

The AMERICAN LEGION

Department of France



Volume 14 / Issue 4

April 2016

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER *Keith Abernathy*



The 3rd Department Executive Committee was held on 19 March in Ansbach,, Germany, at the Hotel Gasthaus Windmühle.

There was a larger attendance than I had expected. Thank you all for coming and thanks to David Chavez Post GR1982 for and putting on a superb banquet. Thank you. A lot was accomplished at the DEC. The Department managed to dole out a fair amount of monies. The body was in a giving mood. The Oratorical Prize Money has been increased to: 1st Place \$1,000.00, 2nd Place \$750.00 and 3rd Place \$500.00 (from \$500.00, \$250.00 and \$100.00). I made a comment that was missed by the Boys State Chairman. Hopefully at the 4th DEC we can do something for Boys State.

Speaking of the 4th DEC. I know that some of you are concerned about the happenings in Brussels, Belgium. Some have called and voiced that concern. However, plans have been made, deposits have been paid and Convention coins ordered. It would be a monetary catastrophe to change now and the questions remains where would we go? It is

too late to try to find another place to hold the Convention in Germany. Therefore, we will have the Department Convention in Belgium in June of this year. I hope the terrible incidents that happened in Brussels does deter anyone who previously voice consent to go to Belgium to refrain. From going. I for one will be there and yes my wife has and is showing concern.

The Awards Committee will meet on Saturday 9 April 2016 to go over the Award packets from the Posts that submitted them. Award Packets must be in the Award Chairman's hand by 07 April 2016 at the latest. Any packets received after the 7th will not be considered. Remember "if you don't submit you can't be considered".

Membership: as of 31 March 2016 the Department was at 91.36%. we hope to get our 100 5 by the Cutoff.

Keith Abernathy/Department commander/
Keithabernathy1942@yahoo.de



Expand the definition of accountability

By National Commander Dale Barnett

A simple definition of “accountability” is a willingness or obligation to accept responsibility. No one more perfectly illustrates that definition than the men and women who have stood in harm’s way to protect and defend our nation. They have been nothing less than fully accountable to their missions and to the United States.

The federal government has struggled with accountability, in particular as the concept applies to veterans. Congress has tried, with limited success, to address the struggle by passing legislation to remove obstacles that prevent the Department of Veterans Affairs from terminating poor-performing managers and employees. VA has described accountability as a top priority in the aftermath of scandals blamed for costing some veterans their lives and in ill-fated efforts to discipline VA executives who abused their positions. When it comes to accountability, all the words are there. Execution has been the problem.

To The American Legion, accountability includes all that but runs much deeper, too.

First, you can find to whom we are accountable etched on the façade of VA Central Office in Washington: “To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan.” Abraham Lincoln’s words endure because they resonate with all who have sent sons and daughters into battle, which we continue to do today. They resonate because we are all accountable to him, to her, their widows and orphans.

Accountability includes the ability to discipline and, if necessary, terminate employees who don’t live up to

their responsibilities. In many other ways, as I explained to a joint session of the Senate and House Committees on Veterans’ Affairs on Feb. 24, accountability – execution and not mere words – must extend to veterans who deserve rewarding careers that match their skills, training and discipline.

Accountability is lost when veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder or traumatic brain injury are not offered effective alternative treatment programs that can help them and their families. Women veterans continue to lack consistent services at VA health-care facilities. Veterans exposed to Agent Orange and other environmental hazards are denied benefits and care because their exposures did not occur in the right places or times, or because years of research have not yet been completed. Our troops are under-resourced, and our force strength is shrinking, putting them and our national security at risk; the number of U.S. military personnel is expected to be about 200,000 lower this year than it was five years ago, as the war continues. A fully interoperable DoD-VA medical records system remains a work in progress many years and more than \$1 billion after the need was first identified. Accountability to those who have served this nation has proven elusive for our government.

I am confident that the system can work, trust can be regained and accountability achieved. It’s going to take teamwork, transparency, leadership and commitment. It’s going to take more than words. That’s what Lincoln meant when, at the end of a bitter war, he let a healing nation know who deserves the fullest measure of our accountability.



DEPARTMENT ALT. NECMAN *Ronald Moore*

For Department of France Commanders, Adjutants, A.L. Family members, ALR Directors and Riders

Please pass this to your members. Support, Ride and Collect!

The registration for the 2016 Legacy Scholarship Run from Indianapolis, IN through several States to the National Convention in Cincinnati, OH is now open. Register at <https://www.legion.org/riders/registration>

If you are unable to participate in the ride, either a leg or the full ride, you may sign up as a supporter. For a minimum of \$25 you will receive the patches and maps of the route as long as supplies last.

I was able to clear one problem with National concerning APO addresses, which we should now be able to input. Foreign addresses may still be a problem, but you can also print the form and send it by mail. The T-shirt order is separate this year, so payments for the Run registration and Emblem Sales order are separate.

Wear your Legacy Scholarship Run patch proudly. That is what the Riders were established for and we have seen what an active Rider Chapter can do for your Post membership and activities.

Best from,
 Ron "Gypsy" Moore, ALR Director
 Department of France
 gypsy_moore@yahoo.de

Department Officers - 2016 Membership Year			
COMMANDER Keith Abernathy <i>GR79</i> <i>keithabernathy1942@yahoo.de</i>	ADJUTANT Maxwell Rice <i>GR79</i> <i>colwichboy@yahoo.com</i>	NECMAN John Miller <i>GR1982</i> <i>miller-rotb@t-online.de</i>	ALT. NECMAN Ronald Moore <i>GR05</i> <i>gypsy_moore@yahoo.de</i>
VCAL Joe D. Brown <i>GR79</i> <i>vcalbrown50@gmail.com</i> GR07 GR20 GR42 CH01 DK01 NL01 TH00(Thailand) Post9999 & New Post Development	VICE COMMANDER Lyndon Hudson <i>FR01</i> <i>lyndonandmargaret@yahoo.com</i> GR03 GR06 GR09 GR13 GR79 BE02	VICE COMMANDER Quincy Foster <i>GR05</i> <i>quincy@karsandra.com</i> GR01 GR02 GR14 FR01 IR01 FR05 IR63	VICE COMMANDER John Shanahan <i>IR01</i> <i>jbshanaban@gmail.com</i> IR02 IR03 IT01 PO01 GC01 SP292
VICE COMMANDER Casby Logan <i>GR07</i> <i>casbyj@hotmail.com</i> GR05 GR30 GR45 GR1982	CHAPLAIN Jimmie Dale <i>GR07</i> <i>jimmiedale.87@gmail.com</i>	HISTORIAN Michael Keating <i>IR02</i> <i>michael.keating@t-online.de</i>	FINANCE OFFICER Gary Miller <i>GR06</i> <i>billsfan_gary@hotmail.com</i>
SERVICE OFFICER Paul Claybough <i>GR1982</i> <i>profsoldier72@yahoo.com</i>	JUDGE ADVOCATE James M. Settle <i>GR42</i> <i>james.settle@kabelbn.de</i>		SERGEANT-AT-ARMS Christopher Buchanan <i>GR1982</i> <i>christoperbuch@hotmail.com</i>



A month of celebrating children and youth

The American Legion

The American Legion has celebrated "April is Children & Youth Month" for the past 77 years by supporting and promoting its national theme – "Children... Our Most Precious Natural Resource." During this month of celebration, American Legion family members are encouraged to show their local communities the Legion's commitment to young people by hosting youth activities or by becoming involved in programs and organizations that support young people.

For ideas on how to support and promote Children & Youth Month in your community, download a copy of the "April is Children & Youth Month" brochure. Legion family members can promote Children & Youth Month awareness through their local newspapers, radio and TV stations, civic groups, schools, social media, and in conversations with other veterans and their families. Communities need to know that American Legion services are available and why young people matter so much to us.

For the past four years, Legion family members at American Legion Post 371 in Valparaiso, Neb., have hosted an event-filled day in April at the post for military kids and other local youth. The children enjoy lunch, firetruck and hay rides, crafts, a petting zoo, a bouncy house, face painting and a magic show. They also write Mother's Day and Father's Day cards for their parents and visit with members of the state and local police department.

"Our intentions were to give the kids the experience of meeting a deputy in person in a friendly atmosphere so if there was ever a time of need, they would not be intimidated with talking with a law official," said Don Suchy, member of Post 371 and National Commander Michael D. Helm's aide.

The children and youth also recite the Pledge of Allegiance and pledge not to be a bully.

"The afternoon is a very rewarding experience for the children and youth, as well as the volunteers," said Marge Suchy, Don's wife and a member of Auxiliary Unit 371. "Our goal is to provide an afternoon of fun for all the kids with a lifetime of memories."

Remember to share on www.legiontown.org how your post, squadron or unit supported Children & Youth Month.



Please send all input for the Department Newsletter to my email address at the latest three days prior to the end of the month. If possible. Constructive suggestions to improve the Newsletter are also welcome.

If you want to stay informed on what is happening with **YOUR** Department you can also visit the following sites, www.AmerLegionDeptFrance.org / www.Facebook.com/ALDeptFrance/ / www.legion.org/fodpal

Thank You...the Editor

David N. Greaux / davidgreaux@t-online.de

DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER *Lyndon Hudson*



Comrades, on the 9th of March I attended Post GR06's stated meeting and they had a good turn out with some new faces in attendance. I encourage Post GR06's new members to please get involved with their post's activities as they just had a successful Easter Egg Hunt for children at Patch Barracks in Stuttgart with the usual people putting on the event. On the 13th I was present for Post GR79's elections and as always it was a good time. I'm looking forward to getting up to USAG BENELUX in Brussels for BE02's elections on the 23rd of April. Really hoping for a good turn out there because this nasty 5-year rule on DAC's is about to rear its ugly head. Regards, Lyndon Hudson VC

DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER *Gary Miller*



Just a recap from the 3rd DEC...The Department will raise the per capita per member from \$19.50 to \$21.50 starting on 1 July 2016 for The 2017 membership year.

As you all may know, National raised their per capita per member From \$13.50 to \$18.50. The Department has not raised their per capita In the past 20 years, although National raised their per capita By \$5.00, the Department is only raising theirs by \$2.00.

Department of France Past Commanders Club



Jimmie Dale...President "2016"

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

Our next meeting will be in conjunction with the Department of France
Annual Convention 16 -19 June 2016

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE... David Greaux...PCC Secretary "2016"

DETACHMENT OF FRANCE

Squadrons: GR01, BE02, GR06, GR07, GR14, GR42, GR79, CH01

Lee Preston... Detachment of France Commander "2016"



Images from Third Detachment DEC held on 5 March 2016, Mörfelden, Germany

Photos provided by Department VCAL Joe Brown



Post Everlasting



Charles (Chuck) Wilson was born in Paris Texas, 15 June 1924, he has been notable as one of our three remaining WW2 veterans living in Belgium. After a year at Texas A&M, Chuck enlisted in the US Army at 19, and was commissioned in the US Army Air Corps a year later, in 1944. He served in the Pacific Theatre, was recalled to active duty for Korea, and eventually became a Command Pilot with over 5,000 hours. At SHAPE he was responsible for the construction of the Static War HQ.

During retirement General Wilson continued to serve. He raised money for repairing US monuments at the Normandy beaches, presided over the organizations and councils of US military retirees in Europe to defend their privileges and benefits, and participated actively in commemorating the 14,000 US KIAs in the three ABMC cemeteries in Belgium. In his 90th year he led the other highly aged WW2 veterans in Belgium to meet with LTJ Campbell, Commanding US Army Europe, in Wiesbaden, Germany. He joined the American Legion Paris Post 1 in 2000 and transferred to the Flanders Field Post BE02 in 2014.

Comrade Wilson went to Post Everlasting early Sunday morning, 27 March 2016– Easter Sunday

Military Records/DD-214 Update 05 ► Available Online

[Source: Vet Council - St Johns Cnty FL | Michael Rothfeld | March 15, 2016]

It's official; DD-214s are NOW Online. Please pass on to other vets. The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following website for veterans to gain access to their DD-214s online: <http://vetrecs.archives.gov> or try <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records>. This may be particularly helpful when a veteran needs a copy of his DD-214 for employment purposes. NPRC is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files.

Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents. Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the online web site. Because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized. The new web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records centers mailroom and processing time.



Department of France Convention / 16-19 June 2016

Flanders Field Post BE02 is proud to host this year's Department of France's 92nd Annual Convention. We have selected the city of Houffalize for the convention site which is approximately 10 miles north of the city of Bastogne, Belgium. The city and surrounding area was directly involved in the Battle of the Bulge in 1944.

We will be staying at the Vayamundo Houffalize and have planned a number of activities throughout the Convention. We will be presenting the Emmy award winning documentary "*The Forgotten Angel of Bastogne*". On Friday afternoon, we are planning an afternoon/evening excursion to the City of Bastogne. And during the Saturday evening banquet we have the Emmy award winning historian Martin King as our guest speaker.

We will also offering training opportunities during the convention. The Department Service Officer Paul Claybaugh will provide a workshop for Post Service Officers and anyone else that may be interested. Addition training opportunities are still be worked and will be posted.

1. **The Convention Registration Letter** can be found at the Flanders Field Post BE02 webpage:

<https://sites.google.com/site/americanlegionpostbe02/department-convention>

Deadline for Reservation letters is Sunday, 01 May

2. Hotel:

Vayamundo Houffalize, Ol Fosse d'Outh 1, 6660 Houffalize - Belgium

Tel: +32 61 288801

Map Location:

www.google.be/maps/place/Vayamundo+Houffalize/@50.1320254,5.7945635,16.75z/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x47c015f3fffff:0x9e2a79d9a342ceb4?hl=en

3. Post BE02 is planning a Friday afternoon / evening activity in the City of Bastogne. If you are interested in participating in the following activities, please inform us at so that we can arrange transportation:

flanders.fields.post.be02@gmail.com

Afternoon / Evening Activity

1500	Depart for Bastogne
1530	Wreath Laying at the Mardasson Monument
1630-1830	Tour of 101 st Airborne Museum
1830-2000	Dinner in Bastogne
2200	Depart for Hotel

Martin King has agreed to be our guest speaker at the convention banquet on Saturday evening, 18 June. Here is his bio:

Martin King is a highly qualified British Military Historian/Lecturer who's had the honour of reintroducing many US and British veterans to the WWII battlefields where they fought. He lives in Belgium near Antwerp where he spends his time writing and visiting European battlefields. In 2008 he left his job as a lecturer in European history at the University of Antwerp to work as a Historical Consultant for The History Channel. He also chose to focus on researching and writing about individuals and the battlefields on which they served. He is frequently in demand by the US military and NATO for lectures and staff tours. His activities came to the attention of some major military documentary makers in Hollywood. The History Channel hired Martin to be their Senior Historical Consultant on their hit series 'Cities of the Underworld'. He appears in the episode titled 'Hitler's Trenches'. Consequently, Breakthrough Films Canada brought him in to present and work as their lead researcher on their series 'Greatest Tank Battles', one of the most watched military documentaries of the last ten years. Bafta award winning documentary makers WMR recently hired Martin to present 'Black Battalions' an episode from their series 'Narrow Escapes' currently airing on the Military Channel in the United States and the Discovery Channel in Europe. His voluntary work with veterans and the tracing the individual histories of veterans, has been a labor of love for almost 20 years. He is frequently contacted by relatives attempting to find out what their family

members did during World War Two. This usually involves extensive research and countless hours sifting through archives until the necessary results are attained. In 2011 he released the book 'Voices of the Bulge' co-written with his longtime friend Michael Collins to great critical acclaim. The ensuing publicity tour saw them presenting the book at West Point Military Academy, Valley Forge Military College, Fort Dix, USAF Spangdahlem and most Barnes and Noble stores between New York and Washington DC. The same year his 6-year campaign on behalf of black nurse Augusta Chiwy finally yielded positive results when 67 years after the fact she was knighted by the King of Belgium and officially recognized by the US Army who presented her with the 'Civilian Humanitarian award'. Martin speaks fluent German, Dutch, Italian and French.

Sincerely, Joseph Schram/Commander Post BE02/+32 0479 178539

FLANDERS FIELD POST BE02
PROUDLY PRESENTS

**The Department of France
92nd Annual Convention
16-19 June 2016
Houffalize, Belgium**

Convention reservation letter can be found at the Flanders Field Post BE02 webpage:
<https://sites.google.com/site/americanlegionpostbe02/department-convention>

Reservations Deadline: 01 May 2016
POC: flanders.fields.post.be02@gmail.com

FAMILY

**Department of France Convention
16-19 June 2016**

Domaine Ol Fosse d'Out, Houffalize, Belgium

1. Guest Details:

Last Name: _____
First Name: _____
Street: _____
Zip / City: _____
Country: _____
Telephone: _____
E-Mail: _____

NOTE: Your registration includes the price for each sleeping room and the banquet

2. Payment Methods

(Include a message with Your Name & Department Convention)

(1) By Check

Send to:
American Legion Post BE02
attn: Department Convention
Unit 28100, Box 017
APO AE 09714

Or
Joseph Schram
attn: American Legion
Meersenstraat 33 C2
8310 Assebroek

(2) PayPal

Paypal.me/JosephSchram

(3) Foreign Bank Transfer

ING Account:
IBAN: BE98 3774 3999 7693 BIC: BBRUBEBB

(4) US Bank Transfer

Andrews Federal Credit Union – Routing #: 255074111
American Legion Post BE02 - Account #: 82019102

Send This Reservation Form to:
flanders.field.post.be02@gmail.com

Deadline for Reservations is 01 May

3. Transportation Requirements:

Train Station, Libramont Time of Arrival: _____

Brussels International Airport Time of Arrival: _____
Name of Airline: _____

Liege Airport Time of Arrival: _____
Name of Airline: _____

4. Accommodation Selection:

Accommodation in Half-Board: Includes breakfast buffet and all-in service supper

4 days / 3 nights (Arrive 16 June, Depart 19 June)

- 3 x breakfast buffet
- 3 x supper All-in in self-service Drinks included (water, soft drinks, beer, wine)

Double Occupancy per Adult € 267.00 2nd Occupant: _____
 Single Occupancy: € 312.00

3 days / 2 nights

- 2 x breakfast buffet
- 2 x supper All-in in self-service Drinks included (water, soft drinks, beer, wine)

Double Occupancy per Adult € 199.00 2nd Occupant: _____
 Single Occupancy: € 229.00

2 days / 1 nights

- 1 x breakfast buffet
- 1 x supper All-in in self-service Drinks included (water, soft drinks, beer, wine)

Double Occupancy per Adult € 152.00 2nd Occupant: _____
 Single Occupancy: € 167.00

Standard Accommodation: Includes breakfast buffet

4 days / 3 nights (Arrive 16 June, Depart 19 June)

Double Occupancy per Adult € 254.00 2nd Occupant: _____
 Single Occupancy: € 299.00

3 days / 2 nights (Arrive 17 June, Depart 19 June)

Double Occupancy per Adult € 197.00 2nd Occupant: _____
 Single Occupancy: € 227.00

2 days / 1 nights (Arrive 18 June, Depart 19 June)

Double Occupancy per Adult € 146.00 2nd Occupant: _____
 Single Occupancy: € 161.00

Send This Reservation Form to:

flanders.field.post.be02@gmail.com

Deadline for Reservations is 01 May

SGT William D. Nelson Post GR09

GR 09 recognizes 15 years membership

During its bi-monthly meeting on 26 March GR 09 Post Commander Aman had the privilege of awarding a 15 year membership pin to Legionnaire Charles Courtney. Mr. Courtney has been a dedicated member of his post and has served in numerous positions throughout his membership years.



Post Commander Aman presenting 15 year membership pin to Charles Courtney

John Wayne Post GR79

This is the 4th time for this charity party. Donations go to different Charities here in Heilbronn, Germany Area.

Meeting place is 74172 Neckarsulm, Pichterichstrasse at the fest platz.
Time 0930hrs / Convoy starts at 1200hrs / Arrival time to party 1300hrs

At the party all proceeds go to charity's in Heilbronn. I have been to the last 3 events along with all my legion riders, good time. End of party is around 1800 hrs. You need to bring no Toys. Great time for old and young, big program for kids. If coming with your car you can go straight to Wertwiesenpark freibad Neckarhalde around 1300 and watch bikes and other vehicles drive in. Last time we had around 800 bikes. You can watch also on you tube...Heilbronn Rainbow Run.

Thank you, Don Chamberlain...*Post Commander GR79*

4. Heilbronner Rainbow Run



Motorrad-Benefizfahrt

Programm im Wertwiesenpark

ab 9.30 Uhr Treffpunkt in 74172 Neckarsulm
Pichterichstraße auf dem Festplatz
N 49°11'17" Breitengrad, 9°14'09" Längengrad

12.00 Uhr Start des Motorrad-Korso durch die
Neckarsulmer- u. Heilbronner Innenstadt
mit Überlandfahrt

13.15 Uhr Ankunft im Wertwiesenpark beim
Freibad Neckarhalde



Pirates County Choppers

Förderer gemeinnütziger Organisationen e.V. 2014

ab 11.00 Uhr Kinderunterhaltung, Spiele, Tombola,
Hüpfburg, Zauberer, Clowns, Kinder-
schminken, Modelltrucks, Händlermeile
usw. und gemütliches Zusammen-
sein sowie viele Motorräder aller
Marken. Für das leibliche Wohl ist
bestens gesorgt. Ende ca. 18.30 Uhr.

Live-Musik mit Electric Animals



www.electric-animals.de

Spendenkonto:

Pirates County Choppers e.V. 2014
Volksbank Heilbronn
Konto: 0392 666 006, BLZ: 620 901 00
IBAN: DE51 6209 0100 0392 6660 06
BIC: GENODE33HAN
Kennwort: 4. Rainbow Run



4. Heilbronner Rainbow Run 11. Juni 2016

Motorrad-Benefizfahrt zugunsten
„Bedürftiger Organisationen“
in der Region
mit großem Familienfest



Unterstützt durch:



**Juweler
Sandkühler**

Weitere Informationen unter:

Rainbow Run



David Chavez Post GR1982

There was a lot of interest in some of our advertising products at the recent DEC meeting in Ansbach. The contact date below is provided for those Posts who wish to order any of this material.

Rollup or banner – You can talk with Frank and make changes to this setup or use your own design. Price is 100. Euro each. Contact Frank Phillips, Second Vice Commander Post 1982, at telephone 09872-2577, or fax 09872-955406 (*If calling from outside Germany, drop the leading zero and add 49.*) or email frank@fphillips.de. Frank says you should plan 10-14 days to get these made.

Tie Tacks and Coffee Cups - You can have these items with the Legion logo, Department of France or YOUR Post Logo on them. Price is 10. EURO each. Contact James McQuarrie at telephone 0170-493-4173 (*If calling from outside Germany, drop the leading zero and add 49.*) or emailjmcq65@live.com

Sincerely, Estus Smith – Adjutant - Post 1982, Ansbach

Images of Third DEC conducted on 19 March 2016 at the Wiindmühle Hotel in Ansbach. Hosted by Post 1982 David Chavez

Pictures provided by GR1982







Vietnam vets honored at VA's marking of war's 50th anniversary

Palm Beach Post

RIVIERA BEACH — For U.S. soldiers returning from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, coming home often included elaborate airport welcomes from cheering crowds.

The reception for Vietnam veterans in the 1960s and 1970s was far different.

“We had to hide,” Maurice Clark, of Riviera Beach, said Tuesday. He remembers getting spat on and called “baby killer” after 13 months of death-defying action patrolling the Saigon River for the Navy.

Stephen Virtue, of West Palm Beach, was told upon returning home following 18 months in Vietnam not to appear in public wearing his Army uniform unless he wanted “to get a butt-whipping.”

“It was senseless,” said Rick Eaton, 69, a Marine from Royal Palm Beach who served in 1965-66. “We weren’t treated very well, and there was no reason for it.”

A national effort is taking place to change that — and to recognize the millions of Americans who fought in Vietnam.

The West Palm Beach VA Medical Center honored about 125 Vietnam War veterans Tuesday during an event marking 50th anniversary commemorations at veterans affairs facilities around the country.

President Barack Obama issued a proclamation four years ago calling for a 13-year program to recognize Vietnam vets that will run through Veterans Day 2025.

More than 58,000 American troops were killed during the Vietnam War and another 153,000-plus were wounded, according to Veterans Affairs. About 1,600 Americans were taken prisoner and remain unaccounted for.

Virtue, who served two stints for a total of 18 months over 1970-72, said he was “bitter for a long time.”

When he returned from Southeast Asia in 1972, Virtue said Vietnam vets were treated with such disdain that job applications were “thrown in a garbage can as you walked out the door.”

Those who went to Vietnam — 25 percent of whom were drafted, according to the VA — did so because their country called and “not because we wanted to shoot people,” Virtue said. It was only after the first Gulf War, better known as Desert Storm, that perceptions began to change, he said.

“People started realizing we were also veterans who served our country,” Virtue said.

Jerry Klein, of Wellington, and an officer with Vietnam Veterans of America, said Tuesday’s ceremony is “an acknowledgement of our service that many of us didn’t feel was appreciated 40 years ago. I think this helps to alleviate that frustration. It’s very gratifying.”

Eaton said his experiences during “12 months, 21 days, 14 hours” in Chu Lai, Vietnam, in 1965-66 remain too vivid to discuss. Returning home to scorn and derision “still hurts.”

But, Eaton said, times have changed.

“Now, I get thanked on a daily basis.”

VA Services ► How to Make It A More Pleasant Experience

[Source: VAntage Point | Tim Huda | March 16, 2016]

Have you noticed that the outspoken majority on social media have complaints instead of praise for VA services. Negative experiences motivate these Vets to post their complaints more so than positive experiences. You and I at some point will fall through the cracks just like they have unless we become our own advocates. No matter how great an organization is it will happen. That is reality, but it doesn't have to negatively affect your experience. To have a better experience than others keep in mind that the VA is not the military; you can't wait around until you are told to do something. Veteran Tim Huda says you must advocate for yourself. But it's so much more than being proactive, it's using all of your available resources. Try using the following guidelines Huda uses to enhance your VA experiences:

Schedule your appointments first thing in the morning or right after lunch. You will be seen on time.

VA docs are not bound by quotas to see as many patients as possible despite the need. They focus on quality visits. (My last annual checkup was an hour) They tend to run over their scheduled times, often sacrificing their lunch breaks. Scheduling an appointment first thing in the morning or right away after lunch is one of my tricks to always be seen on time. It also makes it easy for you to be early and on time.

Have a referral to a specialty clinic? Call that clinic yourself to schedule an appointment.

If you wait around for the clinic to call you, it may be a few weeks. Sometimes VA will automatically schedule you. If so, you may not be happy when the appointment time frame is inconvenient for you. So don't let it happen in the first place. Ask your physician or nurse for the phone number or location of that clinic and call or go there, tell them you have a referral and set a time that works for you.

Ask for an appointment tomorrow.

VA reports on a metric that claims majority of Veterans receive their appointments within 14 days of the desired date. I've always been curious to that number because no one ever asks me when I want to come in, rather tell me when I can come in. So, I decided to start asking for an appointment tomorrow, and it almost always works! I routinely will have an appointment within two weeks.

Use My HealtheVet secure messenger to talk to your physician

Have a question? Ask. Need a new appointment? Ask. Need to check your appointment schedule? Need to refill a medication? You can literally solve your own problems in a few clicks at <https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/anonymous.portal?nfpb=true&nfto=false&pageLabel=mvhHome>. This is a game changer if you aren't already using it. Every facility has a My HealtheVet coordinator and most staff can help you if you run in to any technical problems.

Choose a different VA.

You have the right to go to any VA facility you want to. Yes, it may be more inconvenient, but you have that right. I have a friend who plans a trip home every few months and schedules his appointments all in one day at his hometown VA because he likes it so much. Note that if you choose not to use the closest VA to you, you will not be eligible to receive travel pay to the one you select.

Walk in to the emergency room if you need anything

If you can't wait, use the ER. At the least, they will put in a referral and you can walk to the hospital to be seen. If you have a referral, you can usually talk to the clinic front desk and offer to wait around until a spot opens. I'm not advocating to use this needlessly, but if your condition is getting worse or you feel you need to be seen sooner than your appointment, use the ER. Please, please, please don't wait around for VA to contact you if you have an urgent need.

Use the kiosks.

Don't wait around to check in for your appointment. Use the kiosk and avoid the lines. Every time I'm at VA there is a line at the front desk and a few kiosks open. The kiosk will even tell you if you are in the right area or not.

Prepare and double check.

If you are like me, you see your doctor once or twice a year. When I go, I bring a laundry list of issues I want addressed. As you go down your list with your doc, cross them out or write down the clinic he/she is referring you to. Verify at the end of the visit that the physician entered your referrals, mistakes can happen and you want to make sure you catch them before you leave.

Have a problem? Speak up.

Every facility has quarterly town hall meetings that you can attend to speak with the leadership. They hold these meetings because they want to hear your feedback. You can also speak with a patient advocate about anything. The best and quickest way to get a response or a solution is contacting your primary healthcare team via My HealtheVet secure messaging or calling their office.



American Legion
National Commander Dinner
Friday, 03 June

Chicken & Ribs Dinner

Members, Family & Friends

Everyone Welcome

Starts at 18:00

3-Star Lounge, USAG Brussels



RSVP to the 3-star by 20 May

reservations3star@yahoo.com or

Call: +32 (0)27-17-9822

Price: \$15

Information:

flanders.fields.post.be02@gmail.com





Cincinnati Ohio Site of the 98th American Legion National Convention August 26rd to September 1st 2016



If you are planning on attending the 98th National Convention in Cincinnati OH (and I hope to see some new faces in Cincinnati) please e-mail me at dhaggan@sbcglobal.net with the following information,

THE DATE YOU WILL ARRIVE AND DEPART, THE PERSON YOU ARE SHARING A ROOM WITH IF ANY, AND ANY SPECIAL ROOM REQUIREMENTS.

The room cost per night is \$155.61 all included. Cutoff for the reservation is 15 July 2016.

Hope to see you in Cincinnati



40/8 GRANDE DU GERMANY



La Societe des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux



Fellow Voyageurs Grande du Germany,

I would like to remind you of our Annual Election Promenade for the 2017 Membership Year. This year it will be hosted by Voiture 1524. It is planned for Saturday 7 May 2016. So keep a look out for the ``Call To Promenade``. I am looking forward to seeing many voyageurs there. And besides... ``*I am always happy when you all get to see me*``!

Merci.

David Greaux - *Cheminot Nationale 2016-2017MY*
davidgreaux@t-online.de

History of the 40/8

The 40/8 came from the tiny French railroad boxcars (Voiture) used as troop transports in moving "doughboys" to the "front" which carried signs showing the figure 40 over the figure 8, and referred to the cars capacity of 40 men or 8 horses.

It was funny to see 40 men in full pack and rifles riding in one of those pint sized boxcars, even the horses laughed. It was so miserable in there, the men had to laugh to keep from crying and when they started laughing at their own situation, they weren't so miserable any more.

When they returned home, the laugh was still on them. What a laugh! No jobs, No clothes, and No girls and there wasn't much they could do about it except to laugh at themselves like they had learned to do in the boxcars of La Belle, France.

Formed in 1920 by Joseph Breen at Breen-McCracken American Legion Post 297 in Philadelphia, Pa. La Societe was to be an organization for Legion members to be able to let off steam and be able to have fun and enjoy the comradeship of fellow members.

The first official Promenade or meeting was held at The 1920 Department Of Pennsylvania American Legion Convention in Allentown, Pa., where other Legionaires from across the state were initiated or wrecked into La Societe.

The familiar French Boxcar that they knew so well was chosen to be the launching platform of the 40 et 8. The Posts and Officers were to be titled after the French Railroad, such as Voiture (station) and their Voiture Commander would be Chef de Gare (Station Master) on up to (Nationale Commander) Chef de Chemin de Fer or President of the Railroad. There would be 1 Voiture (Post) per county and members were to be called Voyageurs Militaire (military travelers).

Their uniform was to be a chapeau,(overseas cap) the Voyageur would have a gray chapeau with blue piping, Voiture Officers would have a red chapeau with blue piping, Grand (state) Officers would have a white chapeau with blue piping. The National Officers would have a gold colored chapeau with blue piping. The Past Officers would have a gray chapeau with either red, white or gold piping according to the level office that they held.

With a rented Boxcar the Voyageurs traveled to the National American Legion Convention at Cleveland, Ohio, where 700 Legionaires from across the nation were initiated or wrecked into La Societe.

The National Organization was formed and Joseph Breen was elected Premiere Chef de Chemin de Fer. The National Headquarters (Voiture Nationale) was established in Seattle Washington, and the 40/8 became the playground of the American Legion. The Constitution proposed at Kansas City in 1921 put the 40/8 on the road to progress.