humbled and proud to be serving with you in the coming year. Together we will make good things happen in our American Legion”

Paul Martel, Fae Casper, Douglas L. Boldt, Paul L. Espinoza and Vincent J. Troiola were elected national vice commanders for the 2016-2017 year.
Take a Stand!

Membership

Our “Tiger Teams” are diligently planning and executing their battle plans on how to establish new posts in Italy, Spain and England and revitalizing several Posts in Germany, the Netherlands and France. Our Vice Commanders have taken the first steps to rectify our declining Department membership situation. While our goal this year is to reach 3200 members, I am asking our Posts and Vice Commanders to reach higher.

This year, expect our Vice Commanders to attend the various Retirement Appreciation Days through their areas of responsibilities, help Posts with their annual membership campaigns, and providing assistance in developing their membership plans.

Who are our potential members – Retirees, Service men and women, veterans working for the US government, and veterans who are expats. We need to seriously look at having our members renew. We lose so many members each year because they just don’t renew their membership. This is a systemic problem throughout the American Legion. We need to Take a Stand and ensure that these members are welcomed into our Posts.

Americanism Programs

Did you know that there are 19 American High Schools located in Europe? Seventeen of those have a JROTC unit. There are around 200 Boys Scout Troops located in various regions throughout Europe. Can you tell me how many Posts have established an affiliation with any of these organizations?

The Four Pillars of the American Legion were established in 1919 to create a framework for Departments and Posts to provide benefits for our nation’s veterans, its servicemembers, their families, and the youth. The third pillar, Americanism, provides a sound base to provide our youth programs for advancement and scholarships.

Are you ready to take a stand and take the initiative to start and support an Americanism program? This past February, only 3 candidates competed in the Department Oratorical Contest. In June, we only sent six young men and 2 young women to the Boys State / Girls State program in Maryland.

In our Department we have 19 American High Schools. Take a Stand and help support our youth.

Department of France Past Commanders Club

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...

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

Our next meeting is planned in conjunction with the Department of France Second DEC.
DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER  Carl Hale

On 15 August I traveled to Vierville-sur-Mer, France, to enjoy a week of summer vacation. Vierville-sur-Mer is also known as Omaha Beach. It was one of the five sectors used during the World War II Normandy Landings in support of the Operation Overlord on 6 June 1944, D-Day. I had decided on this trip back to Normandy while escorting Dale Barnett and Sharon Conatser, the 2015 – 2016 American Legion National Commander and National Legion Auxiliary President during their Department of France tour last June.

In addition to catching over 45 mackerels on a great sea fishing trip from Port-en-Bassin, we made a visit to the Pointe du Hoc memorial and the Colleville-sur-Mer Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial. The Visitors Center at the Normandy American Cemetery provides a superb introduction to the planning and execution of the 6 June 1944 landings with a short historical film and a timeline along the wall as you walk through the museum to reach the door that takes you to the cemetery. In the path just prior the the door you hear the names of all those buried.

Driving back to Omaha Beach from the Mont St. Michel I found myself on the D999 road that is designated at the “Voie de la liberté” which translates to “Liberty Highway”. After WWII, citizens of France wanted to pay honor and respect to the 3rd U.S. Army lead by General Patton. The Liberty Highway was inaugurated on 17 September 1947 in a ceremony attended by the U.S. Ambassador to France and members of the American Legion. The route begins at Utah Beach, St. Mere Eglise, follows General Patton’s war path up to Bastogne, Belgium. The mile markers are designed to symbolize the arrival by sea bringing the flame of liberty.

I have been invited as a Department of France Vice Commander to participate in a ceremony this 17 September at St. Symphorien, France, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the first marker installed of the Liberty Highway and to inaugurate a memorial monument dedicated to U.S. Army General Walton Harris Walker. General Walker commanded the XX Corps, 3rd U.S. Armored Division during WWII.

While driving on back country roads to the Mont St. Michel I noticed a sign for a German military cemetery. I stopped to visit and pay respect. If you didn’t know, my mother is a German (now a naturalized American) that married my American father when he was a U.S. Army Sergeant stationed at Bad Herdsfeld in the 1960s. My family background impacts my view when I visit the war graves and attend patriotic ceremonies. The Mont-de-Huisnes German military cemetery contains 11,887 German WWII soldiers. I toured the entire cemetery reading many of the names. The Mont St. Michel monastery can be seen from the site. I have previously visited the “La Cambe” German Military Cemetery near Bayeux, France, not far from the Normandy American Cemetery. The La Cambe cemetery contains over 21,000 German military personnel from WWII.

I am participating in a project called #22Pushups for #22KILL to raise awareness about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Suicide Prevention. See the Department Facebook page to see the videos. Part of the project is to do the pushups each day for 22 days and to nominate other persons to also help raise awareness. So far I nominated the three past National Commanders and our Department Commander. I hope they will take part of this project that could possibly reach a veteran who is considering suicide. Maybe we could save a life by showing that we care and informing that there are solutions and people who want to help others get back to enjoying life.

For God and Country.
Best regards, Carl
The battlefield cross memorial in the Visitors Center of the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial. The battlefield cross is a symbol of loss, mourning and closure for the living. Interpretations vary regarding the meaning of the components and how they are placed. The rifle facing downward means the soldier was killed in action; a rifle facing downward means the soldier was killed in action; a rifle with a bayonet stuck in the ground tells us the soldier went down fighting.

The reflecting pool at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial at Colleville-sur-Mer, France, where 9,387 WWII service members are buried and 1,557 are listed as Missing In Action.

A mile marker from the Liberty Highway

Explanation and map of the Liberty Highway
Greetings, Post Historians! I am Laura Buckner, your Department of France Historian and I am asking for your help in documenting the activities of all the posts in our Department. Each year the Department Historian submits a scrapbook of events and programs conducted by posts to National. I would like to get a feel for the scope of Department events before our upcoming 100th anniversary.

Department of France should take the lead in documenting American Legion history for the anniversary. The Legion began here and we are the living legacy of those early efforts. Our very existence is a tribute to the sacrifices made on and off the fields of battle, by our predecessors, Auxiliary members, Riders and Sons. We have a proud heritage and we should document our past and our present for our future.

National also has an award for the best annual History Book. Wouldn’t it be great if Dept. of France could bring home this award? With your help and inputs, I will endeavor to make that happen.

To get started, please send me your contact information so I can keep in touch. I want to highlight the activities of a couple of Posts in each Department newsletter. With so many events and programs being conducted by each Post, it will be up to you to select the particular activities you would like to submit. Photos are gladly accepted. Please be sure to identify the event, date, and names of Post members in each photo.

My email address is 04Lgb@sbcglobal.net and my cell phone is +32 498 888 501. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Laura Buckner / Dept. of Fr Historian / Brussels, BE
The case of a service member diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder but found instead to have brain damage caused by a malaria drug raises questions about the origin of similar symptoms in other post-9/11 veterans.

According to the case study published online in Drug Safety Case Reports in June, a U.S. military member sought treatment at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, for uncontrolled anger, insomnia, nightmares and memory loss.

The once-active sailor, who ran marathons and deployed in 2009 to East Africa, reported stumbling frequently, arguing with his family and needing significant support from his staff while on the job due to cognitive issues.

Physicians diagnosed the service member with anxiety, PTSD and a thiamine deficiency. But after months of treatment, including medication, behavioral therapy and daily doses of vitamins, little changed.

The patient continued to be hobbled by his symptoms, eventually leaving the military on a medical discharge and questioning his abilities to function or take care of his children.

It wasn't until physicians took a hard look at his medical history, which included vertigo that began two months after his Africa deployment, that they suspected mefloquine poisoning: The medication once used widely by the U.S. armed forces to prevent and treat malaria has been linked to brain stem lesions and psychiatric symptoms.

While no test is available to prove the sailor suffered what is called "mefloquine toxicity," he scored high enough on an adverse drug reaction probability survey to tie his symptoms to the drug, also known as Lariam. The sailor told his Walter Reed doctors that he began experiencing vivid dreams and disequilibrium within two months of starting the required deployment protocol.

**Symptoms can last years**

Case reports of mefloquine side effects have been published before, but the authors of "Prolonged Neuropsychiatric Symptoms in a Military Service Member Exposed to Mefloquine" say their example is unusual because it shows that symptoms can last years after a person stops taking the drug. And since the symptoms are so similar to PTSD, the researchers add, they serve to "confound the diagnosis" of either condition.

"It demonstrates the difficulty in distinguishing from possible mefloquine-induced toxicity versus PTSD and raises some questions regarding possible linkages between the two diagnoses," wrote Army Maj. Jeffrey Livezey, chief of clinical pharmacology at the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, Silver Spring, Maryland.

Once the U.S. military's malaria prophylactic of choice, favored for its once-a-week dosage regimen, mefloquine was designated the drug of last resort in 2013 by the Defense Department after the Food and Drug Administration slapped a boxed warning on its label, noting it can cause permanent psychiatric and neurological side effects.

**50,000 prescriptions in 2003**

At the peak of mefloquine's use in 2003, nearly 50,000 prescriptions were written by military doctors. That figure dropped to 216 prescriptions in 2015, according to data provided by the Defense Department. According to DoD policy, mefloquine is prescribed only to personnel who can't tolerate other preventives.

But Dr. Remington Nevin, a former Army epidemiologist and researcher at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore, said any distribution of the drug, which was developed by the Army in the late 1970s, is too much.

"This new finding should motivate the U.S. military to consider further revising its mefloquine policy to ban use of the drug altogether," Nevin told Military Times.

While a case study is a snapshot of one patient's experience and not an indication that everyone who took or takes mefloquine has similar issues, one randomized study conducted in 2001 — more than a decade after the medication was adopted by the military for malaria prevention — showed that 67 percent of study participants reported more than one adverse side effect, such as nightmares and hallucinations, and 6 percent needed medical treatment after taking the drug.

Yet mefloquine remains on the market while Walter Reed Army Institute of Research conducts research on medications in the same family as mefloquine, including tafenoquine, hoping to find a malarial preventive that is less toxic but as effective.

Mefloquine was developed under the Army's malaria drug discovery program and approved for use as a malaria prophylactic in 1989. Shortly after commercial
production began, stories surfaced about side effects, including hallucinations, delirium and psychoses. **Once considered ‘well-tolerated’**

Military researchers maintained, however, that it was a "well-tolerated drug," with one WRAIR scientist attributing reports of mefloquine-associated psychoses to a "herd mentality."

"Growing controversies over neurological side effects, though, are appearing in the literature, from journal articles to traveler’s magazines and resulting legal ramifications threaten global availability," wrote researcher Army Col. Wilbur Milhous in 2001. "As the 'herd mentality' of mefloquine associated psychoses continues to gain momentum, it will certainly affect operational compliance and readiness. ... The need for a replacement drug for weekly prophylaxis will continue to escalate."

Mefloquine was implicated in a series of murder-suicides at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in 2002, and media reports also tied it to an uptick in military suicides in 2003.

A 2004 Veterans Affairs Department memo urged doctors to refrain from prescribing mefloquine, citing individual cases of hallucinations, paranoia, suicidal thoughts, psychoses and more.

The FDA black box warning nine years later led to a sharp decline in demand for the medication. But while the drug is no longer widely used, it has left damage in its wake, with an unknown number of troops and veterans affected, according to retired Navy Cmdr. Bill Manofsky, who was discharged from the military in 2004 for PTSD and later documented to have mefloquine toxicity.

He said the Defense Department and VA should do more to understand the scope of the problem and reach out to those who have been affected.

"I’m kind of the patient zero for this and I now spend my life trying to help other veterans who have health problems that may have been caused by mefloquine. More needs to be done," Manofsky said.

He said while there is no cure for the vertigo and vestibular damage or the psychiatric symptoms caused by mefloquine, treatments for such symptoms, such as behavior and vestibular therapy help.

And, he added, simply having a diagnosis is comforting. **Veterans can seek help**

"Veterans need to come forward," he said. "The VA's War Related Illness and Injury Study Center can help." The patient in the case study written by Livezey continues to see a behavioral therapist weekly but takes no medications besides vitamins and fish oil.

He sleeps just three to four hours a night, has vivid dreams and nightmares and vertigo that causes him to fall frequently, and continues to report depression, restlessness and a lack of motivation. The sailor's experience with mefloquine has been "severely life debilitating" and Livezey notes that the case should alert physicians to the challenges of diagnosing patients with similar symptoms.

"This case documents the potential long-term and varied mefloquine-induced neuropsychiatric side effects," he wrote.
GR 09 Hosts Annual Grill Party

On 20 August GR 09 hosted the annual grill fest with The Ulmer Traditional Artillery Association, founded in 1906, as their guests.

GR 09 has joined the Artillery Association in many events throughout the past nine years and has participated in this annual grill party for the past five. Hosting of this event alternates each year and this year the GR 09 was in charge. Participation on both sides was high and everyone had a good time which was obvious as the guests stayed until late into the evening. The Germans always look forward to when the Americans are the hosts because they know that the “Masters of the Grill” will provide tasty BBQ ribs and burgers. And as always they were not disappointed.
Cincinnati Ohio
Site of the 98th American Legion National Convention
August 26th to September 1st 2016

Some images of Department of France in attendance…
On the 27th of August, Audie Murphy Post Gr30 and Omar Bradley Post Gr42 had a BBQ at the post home in Kitzingen. About 60 members and guests were present. We enjoyed a great sunny afternoon feasting on ribs, chicken, steaks, hamburgers, and bratwursts with a 50/50 raffle. After a great meal, our ladies from Unit Gr30, brought some cakes and jello as dessert.

On behalf of Audie Murphy Post GR30 and Omar Bradley Post GR42. We would like to thank Unit Gr30 for their contribution and to our members from both Posts for their participation. Also thanks to our Department Vice Commander Briscoe for his support and visit.

Good job, see you next year.

Audie Murphy Post GR30 and Omar Bradley Post GR42
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August 2016 Fishing and Fish Fry / General Membership Meeting
Military Times: Pentagon closer to extending generous new benefit to millions of veterans

Karen Jowers, Military Times 6:35 p.m. EDT August 15, 2016

Plans are progressing to extend online military exchange shopping privileges to all honorably discharged veterans, Military Times has learned.

The Defense Department’s Executive Resale Board voted unanimously Aug. 9 to recommend the policy change, sources said. Extended shopping privileges would apply only to the exchange system’s online stores — not brick-and-mortar facilities located on military installations.

The Pentagon did not immediately confirm the board’s move, and it’s unclear what its next steps will be. Officials have said previously that they’d like to implement the expanded benefit on Veterans Day 2017.

Exchanges operate as discount department stores for the military community. Currently, access is authorized only for active-duty service members, reservists, National Guard personnel, retirees, veterans who are 100 percent disabled and immediate family members. Officials estimate that’s about 10 percent of the nation’s 21.7 million veterans.

If the plan proceeds, the Defense Manpower Data Center would be called on to verify veterans’ status so they can shop at the exchange online.

The idea was proposed in May 2014 by Army and Air Force Exchange Service CEO Tom Shull, who touted it as a way to provide a modest benefit to veterans who didn’t serve long enough to retire from the military, including a number who have served multiple tours in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. Navy Exchange Service Command CEO and retired Rear Adm. Robert Bianchi and Cindy Whitman Lacy, director of the Marine Corps Business and Support Services Division, have said they support the idea.

This would also benefit those currently serving, officials have said. Any increase in exchange profits would generate more money for the service’s morale, welfare and recreation programs. According to one analysis, the exchanges could see an increase of $18 million to $72 million if online shopping is extended to all veterans.

Generally, about half of the exchanges’ profits go to MWR dividends, and the rest goes to capital reinvestment in the exchanges, such as renovations and construction.
Kid’s Fishing Day

On Saturday, 6 August 2016, American Legion Post 1982 sponsored a Kid’s Fishing Day at Soldier’s Lake near Katterbach Army Airfield. A total of 41 kids and about 70 parents participated in this event. With the support of the local MWR Outdoor Recreation Department, Post 1982 members assisted the kids and their parents with a morning of fishing pleasure. Outdoor Recreation provided the fishing equipment, we provided the bait and some instructions.

Although the fish were not cooperating, the kids really enjoyed the morning in the sunshine and fresh air. Several parents expressed their gratitude to the legionnaires for getting the kids away from the television and computer games for a little while.

At lunchtime, Post 1982 members grilled hot dogs and hamburgers, and provided chips and soft drinks at no charge to the kids and parents. After the “hard work” of the morning, everyone had a healthy appetite.

After the lunch, each kid received a participation medal from the Post. Check out the pictures and you can see how excited they were!

This is the second Kids Fishing Day this year at Soldier’s Lake. The first event, conducted in early June was sponsored jointly by the Legion Post and the local Veterans of Foreign Wars Post.
Here are the cooks at work. It was finger-lickin' good.

Veteran’s benefits will match the Social Security cost-of-living increase in 2017, thanks to a measure finalized by Congress in mid-JUL. But veteran’s groups hoping for a more permanent answer to the annual legislative hand-wringing over their benefits boost will have to wait longer for that solution. Under law, annual cost-of-living increases are automatic for Social Security benefits, determined by the executive branch without intervention from Congress. But veteran’s benefits fall into a different category, one that requires lawmakers to vote on an adjustment every year.

In the last few decades, veterans have seen their annual adjustment differ from the Social Security COLA only one time (in 2000, as a result of a minor rounding difference between the two rates.) But outside groups have called having the two increases dealt with separately confusing at best and potentially ripe for abuse or mistakes. The measure finalized by the Senate this week —it passed without opposition late 13 JUL — links the veteran’s benefits boost to Social Security rates for 2017 alone. Legislation to permanently tie veteran’s payouts to the Social Security cost-of-living calculations was passed by the House in February, but has languished in the Senate since then. The bill's ill sponsor Rep. Ralph Abraham (R-LA) said he is still hopeful that measure can advance through Congress later this year.

“Providing a cost-of-living adjustment for veterans is an important step to ensure their financial stability,” he said in a statement. “It is certainly encouraging that both houses in Congress have passed my COLA bill this year, but we need to go further. “Veterans deserve the peace of mind that comes with knowing a COLA will come annually, rather than hoping Congress can break its gridlock to provide for them.” The change affects the annual rates of VA disability compensation, dependency compensation for surviving children and spouses, and medical clothing allowances for veterans, among other benefits. It will not affect adjustments for military retirement pay, which are calculated through other methods.

In a statement, Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee Ranking Member Richard Blumenthal(-CT) called the move an issue of fairness for veterans who sacrificed for the country. “Escalating living expenses are painfully squeezing veterans who rely on disability payments, and this bill would ensure their compensation keeps pace with rising costs,” he said. “It is our duty to provide veterans and their families the support they need to live with the dignity they deserve.” The president is expected to sign the measure in coming days. Congress won’t take up the issue of a permanent fix again for at least two months. Lawmakers started an extended election-year summer recess on Thursday.

Social Security and veterans benefits did not see a cost-of-living increase in 2016, due to lower inflation costs and the methodology used by government officials to calculate the raise. No announcements have been made on a possible 2017 increase.

[Source: Military Times | Leo Shane | July 13, 2016 ++]

COLA. The June CPI is 235.308, and .5 percent above the FY 2014 COLA baseline. Because there was not a positive COLA in FY 2015, the FY 2014 baseline is used. The CPI for July 2016 is scheduled to be released on August 16, 2016