



Legion News

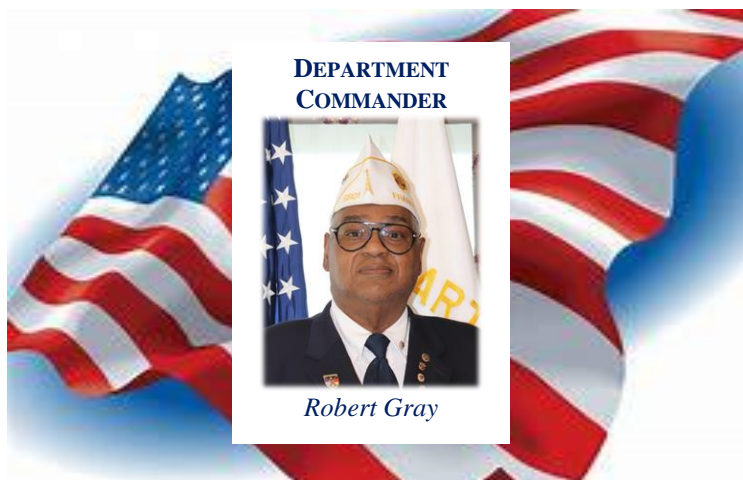
DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE



BELGIUM-CHINA 01-DENMARK-ENGLAND-FRANCE-GERMANY-GREECE-IRELAND-ITALY-NETHERLANDS-SPAIN-THAILAND

December 2023

Vol. 21 / No. 12



Hello, my American Legion Family. I hope and trust that you and your loved ones are in the best of health and spirits. I hope you enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving festivity.

Visit to Greece. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Commander Nikos Papadopoulos of GC01, for his gracious invitation to the city of Thessaloniki, Greece. We arrived on 9 November at Thessaloniki airport. When we arrived, Commander Papadopoulos was waiting at the gate to take us to our hotel, the Hyatt Regency. The hotel was amazing and the rooms we stayed in were fabulous. Once at the hotel we only had 4 hours to prepare for the evening event.

As we met Commander Papadopoulos in the lobby there were also dignitaries in the lobby that we made our introductions to. From there we went into the ballroom, which was elegantly put together. The ballroom was put together flawlessly, and I met more dignitaries and more people with titles. I met several retired generals and their counterparts. I turned to Commander Papadopoulos and asked, how long did it take you to prepare this? The reason why I asked you is because I informed you two weeks ago that I was coming. He commented that it took us a week.

As the ceremonies proceeded, I was shown to a table with different dignitaries, politicians, and a retired general. The master of ceremonies was a young lady. Commander Papadopoulos was sitting at the head table on stage, he introduced me next to speak. After I was escorted to the stage, I said it is an honor to be here, however, as a representative of the Department of France, The American Legion, the first thing we do is honor our colors, and the colors of our host nation,

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which is your flag. I asked everyone to stand and face the flag, I asked the audience to stand in silence as Commander Papadopoulos and I saluted the flag.

I just received word that Defense Minister Dendias marks Armed Forces Day. Greece will celebrate November 11th as it is Veteran's Day. My hat is off to you, Commander Nikos Papadopoulos. Excellent job. The Department of France helped make a difference.



Veteran's Day. After flying in from Greece, at 0940 hours, on the 11th of November, Stephanie and I had to be at the Lorraine American Cemetery, Saint-Avold, France, before 1300 hours. Even with all the road construction, we made it on time. As I went into the Chapel, as I did so many times, it was breathtaking. As I was approaching inside, you can feel a moment of history. I was very honored, pleased, and satisfied, to have the privilege to lay the wreaths. In laying the wreaths, as I mounted them on the stands, I backed away and saluted. However, as I did an about-face and looked out the doors of the Chapel, I saw all the grave markers. That is when the meaning of Veteran's Day truly hit me. I thought about not only the fallen soldiers, but their families, their generations, the losses, and the prices that families have to pay, I thought about the mother's hearts and the economic loss of human labor to our country. This was the true course we carried as a nation. This day I felt honored to be the Department Commander and have the privilege of laying the wreath.



Overseas Grave Decoration Fund. On the 1st of November, the 2024 Overseas Grave Decoration Fund guidelines will be sent out. Fund requests must be sent in on or before 1 January, to be used on Memorial Day. Funds are used to honor, preserve, and decorate the graves of those U.S. veterans who served in the world wars, conflicts, and hostilities and who are buried overseas outside American Battle Monuments Commission-controlled facilities.

The following information is required for each request for funds.

1. The name of the veteran.
2. The cemetery name and location (city and country) where the veteran is at rest.
3. A quote in writing (not to exceed \$50.00) from a local florist, for flowers to decorate each veteran's grave.
4. A mailing address for Emblem Sales' use so they can mail each department or post a "U.S.A. made American flag" for each grave to be decorated.
5. A mailing address for The American Legion National Treasurer so he can mail each department or post the requested funds for each grave to be decorated.

The funds from the Overseas Grave Decoration Trust Fund are dispensed on a first-come, first-served basis annually until the income each year is depleted.

Membership. I want to thank everyone for holding the line in membership. We are still at #1. I realize that in the holiday season, it will be difficult with finances and time. Membership Chairman James Dennis sent out a list of different Posts that have achieved 100%, and some Posts that need a minimum of members to reach 100% in your Post. Try and try to close the gap and reach that 100%. We can do this.



Holiday Season Greetings

Greeting my American Legion family. As we approach this wonderful and traditional holiday of joyous festivities with family and friends, I would like to remind everyone to be safe and aware of their surroundings.

Be The One is a phrase National Commander Daniel J. Seehafer uses to prevent suicidal or depressing situations. I would like everyone to remember this phrase, because you might **Be The One** to deter someone from committing suicide, or you might **Be The One** for someone to lend a friendly ear to. Especially if you see soldiers or veterans depressed or confused, being away from home, alone in this holiday season, just a simple hello, how are you doing? Thank you for your sacrifice and service, can make a significant difference in one person's life.

Buddy Checks are an especially important part of being a Legionnaire. It is comradeship, brotherhood, and true strength as a veteran. Let me clarify this, you do not have to like each other to care for each other. Just know that you will be there for each other and your families. Again, let me repeat myself, this is the season when a lot of people feel alone and suicidal, even aggressive toward family members. There may be some that do not have enough to eat, over expenditures on bills, and seasonal gifts, loss of jobs, high inflation, and have trouble sleeping. Identify those people in your Post and let it be about family, Legion Family!

Membership. So far, we are holding the line. We are still holding first place, and I want to thank every one of you

for giving your best. My gratitude is overwhelming; however, it is a tight position with South Dakota, coming up neck and neck. I know it will be hard during the seasonal holidays but hold that line in membership. We work so hard now, just to get paid later if we are in first place. I cannot tell the Post Commanders what to do, but I will make suggestions. If you have enough Post funds, make a loan to comrades that are in good standing, to pay for their membership, make it a credit. It would be an investment in your Post and your members, with big dividends, but do what you can, to hold that membership line.

Safety, in these troubled times, in the current world events, is important to all of us to observe our surroundings. This is the season for shopping, buying gifts, and socializing. With all this being said we are very vulnerable. If you can, travel in a group, and use the buddy system. Let friends and family know where you are going, and how you are traveling. Again, practice safety.

This is a day to give thanks. Let us give thanks for where we are, what we have, and the peace we now enjoy. The best way to handle things is if you feel as though you are in a rough patch; find that little bit of goodness and go from there.

Robert Gray

Robert Gray

Department Commander

**DEPARTMENT
ADJUTANT**



John Fleming

Greeting Comrades,

Commander Gray will hold a Commanders & Adjutants meeting at 1400 CET, on 10 December 2023. All Department Officers, Committee Chairs, and Directors are also asked to attend.

Consolidated Post Report (CPR) – We need to be working on these now. It is available on myLegion.org, so every time you have an event you can start filling it in. Please do not finalize it until June 2024.

Wearing the American Legion Cap: As I scroll through Facebook, I notice violations of the Wearing of the American Legion cap. The primary violation I see is pins on the left side of the cap. I even saw a Legionnaire with his cap on backward (he was not a member of our department). The 2023 Post Officers guide has a section on wearing the official American Legion cap starting on page 38:

The following regulations standardize the use of lettering, insignia, etc., on the official American Legion cap, as based on Resolution No. 58, adopted by the National Executive

Committee, April 30-May 1, 1964.

Post caps (members and officers)

– All blue, piped in gold and lettered in gold with optional basic lettering (Style 1 or Style 2), and additional lettering and restrictions as indicated below:

(a) Style 1 – Post numerals at right front between piping and front crease. Department name in full on left side beneath emblem. Lettering on emblem side to be in straight line. Example: “20” (at right front) – “Maryland” (on left side beneath emblem).

(b) Style 2 – Post numerals at right front between piping and front crease. Town name in full and department abbreviated on left side beneath emblem. Lettering on emblem side to be in straight line. Example: “20” (at right front) – “Dallas, TX” (on left side beneath emblem).

(c) Style 2 – Shall not be used when the post town is not physically located within the recognized geographic and/or postal boundaries of the department of which the post is a member. Example: Stuttgart, Germany, a part of the Department of France. Such a post may place its location and country on the right side of the cap, if desired. Example: “8” (at right front) – “France” (on left side beneath emblem) – if desired, “Munich, Germany” (on right side).

(d) Where additional lettering is desired, it must be on the right side of the cap. Lettering restricted to name of post, such as “J.S. Jones,” or officer title, such as “Commander” or “Past Adjutant.” Where present or past officer cap insignia or

badges are used in place of embroidered titles, these must be on the right side of cap.

(e) Consecutive membership insignia, membership stars and/or decorations (authorized American Legion or military services) must be attached to the right side of cap. Fraternal or civil organization insignia cannot be used on American Legion caps.

(f) Names or nicknames of individual members cannot be used on caps.

(g) An individual member placing an order directly with Emblem Sales must provide the member ID number.

Restrictions

(a) The left side (emblem side) of any American Legion cap cannot contain other than the official American Legion emblem and lettering as set forth previously in this resolution for post, county, district, department, or national caps.”

Dates to Remember:

10 December 2023, 1400 CET, WebEx Meeting for Commanders & Adjutants, Department Officers, Committee Chairs and Directors.

27-28 January 2024, Mid-Winter Conference.

23 March 2024, 3rd DEC, in Ansbach, hosted by GR1982.

13-16 June 2024, Convention Weekend, in Ochsenfurt, Germany, hosted by GR30.

Thanks, and best wishes.

John Fleming

DEPARTMENT
VCAL



Dennis Owens

Greetings Department of
France,

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving with your family all around you. I heard Post GR79 knocked Thanksgiving out of the Park with a massive feast again! Right on Charlie!

We have our Department of France Mid-Winter Conference (MWC) coming up on the 27th and 28th of January. I am looking forward to hosting a very informative virtual conference that will be beneficial to all Post Members especially all Post Officers. It is open for anyone who wishes to learn more about our American Legion. Nobody steps into an Officer Position here in any of our Posts or Department with already the fullest of knowledge on how to perform our duties. This is what the MWC is all about, to share information and to allow Q&A after each one-hour block of instruction or presentation. I am expecting each Department Officer to provide a block or half a block of instruction or presentation for you. The times will be from 09:00 to 16:00 on Saturday the 27th of January and from 11:00 to 16:00 on Sunday

the 28th of January. In our next Department Newsletter dated 1 January 2024, I will have a firm schedule of all topics and participants. It is not necessary to attend the entire Conference, but those one-hour blocks of time where a subject will be taught that interests you or pertains to the Office you hold would greatly benefit you if you were to attend and participate with questions. If any of you have any topics you wish to hear about and learn, please just ask me and I will see if it is possible to include that topic into the MWC for you. Just contact me at vcalowens@gmail.com with your suggestions.

If you have not already completed your American Legion Basic Training, do yourself a favor and attend the self-paced training on legion.org. I promise it will get you fired up as a Legionnaire. I have not heard anyone tell me it was a waste of their time, just the opposite. A lot of my meetings as Post Commander of NL01, I challenge my Post members to get it completed. Once finished, I ask them to send me their PDF Certificate of completion and I print it out on nice card stock and present it to them in front of the entire Post along with the Basic Training Cap Pin. It is very interesting to hear from each of them what stood out to them as they took the course.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly mention that I am extremely happy with

each of your Department Vice Commanders. Jim Brotherton, John Gerdeman, Quincy Foster and Richard Ojeda. They are doing exactly what I have asked them to do, to reach out and have meaningful conversations with each Post's leadership and to participate when invited like to install new Officers at your Election Meetings. Each one of our Vice Commanders hold each of your Posts with compassion. They brought to your leadership some 30 meaningful questions. I am asking for each of them to provide five new questions, so the process grows each year. These questions they ask allow them to get to know your Post and see where, if at all the Department might be able to help the Post out with growth and improvement. We have outstanding four Vice Commanders this membership year and I am very proud of each of them. It is my hope that each Post accept them in and allow a fruitful conversation to happen. Please do invite them into your Post for meetings and activities. If you are holding an Awareness Table, just ask your Vice Commander if he can attend, I am sure they will if you ask them. We will all grow in our Legion that way.

In closing, I wish all of you a very blessed Christmas and very happy slide into the New Year.

Dennis Owens
Department of France VCAL

**DEPARTMENT
VICE COMMANDER**



Jim Brotherton

Hope everyone had a Happy Thanksgiving. It is, in my opinion, probably one of the most cherished family holidays we observe.

I would like to take the opportunity to shine the light on some of the Posts I'm responsible for. For us, active duty and veterans, Veterans Day is one of the most honored celebrations we observe, right behind Memorial Day, where we honor the fallen.

There are three Posts that were able to perform ceremonies this year. It is important that we as veterans observe these holidays, not just for ourselves but to remind others of the sacrifices that were made by our military.

First Post is American Legion Post IR01, celebrated Veterans Day at Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin Ireland. They were accompanied by the American Embassy. They, along with members Irish and Irish-American's provided a Color Guard and laid a wreath to honor the Americans laid to rest there.

Many thanks to Commander Shanahan and his Posts for their participation.

The second Irish Post I like to honor is IR03. Commander Howko represented the American Legion at the ceremony conducted by the Irish and Irish Americans at the Mayo Peace Park Garden of Remembrance. The Irish, and especially the Irish Americans, are honored for the sacrifices they made during WW I, WW II, Korea and Vietnam. A heart felt gratitude to Commander Ron Howko and his crew for helping to remember our fallen from Veterans.

Last but not least, our thanks go out to American Legion Post EG02 and Commander Tim Litherland and his Post members. They were in attendance at the Cambridge American Cemetery to honor the Americans laid to rest. We are thankful to Tim and his crew for representing the American Legion on this occasion.



**DEPARTMENT
VICE COMMANDER**



Quincy Foster

Season Greetings Comrades

I hope and pray you and your families are doing well. The holidays season is here. I hope you had a grateful Veterans Day celebration. Also, you were able to visit some of our comrades' gravesites. I was able to visit some Gravesites and place our flag on them. I was joined by Vice Commander Gerdeman at

the Worms Graveyard. We placed a few flags and also a marker on some graves.

By the time you read this Veterans and Thanksgiving will be over. I hope you had a great Thanksgiving! I am

looking forward to fellowshipping with some of you at GR79's Thanksgiving Dinner.

I ask you Post Commanders and Adjutants again to help us help you and your posts. If you are having problems of any kind let's work, it together. It doesn't matter what it is Department, other posts or personal. We are all in this together so let's work together. This is your department and the more you put in the more you get out of anything. Whether you believe it or not your voice counts.

We are looking forward to get your invitation to visit your post and meet some of your members.

Thank you again for your service!!! Happy Holidays!!
Quincy Foster

VETERANS DAY 2023 GRAVE SITE VISITS
Department Vice Commanders Foster and Gerdeman



**DEPARTMENT
VICE COMMANDER**



John Gerdeman

On Nov 4, I was at Post GRO5 P.E.C. While I was there, I had the Privilege to Bring in a new member Keith William the owner of the Pirate clubhouse. This will be Post GR05 new Post home. In the last two months GRO5 has brought into the American legion 2 new members.

Then it was off to Kaiserslautern Post GR01 Where the Department Commander Robert Gray and I attended their thanksgiving dinner. I would like to say thanks to Mike Young and Bruce Cole for putting this meal together. I also met 2 Auxiliary members Doris Garcia and Vanessa Brosseau Vanessa is a new member of GR01 Auxiliary. I think she will be a great addition to GR01 Auxiliary.

On November 5 Department Vice Commander Quincy Foster and I placed an American Legion grave marker with an American flag on Lawrence R Leach (GR05) grave. Plus, we put one on Charles Leo Hunsucker (GR07). May their souls rest in peace.

I was on Memorial Day in Worms (Horchheim) cemetery with GR03. There we visited 4 graves of our comrades. They are Earl Daniels (GR07) Pass Commander of GR07

Charles Leo Hunsucker (GR07), Lawrence R. Leach (GR07) with flag and A.L. marker on his grave.

As we were walking to the next grave, a lady stopped us and told us about an American soldier's grave. She showed us the grave of Harold W West. He was a Korean and Vietnam veteran. We thanked her and did a memorial service At his grave. We played taps at every grave.

On November 7, I had the sad duty of performing a memorial service with Comrade David Garcia and the Department Commander of the VFW with 15 members. Comrade John Wesley Pruitt, who died on October 25, 2023 in Texas. He was home because he was going to his brother's funeral. John is survived by his wife Michaela and his son Jannak, daughter in law Lea and his grandson Noah. May his soul rest In Peace.

I went to GR79 thanksgiving dinner on Nov 25th. Along with the N.E.C. Man James Settle, Past Department Commander James Dennis, Past Department Commander Jammie Dale, Department Vice Commander Quincy Foster plus Post Commander Kerwin Hester (GR05), Pass Post Commander E. Cojoe (GR05).

Charlie and Post GR79 did a great job for their thanksgiving dinner. They served over 70 to 80 people thanksgiving dinner. GR79 had a great spread from turkey and ham and stuffing to collard greens. Commander Brown had everything planned out. From setting up the tables and the hall to who was to bring the food. Like cannelloni salad and a flag cake. His planning made this night run so smoothly.



GR03 Veterans Day



John Wesley Pruitt memorial service



Frank Phillips



FMP new initiative: Pre-Determination letter

Background: Previously, the FMP would not issue individual coverage letters, guaranteeing payment for a specific service-connected condition. As of September 2023, they have now established an office, just for these cases.

Many veterans living abroad live from paycheck to paycheck. These same veterans, sometimes, do not have the financial resources to pay for the bill upfront. Because of this, many providers would require the veteran to put up the payment in advance to pay for a surgery or other medical expenses for their service-connected issue(s). This has put some of the veterans at risk, because of the veteran not being capable of financing some medical procedures to sustain basic health. Many providers would not recognize the standard FACT sheet from the FMP. This has resulted in many veterans foregoing essential medical services and, eventually, endangering their lives.



The American Legion Department of France, Department Service Officer, Francis Phillips was invited to meet, in person, with the Under Secretary of the VA, Senior Director Mr Ronald Burke this past June. As a result of this interaction, Mr Burke has directed the FMP to set up an office, specifically addressing these issues (8 staff members) and has issued the first two “pre-determination letters”.

This letter will state that veteran John Doe is entitled to all medical procedures / expenses that are related to the specific service-connected condition. The FACT sheet generalizes this and does not specifically mention the veteran’s name, or if the veteran is eligible to receive the coverage. The medical providers have asked for this type of individual coverage letter in the past.

As a result, more providers will be encouraged to use the FMP as it was designed to and reduce the financial burdens of the veterans.

This will result, when published, that the quality and sustainability of veteran medical care has improved!

Currently, the VA has asked that the inquiries go to the VSOs. They can check the qualification and forward the request to the appropriate authority.

This request will be expedited, and the veteran can present this individualized letter to the hospitals/ provider.

The American Legion and the Veterans living abroad wish to extenuate their gratitude, to Mr Ronald Burke, in this major step to ensure the care of the veterans living abroad.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
TRANSATLANTIC COUNCIL



Department Scouting Director
C.F. "Trey" Jaeger, III

TAC OP TEMPO

Department of France Scouting Program Newsletter

DECEMBER 2023

DEPARTMENT SCOUTING DIRECTOR NOTES:

As the holiday seasons begins, our Scouts typically will be focusing their efforts on the home front for a well-earned rest with their family and friends. By publish time, our units would have finished their recharter registrations for 2024. Be on the lookout on that report next month. The tempo picks up again at the beginning of the year with Klondike Derby at the renowned Kandersteg International Scouting Center in the Swiss Alps. Scouts will test their skills and challenge the "Yeti" in the winter wonderland setting. 2024 also will bring the Normandy Camporee again to honor the 80th anniversary of D-Day. Registration is now open for both staff and campers. Also open for registration is our summer camps in Switzerland and Croatia. Much more to come in 2024. I look forward to seeing everyone along the Scouting trail.

Gut Pfad! – Trey Jaeger



VENTURER SCOUT EARNS ALL 139 MERIT BADGES!

Eagle Scout Sam G. of the InCREWdibles Venturing Crew 802 Windborne (American Legion Post BE02) earned all 138 available merit badges available from the Boy Scouts of America. With this achievement, Sam was awarded the American Legion Bronze Award of Merit with Scouting Device by the Flanders Field Post BE02. **BRAVO ZULU SAM!**

AMERICAN LEGION EAGLE SCOUT OF THE YEAR SCHOLARSHIP NOMINATIONS OPEN

The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year nomination window is from 01 November to 28 February 2024. The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year will receive a \$10,000 scholarship. Three (3) runner-up scholarship awards will be granted in the amount of \$2,500 each. The scholarship recipients will be eligible to receive their scholarship upon enrollment to an accredited trade school, college, or university within the United States. Apply here:

<https://www.legion.org/scholarships/eaglescout>



DEN LEADERS – ARE YOU TRUE BLUE? – DEN LEADER TRAINING AWARD



Each Cub Scouter (adult leader) can earn their Den Leaders Training Award for their current position. If not, please share with the Scouters in your unit and give them this training challenge. One can earn this by completing their position specific training award progress record which can be found at <https://www.scouting.org/training/adult/> (Towards the bottom of that page.) Let's hear about those successful completions!

Upcoming Events

- November 29
TAC Council Round Table
- Nov 30 – Dec 2, Riyadh, SA
Horizon District Camporee
- January 3
FOS Campaign Kick Off
- Jan 12 -15 Kandersteg, CH
Klondike Derby at KISC
- Apr 19-21
Normandy Camporee
- Find Your
Next Adventure!



Department of France Scouting Units

- Cub Scout Pack 97 & Scouts BSA Troop 97
Post 1982 Ansbach, Germany
- Cub Scout Pack 112 & Scouts BSA Troop 112
Post FR01 Paris, France
- Cub Scout Pack 154 & Scouts BSA Troop 154
Post GR06 Stuttgart, Germany
- Scouts BSA Troop 12
Post GR01 Ramstein, Germany
- The 802 Transatlantic Scouting Group
Post BE02 Brussels, Belgium
(Servicing all of Europe, Middle East,
Central Asia & Africa)



FIND A UNIT NEAR YOU!

Developing Leaders for a Better Tomorrow Through Unparalleled Scouting!

**DEPARTMENT
FINANCE OFFICER**



Gary Miller

All Posts or DEPT Officers that I have registered their accounts with NFCU for Electronic Fund Transfers (EFTs).

Recently, my access to perform EFTs was suspended by NFCU due to making EFTs to Posts/Officer accounts that have been closed. My access has been restored.

ANY POST or DEPT. OFFICER HAVING A U.S. BANK ACCOUNT THAT HAS BEEN REGISTERED WITH NFCU AND SUBSEQUENTLY CLOSED, MUST NOTIFY THE DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER IMMEDIATELY.

Thank you for all your support, and HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL. 😊

Gary Miller / Finance Officer / DEPT. of France



Department of France

Happy holiday greetings to everyone. Hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving and are preparing the road to celebrate Christmas. Just remember not everyone gets to make it home for any of these holidays or even spend this time with their families. Keep our military members in your thoughts and prayers, that everyone makes it home safely.

Further news. Some are aware that our contributions to the Legacy Ride Scholarship Fund are charging. This program has been so successful. Just this past year over \$1.55 million dollars was raised to support this program. I have been told there is enough of a surplus to fund the program for the next ten years. None of this surplus can be transferred to help other projects and I think that is a good thing.

Starting in 2024 the donations raised during the Legacy Ride will go to the Veterans & Children Foundation (VCF). The American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation delivers needed aid for military and veteran parents who face unexpected financial hardship.

I will be asking ALL POSTS to get behind the Department to help support this program. We will be asking all Posts, regardless if they have a Rider Chapter within their Posts or not, to help contribute to this program.

Come June, we will ask all Posts to make their contributions at our DEC/Convention. Money collected will be presented on behalf of the Department at the National Convention.

Please, if you can, establish some form of fundraising to help contribute to the VCF. Whether it is bake sales, commissary bagging events or 50/50 raffles whatever your Posts does to support projects such as this.

The Department has set a goal of raising \$3000.00 for this program and I ask each and every one to help support to achieve this goal. Please watch the video from the National Legion Rider Director. We can do this.

<https://www.legion.org/riders/259015/national-legion-riders-chairman-fundraising-vcf-%E2%80%98kids%E2%80%99>

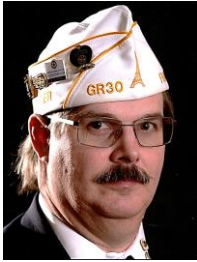
Jim Brotherton
Department Legion Rider Director.
Department of France
The American Legion

**DEPARTMENT
AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS
DIRECTOR**



Jim Brotherton

DEPARTMENT
MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE



James Dennis



THE AMERICAN LEGION

Department of France
96th Annual Convention
Hosted by Audie Murphy Post GR30



13 - 16 June 2024

Best Western Hotel Polisina
Marktbreiter str. 265
97199 Ochsenfurt, Germany

Convention Package Consist of:

4 Days and 3 Nights
One Convention Coin per Department registered guest residing at the Hotel
Breakfast Buffet
Evening Dinner Meal including the Banquet on Saturday
Mineral water and juice during the meetings
Afternoon coffee and pastry

13 -16 June 2024

Complete Package - Single Room	550.00 Euro Per Person
Complete Package - Double Room	460.00 Euro Per Person

14 -16 June 2024

Two Nights with Banquet - Single Room	370.00 Euro Per Person
Two Nights with Banquet - Double Room	310.00 Euro Per Person

15 -16 June 2024

One Night with Banquet - Single Room	190.00 Euro Per Person
One Night with Banquet - Double Room	160.00 Euro Per Person

Following expenditures to be paid at Convention

Attending meetings only. Not staying at hotel. 35.00 Euros Per person, per day.
(Includes use of conference room, afternoon coffee and pastry, & mineral water and juice during the meetings. **Please notify Comrade Dennis if you will be attending Convention Meetings only.**)

Elections and banquet, no overnight	70 Euros Per Person
Banquet only	35 Euros per person



Hello fellow Legionnaires,

I hope you all had a great Thanksgiving with your family and friends. I want to respond to Commander Gray's letter. I just want to assure to that I am totally committed to the post of Chaplain. I know I have not been present lately, due to work and family issues. I have talked to Commander Gray about this, and I thank him for helping me out with some difficulties I have had adjusting.

I would also like to say to all Post Chaplains that I am always available 24/7. Whether through an email or telephone. If you do not have my email or telephone number, please contact Adjutant Fleming for this information. I ask that the Post Chaplains contact me in the coming weeks regarding the holidays and how we can set up an information network regarding our Veterans and their family's well-being. We need to be there for one another through the holidays.

I have written something about Christmas and about brotherly love and why it is important to:

Be the One, or as I like to think, Be the Many.

As we gather on this joyous occasion, surrounded by the warmth of love and the spirit of Christmas, let us reflect on the true essence of this celebration. Christmas is not merely a time for festivities and exchanging gifts; it is a profound reminder of the greatest gift ever bestowed upon humanity—the birth of Jesus Christ.

In the Christian faith, Christmas symbolizes hope, love, and redemption. It marks the miraculous moment when God's love became tangible, embodied in the form of a humble child born in a manger. The birth of Jesus signifies the divine's willingness to dwell among us, to share in our humanity, and to offer a path to salvation.

As followers of Christ, we are called to embody the teachings He shared during His time on Earth—love one another, practice compassion, show kindness, and seek justice. Christmas is not just a historical event but an ongoing invitation to live out these principles daily.

In a world often overshadowed by darkness, uncertainty, and division, the message of Christmas remains a beacon of hope. It reminds us that no matter how dark the night may seem, the light of Christ continues

to shine brightly, illuminating our paths and guiding us toward peace and unity.

Let us take this opportunity not only to celebrate but to reflect on the significance of Christ's birth. Let us extend our love and generosity to those in need, spreading the message of goodwill and reconciliation.

As we exchange gifts with loved ones, let us remember that the most precious gift we can offer is the love and compassion that Christ exemplified. Let us strive to be beacons of light in our communities, sharing the transformative power of Christ's love with everyone we encounter.

May this Christmas be a reminder of the boundless love that God has for each of us and a catalyst for us to share that love with the world.

Let us pray for peace, unity, and an unwavering commitment to living out the teachings of Christ. May the light of His love continue to shine in our hearts and in the world around us.

Amen.
Chaplain Ken.

REMINDER...ALL NEWSLETTER ARTICLES SHOULD BE TURNED IN BY THE 28TH 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

DEPARTMENT
NEWSLETTER
EDITOR



David N. Greaux



Armistice Day 2023

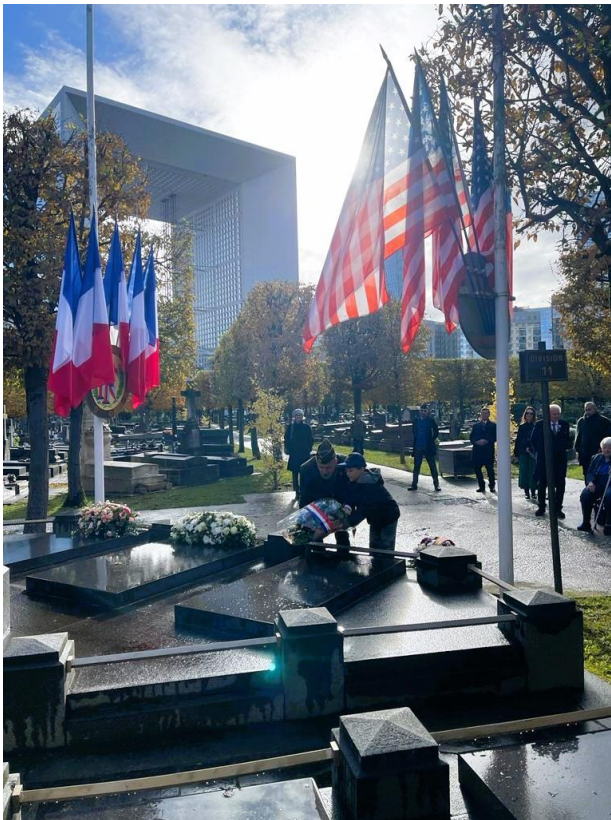
Over 100 years since the end of World War I

Full day of ceremonies and events in France

Paris Post 1 was blessed to have so many join us for November 11th this year, veterans and their families traveled from several states from the USA to visit us.

Photo from above, American veteran and United Airlines pilot, retired Colonel Nathan Thomas, joins Paris Post 1's Chaplain at the Suresnes American Cemetery with youth from several different local Scout troops.

Colonel Nathan Thomas and Chaplain Gary Nadolski laid the wreath together at Suresnes' ceremony (photo above) on behalf of Paris Post 1 and United Airline's veterans group United 4 Veterans.



Armistice Day at Paris Post 1's Mausoleum
Carrying on a tradition of remembering Armistice Day for over 100 years in Paris

Paris Post 1 joined with our community to honor World War I veterans who are interred at the Paris Post 1 Mausoleum. Since the 1930's after the first world war, the American Legion in Paris established the mausoleum, and since there are almost 300 American veterans buried within its tomb.

We are very grateful for the participation of the Girl Scouts at our mausoleum ceremony. It is our duty to educate and allow our youth to participate in our ceremonies so that they can learn of this important history that should not be forgotten.



Photo credit: Jean-Rico EUDOR

Armistice Day 2023 at the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial

Remembering our American volunteer pilots from World War I. Armistice Day at the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial was special this year with Paris Post 1's Auxiliary laying a wreath with United 4 Veterans.

Special thanks to United Airlines pilot retired Colonel Nathan Thomas and Paris Post 1 Auxiliary Anna Marie Mattson for laying a wreath together.

Paris Post 1 is honored to be able to attend our ceremonies with the ABMC, and we are very thankful for their warm welcome.



Armistice Day 2023 at the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial (LEM)

USA to France: our veterans visit for November 11th
Special thanks to Charlie Dawson and his brother Sam, in photo above with Auxiliary Anna Marie Mattson, for coming to

France to visit us for November 11th! We are always happy to see our Paris Post 1 members traveling out to France for our special days of remembrance.

For Charlie and his brother Sam, coming to France for remembrance ceremonies is a special trip. They do it in honor for the many in their family who proudly served in France during World War I and World War II.

Their paternal Grandpa Cecil Dawson commanded a railroad artillery gun in Alsace, France, and their maternal grandpa, Samuel H. Riggs, was a replacement infantry platoon commander both during World War I.

Grandpa Samuel, Sam Dawson's namesake, participated in St. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne offensive. After the war, he remained in Paris as member of Peace Treaty Honor Guard through June 1919.

Their two great uncles, George Ohrstrom and Baz Baby, also served during World War I as pilots flying with the 104th Aero and 88th Aero respectively; both were credited with shooting down enemy aircraft during the war.

Their Uncle Baz returned to active duty in WW2. He was on Dwight David Eisenhower's transport staff, and jumped with a Pathfinder unit on D-Day.

Special thanks to all of our visitors making the trip to see us in France!



In honor of Samuel H. Riggs

World War I veteran post was Honor Guard "District of Paris" Samuel H. Riggs, was a replacement infantry platoon commander during World War I. He participated in St. Mihiel and the Meuse-Argonne offensive.

In the photo above, you can see him after the war, where he remained in Paris as member of Peace Treaty Honor Guard through June 1919.

The unique WWI division patch for the District of Paris shows the traditional fleur de lys symbol.

Paris Post 1 is honored to help carry on the legacies of our member's families, and we are blessed to have these legacy families as supporters and members of Paris Post 1.



Armistice Day 2023 in Montelimar

South of France's Nov. 11th remembrance day with retired Navy Commander David Bruce

American veterans living in France are essential for the vitality of Paris Post 1. Every year we have many military service members who live in France with their families attending ceremonies for our national days of remembrance.

We are very grateful for the dedication of retired Navy Commander David Bruce who has been representing American veterans at ceremonies in the south of France for several years.

The momentum of our remembrance ceremonies continues to grow, and we are always interested in helping support more attendees for 2024!



General John J. Pershing

"Time will not dim the glory of their deeds"

Pershing Hall was created to honor General Pershing, and dedicated to the Americans who gave their lives to end World War I

Inaugurated in 1929 by French President Paul Doumer, Pershing Hall stands as one of the only American memorial buildings outside of the USA that continues to exist.

At Paris Post 1's recent annual Armistice Day commemoration ceremonies, the Franco-American community arrived with a pleasant surprise to see the replica painting of General John J. Pershing and replica marble plaque dedicated by President Paul Doumer on temporary display. Many of the original memorials inside Pershing Hall used to be on public display, many in the Chateau Thierry Memorial Courtyard which no longer exists. On a day of international remembrance, it was difficult for everyone in the community to see Pershing Hall's memorials continue to be missing after years in storage.



Resolving the past to create a solid future

Pershing Halls turbulent history creates an honorable and sustainable path for the future

Paris Post 1 and the Franco-American community are looking forward to a future where the history of Pershing Hall is embraced. At this year's Armistice Day ceremony and event, Paris Post 1 Commander spoke about how Pershing Hall's history is a tale of "blood, sweat and tears."

Throughout World War I and World War II, Paris Post 1 maintained its active status as a post of The American Legion, and members kept up residence in Pershing Hall even through the occupation of the Nazis to ensure the safety of this unique memorial building.

It is vital that our youth and legacy associations understand the importance of Pershing Hall, and how this was the headquarters for so many American associations in France. Its important for the American community to have a presence in Pershing Hall, and for Paris Post 1's headquarters to be active in this special American memorial building that Paris Post 1 helped create.



Celebrating Franco-American friendship at Pershing Hall is common in Paris Post 1's community.

Special thanks to our community partners and friends for joining us on a special remembrance day like Armistice Day.

Alex Noka and Dominique Lambert from the Centre de Secourisme were present with Commander Bryan Schell of Paris Post 1 along with Liaison Officer to the French Army HQ at the U.S. Embassy Will Hogan and Commandant en Second of the Gendarmerie Nationale Benoit Fief.

Friendship in our community is important, and we are all thankful to be united in a common bond that keeps our community strong and vibrant.



November 11th is also a day of bringing our community and members together from around the world.

Paris Post 1 Historian Scott Rayl visiting with Paris Post 1 Auxiliary Jennifer Harlay about Pershing Hall history and programs to engage our youth.



Paris Post 1's Service Officer Tom Adams with Joyce Good a prior employee who used to work in Pershing Hall. Bringing our legacy members of Paris Post 1 and our community together are important to help preserve our history that Pershing Hall and The American Legion have had in France over more than 100 years.



Paris Post 1 would like to give a special thank you to Allianz Real Estate and BNP Paribas for their support and assistance for our ceremony and event at Pershing Hall. We would also like to thank Jeffries Investments for their support of American national days of remembrance at Pershing Hall. It is thanks to the generosity and support of our community that we are able to thrive and have our annual ceremonies.



Celebrating 100 years since the start of the flame under the Arc de Triomphe

Since November 11, 1920, an unknown soldier has rested under the Arc de Triomphe to represent and pay homage to all who have died for France.

Fearing that this symbol of the Unknown Soldier would be forgotten, the idea of an eternal Flame of Remembrance on the tomb of the unknown soldier was born in 1923.

This Flame was lit for the first time on November 11, 1923, 100 years ago, by the Minister of Pensions André Maginot. Since then, it has been rekindled daily at 6.30pm, inviting us to remember the sacrifice of those who died for our values and our freedom.

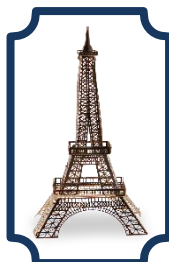


The flames centennial in Paris

Members of Paris Post 1 were able to attend the incredible light show and ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe in honor of the centennial of the Arc's flame.

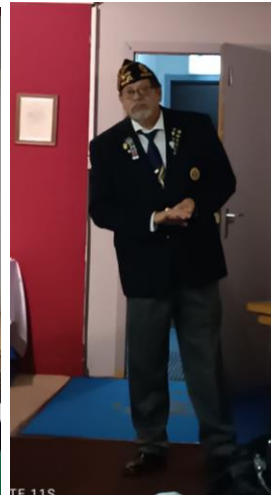
In the photo above, Paris Post 1's Finance Officer Patrick Morrissey with friends from local veterans associations. 100's of flags were representing many associations located throughout France who all came to the capitol for this big event. While being one of the only foreign national flags present, the American flag was held high with honor, and was visible during the ceremony when two French citizens received medals for the decades of service at the Arc de Triomphe (see on video link). Check out the amazing ceremony and light show via the video link below!

For those with good eyes, you may be able to see on TV Paris Post 1's Finance Officer Patrick Morrissey and Commander Bryan Schell in the crowd (background) of the medal ceremony with (see photo below near American flag).



KAISERSLAUTERN POST GR01 KAISERSLAUTERN, GERMANY

Post GR01, held their Holiday meal on 15 Nov 2023. Dept Commander Gray, Dept Vice Commander Gerdeman were in attendance. They wished everyone a joyous Holiday season.



PCC President



Tim Litherland

Department of France Past Commanders Club 2024MY

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

PCC Secretary



Frank Phillips

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

For the third year in a row, Post GC 01, Athens, Greece commemorated on November 9 in Thessaloniki Veterans Day. This was by far the most elaborate event for the occasion as for the first time our Department of France represented the American Legion. We were delighted to meet in person our Department Commander, Robert Lee Gray, and his wife who traveled from Germany to be with the over 120 guests in our Gala Dinner event.

Admittedly, Commander Gray was the 'star' of our event with his personality and his demeanor. The American Legion made many friends on November 9 in Thessaloniki.

The event was attended by members of our Post, US military representatives, the American General Consulate

in Thessaloniki, local political leaders as well as officials from regional and national government entities. Furthermore, the business sector of Thessaloniki was also well represented.

In addition to our Department Commander, comrade Gray, addressing the group, we heard appropriate speeches for this event by retired Greek Lt. General Ilias Leontaris and University Professor Kostas Lavdas who emphasized the importance of commemorating Veterans Day and the contribution of American veterans to world peace.'

Nikos Papadopoulos
Commander, Post GC01
Athens, Greece



The Athens Post of the American Legion was established in December 1926 in Athens, Greece by Greek Americans

volunteers who fought with the U.S. Expeditionary Force in Europe during the First World War. It was chartered

by the American Legion in September 1927. The Legion membership grew exponentially in Greece reaching over 2,500 members with the establishment of another four Posts in Greece. In 1939 the Athens Post bought its own building at the center of Athens which it donated to the City of Athens in 2010 to house its Homeless Foundation.

The Legion now operates in Greece out of its only Post in Athens, GC01. Its membership is geographically diversified in Greece and consists mainly of Greek Americans who work and reside in Greece as well as retirees. Getting the membership together for joint events is rather difficult. We are in the process of developing a 'call program' visiting locations where our members reside by holding appropriate events that will 'publicize' in those areas the existence of the Legion. There are over 36,000 retirees in Greece who lived and worked in the USA. There must be some veterans among them.

I have been a member with the Legion for over 12 years and the Post Commander in the last 4 years.

Annually, we hold several activities commemorating important events in the history of the Legion and of the US Armed Forces. The last event was the commemoration of the US Veterans Day which took place in Thessaloniki on 9 November 2023 and was attended by our Department Commander, comrade Robert Lee Gray. We have established a 'connection' in Greece with persons who are interested in furthering the relationship between the USA and Greece. Working closely with the US Embassy in Athens and the local business communities in our country, we have promoted a positive image of the Greek

American relations. This is reflected in the 'acceptance' of our activities in Greece as evidenced at the recently conducted event in Thessaloniki. In other words, we 'create' friends for the Legion and for the USA in Greece. This is our mission.

The Post assists, to the extent allowed by VA directives, widows of US servicemen who now reside in Greece. Also, we have in operation an extensive contact program with our members. With the unemployment in Greece at a high level, especially with persons over age 40, we assist as much as possible seeking employment opportunities for our members and their families. Unfortunately, this is not always successful and consequently we lose from time-to-time members who seek employment opportunities abroad.

In addition to our 'live' events, we operate an extensive program of virtual events utilizing our ZOOM platform. We average two virtual events a month over a wide range of topics, attracting first-class speakers. Our programs are in Greek and are broadcast over Facebook and YouTube.

Getting new members is becoming very difficult. The US military personnel who serve now in Greece are here on short-term tours. We have been working with the US Embassy in Athens and we are hopeful we will see positive results soon.

Best personal regards,
Nikos Papadopoulos

This is good news as stated below. The Legion in Greece has been urging the Greek Government to 'appoint' a Veterans Day for this country. It has happened and Greece will celebrate November 11 as its Veterans Day.

POLITICS / 21 November 2023, 16:59:06 / Last Update: 12:37 / Source: ANA-MPA



November 11 should be declared Armed Forces Veterans Day, said National Defence Minister Nikos Dendias, who stood in

for Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis and the government during events marking Armed Forces Day on Tuesday.

This is "the least we can do to show our gratitude for those who did their duty for the country", he noted.

In a statement, Dendias also pointed out that Greece's armed forces "secure our national interests, the independence of our homeland, our sovereignty and sovereign rights, in every part of our national space, even in the most remote single-rock islet."

At an event held in the Armed Forces Officers' Club (LAED) Dendias met briefly with President of the Hellenic Republic Katerina Sakellariopoulou, Parliament President Constantine Tassoulas, party leaders and military officials.

Earlier in the day, the minister attended a liturgy at the Athens Metropolis, as November 21 also happens to be the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebrated by the Orthodox church. After the liturgy, Dendias attended a wreath laying by President Sakellariopoulou at the Unknown Soldier memorial.

Giving Back

Members of American Legion Post TH02 recently participated in the award of Certificates of Appreciation to members of the Pattaya Police Volunteers. As a Post we are very fortunate to have a working relationship with our local Police. As one of our members is a Police Volunteer it affords us the opportunity to assist whenever a visitor or resident needs help. This is accomplished by working with both the Police Officers and other Police Volunteers. The Commander wanted to show his appreciation to the members of the Police Force and volunteers.



Member Spotlight



The Commander would like to take this opportunity to share the Member Spotlight onto Mr. Michael Brewer. Mike is an active member of the community. He is a Royal Thai Police Volunteer working with the Pattaya City Police. In addition to being a Pattaya City Police Volunteer, Mike recently completed his training as a Community Liaison Volunteer for the US Embassy, Bangkok Thailand. Both roles find Mike interacting with the community on an additional level.

His role as both a Police Volunteer and a Community Liaison Volunteer has him getting involved with both the good and the bad of the individuals in distress. However, the Royal Thai Police go above and beyond to allow resolutions to problems before the Police must take action. The same is true with US Embassy involvement. Normally the US Embassy allows all avenues to be taken before they intervene.

An example of a feel-good story, an American tourist disembarked from a cruise ship at the Laem Chabang Port. She accidentally left her purse in the rest room. Through a combined effort of the TH02 Officers and Mr. Brewer this individual was able to get her belongings returned to her.

Garry Kolb
Details

Michael:
Thank you so much for everything you did to ensure a safe return of Arlona's phone. The port agent delivered it to the ship [today](#) in Darwin, Australia intact.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you, and Happy Thanksgiving!



Pearl Harbor Day (1941) Dec 7, 2023

American Legion Family members remember and honor the 2,403 Americans who were killed in the Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii on Dec. 7, 1941. The attack led to the United States declaring war on Japan and thus entering World War II. Each elected American Legion national commander visits Pearl Harbor on Pearl Harbor Day to pay respect.

Remembrance Event at Mayo Peace Park. 11-11-11 2023



GR 09 members participate in German Memorial Day

On 19 November, the date of German Volkstrauertag (Memorial Day), eight members of the William D. Nelson Post GR09, Neu-Ulm, together with members of Germany's Traditionsverein Ulmer Artilleristen (Traditional Association of Ulm Artillery soldiers) participated in the placing of a floral arrangement at the Ulm memorial monument honoring fallen soldiers and persons who have suffered at the hands of oppressors.



The Traditional Ulmer Artillery Association which has a history going back to 1909 and GR09 have joined together in this somber affair since 1998. With this comradeship the American Legion also promotes the understanding of the Legion's principles to our German hosts and the members of the Vereine expressed their gratitude to GR 09 for their participation.



**DETACHMENT
COMMANDER**



John Fleming



DETACHMENT OF FRANCE

**DETACHMENT
ADJUTANT**



James Dennis

Hello Comrades,

Check out the great photo of me in my new Cap.

Now we need to continue working on membership in the Squadrons. As of 27 November 2023, we are in # 3, with 75.00%. We only need 42 renewals/new members to hit 100%. We can do this.

We also need to work on DEC attendance. Meeting dates and times are announced well in advance so everyone can plan. If no one from your Squadron can attend, an email

requesting a Squadron excusal should be sent to the Adjutant.

Upcoming Events:

27-28 January 2024 – Department Mid-Winter Conference.

2 March 2024 – 3rd DEC, 1300 CET, at the Gaststätte “zum Reegen”, Riedweg 52, 74078 Heilbronn.

1 June 2024 – 4th DEC/Conference/1st DEC, 0900 CET, 1300 CET, at the Gaststätte “zum Reegen”, Riedweg 52, 74078 Heilbronn.

Take care and be safe!
John Fleming

OMAR BRADLEY GR42

SCHWEINFURT, GERMANY

GR42's Legionnaires in Action!



I attended Veterans' Recognition Day Event at St. Joseph's University in downtown Brooklyn, which is an annual occasion. They offer courses here on post at Fort Hamilton, and by virtue of my being Education Services Officer here to the Garrison, I always receive an invitation to attend, so I go...certainly glad I went this year, as they presented me with the folded Stars and Stripes, which was quite moving to me.

To the Legionnaires of GR42, Department of France and their families, hoping you had an enjoyable Thanksgiving!

JAMIE REILLY, Education Services Specialist (ESS), Installation Management Command,
Directorate of Human Resources

JOHN WAYNE POST GR79

HEILBRONN, GERMANY

THANKSGIVING 2023





GRANDE CHEF DE GARE *DAVID GARCIA*



GRANDE 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 Forces.

DATES TO REMEMBER:

13 January 2024 – Winter Wreck, Heilbronn Germany.

27 April 2024 – Grand Elections, Kaiserslautern Germany.

Summer Wreck, July 2024 – Location and time to be announced.



**Space Force Birthday
Dec 20, 2023**

On Dec. 20, 2019, the U.S. Space Force – the newest branch of the U.S. Armed Forces – was officially instituted with the signing of legislation by President Donald Trump.



Panama/Operation Just Cause (1989)

Dec 20, 2023