



Legion News

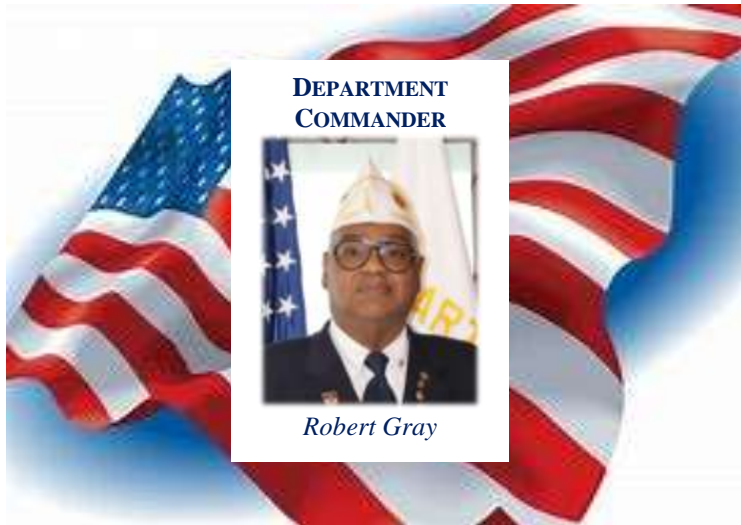
DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE



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

September 2023

Vol. 21 / No. 9



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Hello American Legion family,

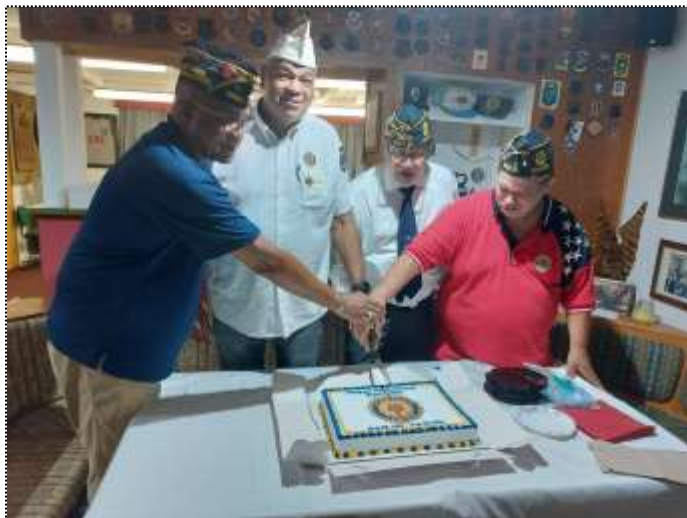
This month was a great beginning. I hope everyone enjoyed the summer months as we head into the school season. I hosted the Commanders and Adjutants (C&A) meeting on 6 August, and it was an enormous success. The vice commanders were not present to give me a chance to have a one-on-one with the Posts Commanders and Adjutants. It was a good discussion, and a lot of positive things came out of it. We are headed in a positive direction.

We also hosted a Commander Advisory Council (CAC) meeting. The meeting was highly informative and well-needed. The topic discussed was the standings in the post, which was given by VCAL Dennis Owens. I needed to understand how each Post was doing and if they were good or had problems that we needed to address. Then we discussed membership, and how to improve. Great ideas came from this, as we will discuss in future meetings.

I was pleased to attend a GR01 meeting along with Vice Commander John Gerdeman, as they celebrated their 70th birthday. Post Commander David Garcia, along with 2nd Vice Commander Michael Young did a beautiful job. Chief Cole prepared an impressive meal of grilled steaks and chicken with side dishes. The evening started at 17:30 with open remarks from the commander and ended with the cutting of the traditional American Legion GR01 birthday cake, which I had the privilege to participate in.

On the 24th of August, I flew to Charlotte, North Carolina, to attend the American Legion National Convention. I look forward to attending, where I can meet other department commanders, get fresh ideas, and express comments and concerns to National. On my return, I hope to share innovative ideas and experiences that will benefit the Department of France.

I wish that everyone in the Department of France American Legion family stays safe and healthy and looks out for each other.



DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT



John Fleming

Department Adjutant's Corner

Greeting Comrades,

The 2nd DEC will be at the Novotel in Saint Avold, France, on 28 October 2023, so please start planning to attend. Here is the address for the hotel and the website if you wish to book a room. I will be arriving on Friday, 27 October 2023.

Novotel Saint-Avold
Avenue de Fayetteville, RN 33
57500 Saint Avold - France
<https://all.accor.com/hotel/0433/index.en.shtml>

I believe that planning has begun for our next Mid-Winter Conference. If anyone has any suggestions for topics you would like to hear, please email me and VCAL Dennis Owens.

Upcoming Events:

28 October 2023 – 2nd DEC, agenda to be published.
11 November 2023 – Veterans Day Ceremony
Early 2024 – Mid-Winter Conference
16 March 2023 – 3rd DEC
26 May 2024 – Memorial Day Ceremony
27 May 2024 – Memorial Day
June 2024 – 4th DEC, Convention, 1st DEC

Thanks, and best wishes.

John Fleming

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 Greaux

**DEPARTMENT
VCAL**



Dennis Owens

Department of France Vice
Commander's Corner...

Greetings Department of France,

Another month has gone by and I can say that I am very pleased with your Department Vice Commanders. I have asked them to contact each Post Commander and Adjutant and to have a sit

down with them for between one and two hours with a questionnaire that I wrote in 2018, it is still relevant to today's American Legion. It will provide your Vice Commander a greater understanding you the Post Commander and his or her Post. What are your strengths and what are your Post challenges. At the end of the questionnaire there are several suggestions which might help your Post along. As VCAL, I even picked up several Posts and can say that I have had a couple of wonderful conversations with my friend Nikos Papadopoulos Commander of GC01 in Athens as well as Jeff Carson and

Terry Parker Commander and Adjutant of CH01. I will have my conversation with TH02 later the 28th of August. Speaking of TH02, I was just invited to their August meeting this past week over Google Meet and I found it quite interesting, friendly, business like and very enjoyable to sit through. Commander William Ahlberg and Adjutant Mike Chitwood do a fantastic job in TH02 and I can see that it is no wonder why they achieved all the Membership Awards they received last year! I am looking forward to completing the contact with TH01.

I would highly encourage each Post Commander and Adjutant to reach out to your assigned Department Vice Commander and make the connection, check your emails because we are reaching out to you. It will be very much worth your time. Also, please invite them to your meetings, especially your Election Meeting so they can install your newly elected officers.

Very best wishes,

VCAL, Dennis Owens

**DEPARTMENT
VICE COMMANDER**



John Gerdeman

On the August 12 I visited Post GR79 in Heilbronn for their Fish Fry and spare rib day. They forgot to tell me that I had to catch the fish and clean it before we could eat them. So, it was off to Frohnfalls im Mainhardter Wald. Where there was a trout pond, we caught around 10 trout, Comrade Brown caught 5 fish and the other 10 were caught by

Roy Martin and Remi Drummond, Mick Drummond. Then came the Spareribs. They had a contest who could BBQ the best Spareribs. There were 3 contestants: the 1st place winner was Remi Drummond 2nd place Charles Singeton 3rd place Roy Martin, and they ask me to be one of the Judges. When it was over, they told me that

someone from the North does not know anything about spareribs even though I am from the south (Maryland).

All in All, we had a lot of fun and it was a great time with GR79 again. I think Commander Brown is doing a Great job with Post GR79. Please keep up the good work.

Then it was off to Kaiserslautern Post GR01, there they were celebrating their 70th birthday as a post. The Department Commander



Robert Gray and I attended the celebration. I got to talk with the members and their spouses. I really liked to see that Comrade Steve Wards Family was there. This was keeping with what the American Legion stands for GR01 was first Chartered on 26 August 1953, in Paris. the first post commander was Michael Cuciano 1954. GRO1 has over 121 members They are one of the larges posts in Europe.

**DEPARTMENT
VICE COMMANDER**



Jim Brotherton

After our DEC/Convention in June I received from our leadership awards and the new Post Charter for EG01. This Charter placed the American Legion Post London England under the Department of France.

I presented Commander FitzGerald the Membership Achievement Award and the new Charter making EG01 part of the Department of France (DFR) on a recent trip to Belgium, where he resides.



I had the opportunity to sit down with the Commander and talk about his Post and their recent move, administratively, to the DFR.

James has been the Commander since around 2020. At that time the Post was under the responsibility of the Department of New York.

They are a Post facing the same problems many of our Posts are facing here in Europe, the drawdown of military installations, in turn the diminishing availability of attracting new members and the ageing of their present membership list.

At the time they were Chartered in December 1920 there was no Department of France (Chartered in October 1923), nor a Department of Continental Europe (Chartered in October 1921), the forerunner of the Department of France. It is not clear how this Post actually ended up assigned to the Department of New York, but there it remained for more than 90 years. The support they received from New York was minimal and after a time New York was no longer aware that EG01 was assigned to their Department.



In 2021 EG01 petitioned the Department of New York to have their Post transferred to the Department of France. This would make it easier to align support for their Post and membership and basically have a home they could turn to. It has not been an easy journey, but nothing worthwhile doing usually is.

Post EG01, London England, is the **newest** Post to join the Department of France family, it also is one of the **oldest** surviving Posts in our Department, second only to Paris Post 1. It brings with it a rich history, which the Post membership is very proud of.

Welcome Commander FitzGerald, welcome EG01 and welcome all the long serving members it brings with this addition.

**DEPARTMENT
VICE COMMANDER**



Rick Ojeda

For those of you who don't know me yet, let me introduce myself; my name is Rick Ojeda from Post NL01 and I am one of the newly elected Vice Commanders of the Department of France (DFR). Currently I hold the position of Chaplain in my Post.

This is my first experience as an officer at the Department level, so this will be a learning experience for me, one that I hope will be quite fruitful in revealing the inner workings of the Department.

While it is a little cliché, communication is the key to a better working relationship between the Department and my assigned Posts. As the liaison between my assigned Posts and the Department, I want to do my best to ensure that the communications pathway is open in both directions. Of course, I can't do this alone; it requires the

cooperation of my assigned posts as well as that of the Department. Regardless of what the past relationship was or is with the Department, I'm asking that you give me a chance to assist your Post in any way that will improve this relationship.

I have the honor of being assigned the following Posts in the DFR: BE02, GR09, GR13, GR30, GR42, and GR20. On August 4th I sent out a general email to all of my assigned posts. Within this email was a list of dates that I would be available to meet with the Post Commanders and Adjutants. As of today, I have received replies from two Posts. I will resend the email out once again in hopes of receiving more replies.

I'm sure that some of the Commanders and Adjutants of my assigned Posts have been Legion members far longer than I have, and many may have held the same position as I currently do in the Department. So, I think of this as an opportunity for me to learn from those more experienced than me. All I ask of you is a chance to get to know the Posts that have been assigned to me and to assist you in any way possible. That's what I'm here for.

**DEPARTMENT
VICE COMMANDER**



Valerie Préhoda

August has been an intensely busy month and has gone by in a flash. With the quiet exception of SP292, who nonetheless are maintaining their fellowship, Posts NL01, GR14, GR07, GR03, and FR01 have been busy with their membership drives and other Post activities. Each of them reflects the best of what the

American Legion stands for, and I couldn't be prouder of them.

As I participated in the 79th anniversary of D-Day ceremonies in southern France over a period of 4 days (13-16 Aug), I reflected on the fact that all the good work our DFR comrades do maintains the dignity and honors the sacrifices of our fallen comrades-in-arms through the years. It was truly an honor for me to represent you all at the wreath-laying ceremonies in Antheor, Dramont (St Raphael) and Theoule-Sur-Mer. Although the weather conditions were much different down south than they were during the earlier (and more well-known) D-Day operations in Normandy several months earlier, it still must have been an intense experience for the soldiers of the 7th Army, specifically the 3rd, 36th and 45th ID of VI

Corps. The 860 crosses in the ABMC Rhone Cemetery in nearby Draguignan, along with names of the 294 MIA attest to the fact that Operation Dragoon was no easy day.

The 2 Americans who participated in the ceremonies, Capt. Rayermann, from the 36th (now a National Guard Engineer unit near Austin) and me, were motivated and moved by the well-executed and heavily attended ceremonies put on by the French authorities in their respective towns. The 36th will be back next year, in greater force, to commemorate the 80th year since the highly successful landing in Provence to launch Operation Dragoon, that effectively signaled the end of Nazi tyranny in Europe.

My participation was bittersweet, as it marks the last time, I represent DFR as one of your Vice-Commanders. I have had to resign my post, with much regret, due to my surfeit of other priorities that unfortunately have hard timelines/due dates attached. I deeply appreciate the support and confidence that our DFR leadership placed in me, and I will continue to serve as BE02's 2nd Vice, to the best of my limited (by time and energy!) abilities. Thanks to my fellow Vice Commanders for their camaraderie and esprit-de-Corps, especially our indomitable VCAL Dennis Owens. Semper Fi!



Theoule sur Mer on the 16th of August 2023



Dramont (St Raphael) on the 15th of August 2023. Capt Rayermann is the officer representing the 36th ID.



DEPARTMENT MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE



James Dennis

Fellow Comrades,

A week has gone by and we are slowly approaching the 65% membership goal. 22 Posts have reached 50% or better, Congratulations! Keep up the good work.

New and old information.

1) On the membership standings list is a new note attached. It is called " Transferred from Post 9999+AD". These are members from Post 9999 to your Post. I will now count them to your Post. Why, you ask? National is including them in your count. This will make the National and Department database identical. You will see this under TH02 on the Membership standing list.

2) PUFLs. It has been talked about that I add all new PUFLs every month to the Standings. As of this month, I am doing just that. National is now doing it as well. Following their lead,

PUFLs will be checked and modified in every Membership standings according to the National Database.

3) Address issue. Yes, the recurring address issue is here. Please check all your addresses for the extra line that is usually street and zip code, district and sub district, or town and zip code. I sent National another email today. If you have them, send me the Post, members name and ID#.

4) Undeliverable addresses. I have a list of 13 bad addresses in the database. I will be sending this list out to the Posts affected, this week. You can also search your database for them yourself.

5) Missing membership cards. If your Post is still missing your membership cards. Contact me and I will send you blank cards. I am aware of 2 Posts without cards (IR02 and TH02). I hope to have them corrected this week. Are there any other Posts??

James Dennis
Membership Chairman
Department of France



“Once you have tasted flight, you will forever walk the earth with your eyes turned skyward, for there you have been, and there you will always long to return.” - Leonardo da Vinci

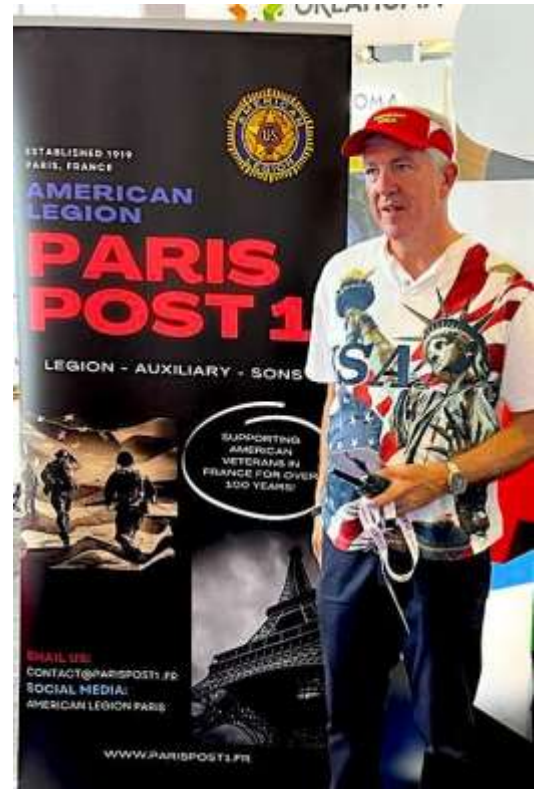
Paris Post 1 spread its wings with an extraordinary weekend exhibiting at the Paris Air Show and making new friends with visiting U.S Military pilots who flew their plane over from Texas to exhibit.



Paris Post 1 at the Paris Air Show!

Special thank you to Tom Kallman and his team at the USA Pavilion for letting Paris Post 1 join this year!

The Paris Air Show was an extraordinary event full of new technology and ideas from the leading international companies of the air and space industries!



Paris Post 1 Commander Ernest Paolucci and Tom Kallman's WWII D-Day History Connection

During the Paris Air Show, the USA Pavilion was busy! We were really grateful for Tom Kallman's support in Paris Post 1's exhibition this year, and for taking the time to let us interview him. Paris Post 1 is also very grateful for the help and expertise of Kallman Worldwide manager Michael Beltrone and his team at the USA Pavilion.

Tom Kallman, an American veteran and owner of Kallman Worldwide, has worked with the aerospace industry for decades. His passion for the aerospace industry grew out of Tom's love for flying which started

after spending four years at the U.S. Air Force Academy, and a nine-year tour of duty overall in flying planes.

Tom has spent over 2,700 flying hours as a T-33 and F-15 instructor pilot over his career in the military.

This year, Tom was interviewed by Paris Post 1, and he told us about a special piece of history that unknown! The history involves our past post Commander Ernie Paolucci, and a village that he liberated after landing in Normandy on D-Day in 1944



U.S. Department of Defense

Paris Post 1 had the opportunity to exhibit next to the U.S. Department of Defense.

Representing the U.S. military around the world, it was an honor to be at the Paris Air Show next to the Department of Defense.

We enjoyed meeting everyone, and we look forward to seeing you again next year!

Thank you for your service and dedication to the USA overseas!



U.S Military Visiting from Around the World

Paris Post 1 was lucky to have the opportunity to meet so many U.S military who traveled to France for the Paris Air Show.

Being able to share the history of Paris Post 1, and the services and support we provide to American veterans in France helps us grow our community around the world!

We look forward to keeping in touch, and to seeing you again next year!



American Astronaut Charlie Duke honored by Paris Post 1

It was a very special opportunity for members of Paris Post 1 to meet several astronauts at the Paris Air Show this year. The event had three astronauts who gave talks at the USA Pavilion, and who also spent time with members of Paris Post 1 (see video below).

Many in our community, including a lot of youth, came to watch these talks, and the astronauts were very generous in speaking more with everyone after their presentations.

In the photo above, American astronaut and retired U.S. Air Force Brigadier General Charlie Duke. Paris Post 1 had the special opportunity to speak with Brigadier General Duke to ask him about his flight to the moon on Apollo 16, and his long career with the U.S. Air Force.

Thank you for your service Brigadier General Duke, and for sharing your experiences in space at the Paris Air Show!



Brigadier General Charlie Duke giving a talk and presentation on his trips into space at the Paris Air Show.



French Astronaut Jean-Loup Chrétien honored by Paris Post 1

Paris Post 1 Legionnaire David Ashcraft had the opportunity to meet French astronaut Jean-Loup Chrétien

who is a retired Brigadier General from France's Armée de l'Air.

Brigadier General Chrétien was the first western European in space, and he has spent a total of 43 days 11 hours and 19 mins in our outer cosmos.

Thank you for your service Brigadier General Chrétien, and for sharing your experiences in space at the Paris Air Show!



American Astronaut Mike Bloomfield honored by Paris Post 1

Paris Post 1 Auxiliary Anna Marie Mattson had the opportunity to meet American astronaut Mike Bloomfield who is a retired U.S. Air Force Colonel.

Colonel Bloomfield piloted three missions into space. He first flew as a pilot aboard STS-86 in 1997, where he docked with the space station Mir. Colonel Bloomfield also piloted STS-97 in 2000 and commanded STS-110 in 2002, both missions to the International Space Station.

Thank you for your service Colonel Bloomfield, and for your dedication to the exploration of space!



Colonel Mike Bloomfield giving a talk and presentation on his trips into space at the Paris Air Show.



PCC President Tim Litherland

Department of France Past Commanders Club 2024MY



PCC Secretary Frank Phillips

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

Past and Present Department Commanders, Department Vice Commanders At Large, Department Vice Commanders, Post Commanders, SAL Detachment Commanders, SAL Squadron Commanders, Auxiliary Department Presidents, Auxiliary Unit Presidents... so if you were just voted into the office, you are eligible to join

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

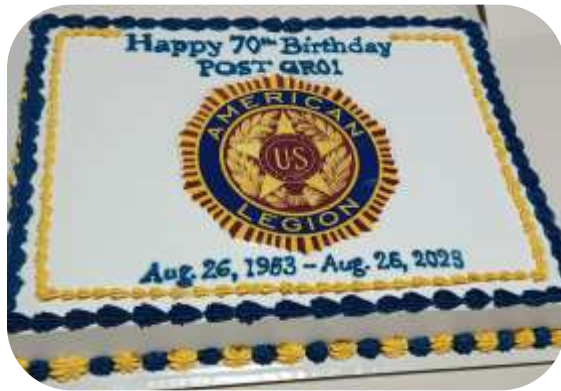
Renewal dues for the Past Commanders Club is only \$10.00



Sept. 18 is the birthday of the Air Force.

Now the second-youngest of the service branches, the Air Force was officially founded as an independent service in 1947, although the U.S. military deployed aerial components even back in World War I.

Post GR01 Celebrating its 70th Birthday.



Post GR01 Commander David García, 2nd Vice Commander Mike Young and SGT of Arms Carlos Gonzalez, presented a Certificate of Appreciation to member CMSGT JC Chacon, 86 Wing Enlisted Advisor for his outstanding support to the post.



Patriot Day is a day of remembrance to those who died during the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City, at the Pentagon and on United Flight 93 in Pennsylvania. American Legion Family members lead efforts in their communities to honor and remember the victims and to never forget.

This is from GR03 memorial service for Joseph Kienlen 27 August 2023

Commander John Gerdeman
1st Vic Commander Ed Sherman
Chaplain Abraham Cruz
Grande Chef de Gare David Gracias
Joseph Kienlen widow and family



QUICK LINKS TO NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Below are three innovative programs that gives you instant access to The American Legion, National Headquarters.

They are very good, and quick tools to use if you want to share American Legion information with someone, or if you are trying to recruit a new member.



NEW MEMBERSHIP WEB PAGES
SCAN WITH SMARTPHONE CAMERA



/MEMBERSHIP



/TRAINING



/COMMUNITY



1st Place best BBQ ribs, Remi Drummond.



GR79 Commander Brown fishing fest.



GR79 Fishing Day.



2nd place best BBQ ribs, Charles Singleton.



GR79 1st Vice Commander, Roy Martin.



3rd place best ribs, Roy Martin.



Dept. Vice Commander John Gerdeman cleaning fish for our GR79 Fish Fest.

Sept. 16 is National POW/MIA Recognition Day,

held each year on the third Friday of September. This commemoration is set aside to honor the commitment and sacrifices made by this nation's prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action, as well as their families. As part of the day of recognition, Americans are asked to pause and reflect on the sacrifices made by the military men and women who are imprisoned or unaccounted for as a result of their military service. Individuals and businesses should also fly their POW/MIA flags.





Department of France

At the time of this writing the 2023 Legacy Scholarship Ride will be coming to an end, heading for their final destination. At this point they have already managed to raise \$667,000 and I'm sure there will be a lot more added to that figure as the National Convention gets underway.

I know that Lee Preston will be at the Convention to present a check on behalf of The Department of France which brings me to the core purpose of this article.

We are a small Department when you measure us against other Departments. Our Rider Chapter throughout the Department is even smaller by comparison. There are **Posts** with 10X the Rider membership than what we have at Department level. Last year Lee presented a check from the Department in excess of \$1200, this year we only managed to come up with less than \$800. I know our pockets are not as deep as other organizations, but we should be able to do better. I'm not just talking to the Posts who have Rider Chapters but to all Posts. This a department project, every Post, every Post member, this is a "**Team Effort**".

Our riding season here in Europe will be coming to a close for a lot of you. It will give us the chance to concentrate on a plan on how we can approach the 2024 Legacy Ride

as a Department, working together, at all levels to boost our donations to this cause.

More importantly I would like to hear recommendations, suggestions, ideas from all Legion members how we can raise for things

such as the Legacy Run or any charity event. I know there was a toy run planned this past year, there have been rides organized to attend Remembrance events. There has to be a way to couple all these events to further our efforts to do better when things like the Legacy Run occur. If you have an idea, put it out there. Will be looking at this from Department level, to Post level, to individual Legion members to participate.

As we head into the autumn months will be trying to get more organization with the Posts and Rider Chapters. Look to see more on this in the future.

Ride safe, be careful out there and come home on the same two wheels you left with.

DEPARTMENT AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS DIRECTOR



Jim Brotherton



Sep 16, 2023

In recognition of The American Legion's 90th birthday, the Senate and House of Representatives passed a resolution designating Sept. 16 as "American Legion Day." The measure was shepherded through the Senate by then Sen. Olympia Snowe, R-Maine,

who praised the Legion for its continued aid to wounded veterans and military families, legacy of community volunteerism and significant role in establishing important national legislation.

DETACHMENT
COMMANDER



John Fleming



DETACHMENT
ADJUTANT



James Dennis

DETACHMENT OF FRANCE

Sons of The American Legion, Detachment of France

Hello Comrades,

Sorry, but my new Cap has not arrived yet. It is in Germany, but we are waiting for one item before everything is mailed to me.

At this time, I am canceling the video conference for the first Sunday of September. We will talk more about video conferences during the 2nd DEC.

Upcoming Events:

14 October 2023 – 2nd DEC, Heilbronn, hosted by GR79.

11 November 2023 – Veterans Day Ceremony at Lorraine American Cemetery, St. Avold, France.

1 March 2024 – 3rd DEC, TBA

1 June 2024 – 4th DEC/Conference/1st DEC, TBA

I will have a proper photo as soon as my new Detachment Cap arrives.

John Fleming



CONSTITUTION WEEK - SEP 17, 2023

CONSTITUTION WEEK OBSERVES THE ADOPTION OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION. THE AMERICAN LEGION SUPPORTS THIS THROUGH ITS ORATORICAL CONTEST, A CONSTITUTIONAL SPEECH CONTEST FOR HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH.

Gold Star Mother's Day Sep 24, 2023

This day recognizes and honors mothers whose son or daughter paid the ultimate sacrifice while serving in the U.S. military.





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.

Our next Promenade will be held Saturday 07 October 2023 – Kaiserslautern, Germany

DOES YOUR POST HAVE A WRITTEN HISTORY RECORD (BOOK) ?

DEFINITION OF HISTORY

A: a chronological record of significant events (such as those affecting a nation or institution) often including an explanation of their causes.

B: the whole series of past events connected with someone or something.

C: a continuous, typically chronological, record of important or public events or of a particular trend or institution.



GET STARTED TODAY

A written history of your Post is vitally important. I can attest to the importance of a history book, with the help of many people and a lot of research over the Internet and record files it took almost 10 years to put together The Department of France history book (which is attached).

Get a group of people together and start going through Post Records and Memorabilia. Write your History down so it makes it easier 20 or 30 years from now when some researcher is looking for information about your Post.

When you start to research your Post History you will be amazed as to what your Post has done over the years.

The below link will give you great information on how to start a Post History Record.

<https://centennial.legion.org/histories>