My Fellow Legionaries

On the 16th of February 2014, myself along with VCAL Brown, VC Ward, VC Aman, Adjutant Rice, and Service Officer George Hall, Department Auxiliary President Settle, and SAL Detachment Commander Settle, attended the Department level Oratorical Contest. Also present were the Post Commanders from GR01, GR03, GR06, GR79, GR1982, and representatives from BE02.

Thanks to the post and its membership we had five contestants for this year’s department oratorical finals, something that has not occurred in a long time. Listed below are the candidates and the post representing them.

(1) Avalon Roche Kaiserslautern Post GR01  (2) Brianna Totty Wiesbaden Post GR03/GR79  (3) Reiwan Hussein Ansbach Post GR1982  (4) William Ritter Stuttgart Post GR06  (5) Ruth Alvarez Brussels Post BE02

All of these students had well prepared speeches, and presented them outstandingly and professionally. On the drawn subject (1st Amendment to the Bill of Rights) to the US Constitution, all again done exceptionally well. All of these contestants are to be applauded for their efforts in the oratorical contest. It takes a great amount of courage, to stand before an unknown audience, and give a speech on what could be a very boring subject, and still be able to hold the attention of the audience.

All of these students were able to capture the attention of the audience, and hold their attention to the assigned speech and drawn subject. Congratulations are in order for all of them.

Below is listed the outcome of the Department Level Oratorical Contest.

First Place Winner Ruth Alvarez Brussels High School
Second Place Winner William Ritter Stuttgart High School
Third Place Winner Brianna Totty Wiesbaden High School

Once again this year, we had two post GR03, and GR79, supporting the candidate from GR03 Brianna Totty in this event. By both Commanders working together, they were able to organize, the post level oratorical contest, and move their contestant forward to the department level portion of the contest. This only shows what we can accomplish, when we collectively work together with each other. My cap off to both Commander’s Ed Sherman, and Joe Brown for supporting each other’s efforts. I hope in the future to see more post working together to accomplish a mission.

A big thank you to Stuttgart Post Commander Van Duyne, Comrades Gary Miller, Douglas Clemence, and the members of GR06 for hosting, organizing, and implementing the Department of France Oratorical Contest 2014. In addition a BIG THANKS to the Time Keepers and Judges, who supported the Department of France oratorical finals, Thank you for a job well done.

National Commander Daniel Dellinger and party will be arriving here in Germany on the 26th of May at 8:30 hours in Frankfurt. As it looks now we will have a busy schedule for the Commander. The Commander departs on or about 1 June 2014. His plans also include visiting Normandy for the 70th anniversary. If you wish to help support this effort, or would like to have the National Commander visit your area, please contact me ASAP.
The Department has done a great job this year in membership drives at various locations throughout Germany, and more are planned or are in the process of being conducted, outside of Germany. A reminder to Commanders, Adjutants, and membership Chairmen, when planning a membership drive to not forget to add your current membership members that have not paid their dues for the current year. Once again great job.

Now is the time to start working on your Post Awards Packets. I am sure VCAL Brown is already working on the Awards Committee meeting which will be in the May time frame.

The Department 3rd DEC is the 15th of March 2014 hosted by GR1982 in Ansbach. The Call has been sent out do not forget your delegation paperwor.

The Department Convention will be conducted 19-21 June 2014 and is being hosted by GR09. For more information see information in this Newsletter. MEMBERSHIP, MEMBERSHIP, MEMBERSHIP. I cannot stress membership enough. It is the bloodline of our organization. It enables us to perform our missions to the Veterans and their Families, and supports not only National Programs but ours also. While you are out there recruiting, new members do not forget your current members, get them to renew in a timely manner. If you have any questions on membership do not hesitate to contact the Membership Chairman Comrade Brown, at joedan.pascal1@googlemail.com. He can answer your questions and resolve any problems you are having, with membership.

In closing, please keep those in harm’s way and their families, in your thoughts and prayers also.

James M. Settle
Department Commander

Phone: 07138-67359
E-Mail: Pisces@t-online.de

The Department Web Page is: www.AmerLegionDeptFrance.org
The department has a Face Book page at the following www.Facebook.com/ALDeptFrance. Please visit and like this page.

Thanks

---

**Department Officers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMANDER</th>
<th>ADJUTANT</th>
<th>NECMAN</th>
<th>ALT. NECMAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>James M. Settle GR42</td>
<td>Maxwell Rice GR79</td>
<td>John Miller GR1982</td>
<td>H. Ownby CH01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:james.settle@kabelbw.de">james.settle@kabelbw.de</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:colwichboy@yahoo.com">colwichboy@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:miller-roth@t-online.de">miller-roth@t-online.de</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:hknowby@aol.com">hknowby@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICE COMMANDER AT LARGE</td>
<td>VICE COMMANDER</td>
<td>VICE COMMANDER</td>
<td>VICE COMMANDER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe D. Brown GR79</td>
<td>Stephen Ward GR01</td>
<td>Liam Kane IR63</td>
<td>Jerry Aman GR09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CH01 BE02 FR05 GC01 GR20</td>
<td>IR63 NL01 PO01</td>
<td>DK01 FR01 IR02</td>
<td>GR06 GR13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR30 POST9999 &amp;</td>
<td>GR07 GR14 GR45</td>
<td>IR03 IT01 SP292</td>
<td>GR79 GR1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Post Development</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wardtrans@yahoo.com">wardtrans@yahoo.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:commliam@gmail.com">commliam@gmail.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jerra503@aol.com">Jerra503@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:Joedan.pascal1@googlemail.com">Joedan.pascal1@googlemail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICE COMMANDER</td>
<td>CHAPLAIN</td>
<td>HISTORIAN</td>
<td>FINANCE OFFICER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casby Logan GR07</td>
<td>Gino Cantu GR07</td>
<td>Ross Shephard GR79</td>
<td>Gary Miller GR06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GR01 GR03 GR05 GR09 GR42</td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:rshephard3rd@hotmail.com">rshephard3rd@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:billsfan_gary@hotmail.com">billsfan_gary@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:casbyj@hotmail.com">casbyj@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVICE OFFICER</td>
<td>JUDGE ADVOCATE</td>
<td></td>
<td>SERGEANT-AT-ARMS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Hall GR03</td>
<td>George W. Seeburger GR14</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hal Rittenberg GR09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:halgt@hotmail.com">halgt@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:gwseeburger@gmx.de">gwseeburger@gmx.de</a></td>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:rittenberg@t-online.de">rittenberg@t-online.de</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER AT LARGE / MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN  Joe D. Brown

Post Commanders, Adjutants, Membership Chairmans and Members,

Thanks to the posts that made 100%! To date, we have 8 posts with 100% and 8 posts with 90%. We still have a post out there that has not made a transmittal this year and some posts that only made one. Department needs your membership so don't sit on your transmittal, if you have one member to transmit, send it to me. We want to do a membership drive in GR06 Stuttgart and GR 20 Eifel at the Commissary. Department has had two membership drives this year at the Wiesbaden PX, we recruited 17 new members. The recruitment drive in Vilseck with Vcal Charlie Brown and Vice Commander Stephen Ward, we recruited 57 new members for post GR 45, which made them at 100%. The Department does have membership cards and membership brochures on order from national. I asked national how long does it take to process new members, transfer members and update the membership database, have not received an answer yet. The Oratorical contest was really great in Stuttgart, with contestants from GR1982 Ansbach, GR03-GR79 Wiesbaden, GR06 Stuttgart, GR01 Kaiserslautern and BE02 Belgium. All contestants were winners, but Belgium's first time in the Department Oratorical contest won. Ms Ruth Alvarez.

I need your post award packets in my mailbox no later than 19 April 2014. If it is ready, you can also bring it to the 3rd DEC in Ansbach. Any packets I receive after the 19th of April will be discarded. If you have a transmittal you can also bring it to the 3rd DEC in Ansbach.

Annual High School Oratorical Contest on Feb 1 2014 Wiesbaden Germany

1st Place: Brianna Totty – Awarded a gold oratorical medal & lapel pin, oratorical certificate and a scholarship check for $300.00 from Heidelberg Post 3 and an additional $100.00 in cash from Heilbronn John Wayne Post 79.

Commander Brown presented Brinna Totty Award

John Wayne Post 79 at the EC at the Post home
Department of France Oratorical 16 Feb Stuttgart Post Commander Came out

GR 03- Post Commander - Edward Sherman
GR 06 - Post Commander - Derek Van Duyne
GR1982 - Post Commander - Christopher Buchaman

GR 79 - Post Commander - Charlie Brown
GR 01 - Post Commander - Stephen Ward
GR 09 - Post Commander - Jerry Aman

15 FEB 2014 Vilseck Commissary Vceral Commander Joe Brown and Vice Commander Stephen Ward Recruited 57 new members for the Department Of France

From the Editor...

Please send all input for the Department Newsletter to my e-mail address by the end of the month. Please use Word document format. Constructive suggestions to improve the Newsletter are also welcome.

I would like to thank the Department Officers and Posts for their input that makes up the newsletter. Especially FODPAL for all their articles.

If you want to stay informed on what is happening with YOUR Department you can also visit the following sites,


David N. Greaux
davidgreaux@t-online.de
On 11 February I attended GR 1982’s Executive Committee and General Membership meeting. As always the meeting was conducted in a professional manner with six Post Officers and quite a number of members present.

All of the officers briefed the membership on their programs and provided a list of activities that the post had planned. Commander Buchanan announced that the post passed its 100% membership goal on 26 January by recruiting 34 new members at the local PX. The post now has 131 members. Seven new members were initiated into the American Legion during the meeting. One of the numerous programs of the post is helping the Ansbach Middle School’s Jr. ROTC Cadets in attaining their goal of collecting $1,500 for the Jr. ROTC Ball in March.

After the meeting everyone retired to the conference room for socializing and sandwiches. All of the money that was contributed for the food purchased by GR 1982 was donated to the ROTC. Two Jr. ROTC members (potential officers in our military) were on hand to offer assistance and answer questions on their program.

Oratorical Contest
Five great American kids.
Too many of us who have lived outside the US nor in the proximity to US Forces do not have many opportunities to meet or observe American high school kids. If that applies to many of the Department’s members you missed a great opportunity to witness a stellar performance of patriotism of five American High School kids at the annual Department oratorical contest held on 23 February at Patch Barracks in Stuttgart. The five contestants were the winners of an oratorical contest held in their school and therefore had the opportunity display their talents and knowledge for the opportunity of winning Department’s $500 college scholarship. Each student had an opportunity to speak on his or her choice of any section of the Constitution for a period of eight to ten minutes. After a brief pause they were assigned the topic, the Second Amendment and were given five minutes to prepare and then speak on that subject. These kids knew the American Constitution, were well prepared, and without any trace of “butterflies” in their stomach spoke forcefully and eloquently. It was a pleasant experience and led confidence to the fact that these five kids would someday be outstanding citizens of our country.

The winner, Ruth Alvarez, a student at the Brussels, Belgium High School traveled 12 hours with her parents but the trip was worth it. In addition to Department’s scholarship she won a free round trip with chaperone to represent the Department of France in the National Oratorical finals and the opportunity to win a $15,000 scholarship.

Sadly the audience consisted mainly of family members, friends and Department officers and should have been larger. These kids deserved more and I hope that next year more of our Legionnaires will make the trip to Stuttgart to visit this event.

Our compliments and appreciation to those posts that recruited and vetted these young Americans and special thanks to GR 06 for hosting this affair. It was conducted very professionally and was well organized. Also thanks to the five GR 09 members who made the trip to Stuttgart to support this event.

A word of caution: When visiting GR 06 don’t get caught eating one of their pastries while wearing your Legion cap.

I was unable to visit GR 13 and 79 but will try to get to them in March.

March 15, the designated birthday of The American Legion, is the day in 1919 when the first American Legion caucus, held by members of the American Expeditionary Force, convened in Paris. Much as the birthday of the United States is celebrated on July 4 – for the day in 1776 when revolting patriots declared the independence of the British colonies and the spirit of America was born – March 15 is the date on which the Legion came to life.
DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER  Stephen A. Ward

Post Elections TWB (Thomas W. Barnett) Post GR14 which was held at the Restaurant Landgasthof Schroth located in the town of Orlehausen near Buedingen, Germany. Department of France Vice Commander (Stephen A. Ward) administered the installation to the newly elected Post Officers (12 Feb. 14). Post Commander Joe James was re-elected. Congratulations to the Post Officers.

DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICER  George Hall

I am now set up at my home for VA, DAFS, SSA, ACG, CA.
The address is AmKirchwald 3, 69251 Gaiberg

Phone H 06223 5475
Phone M 0176 7227 6350
Email hallgt@yahoo.com

DETACHMENT COMMANDER  Joshua J. Settle

My fellow Comrades
On the 16th of February I was able to attend the Department of France oratorical finals held in Stuttgart. If you were not able to attend this event, you missed out on something spectacular. These students were well prepared for this event and I am sure the judges had a hard time picking the Department winner. Ms. Ruth Alvarez from Brussels' American High School will represent the Department of France at National. If you have not attend one of these events, I highly recommend that you do, and watch these future leaders in action.

I encourage all squadrons to continue their Membership renewals program. Remember the Detachment has a Membership fund which will allow Squadrons to do a transmittal now and then reimburse the Detachment once the dues are collected from their members.

The Detachments fishing trip which was scheduled for the 5th of April in Ansbach, is not possible due to other commitments at the lake. The next available date is the 19th of April 2014 please let me or the Detachment
Adjutant know, if you are planning to attend, so that we can finalize the event.

Our 3rd DEC will be held on the 8th of March in Heilbronn/Frankenbach, Germany. The meeting will be conducted at Restaurant Pizzaria Sonne, located on Speyerstr 28, 74078 Heilbronn/frankenbach. Please do not forget your letters of Delegation. It will be hosted by GR07's squadron.

I still encourage SAL Members in the Detachment that are Dual Members to carry your SAL Cap to events, this will show SAL support to the Post, Detachment, and the Department.

Those posts desiring to start a squadron, please contact me or the detachment Adjutant and we will help you to get started. Attached to this Newsletter is FAQ sheet for SAL.

In closing I hope all of you had a good start into the New Year and please keep those in harm’s way and their families in your prayers.

Joshua J. Settle
Detachment Commander
Phone: 07138-67359
E-Mail: josh.sal@hotmail.com

---

Flanders Field Chapter BE02

Fellow Legionnaires and Friends,
I would like to ask your support for this endeavor by the American Legion Riders. Thank you
Joseph Schram
Subject: American Legion Riders Flanders Field Post BE02

Greetings,

The American Legion Riders - Flanders Field Chapter BE02 has created a team to participate in the "International Relay for Life" hosted at St. John's International School.

This charitable event is:

- **To celebrate** and pay tribute to the people who have conquered cancer, and support those who are still fighting the disease;
- **To remember** the people who have lost their fight against cancer and to support those who are still fighting the disease;
- To stand united in the fight against cancer.

Please follow the link below and support us by donating to a great cause!


Thank you in advance for your support,

Paul Dunn
President
American Legion Riders
Flanders Field Chapter BE02
www.facebook.com/legionridersflandersbe02
The American Legion
Ansbach Post 1982
CMR 454 Box J, APO AE 09250

Estus Smith, Adjutant  Chris Buchanan, Commander

Check us out on Facebook,  www.facebook.com/AmericanLegionPost1982

Post meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month at the post home at 6:00 p.m.
All members and guests are invited to attend.
The Post home is located in the basement of the Katterbach Dining Facility.
Please enter on the side of the dining facility next to Burger King

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Legion Team,

Thank you for all your patriotism and believing in the American Legion. We have broken records this year and supported more events than ever before.
We have qualified for a Post Excellence award which our Department Vice Commander Jerry Amen is working on for us. We are at an all-time high membership with 137 members. We look forward to seeing the new members at meetings and volunteering side by side to support the Ansbach Community.

A big congratulation goes out to our post Oratorical Scholarship contest winner Raiwan Hussain of Ansbach High School. She represented Ansbach and our post well. She competed against four other contestants in Stuttgart at the Department of France contest. She did not win department but she was very competitive. I hope she tries again next year.

We BBQed for the Warrior Transition Unit Soldiers during a stress relieving event in December. The Soldiers painted three mosaics which were composed of six different pictures. The Warriors donated a set to our Legion home so check it out next time you are there. Here is a link to the article on the project,  http://www.army.mil/article/117271/

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Four Chaplain’s Day observance will be on 9 March. The ceremony honors the actions of four Army chaplains who gave their lives to save others. Guest speaker will be Pastor Doug Cook.

We are hosting the Department of France 3rd QTR Executive Committee meeting. We encourage everyone to come to this event to see what happens at the department level. One can learn about the available leadership positions and meet the senior leadership in our department.

On March 11th at our post membership meeting we will be nominating the 2014-2015 officers. If you are interested in running for a position this is the meeting to be at.

In May the American Legion National Commander will be visiting Germany. There will be a dinner with him that everyone can attend. We will have more information at the post meeting. It is highly encouraged to attend the dinner and speak with our National level team.

VOLUNTEERING

We have a volunteer position listed under the VMIS system. This is an official system that the Army and

ACS use to record volunteer hours. To create an account go to myarmyonesource.com. If you need assistance speak to Commander Chris Buchanan.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar 9th</td>
<td>Four Chaplain Day Observance</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>Ansbach Baptist Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 11th</td>
<td>Post Meeting</td>
<td>1800</td>
<td>Post Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 15th</td>
<td>Department Exec Cmty Meeting</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>Post Home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1st</td>
<td>Legion Riders 1st Ride</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Raiwan Hussain, Post 1982’s contestant competing at the Department of France 2014 Oratorical Contest.

Post 1982 Commander, Chris Buchanan with Raiwan Hussain, Her Parents Mr. and Mrs. Smith, Raiwan’s Grandmother and sisters.

Department of France Commander, James Settle presenting the Oratorical Contest winner with her check for $500 and a certificate.
MARCH 9, 2014

FOUR CHAPLAINS DAY OBSERVANCE

Non-denominational service
American Legion Post 1982 - Ansbach will conduct a Four Chaplains ceremony at 3 p.m., Sunday Mar. 9 at Ansbach Baptist Church. The ceremony honors the actions of four Army chaplains who gave their lives to save others. Guest speaker will be Pastor Doug Cook. Ansbach Middle High School JROTC will present the colors. Come out and hear stories of bravery, selfless service, brotherhood and sacrifice. Child care will be provided. Refreshments to follow.

Location address: Hardtstraße 26 Brodswinden 91522 Ansbach or online at www.ansbachbaptistchurch.org

For more event information: contact Bill Wight, Chaplain American Legion Post 1982 at williamwight42@yahoo.com

For general information on the American Legion: check out the Facebook site at www.facebook.com/AmericanLegionPost1982
Legacy Scholarship Fund- Question To ALL Dept (FR) POSTS… Where is your Legacy Scholarship Donation Can?

Feb – August 2014- Department of France is coordinating donations for the Legacy Scholarship Fund through the Department of France AL PE Messenger Service as follows:

We recruited several Post and messengers over the past years, but we are woefully short of the 100% department participation anticipated. The following is a reminder for Posts and perspective messengers:

1) Department of France Pony Express Messenger service is open for all Legion, Auxiliary and S.A.L. organizations, as well as their current members. Posts, Units and Squadrons serve as Way Stations on a best effort basis and collect donations from their members or their communities in their area of operation. This is on a best effort basis with no donation limits or set expectations.

2) The first two messengers from each Way Station (each Post Commander automatically becomes a Messenger for his Way Station) receive a Pony Express Badge at no cost from the Dept of France AL PE Coordinator. Department of France AL PE Way Stations and Messengers must register with the Department of France AL PE Coordinator.

Goal is to have all donations moved to any physical Department of France Post by July 31, 2014. The Post will either call me or send an email by evening of July 31st requesting pickup.

I will coordinate to have donations (Checks drawn on U.S. banks, USD money orders or pledges <keep a copy of your pledges please>) picked up to be moved to the Final Collection Point in Frankfurt Germany by August 4th. I will pick up the donations/pledges on August 5th for personal transport to the U.S.

I will ensure that the National Commander receives all envelopes that I receive from Department of France Posts and messengers.

Procedure for envelopes containing donations and pledges:

1) No cash will be moved. Only checks made out to The A.L Legacy Fund and drawn on U.S. banks, USD money orders or pledges are to be sent in an open envelope with name of Post and total amount of donations/pledges written on the front of envelope. An envelope that is sent by mail because of time constraints may be sealed. The messenger will open it to check contents before transporting.

2) Again, no cash, packages, sealed letters or other items are to be transported by messengers. All envelopes containing donations/pledges are to be left open or opened by the messenger.

3) Messengers are to ensure that they do not move instruments totaling more than $10,000 when crossing international borders.

4) Department of France Messengers are instructed to deliver any envelopes from Posts with donations/pledges to me personally, either before August 4th or at the National Convention at the beginning of the Convention First Session. These donations should be kept separate from the general Department of France donation. The department still receives credit for all amounts received from Department of France Posts. This however gives Posts the chance to receive recognition for their individual efforts. Donations of $100 or more receive personal recognition from the National Commander.

I will be in Washington, DC from August 6th to 13th. I then plan to ride straight to Indianapolis and will be at the Legacy Run hotel specified until the Run and I plan to ride the full Run, God willing. This will be my 5th full Run.

Please remember, we do God's Work in caring for our fallen heroes and their children, so let's ride safe and all get where we have to be with no accidents. Ride safe and ride with God.

Also please remember your Messenger’s oath that you took when you received your badge.

Ron “Gypsy” Moore
Department of France AL PE Coordinator

P.S. In case of late donations received after July 31, 2014, it is still possible to mail donations to me so that I receive the donations by August 12th in the U.S. for delivery to the Convention. My address there will be

Ronald Moore, ALPE Coordinator
4030 19th St. N.E.
Washington, DC 20018

Effective August 7th, my US cell phone number is 202-375-8769 and will be on 24 hours a day.

If you have any questions, please contact me under gypsy_moore@yahoo.de (underscore between gypsy and moore) or mobile telephone +49-172-741-7812.
Dear Mr. Hale,

Thank you for contacting the American Battle Monuments Commission about the 70th anniversary of D-Day and commemorations in Normandy.

In 2013, the French Government announced their basic intention regarding the 70th anniversary commemorations in 2014. In essence, this is what was announced:

• The June 6th international ceremony will be held at Ouistreham on SWORD beach.

• Two bi-national ceremonies will be held at JUNO and OMAHA beaches, respectively.

The French government is lead for planning the international and bi-national D-Day commemorations. Unfortunately, no further information has been released by the French government.

Anyone seeking further information on D-Day ceremonies can find the most recent updates on some of the websites listed below. The official French Government website has a separate section, “espace dédié” or “dedicated area,” for those who are World War II Veterans, media outlets, or tour operators.

• [http://www.le70enormandie.fr/en](http://www.le70enormandie.fr/en) -- The “official” French Government website in French. This is the best website to reference for the national-level ceremonies and other French Government supported events.

• [http://www.the70th-normandy.com](http://www.the70th-normandy.com) – The “official” French Government website in English. This is the best website to reference for the national-level ceremonies and other French Government supported events.

• [http://www.abmc.gov/cemeteries/cemeteries/no.php](http://www.abmc.gov/cemeteries/cemeteries/no.php) -- The ABMC website in English. This is the best website for information on events happening in Normandy American Cemetery. The ABMC public affairs team plans on updating the website as new information is available.

• [http://www.normandie-tourisme.fr/articles/70eme-anniversaire-de-la-bataille-de-normandie-1502-1.html](http://www.normandie-tourisme.fr/articles/70eme-anniversaire-de-la-bataille-de-normandie-1502-1.html) -- The Normandy Tourist Bureau website in French.

• [http://www.dday-overlord.com/eng/commemorations_normandy_2013_program.htm](http://www.dday-overlord.com/eng/commemorations_normandy_2013_program.htm) -- This is a private, non-government website with descriptions of some of the smaller ceremonies in the Normandy region.

• [http://france.usembassy.gov/](http://france.usembassy.gov/) -- This is the official site for the U.S. Embassy in Paris. Any American citizen traveling in France is highly encouraged to visit this website for a variety of information and news that may pertain to your visit.
The Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial, located on the cliff overlooking Omaha Beach in the town of Colleville sur Mer, is administered by the American Battle Monuments Commission. ABMC is planning a bi-lateral commemorative ceremony with the French on June 6, 2014 that will be similar to ceremonies conducted each year on Memorial Day.

- The ceremony will be open to the general public and reservations or entry passes will not be needed. Reserved seating will be available for WWII veterans and family members accompanying them. If you are a WWII veteran you can send your request to:

Normandy American Cemetery or Normandy American Cemetery
Unit 9200 Box 1030
DPO AE 09777
Omaha Beach
14710 Colleville Sur Mer
France

Email : DDay70@abmc.gov

Media wishing to cover the ceremony should contact:

- If based in the U.S., please contact Tim Nosal at nosalt@abmc.gov
- If based in Europe or outside the U.S., please contact Anaelle Ferrand ferranda@abmc.gov

Please understand that the time for the ceremony has not been scheduled. Since we do not know the starting time for the main ceremony in Ouistreham, a time cannot be scheduled to avoid a conflict. As soon as the time for the Ouistreham ceremony is released, we will establish the time for the ABMC ceremony. When known, this information will be posted on our website www.abmc.gov.

ABMC’s has received many queries asking if the President will attend the ceremony in the American Cemetery. It is not known if there will be a Presidential visit and this information will probably not be released by the White House until a date much closer to the anniversary.

Having said that, should the President attend the ceremony in Normandy American Cemetery, the White House and U.S. Embassy will assume control of the event. As such, the U.S. Embassy, in consultation with the White House, will determine entry and seating requirements including media credentialing. If you have sent requests for reserved seating and passes to ABMC, those requests will be forwarded to the U.S. Embassy for consideration. Please understand that if the ABMC ceremony becomes a Presidential event, ABMC will have no control over entry passes, seating or media credentialing.

We encourage you to check www.abmc.gov and www.the70th-normandy.com regularly for updates and new information. Thank you for your understanding and patience.

Sincerely,

Dan Neese

Daniel L. Neese
Superintendent
You read correctly. The 90th Annual Convention. This is the big nine O. Mark these dates in your calendar

The William D. Nelson Post GR 09, Neu-Ulm, Germany is honored to host this historic event and will make every effort to ensure that Department of France Legionnaires will enjoy their stay and participation in this important yearly event.

The site selected for this affair is Neumaier’s Gasthof & Landhotel Hirsch, Römerstraße 31, 89264 Weißenhorn/Attenhofen, located 20 minutes from the historic city of Ulm. This modern country gasthof with a typical rustic restaurant is located in the idyllic center of the village Attenhofen and has 30 rooms available: 22 as single and 8 as double rooms. Attenhofen is easily accessible via Autobahns A-7 and A-8, train and the Memmingen airport (Stuttgart Airport an hour).

This Gasthof is ideally suited for conferences with several meeting and one banquet room. The restaurant is a popular local establishment well known for its regional menu and the modern hotel rooms all have an internet connection, TVs and modern bathrooms. The hotel also has an outdoor terrace and beer garden.

Further details such as directions, programs, pricing, registration information and events will be provided in future newsletters and at the DEC.

We are looking forward to seeing you on 19 to 22 June.

Still serving God and Country

Jerry Aman
Vice Commander Department of France
Post Commander, GR 09
COLA vote not quite enough
Commander says Legion won’t rest until all planned cuts to military retiree benefits are off the table.

(WASHINGTON, Feb. 12, 2014) -- American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger says he has mixed feelings about a vote by the U.S. House of Representatives that partially restores planned cuts in cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) on pensions for military retirees. By a vote of 326-90 on Feb. 11, the House approved an amended measure that would restore full annual COLAs for most working age military retirees. However, it continues to apply a controversial COLA cut to future pensioners who first enter the military beginning this year.

“What the House did is commendable on one hand and rectifies an unfortunate earlier move to restore full COLAs only to veterans with disabilities,” Dellinger said. “However, this action still falls short of reversing the COLA cut for all eligible military retirees, current and future. Again, as in targeting the Department of Defense for sequestration, this legislation places the responsibility for correcting a financial catastrophe – that is, the unruly national debt – almost solely on our servicemembers. While we applaud the House for taking another step forward, we will continue to push toward a full repeal of military pensioners’ COLA cuts.”

The bill in question, S. 25, is not law and may never be. The House and the Senate are expected to study the measure in conference when the House returns from a Presidents Week break on Feb. 25. In the meantime, the Senate is considering its own measures to repeal the COLA cuts contained in a budget and deficit reduction agreement reached by Congress last December. Since then, The American Legion has led the charge, joined by many other veteran and military service organizations, in opposing any benefit reductions for military retirees.

Legion reaffirms support for oil pipeline
Keystone XL project is a positive step for national security and economy alike, says national commander.

WASHINGTON (Feb. 6, 2014) -- The $7 billion Keystone XL pipeline project would reduce America’s reliance on middle eastern oil suppliers, provide jobs for veterans and improve national security, American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger said today as arguments against the proposal are fading.

“We have never wavered in our favor of the Keystone XL pipeline project,” said Dellinger, leader of the nation’s largest veterans’ service organization. “Keystone XL will bolster national security and the national economy alike. There can be no reasonable objections to it remaining.”

On Wednesday, the U.S. State Department issued a final environmental study for the proposed expansion, which would transport Canadian oil through the heart of America to a hub in Nebraska and on to refineries at the Gulf of Mexico. The report largely negates arguments made by those who oppose the project on the basis of environmental impact. President Obama has said he would support the project only if environmental concerns were allayed.

“The development of Keystone XL would have two primary effects that are of particular interest to The American Legion,” Dellinger said. “Expansion of our existing oil supply route from our neighbor and ally, Canada, would strengthen national security by lessening our dependence upon foreign oil sources. The more self-sufficient we are, the stronger we are.

“Secondly, the building and maintenance of Keystone XL would provide jobs - many jobs,” Dellinger added. “Some of those jobs, naturally, would go to qualified, disciplined, hardworking and dedicated military veterans. But employment created by the Keystone XL would not only decrease the veteran unemployment rate, but overall national jobless numbers. No cogent argument can be made against either of these benefits.”

Two American Legion resolutions were passed in 2012 supporting the Keystone XL pipeline project.

Resolution No. 207 (http://archive.legion.org/handle/123456789/2096), points to continued reliance on foreign energy sources and consequent compromises to national security as reason enough to move on the project. The resolution “call(s) upon Congress and the President to expedite the approval and construction of a pipeline from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico and other points as a step toward greater U.S. energy independence along with allowing the development of all viable energy resources.”

Resolution No. 300 (http://archive.legion.org/handle/123456789/2167), declares that “The American Legion, in order to increase American
energy self-sufficiency, promote the creation of 20,000 jobs, and improve the stability of the American economy, strongly recommend(s) the permitting, construction and operation of the pipeline; and, urges all segments of the U.S. government (to) pursue and grant all required permits necessary for the construction of the proposed pipeline without further delay.”

The Canadian government has been actively campaigning on behalf of the Keystone XL pipeline project as well. A highly visible poster campaign was launched in Washington recently, promoting the strong and friendly relationship between the United States and Canada, the No. 1 oil exporter to the United States.

On a webpage devoted to the proposed pipeline expansion, the Canadian government argues that “the Keystone XL (KXL) pipeline will have the capacity to transport 830,000 barrels per day (bpd). Approximately 525,000 bpd of Canadian oil sands crude could ultimately be transported via KXL. TransCanada has indicated that up to 25 per cent of KXL’s capacity would be utilized by tight, light oil from the Bakken Formation, which is located in Montana and North Dakota, further contributing to U.S. energy security.

“KXL furthers our countries’ long history of cooperation,” the website text continues, “by increasing the existing transport of Canadian and American crude to U.S. refineries, creating jobs and ensuring energy security for both our countries. Canada is already the largest oil supplier to the U.S. – in 2012 delivering 3 million barrels of crude and petroleum products per day, more than Saudi Arabia and Venezuela combined.”

---

**Agent Orange exposure**

**Q. How do I know if I have a claim for Agent Orange?**

**A.** Many Vietnam War veterans are concerned that they have been exposed to Agent Orange, the chemical herbicide used to destroy jungle foliage in order to expose enemy troops. Public Law 107-103 provides a presumption of exposure to herbicides for all veterans who served in Vietnam during the Vietnam era. You do not have to prove you were sprayed or in an area that was sprayed if you served in Vietnam from Jan. 9, 1962, to May 7, 1975. However, before you begin to file a claim, you must have proof of service in Vietnam during the war time and medical documentation of the condition(s) officially recognized by VA.

The following is a list of diseases that VA recognizes as related to Agent Orange exposure:

- Peripheral neuropathy (acute and subacute)
- AL amyloidosis
- Chloracne
- Chronic B-cell leukemia
- Hodgkin’s disease
- Ischemic heart disease
- Multiple myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma
- Parkinson's disease
- Porphyria cutanea tarda
- Prostate cancer
- Respiratory cancers (e.g., lung, larynx, trachea and bronchus)
- Soft tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma or mesothelioma)
- Type 2 diabetes

Learn more about the diseases: [www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/diseases.asp](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/diseases.asp)

Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange may be eligible for an Agent Orange registry health exam, health care benefits and disability compensation. Contact your local American Legion accredited service officer to discuss possible benefits and file a claim: [www.legion.org/serviceofficers](http://www.legion.org/serviceofficers)
VA phasing in new ID card with improved security features

The Department of Veterans Affairs has announced the phased rollout of a more secure Veteran Health Identification Card.

The cards, first introduced in 2004, are getting improved security features and will be personalized to display the emblem of the veteran’s service branch. They will include VA phone numbers, emergency care instructions and the “VA” in Braille to help visually impaired veterans, according to a VA statement Thursday.

The rollout begins this month, starting with newly enrolled veterans and those without VIC cards, the statement said. In early April, the VA will begin a three-month effort to get replacements to current VIC cardholders, who will be asked to cut up or shred their old cards to safeguard their personal information.

“VA is committed to providing high-quality health care while ensuring the personal security of Veterans,” Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki said in the statement. “These new identification cards are an important step forward in protecting our nation’s heroes from identity theft and other personal crimes.”

The new cards will function like a typical health insurance card, the statement said. They will include the veteran’s member ID, a new unique identifier, as well as a plan ID, reflecting the veteran’s enrollment in VA health care, the statement said. The cards are not required to receive VA health care but are recommended.

For more information, enrolled veterans can visit their VA medical facility enrollment coordinator, call 1-877-222-VETS (8387) or visit www.va.gov/healthbenefits/vhic. Those who are not enrolled in the VA health care system can apply by calling 1-877-222-VETS (8387), visiting their local VA health care facility or clicking on www.va.gov/healthbenefits/enroll.

I NEED PICTURES…I NEED HISTORY

I have a BIG problem; I have run out of pictures to post on The Department of France Website. I know there are Legionnaires in the Department that have pictures that need to be posted on the Website. We NEED to preserve this part of our Department History. If you have pictures for me, send me an e-mail, I will send you a link to a photo sharing program called “DROP BOX”, when you get it go to “get started” and it will tell you step by step on how to use it. It is a program that National uses and it works great when you want to send a large amount of pictures. It’s easy to use, I have setup a folder called The Department of France, just create a file drag it into the Department folder; send me an e-mail with a short story plus date, the function, and location. I will pull it out of Drop box and post it on the Website, it’s that easy. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at dhaggan@sbcglobal.net If you have a couple of minutes login into The Department Website and checkout the Photo Gallery.

LET’S PRESERVE OUR DEPARTMENT HISTORY FOR THE FUTURE
Tower 66 Steakhouse & Bar in Böblingen, Germany, provides a taste of Americana

If you are into beef and bikes, there’s a new steakhouse in town for you.

Tower 66 Steakhouse & Bar, which opened just a couple of months ago in Böblingen, Germany, is pure Americana. The menu is simple and delicious: steaks, ribs, burgers and all the typical trimmings.

The decor is sure to make you feel at home as well. There’s the obligatory American flag on one wall. There’s a display of cool-looking pocket knives behind the bar.

The burgers even come with a little American flag on a toothpick.

If that’s not enough, the restaurant is directly next to a beautiful Harley Davidson shop, which you can wander through after you load up on a succulent dry-aged steak. What could be more American?

During a recent visit to Tower 66 for lunch, I almost felt like I was back home. The menu was familiar, the English-speaking staff was friendly and there was just the right amount of tacky decor.

But as I chewed on my surf and turf burger, a tasty affair topped with an interesting peanut butter sauce, it gradually dawned on me that something was amiss. It was the clientele.

They weren’t wearing Levis and T-shirts. No ball caps or guys wearing the jerseys of their favorite football teams.

At Tower 66, the only thing that’ll tip you off that you’re still in the well-heeled Stuttgart area are the somewhat-precious patrons wearing their sleek European-cut suits, and a lot of other guys in tight pants and pointy shoes.

I suspect they must have drifted over from the Ferrari and Maserati dealership that shares a parking lot with Tower 66.

That’s the other great thing about Tower 66: You’re surrounded by amazing vehicles you can only dream of owning.

Ferrari Testarossas on one side, Harleys on the other, and a big, fat burger joint in between.

vandiver.john@stripes.com

**Location:** Wolfgang-Brumme-Alee in Böblingen. The restaurant is directly off Autobahn 81 exit 23.

**Hours:** 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. and 5:30-12:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday; 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; closed Thursdays.

**Prices:** Meals range from burgers costing 8 euros to steaks in the 25-euro range. Daily specials usually are priced at less than 10 euros.

**Dress:** Casual.

**More information:** Website: www.tower66-steakhouse.de. Make reservations by phoning: (+49) (0) 703-1 3098400.
The U.S. Army’s top officer said the service should have at least 450,000 active-duty soldiers or it may not be able to adequately respond to conflicts around the world.

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond Odierno said the Army’s minimum end-strength should be 980,000 soldiers, including at least 450,000 in the active component, 335,000 in the National Guard and 195,000 in the Reserve. The service requested authorization for almost 1.1 million soldiers, including 520,000 in the active component, 354,200 in the National Guard and 205,000 in the Reserve, according to fiscal 2014 budget documents.

But after more than a decade of ground operations in countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq, the service’s active-duty component is slated to shrink, possibly to as low as 420,000 soldiers over the next several years, under automatic budget cuts known as sequestration. Odierno said such reductions would make the military “too small.”

“Losing that last 30,000 makes a huge difference in the capabilities that we have,” he said during a panel discussion on Tuesday at the Council on Foreign Relations in Washington, D.C., referring to the number of active-duty soldiers.

Odierno also pushed back against the idea of downsizing the military simply because the wars of the past decade were coming to an end.

“It’s easy to say, ‘I just don’t see us having another conflict again,’” he said. “Well, I heard that in 1980. I heard that in 1990. And I heard that in 2000. And yet, we’re constantly engaged.”

Odierno cited potential risks from Kim Jong Un, the young North Korean leader who last year tested a nuclear bomb and threatened to attack U.S. allies in the region, the civil war in Syria, and sectarian divides surfacing in Iraq and other countries in the Middle East.

The Army is “about deterrence and compelling others not to do things,” he said. “If you get too small, you lose the ability to deter.”

Odierno, who commanded the 4th Infantry Division in Iraq and later became the top U.S. military commander there, said the country could still recover from a recent spate of deadly violence, but wasn’t sure how long it might take. The U.S. is sending more missiles and unarmed drones to the Iraqi government to help it fight an increasingly deadly insurgency.

Odierno was candid at times during the discussion, saying Army leaders had “no idea” of “what would push back on us” in Iraq “until we got in there.” He also said he’s not sure leaving U.S. troops in the country after 2011 “would have made much difference.”

However, on Afghanistan, Odierno said he supports leaving a contingent of American service members there after this year to help train its security forces and rebuild its economy.

Separately on Tuesday, Adm. William McRaven, commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, said Afghanistan remains his No. 1 war-fighting priority while confirming that the number of U.S. and NATO special operators in the country will decline this year in line with the overall drawdown of foreign troops.

The Pentagon wants to keep about 10,000 U.S. troops at a few bases there to help maintain security after 2014. Negotiations on a security agreement have stalled amid resistance from Afghan President Hamid Karzai, who wants the U.S. to take a greater role in encouraging Taliban fighters to enter talks with the government.
Scam targets Army soldiers, civilians, retirees and their families

Defense Department officials say scammers are trying to get information and passwords from Army civilians, soldiers, retirees and family members.

The scam involves a website called “My Army Benefits,” which is nearly identical to the Army’s official website called “MyArmyBenefits.”

“The primary purpose of the fraudulent site is to collect soldiers’ Army Knowledge Online, or AKO, email accounts and passwords, officials said. It also makes the false claim that the U.S. military has granted access to unclaimed and accumulated benefits for active duty soldiers, and that benefits not claimed within the stipulated period will be available for claims after 60 months,” according to information released by the Department of Defense.

Soldiers, Army civilians, retirees and family members are strongly cautioned to ignore the website, do not log into the website and to immediately delete suspicious emails without answering them. If you have accessed the website from a government computer or system, you should contact your local information assurance office.

The scam site is called “My Army Benefits” and the most recent URL for it was http://www.usmilitarybenefit.org. Again, the DOD says this site is not affiliated with the U.S. Army.

The real “MyArmyBenefits” website is at http://myarmybenefits.us.army.mil.

“Most online scam attempts are easily recognizable, officials said, because they usually involve unsolicited emails or text messages. Hoax websites often contain misspelled words and punctuation and grammatical errors, they added, and often ask for private information such as an email address and password,” the DOD post said.

Proposed budget cuts irk overseas service members

Cuts announced by Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel this week aren’t going down well with military personnel serving overseas.

Caps on pay raises, higher commissary prices, housing allowance cuts and reduced health insurance benefits for dependents and retirees are some of the proposals advanced by Hagel in an effort to meet tough budget targets set by Congress.

It’s no surprise, then, that the measures aren’t popular with servicemembers and their families.

Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Toomer, a contracting noncommissioned officer with the 409th Contracting Support Brigade in Kaiserslautern, Germany, noted that as talk in Washington steers toward curtailing military benefits, decision-makers have exempted their own six-figure salaries, multiple offices and various other benefits from cuts or freezes.

“How about leading by example?” Toomer said.

The Army would take the brunt of cuts under Hagel’s proposal, losing an additional 40,000 to 50,000 soldiers beyond reductions in the works.

The service is already shedding 80,000 soldiers, and, in doing so, is shifting standards to cull soldiers who were deemed fit to serve in Iraq or Afghanistan but not fit enough to continue serving now that they aren’t needed to deploy, said Sgt. 1st Class Keisha Reynoso, also a contracting NCO with the 409th.

“Some standards are so high, they’re double,” Toomer said.
"Hopefully [the Army] does the right thing and removes the right people ... and handles it appropriately," Staff Sgt. Ashley Allison, a vocalist with the U.S. Army Europe Band, said.

But for many, especially outside the Army, it's Hagel's proposed cuts to pay and benefits that have caused the most concern.

Among other things, Hagel's proposal would trim domestic housing allowances to cover 95 percent rather than 100 percent of living expenses; slash the subsidy to military supermarkets, adding an average of more than $10 to the typical grocery bill; and cap pay raises at 1 percent, which would reduce servicemembers’ buying power if inflation exceeds that mark.

“I think our pay should go up as inflation goes up,” Airman 1st Class Aaron Mullins, a communications technician at Yokota Air Base, Japan, said. “They are starting to take away all my incentives to stay in for retirement.”

Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Tim Macaspac, at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, said the plans were unfair.

“Dependents need that money to survive, and their paycheck isn’t always going to cut it," he said. “Our benefits are how our government shows how much they care for us.”

Senior Airman Jujuan Burton, a medical technician at Yokota Air Base, said the cuts will likely hit airmen with families the hardest.

“If you have to think about your family, it affects you as a person, you can’t really do your job when you’re worried about these sorts of things,” he said.

The move to increase commissary prices is particularly unpopular with overseas personnel.

“If they are going to increase prices it is going to be hard on the military,” Mullins said. “The commissary is so convenient, but if they put up all the prices there is no need for me to go there. I will just go to Wal-Mart.”

Fireman Apprentice Stephanie Buttrick, a Yokosuka sailor, said commissary price rises could have a big impact on her.

Junior enlisted sailors’ paychecks don’t cover their expenses, she said.

“It’s hard on us,” she said. "When you’re just out of boot camp, you have to buy a lot of things. I just spent $80 on patches, and I was just told I had to buy food and extra toiletries before I get underway.”

Military spouses are equally concerned.

Yokota Air Force spouse Ashley Faye said her family is about to take a second overseas tour for the extra pay.

“If the commissaries overseas are hit by these cuts, there’s very little reason to ever want to be there,” she said. “It’s already expensive enough as it is living here.”

Yokota military spouse Nina Smith said the commissary cuts will hit lower-paid airmen the hardest.

“I haven’t been military all my life, so the prices won’t be a shock to me, but for people that have been in the military for a while, it’ll be a shock for them,” she said.

Erika Brown, the wife of an enlisted airman at Yokota, said raising Tricare health insurance rates would be “another broken promise.”

The mother of two school-age children said she’d use the Japanese medical system if Tricare rates go up too much.

Burton, the medical technician, said he doesn’t like the cuts but understands why they are being made.

“I don’t know if the cuts need to be this extreme, but I understand where they’re coming from,” he said.

The Defense Department is dealing with the effect of billions in budget cuts imposed by Congress in an effort to rein in government spending.

Mullins, the communications technician, said he’d consider leaving the service if things worsen but says he’s still positive about the military’s future.

“What makes the American people great is our ingenuity and our ability to solve our problems,” he said.
How the New Budget Cuts Would Impact You

You've seen the headlines and all you want to know is this: “what do the upcoming pay and benefit cuts mean for my family?”


First, remember that none of this is law just yet. All of it is still just a proposal.

But still, that's some pretty scary stuff. We've known for awhile that life as we know it in the military is coming to end. Programs are downsizing or shutting. Rumors are flying about what is going away and when.

But what does it all mean?

What the Defense Department released this week was just a taste of their full proposal that will come out March 4 — and then make it past Congress. Until then all we have in the way of details is what they presented Feb. 24 and speculation. All of the exact “but HOW?” stuff is still to come.

Here is what we know now about how it will impact you:

You Might Get Kicked Out of the Military

What we do know: Services, especially the Army and the Marine Corps, are already drawing down. For example, the Army already is working on reducing its current size of 520,000 soldiers to 490,000. However, under the new budget they are looking to shrink it even further to 440,000 active duty soldiers. The Marine Corps will be drop from 190,000 to 182,000 (and more if sequestration comes back). That means being given a pink slip when you thought you were making the military a life long business.

What we don’t know: Exactly how the force reduction will work. For the current troop reduction it means separation boards for officers and denied reenlistments for soldiers and Marines, especially in “over strength” specialties. We could guess that similar paths will be taken in the future, but no details were given. We also don’t know exactly how downsizing will impact the Navy or Air Force.

BAH Would Go Down

First, let's briefly review how BAH is calculated. The DoD each year looks at each area with assumptions about the kind of housing each pay grade qualifies for (example: an O-3 with dependents receives the rate for a three bedroom townhouse), the cost of utilities and the cost of renter's insurance. The result of that survey is what you receive for housing each month.

What we do know: None of the BAH reductions are going to hit your paycheck in one lump immediately, or even if and when the 2015 budget passes later this year. You will see some reductions, though. The Pentagon’s 2015 proposal will drop rates about 5 percent over time. They will stop including the cost of rental insurance in their calculation and they will start only covering 95 percent of your housing costs. That means if your pay grade is receiving $1,300 for housing in your area right now, in theory that number could go down to $1,235.

What we don’t know: Exactly how this will roll-out over time. Officials said they are going to "slow the growth" of BAH. That makes it sound like we might over the next few years simply see smaller or no BAH rate growth in areas where it has consistently been going up. We also don’t know how this will
Commissary Funding Would Be Slashed

Like we've been reporting for months, the commissary system is going to see huge cuts over the next three years. While DoD officials claim they have no plans to close the commissary system, plenty of industry insiders wonder if that won’t be the final result anyway.

**What we do know:** The commissary currently receives $1.4 billion to pay employees (many of whom are military family members), keep lights on and ship food. The new budget will reduce the commissary’s tax payer funding to a measly $400 million by 2017. To stay open the commissary system is going to have to come up with that $1 billion themselves. Insiders have suggested that they are planning to do so by asking Congress to let them raise prices, raise the surcharge and nix subsidies for shipping food to OCONUS commissaries.

**What we don’t know:** The DoD’s exact plan for how the commissary system is going to come up with that $1 billion extra by 2017 without closing stores won't be revealed until later. And we don’t know exactly how much is going to be cut from their budget for 2015, either — just that it will be slashed a total of $1 billion by 2017.

Tricare Fees Would Go Up

**What we do know:** Health care is the single most expensive part of military personnel costs and so the DoD is very interested in reining it in. In the new budget deductibles and co-pays for retirees and some active duty users are going to go up and Tricare is going to be dramatically reshaped. According to a DoD official at a background briefing that are going to “transform the health care system into a single plan.”

Medically retired servicemembers, their families and surviving families of those who died on active duty will be sheltered from some of the cost increases. “We will simplify and modernize our Tricare health insurance program by consolidating plans and adjusting deductibles and co-pays in ways that encourage members to use the most affordable means of care,” according to Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel.

**What we don’t know:** Anything else. Those frustratingly few details leave us asking “wait, what?” with no answers, at least for now. That announcement sure makes it sound like it's going to cost more for users to go outside a local treatment facility for care or to pick-up prescriptions at civilian pharmacies. But how much more is yet to be seen. And what’s this about a “single plan?” What does that mean? We'll have to wait to find out.

Pay Raises Would Be Slowed

**What we do know:** In recent years we have received a 1.8 percent pay increase each year. In 2015 the DoD is only asking for most troops to receive 1 percent. General officers and flag officers are going to see a pay freeze. And past 2015 pay raises will be “restrained.”

**What we don’t know:** What does “restrained” mean? We can count on 1 percent for 2015, but “restrained” in the future is, well, ambiguous.

Finally, Something to Remember

All of this is a proposal. To become law it has to first get past Congress and then be signed into law by the President. There is plenty of speculation out there that some of these proposals won't get past lawmakers as is. We could still see drastic changes to this stuff before it hits our backyards.

And you can make a difference. We saw it with the recent repeal of the retiree cost of living adjustment (COLA) reduction. People spoke up in LOUD opposition, and lawmakers took action to make the change. If you don’t like something you see here, contact your Congressman and let him or her know.
CHARLOTTE NORTH CAROLINA
Site of the 96th American Legion National Convention

August 22nd to August 28th 2014

If you are planning on attending the National Convention in Charlotte (and I hope to see some new faces in Charlotte) 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.

Cutoff for the reservation is 14 July 2014.

Hope to see you in Charlotte, a good time will be had by all.
In 2018, The American Legion will begin celebrating 100 years of service to veterans, military personnel, families and communities. To honor the Legion’s centennial, many events at the national, department and post levels will occur starting at the 2018 National Convention in Minneapolis and continuing throughout the 2019 convention in Indianapolis. Planning for these celebratory events is currently underway by the Legion’s 100th Anniversary Observance Committee, but help is needed at the post level to tell the larger story of The American Legion’s first century.

All 13,000 Legion posts worldwide, whether chartered in 1919 or 2009, have histories and a legacies that have contributed to the overall identity of The American Legion. Each post can convey its legacy by sharing historical photos, videos and print material on the Legion’s new Centennial Celebration web page: [www.legion.org/centennial](http://www.legion.org/centennial)

**How to get started**

Posts are encouraged to form centennial committees now, made up of members who will collect historical artifacts and data on the post. For example, the centennial committee may identify:
• Who founded the post and when
• Who the post was named after
• Important dates in the history of the post
• Families involved with the post for multiple generations
• Notable members
• Notable alumni from youth programs such as Boys State, the Oratorical Contest or Legion Baseball
• What makes the post special or unique
• Great things the post has done for its community

If this information isn’t accessible from post archives or members, speak with the local library or media outlets (newspapers, radio, TV) that have covered events about your post.

**Share your story**

Once your post’s centennial committee has collected photos, videos and print material related to its history, share it on the Legion’s new Centennial Celebration web page.

To create a post history page, follow these seven steps:

1. Go to the Centennial Celebration web page, [www.legion.org/centennial](http://www.legion.org/centennial)
2. Register (in the upper-right hand of the page) to be an administrator. The administrator of a post’s page allows him or her to monitor all content submitted to the page before it appears to the general viewing public.
3. Click "Share Your Post History" located under "History" on the left hand navigation column.
4. Enter your department and post number.
5. Click "Yes, create post x."
6. Complete the required fields needed to start; you only need your post number, city and charter date. If you don’t know when your post was chartered, put in an estimated date until you find the answer; you can add/change information as you receive it.
7. Click "Save" when finished.

Once your post page is created, members — and those whose lives have been touched by the post — can add historical photos, timeline events (significant moments that helped build the chronology of your history) and upcoming events celebrating your history and the Legion’s centennial.

And for step-by-step instructions on how to share your post’s legacy and vision, download the Legion’s **Centennial Celebration Workbook here**.

If your post does not have access to the technical tools or expertise needed to create a Centennial Celebration history page, the workbook features paper forms of timeline events, photo galleries and upcoming events. The forms can be submitted to a third party who is willing to create the web page and act as the post’s administrator.

For more information, please email: ledwards@legion.org
BEST WESTERN Hotel Ludwigshafen
Reservation Department
Pasadena Alle 4
67059 Ludwigshafen
Tel: 0049 – 621 – 59 51 500
Fax: 0049 – 621 – 59 51 104
Email: fb@hotel-ludwigshafen.bestwestern.de

BOOKING – Department of Europe – VFW Convention 2014

Please reserve the following:

Guest Details:

Lastname:

Firstname:

Street:

ZIP / City:

State:

Telephone:

Telefax:

Email:

Room reservation:

Arrival Date:

Departure Date:

Room Type: 0 EUR 51.00 per Single room / night

0 EUR 81.00 per Double room / night

Children (0-11 years) sharing parent’s room free of charge without extra bed
Banquet - reservation:

13. June 2014:  0 x  EUR 16.00 per person for LUNCH-Buffet
                0 x  EUR 21.00 per person for DINNER-Buffet

14. June 2014:  0 x  EUR 16.00 per person for LUNCH-Buffet
                0 x  EUR 32.00 per person for BANQUET Dinner-Buffet

15. June 2014:  0 x  EUR 16.00 per person for LUNCH-Buffet

Conditions:

Cancellation deadline: A cancellation free of charge is till 10th May 2013 possible.

In case of cancellation after 10th May 2013 we reserve the right to charge 90% of the expected revenue.

Child Policy:  Childs until 03 years are free of charge
              Childs from 3-12 years will pay 50% of the price for the buffet Childs up to 12 years should pay 100% of the price for the buffet

Booking guarantee:

Credit card Details:  Credit Card: ______________
                      Card Owner: ______________
                      Card Number: ______________
                      Valid: ______

For Hotel use only:

Herewith we re-confirm the above mentioned booking:

Reservation Number: