



Legion News



DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE

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

November 2020

Vol. 18, No. 11

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER...Santos Alvarado



My Fellow Legionnaires,
Another month has come and gone. We must remember that Covid-19 is still around. We must remain safe and protect ourselves, practice social distance and wear a mask when and where required. The 2nd wave of this pandemic has already hit some EU countries, if you intend to travel stay safe. Also, during Oct, we had our 2nd DEC that was held via virtual, I had to make a decision about this due to the rise again of Covid-19. I did not feel that it would be fair if we a in person DEC, did not want anyone to get ill. I suggest the all Post refrain from having any closed meetings and follow the local laws. Membership has been going strong thanks to all those Members that

have renewed, we must reach our 100% goal for 2021. As of 28 October 2020, we are at 71 %, some Posts have already reach or exceeded this level. Make sure that you reach out to all your Post Members to renew, instruct your Members on how to renew online. Most of all let us not forget the Buddy Check, remember that some Post members might not have a smartphone or computer. Pay them a Visit to see how they are doing. Remember that in Nov we Celebrate Veterans Day, Honor all those that Served. We also celebrate Thanksgiving Day, as we sit at the dinner table, let us not forgot those that can't be home due to mission requirements and those that have no one or nowhere to celebrate it.



National Commander
James W. "Bill" Oxford

[National Commander addresses
The American Legion
National Executive Committee](#)



DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT...*John Fleming*

Greetings Comrades,

I hope everyone is safe and well as we continue to live with this Pandemic.

First, I would like to congratulate and welcome our newest Post. During the National Executive Committee, held virtually on 14-15 October 2020, Resolution 15 was approved authorizing the issue of a temporary charter to the Sgt. Thomas Oliver Ahlberg Memorial Post TH02, located in Pattaya, Thailand. They chartered with 43 members and they continue to grow their new Post. Great Job!

Second, I would like to thank the 15 Posts that had Delegates attend the 2nd DEC on 24 October. A 45% attendance rate is not too bad, but there is room for improvement. Please realize, commanders and adjutants, that you do not have to attend. You can appoint any member in your Post to attend. All they need is a computer and an internet connection. I would suggest that if your Post has a Post home with internet connectivity, you might have more members attend and have the Delegates "on camera" (remembering social distancing).

As we start November, I would like to stress a few items:

1. myLegion.org: Most of our active Posts are using this tool effectively. A few Posts need to please step up their game and start using this tool to assist them in reaching their 2021 Membership Goal. I and other Department members are here and willing to assist anyone who needs any help.

2. Consolidated Post Report (CPR): The 2021 Membership year CPR is now available on myLegion.org. Four Posts have already started this year's CPR. Great Job! It has been recommended, and I agree, that you access the CPR as least once a month and enter everything your Post has done for the last month. This ensures that your Post gets credit for your accomplishment and someone does not have to sit down at the end of the year and try and figure out what your Post did all year.

3. Certification of Officers: A reminder that after Post elections it is required to send two forms to the Department Adjutant. Immediately after Post elections, the Notification of Post/Squadron Commanders & Adjutants form must be sent to the Department Adjutant. This is needed so that rosters, in particular my e-mail list, can be updated and new commanders and adjutants can be notified of upcoming events. This form needs to be completed even if there is no change in Officers. As soon as possible after Post elections, the Certification of Post Officials report needs to be forwarded to the Department Adjutant. This is needed so that I can update the National Officer/Committee data base. It is understood that this form requires some time to gather all the necessary information, but please try to submit it within 30 days of elections.

DEPARTMENT OFFICERS 2021MY

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WELCOME SGT. THOMAS OLIVER AHLBERG MEMORIAL POST TH02

Pattaya, Thailand



Post members with Temp Charter & Family Members



Joint American Legion and VFW
at Kachantaburi National Cemetery

The formation of the post has three pieces to the puzzle.

I would say this is one of the first pieces of the puzzle. Our Commander (William Martin Ahlberg) had toyed with an idea for several years. The formation can trace its roots back to Osan AB, Korea. As with most overseas military facilities there is a contingent of civilians affiliated with the base. This is made up of civilians in various capacities. Some are spouses and children of active duty military members. Another group is made up of civilians working as contractors and employees of the US military. Many of these civilians and contractors are prior military. These civilians naturally gravitate to each other to form the expat community surrounding the installation. Many in this community also take it upon themselves to assist other expats by sharing their knowledge and experiences living in an overseas environment. Typically, active duty military would come and go, but we civilians would be there for many years at a time. Over time many of us from this expat community relocated and retired to Thailand.

The second piece now is with the expat community living in Pattaya, Thailand. On one occasion our Commander shared his story of his brother and his service in Vietnam. He expressed a wish that there would be a way to honor his brother who was killed while serving in Vietnam.

The third piece of the puzzle fell into place when a Marine Veteran sought information in joining the local VFW post here in Pattaya. He did not meet the membership requirements for joining the VFW. This was probably the a-ha moment for our Commander and our Second Vice Commander (Shane Curtis).

Although it is the nature of most expats to assist other expats, there was a particular need for an organization whose purpose is the unique needs of all US Veterans. As expats living in Thailand, we have a particular knowledge that is useful. We enjoy getting involved with the local area veterans after retirement and/or separation from active duty. We have some understanding of the local laws so it was easy to find like-minded individuals who support the same ideas. All of these values are in line with the mission of The American Legion. Veterans helping Veterans.

We currently have 43 Charter Members and 5 members who have transferred into the post since the temporary charter was approved. As far as potential members are concerned it is difficult to quantify. It is next to impossible to get actual numbers of Americans living in Thailand and further broke down to Veterans. We estimate that they number in the thousands. We currently have members from

all over the world and we continue to use that network to further increase our membership.

The pandemic has had some impact on our plans. Initially there was a lot of momentum in forming the post and getting it up and running. Then Thailand went into lockdown. This took some of the momentum out of the standing up of the post. We continued to recruit and assemble the application for temporary charter. The first informal meeting was held in late 2019. After the initial meeting steps were in place to pursue what would be involved in the formation of an American Legion Post here in Thailand. This involved a trip to the only other existing American Legion Post in Thailand, The Robin Olds American Legion Thailand Post TH01 in Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand. After this trip and with the information acquired the process began. On the 5th of March the first Steering Committee meeting was held. Unfortunately, soon after that meeting Thailand went into shutdown. This prevented face to face meetings and took a little momentum out of the formation of the Post. During the shutdown efforts continued in recruitment and assembling the necessary documents to establish the temporary charter. The lockdown in Thailand eased and the second steering committee meeting was held in mid-June 2020. Oddly, the pandemic had benefited us in the initial formation of the post. Our application for temporary charter was delayed until the 1st of July which fell in line with the timetable for paying of membership dues ultimately saving our membership money.

It is precisely the history that is a driving force with the Post. The United States and Thailand engaged in their first official diplomatic interaction on March 20, 1833, when they signed a Treaty of Amity and Commerce which was the United States' first treaty with an Asian country.

As Thailand is one of the most desirable locations for expats to retire in, this establishes our Post to be uniquely posed to assist our Veterans. As we are geographically separated from the support normally offered to our Veterans and expats it will be the goal to bridge that gap. The American Legion offers an opportunity to all US Veterans' to belong to an organization with their best interest in mind. With this goal we will assist all Veterans' regardless if they are members or not. To date this Post has already participated in several events formed with both American Legion, VFW and other Foreign Veteran organizations to represent Veterans before the community in a positive way.

Michael J Chitwood
Adjutant, TH02 / michael.j.chitwood@gmail.com



DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE...*James Dennis*

Fellow Comrades,

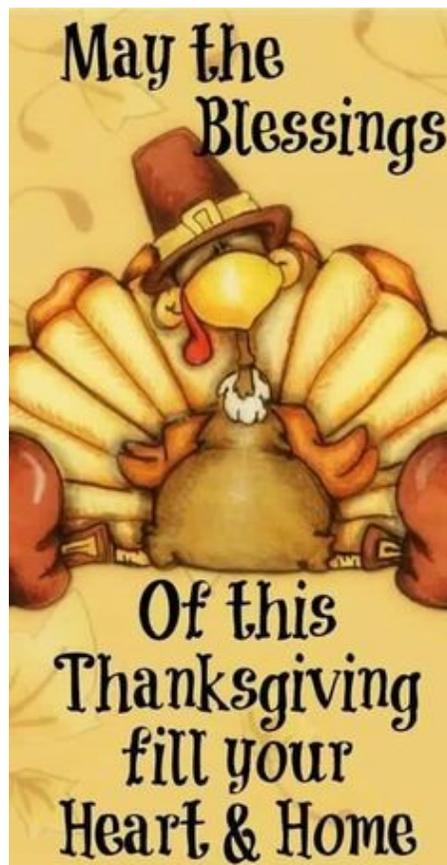
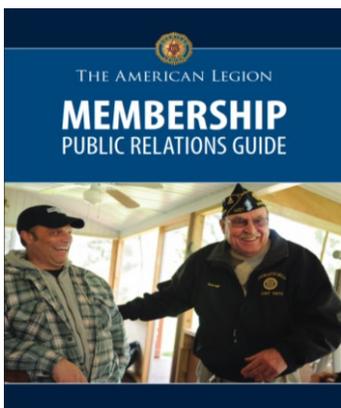
I have been watching your Posts thrive. You have brought this Department up to the 70% plus membership and we are #1 at National. Do we want to stop here??? I do not think so. A lot of our Posts are only a few members away from their 100% and can reach it before 31 December for the \$1.00 per member incentive.

As I look through the statistics, we are above in membership from last year, but our renewal numbers are still too high. Over 1600 members still not renewed from 2019 and 2020. I ask that all the Posts please contact the members for renewal again. Let us see if we can get our renewal rate for the Department of France up to 90% or higher this year.

I have been working with a lot of Posts on their transfers, renewals, and basic membership. I have come to realized that we need a class on basic paperwork for membership. So, we can get to know what form we need for what purpose. I would like to have it on the 14th of November 2020, via video conference. If your Post is interested, contact me.

One thing in membership that is never mentioned enough is "Thank you ". Every Post, everyone at Department level, and most of all the members themselves. On my behalf, thank you for supporting this Department, Your Post, and the American Legion.

James Dennis / Membership Chairman



Buddy Check:

Wellness check-ins with veterans



The American Legion activates national Buddy Checks to save veteran lives amid rising suicide rates, urges Congress to pass bill to help

Posts across the country step up veteran-to-veteran outreach to support those at high risk around Veterans Day

INDIANAPOLIS (October 29, 2020) — As COVID-19 cases rise and the holidays approach, [The American Legion](#) is activating its **Buddy Check** program to save veteran lives through peer support check-in calls. The nation's largest veterans organization is also urging Congress to pass the Buddy Check Bill which will make wellness checks a national priority for the Department of Veterans Affairs. With military suicides up 20% over this time last year, Legionnaires will make thousands of check-in calls to at-risk veterans across the nation, to offer support and access to health and wellness programs in the week surrounding Veterans Day and into the weeks ahead.

The American Legion warns that veterans can be at particular risk for depression and suicide around the holidays and into the winter months. Many veterans are disproportionately hard-hit by the pandemic due to age, chronic health issues, post-traumatic stress disorder and isolation. [The Buddy Check program is designed to give Legionnaires the tools to make contact, engage in conversation, assess risks and direct veterans in need to the appropriate services.](#)

“The American Legion knows from 100 years of experience that it’s veteran-to-veteran contact that can make the difference for someone in a crisis situation,” says James W. “Bill” Oxford, national commander of The American Legion. “So, we’re putting some muscle behind this effort and giving our members the tools they need to reach out to fellow veterans in their hometowns who may be hard hit by the triple whammy of the pandemic, isolation and the holidays.”

The American Legion is also urging Congress to unanimously pass the **Buddy Check Bill** introduced with bi-partisan support from Sens. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa; Doug Jones, D-Ala.; and Maggie Hassan, D-N.H. The legislation will require VA to establish a “Buddy Check Week,” as well as provide educational opportunities, materials and references for veterans to learn how to conduct personal wellness checks. The bill also compels VA to expand resources for the Veterans Crisis Line to handle any potential increased volume during the designated week.

“Veterans are in crisis, and we need Congress’ help to take this program to the next level and stem the tide of suicide among our nation’s veterans,” Oxford said. “We need all hands on deck and all boots on the ground to fight for our nation’s veterans, just like they fought for us.”

The Buddy Check program encourages Legionnaires to make contact, lend a listening ear, and direct their peers to critical services. For Buddy Check information, visit legion.org/buddycheck. For urgent help, contact the Veterans Crisis Line at **1-800-273-8255**.

About The American Legion

[The American Legion](#) is the largest veterans service organization with nearly 2 million members in more than 12,000 posts across the nation. Chartered by Congress in 1919, The American Legion is committed to mentoring youth and sponsoring wholesome community programs, advocating patriotism and honor, promoting a strong national security and continued devotion to servicemembers and veterans.

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Media Contact: John Raughter, (317) 630-1350 jraughter@legion.org



The American Legion

SEP 30, 2020

The American Legion Department of France includes posts in more than 10 countries in Europe and Asia. With such a far-flung membership, activities like post service officer (PSO) training could be complicated even before the global COVID-19 pandemic hit this spring. But the work of The American Legion has gone on, including helping veterans with their claims.

At the end of August, Department of France Service Officer Frank Phillips conducted a full-day PSO training attended both in-person and virtually by service officers from Greece and Thailand to Ireland and England. It was the second event put on by Phillips, an Army veteran who took over the department job in 2017 as a volunteer and immediately started building it up. He works out of Garrison USAG Ansbach in Germany, and belongs to American Legion Post 1982 in Ansbach. He cites the garrison as a source of support and resources. [And in his capacity as a service officer overseas, he encourages VA health-care participants planning to start traveling abroad again to look into the agency's [Foreign Medical Program](#) before leaving.]

"It's a very important job over here, being an accredited service officer," Phillips says. His work has led to a deluge of claims cases from around the world; "Our reputation is spreading like wildfire." Some of the veterans he has assisted later became PUFL Legion members. More cases necessitate more service officers, hence the training session. Phillips himself had attended Department Service Officer School during the Washington Conference at the end of February, as the pandemic was expanding globally; the borders closed the day after he returned to Europe. But the time and energy is worth it – "They're really appreciative that we have someone who will help them with their claims."

JOHN WAYNE POST GR79



Second Department DEC 24 Oct. 2020



Mrs. Marlies Easterling presented a Post Everlasting Certificate



GR79 General Membership Meeting October 2020



Halloween 2020



Election Day History



Election Day refers to the day on which general elections in the United States are held. Presidential elections are held every 4 years and the elected president will then be sworn in and take office the following January 20th, a day known as [Inauguration Day](#).

Election Day in the United States is always held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November.



Joseph Schram

*Department Historian, Americanism Chairperson, Oratorical Director
& Boys State Director*



The following Americanism awards were approved at the Department of France 's 3rd DEC

Girl Scout Gold Award

Girl Scout Gold "Scout of the Year" Award with the following:

- \$500 monetary prize
- Plaque
- Certificate

The deadline for nominations to Department is 15 March



Civil Air Patrol Cadet of the Year

Civil Air Patrol "Cadet of the Year" Award with the following:

- Plaque
- Certificate

The deadline for nominations to Department is 15 March



JROTC European Drill Competitions

JROTC European Army & Air Force/Navy Drill Competitions winners awarded the following

- \$250 monetary prize
- Plaque
- Certificate

Junior Three-Position Air Rifle Tournament

The American Legion's Junior Three-Position Air Rifle Tournament prize awards have been increase to the following amounts

- 1st Place: \$700
- 2nd Place: \$500
- 3rd Place: \$300



Changes to Americanism Programs

Oratorical Contest

Oratorical rules state that arrangements for contests leading up to department finals is the responsibility of each department. For levels of competition prior to the department finals contest, the rules and regulations set forth in the oratorical rules are not mandatory – they are offered as a guideline, and your respective department headquarters should be consulted. However, **if a department wishes for its finalist to compete in the National Oratorical Finals Contest in Indianapolis next year, rules state that the department finals contest shall conform with national contest procedures, rules and regulations.** The decision for having a traditional National Oratorical Contest was made for a couple of reasons.

Eagle Scout of the Year (eligibility requirements)

American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year be amended to read: “Must be either a registered active member of a Boy Scouts of America unit that is chartered to an American Legion post, American Legion Auxiliary unit or Sons of the American Legion squadron **OR** be a registered active member of any chartered Boy Scouts of America unit and have a parent or grandparent possessing up-to-date membership in The American Legion or Sons of The American Legion or American Legion Auxiliary, and in the case of a recently deceased member, their membership for the year immediately prior to the current year may be used; AND each of the following:

- (1) Received the Eagle Scout award;
- (2) Received a Scouts BSA or Venturer Religious Emblem;
- (3) Demonstrated practical citizenship in church, school, Scouting, and community
- (4) Reached their 15th birthday and enrolled in high school at the time of selection
- (5) Applied through The American Legion department of the state in which their Scout unit is chartered.

The winner of the competition receives a \$10,000 scholarship and the three runners-up each are awarded \$2,500 scholarships

Nomination form will be available on 01 November

The deadline for nominations to Department is 15 March

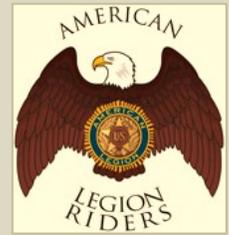
www.legion.org/scholarships/eaglescout



Lee Preston

Department of France
Legion Riders Director / Chairperson

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Hello All Department of France Legion Riders,

I guess that you are wondering why I am writing an article in the monthly Department newsletter. It is with a heavy heart that I need to report that Jim Brotherton has decided to step down as the Director/Committee Chairperson, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for the service and time that he donated to the Department and the Legion Riders. He was and still is a great asset to the Department Legion Riders, the Department of France, and The American Legion. Thank you, Jim, for everything that you accomplished and your pledge to assist me as necessary. The Department Commander, Santos Alvarado, requested that I take the position. I accepted as I am hoping that I can get the Department Legion Riders through this new time as well as new rules that have been passed.

Ok, now for formalities! As everyone should know by now; a new Department SOP was drafted and approved at the last DEC. I hope that everyone has had the chance to read it. If not, please send me an e-mail, lpreston1957@gmail.com and I will gladly send a copy to you for your revue. A copy will be sent to all of the Department Chapter Directors NLT 5 November 2020; if they have not received it already.

The new SOP is keeping the Department in compliance with the new resolution, number 19, that has been passed by the NEC October 14-15, 2020. Here is the link to the resolution so that everyone can read it https://www.legion.org/documents/legion/pdf/ALR_Resolution_19_2020.pdf. I do understand that there are things in this SOP that are not realistic for our Legion Rider Chapters and several Riders are angered at this proposition. Please rest assured that myself and Jim Brotherton are currently revising the SOP to make it more

realistic for our current Chapters as well as future Chapters while keeping Resolution 19 in mind. Here is the link to open and read Resolution 19! Please take a close look and read it two or three times. Please pay close attention to page 4 were it states:

Resolved that The American Legion National Headquarters and the respective Departments shall maintain general oversight of the American Legion Riders program in regards to proper use of the emblems of The American Legion, The American Legion Riders, and The American Legion Legacy Run, and compliance with the American Legion National Constitution and By-Laws.

The Department has gone in the direction to convert the American Legion Riders to a Department run program which is well within their right to do. They then have the ability to maintain the required oversight of The American Legion Riders Program, Department of France. I am hoping that we can come to an agreement on the new SOP that will unite the Riders and the Department to a point that meets the National requirements. I will be setting up a meeting with the Chapter Directors, either face to face or online, as soon as we complete the new SOP.

You can also view both documents at this link: <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/4aob9y4f7w25iazxwnna/-My-Paper-doc.paper?dl=0&rlkey=sd1pdgsfom4vnkxscgu93aa4t> you can open and read both documents at this address. If you do not get in; send me an E-mail!

Thank you all for reading this and looking at both the Department SOP and Resolution 19!

Lee Preston
Papa Smurf
Department Director/Committee Chairperson



Newsletter Editor...*David N. Greaux*

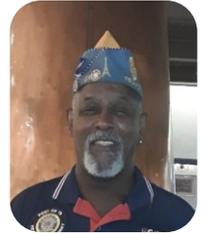
REMINDER...all newsletter articles should be turned in PRIOR to months end!

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DETACHMENT OF FRANCE

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Second DEC 10 October 2020 Heilbronn, Germany



DATES TO REMEMBER!!!

Third SAL DEC...06 March 2021 hosted by Squadron GR05

SAL Convention...05 June 2021 hosted by GR79

INTRODUCING TRAINING TUESDAYS

Beginning in October, American Legion National Headquarters staff will present 60 to 90-minute sessions on topics aimed at post commanders and adjutants.

Future Dates in 2020

Tuesday, Nov. 24, 2020 – 7 p.m. EDT Topic: Post Administration

Tuesday, Dec. 29, 2020 – 7 p.m. EDT

Presented via Microsoft Teams

[CLICK HERE TO JOIN](#)



Grande Chef de Gare 2021MY...*Lee Preston*



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.

GRANDE MID WINTER PROMENADE! / Saturday, 19 December 2020