DEPARTMENT COMMANDER...Jimmie Dale

Hello Comrades,

I hope everyone is safe and had an enjoyable Memorial Day weekend. I received a few emails that showed some Post were able to conduct grave site visits. I also was able spend Sunday afternoon visiting two cemeteries here in the Mannheim area. It was an honor and a privilege to be able to replace the old flags on our fallen veteran graves and honor their sacrifice to our great nation.

COVID-19: This is still a dangerous situation we are facing, and our members need to stay alert to that fact and do not let your guard down because the weather is getting nice outside. Germany has eased its restriction in many parts of the country as it has begone reopening the countries job markets. But there are still plenty of safety precautions that need to be taken to stay safe such as social distancing and wearing a face mask. The best way to prevent the illness is to limit your exposure to people who might have the virus.

Electronic DEC: I have directed an executive committee to be formed to come up with a safe way for our Department to continue to conduct business. Once this committee has developed the instruction and procedures for an electronic DEC that information will be sent out to all Post leadership.

Post CPR: We need to make sure all our Post have completed their Post CPR Report and submitted it to National by 1 Jul 2020, that is the cutoff date for National. I need for all Vise Commanders to work with the Posts that they are responsible for to make sure we can make this deadline.

Vote: If you are not registered to vote, then you need to get register so you can vote in the upcoming election. My 1st Vice Commander at my Post sat me and my Post Adjutant down and we filled out the paperwork to request our Voters Absentee ballad. This was a simple procedure and did not take long to fill out and mail it. Now I am waiting for them to mail me back the registration forms. Each Post might want to have someone in the Post to assist with this activity it should come under Americanism.

DSO: Department Service Officer support is still available this support is done electronically online through emails and phone calls. If you have any questions about this support, you can contact Frank Phillips the DSO.

Buddy Checks: This is still one of the main objectives of our organization, we need to keep the lines of communication open with our members. To identify who might be sick or may just need some assistance and support while this virus pandemic is still going around.

Membership: We are at around 91% in membership for the Department this year and we have a few Post that are close to 100% but they need to communicate more with the members that have not renewed this year. There is no doubt in my mind that we would be at 100% right now if we could have continued with our membership awareness program. COVID-19 changed all that so now it is up to the individual Post to finish the mission and get the Department of France to 100%.

Respectfully,
Jimmie Dale
American Legion
Commander
Department of France
Health emergency forces cancellation of American Legion national convention


“The safety of our members and compliance with state and federal public-health restrictions and guidelines made this decision not only prudent but necessary,” American Legion National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford said. “The commonwealth of Kentucky has taken emergency actions to prevent the spread of infections and to follow federal guidance that restrict public gatherings and urge social distancing. No one can say with any certainty when these measures will be lifted or in what manner.”

The American Legion National Executive Committee approved a resolution Wednesday, April 8, by email to cancel the annual convention of wartime veterans and their families for the first time in history. The 2020 Sons of The American Legion National Convention is also canceled.

“The safety of our members and compliance with state and federal public-health restrictions and guidelines made this decision not only prudent but necessary,” American Legion National Commander James W. “Bill” Oxford said. “The commonwealth of Kentucky has taken emergency actions to prevent the spread of infections and to follow federal guidance that restrict public gatherings and urge social distancing. No one can say with any certainty when these measures will be lifted or in what manner.”

The 102nd National Convention is now scheduled for Aug. 27 – Sept. 2, 2021, in Phoenix. Terms of currently serving national officers, including National Commander Oxford, are extended until then, according to the resolution. Nationally appointed American Legion commission and committee chairpersons will also remain in their positions until the Fall 2021 meeting of the National Executive Committee.

The convention cancellation and extension of national officer terms are within the authority of the NEC, according to The American Legion’s constitution and bylaws.

Also Wednesday, the NEC selected Louisville as the site of the 2026 American Legion National Convention, the first available date.

With a current membership of nearly two million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, patriotic youth programs and Americanism. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through nearly 13,000 posts worldwide. From the drafting of the original GI Bill to the creation of the Department of Veterans Affairs, The American Legion, www.legion.org, is the most influential voice for America’s veterans.

Media contacts: John Raughter, jraughter@legion.org, (317) 630-1350
On Sunday May 24th 2020, in accordance with long-standing tradition to celebrate Memorial Day on Sunday in France, the city of Neuilly-sur-Seine welcomed the American Legion Paris Post 1, the Veterans of Foreign Wars Paris Post 605, and the American Overseas Memorial Day Association at the American Legion Mausoleum in the Cemetery of Neuilly.

Our first Zoom Monthly Meeting is in the books. I think it went well with 22 participants at the high point. We did not get Zoom Bombed. Now we know it is quite possible to do this type of meeting.

It was so great to see Commander Ray Vincent and Life member Mike Hansen in our meeting from State side. We will make it possible for this type of technology to be used for you guys that can not make our meetings to still participate like this in the future.

Looking forward to the next one.

Dennis Owens / Post Commander
Who is eligible to join the Department of France Past Commanders Club?

Past and Present Department Commanders, Department Vice Commanders At Large, Department Vice Commanders, Post Commanders, SAL Detachment Commanders, SAL Squadron Commanders, Auxiliary Department Presidents, Auxiliary Unit Presidents... so if you were just voted into 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
Comrades,

I want to inform our Veterans about the current CORONA VIRUS situation and the Department of Veteran Affairs.

The American Legion Department of France is still continuing to process claims.

Because of current events, the DOS / ADSO offices are closed to the public. The American Legion Regional Office is closed. Contact is available via e-mail.

All appointments that have been scheduled, will be contacted per e-mail or phone. We will try to set up a teleconference to assist you.

For new appointments, we ask that you send us an e-mail, after the 13th of May 2020. Our office has appointments (teleconference) booked through the 14th of May. We will contact you and set up new appointments.

Please do not call, as we are working with other claimants on the telephone. Send us an e-mail, we will get back to you as soon as possible.

After the 14th of May 2020, our office will take phone calls on Wednesdays OR Fridays between 1300 and 1600 hours. This is for making appointments only. We will not have time to discuss your claims. We will schedule a time to call you back to discuss your claim.

The Department of Veteran Affairs is still working! Claims are still being processed. The VA is still operating. Most employees are working from home. At this time, claims are being processed normally.

As far as the Compensation and Pension exams, scheduled exams will still take place. There will be a reduction of exams, until this crisis is over. Please be patient and understand. You will be contacted by the VES as soon as C&P exams are possible.

Please stay safe and follow all advisories, regarding the Corona Virus.

- Take preventative actions to include the following:
  - Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
  - Washing your hands often with soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
  - Using alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with at least 60-percent alcohol) if soap and water are not available.
  - Cleaning and disinfecting frequently-touched objects and surfaces.
  - Refraining from touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Staying home when sick.

Do not forget our older Veterans. Please do the Buddy Check and call them. See if we can help them with their situation. If there is a way the DSO can help, please feel free to contact our office.

Excerpts from VA OCONUS Bulletin issued on 25 March 2020 at 1700 hours:

1. The Pittsburgh Regional Office, along with the BDD sites in Germany & Korea are currently closed to the public and will no longer accept walk-in claims assistance, scheduled
appointments, counseling, or other in-person services. For those individuals who require assistance from the BDD offices, you may contact the Landstuhl BDD office.

VBA benefits and services provided to Veterans, families, and survivors will continue to be delivered throughout the duration of COVID-19 impacts.

2. COMPENSATION & PENSION EXAMS

- Due to COVID-19, there are instances when claimants are asking to cancel or postpone scheduling their examination appointments because of social distancing practices. VA will not deny a claim solely for a failure to report for an exam at this time.
- Veterans and Servicemembers who wish to reschedule an exam due to COVID-19 concerns should contact the exam vendor directly. Vendors will hold the exam request in their system and will reschedule appointments once it is safe to do so.

Please also notify VA either via phone (412-395-6272) or from Germany 0800 1890363

3. BOARD OF VETERANS APPEALS (BVA) HEARINGS

- Effective Monday, March 23, 2020, the Board is suspending all video and Central Office hearings through at least May 1, 2020. We understand that Veterans have been waiting for these hearings and we don’t want to delay an longer than necessary. The Board will work with Veterans, VSOs, an representatives to provide virtual hearings where possible.

4. VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION & EMPLOYMENT SERVICES (VR&E)

- VR&E counselors will be reaching out to establish a plan to maintain communication throughout this period and ensure there are no lapses in VR&E services or any negative impact on the processing of your claim.
- **Facilities Converting to Distance Learning Only** - In an attempt to control the spread of COVID-19, many facilities are temporarily converting to distance learning only, meaning in-residence classes are transitioning to an on-line format for a period of time. This change is not the result of a reclassification of the type of program, meaning the facilities are not officially reclassifying in-residence classes to on-line classes for VA purposes. Therefore, there is no need to request an updated certification for the current term as a result of this change. Also, it is VR&E’s policy to pay the in-residence rate for a term that includes a combination of in-residence and on-line training. However, if this practice is still in place at the beginning of the facility’s next scheduled term, an updated certification must be sent to the facility to verify the classification of the type of program.
GR09 honors graves of veterans buried in local cemeteries

Again, as in past years, GR09 paid visits to the ten graves of locally buried American Veterans on Memorial Day and as in previous years the Post was able to decorate each grave with more than just a US flag. Thanks to the American Legion’s Overseas Graves Decoration Trust Fund, Post GR09 received 500 dollars to “be used to honor and decorate individual graves of those veterans who were laid to rest outside American Battle Monument Commission controlled facilities.” Accordingly, each grave was decorated with an impressive flower and plant arrangement and with a streamer citing the Neu-Ulm’s American Legion and a card acknowledging the donation by the American Legion’s Overseas Graves Decoration Trust Fund. This demonstration of patriotism also exhibits to German visitors to the cemeteries that Americans do not forget their comrades in arms.

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 Virus the normally larger group of GR 09 members could not participate in this yearly event as Post Commander Aman did not want to risk the health of any of the post’s members therefore some of the graves were visited by only one GR 09 officer.

Postal Chaplain Tom Snook preparing floral Arrangements for distribution.

Legionnaire Anthony Hicks saluting flag at grave of Frank Schlipf.
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.

Due to the COVID-19 Situation, it was decided and approved by the membership that all Grand positions will remain in place for the 2021 Membership Year!!!

The Grand is planning a Cheminot for July 2020…if possible. Information will be sent out to the Voyageurs.

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<td>Commander Joe D. Brown</td>
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<td>NEC Maxwell Rice</td>
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Due to the COVID-19 Situation, our Detachment Convention had to be postponed until further notice!!!

Online Membership Processing Now Available for Sons of the American Legion.