My Fellow Legionaries

I hope all of you had a happy and safe Easter, enjoyed with family, friends and your extended Legion family.

On the 24th of April, I along with members from GR06, 40&8 Locale 1524, and Madam President attend the funeral of William Wiessner. Bill was laid to rest at the Zuffenhausen Friedhof. Family members, friends, and an Honor Guard out of Stuttgart ensured a Military burial for Bill. Till we meet again Bill R.I.P. you will be sorely missed by us all.

On the 25th of April the department conducted its annual Awards Committee Meeting. Again only six (6) post submitted awards. This is your program also, and if you did not submit an awards packet for your post, you have done your post and its members an injustice. Hopefully next year we will have a better turn-out in award packets. The awards have been ordered.

On the 26th of April John Wayne Post 79 conducted its 40th year anniversary, by hosting a dinner in Heilbronn. The dinner was well supported by members, local officials, and the German Veterans Organization. I was only able to attend this function for a short while due to other commitments, I am sure they all had a great time, and enjoyed the conversation, and food. In addition John Wayne Post 79 announced their addition of a Legion Riders Chapter to their Post. Congrats to all at JWP79.

Commanders/Adjutants if you have not yet registered for MyLegion you are behind the power curve. We currently have sixteen (16) post registered (see attached listing of those post. I encourage you to get with the program, this is a vital tool to assist you and your post in its daily operation. In addition CPR deadline is approaching fast, we have seven (7) post (see attached listings) that have either submitted via MyLegion or via snail mail. The CPR is a very important document it helps National prepare its statistics to present to Congress what The American legion is doing for Veterans, and their families. Reminder to all the CPR can be filled out online at My Legion this online form also gives you an opportunity to add additional information.

Our next big event is Memorial Day Ceremony at Lorrain Memorial Cemetery in saint Avold France on Sunday the 24th of May 2015. The department has requested twenty (20) reservations(seating arrangements) for this event hopefully you will be able to attend this solemn event. if you have not already ordered your wreaths through the Department Finance Officer it is to late the order had to be in on the 27th of March 2015. The Department will no longer be able to order wreaths, this will no longer be an available option since ABMC will no longer order wreaths for Saint Avold.

National Commander Michael Helm and party will be arriving here in Germany on the 30th of May 2015 at 0830 hours, at Frankfurt Airport. As it looks now we will have a busy schedule for the Commander. The Commander departs on or about 3 June 2015. His plans also include visiting Normandy, Flanders Field, and Paris. 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 Convention will be conducted 18-21 June 2015 and is being hosted by GR01. 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: james.settle@kabelbw.de

The Department Web Page is: www.AmerLegionDeptFrance.org
The department has a Face Book page at the following www.Facebook.com/ALDepFrance. Please visit and like this page. Thanks
My $4 million goal is within reach

With only five months left as your national commander, I’m proud to say that my goal to raise $4 million for American Legion and Auxiliary charities is right on pace.

As of April 1, more than $3.2 million has been raised for the charities, which include Operation Comfort Warriors, Child Welfare Foundation, National Emergency Fund, Legacy Scholarship Fund, Endowment Fund and Soldier’s Wish. Also included are the Auxiliary charities, which include the Emergency Fund, Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund, Children of Warriors National President’s Workshop and American Legion Auxiliary Foundation.

These generous, tax-deductible contributions mean so much to me, as every dollar will go directly toward items to help make a wounded soldier’s recuperation more enjoyable, give a much needed boost to a deserving child’s education, provide clothing and shelter for a disaster victim and so much more. Our progress so far has been excellent. But we need to finish strong so that our programs can continue to support veterans, active-duty servicemembers and their families who need our assistance.

To make a donation to one or more of the aforementioned programs, visit:  www.legion.org/donate

As I meet Legion Family members throughout my travels, I am constantly impressed by their dedication to our core values. These individuals work tirelessly on behalf of veterans, current servicemen and women, and their communities. Everyone must work together at all levels to build membership and raise funds throughout The American Legion Family.

When I announced my fundraising and membership goals, I described them as lofty. Now, thanks to the dedication of numerous American Legion Family members and friends, the goals are well within our reach. But, just like we wouldn’t waver in our commitment to country, we cannot waver in our commitment to a bright future for The American Legion.

For God and Country,

Mike Helm

From the Editor...

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, please use Word document format. 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.  David N. Greaux / davidgreaux@t-online.de
It’s spring time, the time of year to knock the dust off your grills, wash the picnic tables, and have a spring cookout at the Post. So if you are going to do all that work cleaning up the outside, why not turn it into a membership roundup day. This would also be the ideal opportunity to get members out to the Post that have not yet renewed their membership for 2015, or for that matter 2013 and 2014. Have a Service Officer present and advertise the event in your local paper and let your local radio station advertise it, most will do it for FREE. I don’t want to beat a dead horse, but we still have two months left in the 2015 membership. I haven’t given up on the 2015 membership year and I hope you haven’t either. I would like to see us march into the National Convention in Baltimore at the TOP of the MEMBERSHIP standings, and not with our heads down sitting in the MEMBERSHIP cellar.

I know I mentioned it in my last Newsletter, but I think it is very important to bring up the Consolidated Post Reports again. I can’t emphasize how important this report is to the National Organization. This report tells Capitol Hill what the American Legion has accomplished in the past year. If you don’t know if an item should be reported on the Consolidated Post Report ask your Department Adjutant, he should be able to provide you with an answer. Remember, even the littles pieces of information is very important.

I want to Thank the Departments of New York, Delaware, and Pennsylvania for hosting me on my most recent visits. I would also like to thank the Departments of New York and Delaware for hosting my wife Elke.

We had two amazing membership revitalizations both in New York and Delaware. We had a large number of Legionnaires present to make phone calls at both departments. The Department Service Officers were hard at work during the revitalization also, and their efforts were greatly appreciated. The Delaware revitalization was topped off with a very informative DEC. It was such enjoyable working for Frank Fazzio and his crew in Kings County New York, and Commander Bob Michael and his crew in New Castle Delaware, both Departments had a first class setup, and both revitalizations were a great success. Thank You to everyone who came out to help.

My visit to Pennsylvania was a full weekend with impressive committee meetings on Friday night, and Saturday morning, DEC Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning. But the key to the whole weekend was the Commanders Testimonial on Saturday night, there was a lot of ribbing and a lot of appreciation bestowed upon Commander Haas. I also had time to catch up with old friends, PNC Ron Conley and my National Commander Dominic D. DeFranesco.

Thank You New York, Delaware, and Pennsylvania for your hospitality I am looking forward to my future visits.
**DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER AT LARGE / MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN**  Joe D. Brown

Department Awards Committee was in Heilbronn on 25 April 2015. We had 6 posts that turned in award packets. That is really poor, since we have 29 posts in the Department. The Membership standing is very poor this year. We have 55 Departments and France is standing at number 54. Last year we were number 1. We have posts out there have transmitted only one time this year.

The Post Commanders and Membership Chairman need to get on the ball with membership because the National Commander will be here next month. It looks bad to be #54 in the National database. So let’s do a big push to get the membership numbers up. If you need help with your membership, we have Vice Commanders, the Department Commander and Myself that can help.

The National Commander Helm will be here on the 30 May. GR 79 will be hosting a dinner for the National Commander Helm, so come on out and support the Department. The Department Convention, we are getting a lot of mails about the Hotel, The POC is GR 01 Commander Purdy jotthspur@t-online.de.

Remember the Memorial Day ceremony at Saint-Avold on Sunday the 24th. Also, send me your Transmittal now asap.

Following Posts made 100%: BE02, DK01, NL01, GR01, GR02, GR05, GR06, GR09, GR13, GR14, GR42, GR79

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National Goal for Department is 2970 Members
GR01 INSTALLATIONS

GR01 incoming Commander Purdy with VCAL Brown

Department Vice Commander Foster installing the new Officers

GR79 40 YEAR BIRTHDAY PARTY

GR01 new Officers and Executive Members

GR79 Dept. Vice Commander Logan with newly elected GR79 Commander Martin
Dept Commander Settle presenting Department awards

Post Commander Brown stepping down as Commander GR79
DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER  Jerry Aman

GR 09 hosts WW II Veteran

On 23 April 1945 as Private Myron Roker, of the 324th Infantry Regiment, 44th Infantry Division entered the city of Ulm WW II was coming to an end and Myron and his unit had endured 203 days of combat in France and some pockets in Germany. As Myron marveled at the majestic Ulmer Muenster (Cathedral) which was barely damaged by the relentless bombing he could never have imagined that 70 years later to the day he would again be standing in front of the Cathedral, but this time as a guest of GR 09.

In December 2014 GR09’s Post Commander was contacted by Karen Howl, former resident of Ulm and previous employee of the US military community who asked if American Legion Post 09 had any activities planned to commemorate the 70 year anniversary of the US Army’s advance into Ulm. At that time there were none but Ms. Howl was determined that something should be done to acknowledge this feat and after extensive research contacted the 44th Division Historical Society which confirmed that its 324th Regiment was the first unit to enter Ulm and that there were three survivors still living of which only one, Myron Roker, 91 years old and living in Glenwood, Iowa, would be able to travel. Ms. Howl “picked up the ball” and together with her husband, COL (R) Larry, now a pilot for United Airlines, arranged for United to fly Myron, his 90 year old wife Viola and youngest son and daughter-in-law to Germany.

On 17 April Post Commander Jerry Aman greeted Myron at the Ulm Bahnhof and for the next seven days accompanied him on a whirlwind tour through Ulm which involved radio, TV and newspaper interviews, visits with city officials and Ulm’s Lord Mayor. Within a short time Myron was a celebrity and in much demand by many.

On Myron’s last night in Ulm GR 09 hosted a banquet in his honor at the German Army Officer’s Club. Of the over 60 attendees was a mixture of German and American active duty military personnel, retired German military and reservists and 17 GR 09 members with wives. Culminating the evening’s events Myron recounted some of his experiences with a slide presentation. Throughout his visit Myron was visibly moved many times when recalling his experiences and thanked GR 09 for hosting his visit.

On his way back to Glenwood Myron had another stop scheduled, this time in Washington D.C. where he was interviewed by a local ABC affiliate TV station and a visit a local grade class where he was to present his WW II stories.
Myron Roker in his original WW II uniform

Myron Roker with German Air Force Major General Haberselzer

Legionnaire Bob Lindsey presenting Myron with GR 09 baseball cap with Hal Rittenberg looking on

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**DEPARTMENT OFFICERS - 2015 MEMBERSHIP YEAR**

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Greetings, Commander’s & Legionnaires,

As the Department of France Vice Commander, I have been assigned the following Posts:

John F. Kennedy Post IR63 Facebook site: www.facebook.com/AmericanLegionIRL
Eifel Post GR-20, Riveria Post FR-05, Madrid Post SP-292, and Portugal (Nunv Alvares Pereira) Post PO-01.

Doug Haggan (FODPAL Secretary) is asking the Department and Posts to submit pictures and small articles to the FODPAL website: http://www.legion.org Click Members FODPAL site listed at Quick Links. FODPAL (Foreign and Outlying Departments and Posts of The American Legion) is asking for special programs & events and Facebook sites. The Department of France Newsletters is posted on the FODPAL website. Click Newsletters. It’s listed in the FODPAL site: www.legion.org Click Members Click FODPAL.


Post IR-03 plans to visit the unveil a granite memorial bench in memory of the late Brigadier General William J. Gormley III, Commander, Massachusetts National Guard, whose ancestors hailed from Lecarrow, Ireland. Will sound taps and present a folded flag to his widow. Castlebar, Co. Mayo has declared 4th of July 2015 as America Day and invites the American Legion and families to a fun packed day. A dedication of a bench at 6 P.M. in the Garden of Remembrance, May Peace Park in honor of CPL. Joseph A. Clancy a native of Westport, Co. Mayo who was killed in an aircraft accident in Vietnam. After the dedication March through the town to Cox’s Bar near the Linenhall for a Texas style BBQ, Blue Grass music and Elvis appearance. The National Day of Commemoration (12 July) at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, Dublin 11 A.M. Contact: Michael P. Noone (Post Adjutant).

Commanders & Comrades, we need to think about membership. As of 31 March 2015, Portugal Post PO01 requires 8 members to be 100% membership, John F. Kennedy Post IR-63 requires 3 members to be 100% membership, Madrid Post SP262 requires 8 members to be 100% membership, Eifel Post GR-20 requires 1 member to be 100% membership, and Riveria Post FR-05 requires 8 members to be 100% membership. Membership is our Voice on Capitol Hill. I encourage the Posts to transmit each month to the Department Membership Chairman (Joe Dan Brown). Check out the Online Renewal at: www.legion.org

The Kaiserslautern Post GR01 has sent the registration/hotel form (Department of France Convention) to the Department Adjutant (Rice) and VCAL Brown. If you require the registration/hotel form, please contact the Kaiserslautern Post Commander (John Purdy). His email address: jothspur@t-online.de

Commanders & Comrades, don’t wait till the last minute to register.

Commanders & Fellow Legionnaires, many thanks for what you do for your Posts and the communities you serve. The Department of France Commander asks to continue membership and Post Renewals. Retention maintains strong membership within the Posts, Department, and the Organization. I have been re-assigned to William Beaumont Army Medical Center (El Paso, Texas). I will greatly miss the Commanders and Comrades (Department of France) and Posts. God Bless America.
Department of France Past Commanders Club

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 which will entitle the new member to a Past Commanders Club cap, Past Commanders Club pin and membership card

Renewal dues for the Past Commanders Club is only $10.00

Our next meeting will be during our Department Legion Convention 18-21 June 2015

**HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE... David Greaux, PCC Secretary “2015”**

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**Post Everlasting**

*It is my ad duty to report to you that Comrade Campbell a long time member of Stuttgart Post 6 reported to Post Everlasting on 02 April 2015. A Memorial Ceremony was conducted on Patch Barracks 15 April 2015 at the Patch Chapel in Stuttgart.*
Greetings Comrades,
Greetings Sisters and Brothers of the American Legion Family,

Well, May is going to be a busy month again this year. Meetings at National, our National Commander rolling in at the end of the month, Memorial Day and our service at the Lorraine Military Cemetery in St. Avold/ France. I have to thank you for putting up with me. Every month you get to read a few words that I put together. I thank God that He has placed so many dedicated people in this family of ours and given them the strength to do Good Works in His and the name of The American Legion.

I know however that you aren’t waiting to read my words before going out to do something important to help in the support of our veterans. All of you are involved in the Legion Family in various levels, as well as being involved at home. I therefore also have to thank you for your service from the bottom of my heart. I’m proud to be a member of The American Legion, Department of France and part of this great family.

We need to pray for our country and that our public leaders will recognize their duty to such a great Nation and its citizens. It is difficult to lay personal preferences aside in order to represent the voices and wishes of their constituency, but that is something that they have sworn to do. I’m sure their past performance can be seen in the statistics. The democratic process of voting for our Commander-in-Chief, Senators, Congressmen and other public servants is an important bulwark of our country. This is all founded in the Constitution and its Amendments. Funny, how many people seem to think we need to change our Constitution rather than follow the course set by our forefathers.

Our forefathers put God in first place. The American Legion followed that principle also in the set up of our Constitution. I love those words, “For God and Country” and they are something we can build on and follow. Let those principles be forever valid and binding on our family organizations.

God bless our servicemen and women, as well as their families, no matter where they serve.

Service to God and Country!

Rev. Ronald Moore,
Department of France Chaplain
Detachment of France Chaplain
Mobile: 0049-(0)172-7417812
Email: gypsy_moore@yahoo.de

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**National Special Days:**
- 1st - Loyalty and Law Day;
- 7th - National Day of Prayer;
- 8th - V-E Day 1945;
- 10th - Mother’s Day;
- 15th - Peace Officers Memorial Day;
- 16th - Armed Forces Day;
- 25th - Memorial Day.

**Legion Events:**
- Spring Meetings;
- Memorial Day Ceremony at St Avold;
- National Auxiliary Poppy Day

**Christian Religious Days:**
- 2nd - Ascension Day (Most Christians);
- 24th - Pentecost (most Christians);
- 31st - Trinity Sunday (most Christians).

**Jewish Holidays** (Year 5775):
- 14th - Second Passover;
- 18th - Lag B’Omer

**Islamic Holidays:**
- 13th - Lailat al Miraj.

Please visit the church, temple, synagogue or mosque of your choice.

**Post Everlasting reported to April 29th:** William “Bill” Campbell, GR06

Prayers have been offered for their families and friends. Please remember them in your prayers also.

**Prayers for the Sick & Ill:**
- George Hall, GR-03
- Wife of GR05 Vice Cdr Santos Alvarado

…are undergoing, were undergoing or were scheduled for, medical treatment.

No other deaths or other illnesses were reported to me, but we continue to pray for those comrades, family members and friends of the Legion who have passed away or are ill.
Post GR 13 had its monthly meeting 18 April 15 with elections. 19 Members were present. Election results: Post Cmldr. Rick Cervenka, re-elected/Post 1st Cmldr. Nat Wiggins re-elected/2d Vice Cmldr. Gary Baisley, re-elected/Finance Officer, Walter Roth, re-elected/Chaplain, Val Hallinan, re-elected/Sgt@Arms, John Fleming, elected/Judge Advocate & Historian Vacant/Service Officer, Riley Peoples Elected

Next Meeting moved to Saturday, 23 May 2015 5 PM. Memorial Day ceremony at West Friedhof- 25 May 15.

Post home remains Deutscher Kaiser Restaurant, Hessenbach Str 13, 86157 Augsburg (Pfersee)
Mailing address American Legion Post GR 13, Postfach 310107, 86062 Augsburg

John Wayne Post GR 79 is hosting a dinner for the National Commander Michael D Helm

Sunday, 30 May 2015 at 1800 hrs, GR 79 Post Home
ZUM REEGEN, IM RIED, Riedweg 52, 74078 Heilbronn-Frankenbach

The menu consist of a Gemischter Braten (Mixed Roasts) Buffet of Rinderbraten (Roast Beef) and Schweinebraten (Roast Pork) and Salad Buffet

Croquette, Pommes, Spaetzle and Vegetables and Desert...Mix Ice Cream

The Cost for this Meal is 17 Euros

R.S.V.P. NLT 23 May 2015
joedan, pascal1@googlemail.com

IPC Commander Joe Brown
Adjutant Ross Shephard III
DETACHMENT OF FRANCE
Squadrons: GR01, BE02, GR03, GR06, GR07, GR14, GR42, GR79, CH01

SAL DETACHMENT ALT NECMAN...David Greaux

Remember to mark your calendar…

SAL Convention 2015 hosted by GR42 on 6 June 2015…

the Call will be sent out to the squadrons.

S.A.L. MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

BALTIMORE MARYLAND
Site of the 97th American Legion National Convention
August 28th to September 3rd 2015

If you are planning on attending the National Convention in Baltimore (and I hope to see some new faces in Baltimore) 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 $159.00 plus tax. Cutoff for the reservation is 12 July 2015.
Hope to see you in Baltimore, a good time will be had by all.

Update on what we are working on for our attendees’ enjoyment at the 2015 National Convention...

Friday, August 28, 2015 – Color Guard Competition at 5:00 PM at the Baltimore Convention Center. Applications are due by July 24 to the Convention & Meetings Office.

On Friday, August 28 OR Saturday, August 29, the Baltimore Ravens will host the Washington Redskins in a Pre-Season Game. We are working with the Ravens and more information on tickets will be forthcoming.

Saturday, August 29, 2015 – Competitive Concert Band Contests will return along with the new Exhibition Concert Band class. Contests will start at 1:00 PM at the Baltimore Convention Center. Applications are due by June 1 to the Convention & Meetings Office.

Sunday, August 30, 2015 – Patriotic Memorial Service featuring The Texas Tenors. Service starts at 11:00 AM in the Baltimore Convention Center.
Monday, August 31, 2015 – American Legion Family Night at Camden Yards Ballpark with the Baltimore Orioles vs. Tampa Bay Rays. Game time is 7:05PM. See the American Legion Baseball Player of the Year throw the ceremonial first pitch. Please see attached document for ticket information.

Tuesday, September 1, 2015 – National Commander’s Banquet. The Swing Dolls have been selected by National Commander Helm as the entertainment. The Swing Dolls perform a Musical USO Tribute and music made popular by The Andrews Sisters, The McGuire Sisters, female groups of the 1960’s and Mamma Mia. Tickets are $45.00 per person and each table is a round for eight (8) people this year. Departments may send their checks to the Convention & Meetings Office, payable to National Treasurer of The American Legion. Tickets at this time are still available.

Tour Opportunities are available during the National Convention. These are listed on our website at www.legion.org/convention.
AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY NIGHT

Monday, August 31st at 7:05 p.m. vs. Tampa Bay Rays

Terrace Box (Sections 1-17 & 55-65): $19*
Left Field Lower Box (Sections 66-86): $19*
Lower Reserve (Sections 67-87): $12*
Upper Reserve (Sections 316-356, rows 13-25): $10*

*There is an additional 10% service charge per ticket

For any questions or accessible seating, please call 888.848.BIRD (2473) and ask for the Ticket Services team.

FOLLOW THE STEPS BELOW TO PURCHASE TICKETS:

1. Click on the link below
2. Select a quantity of tickets
3. Create a Baltimore Orioles ticket account
4. Purchase and print your tickets

http://www.orioles.com/tix/americanlegion

Tickets posted for re-sale are subject to cancellation. Offer is NOT valid at the Box Office.
The Oak Ridge Boys to receive The American Legion Patriot Award

INDIANAPOLIS (April 29, 2015) – The nation’s largest organization of wartime veterans today announced the selection of The Oak Ridge Boys as its 2015 recipients of The American Legion Patriot Award.

“By using their considerable talents to raise awareness and support for the needs of veterans and their families, The Oak Ridge Boys are an obvious choice for this prestigious honor,” said The American Legion National Commander Michael D. Helm. “Duane Allen, Richard Sterban, Joe Bonsall and William Lee Golden are great Americans who have entertained people worldwide with their stirring hits and amazing record of success. Their blend of gospel, country and rock make The Oak Ridge Boys true American icons.”

The Patriot Award is just the latest honor for the band, which was recently selected as 2015 inductees to the Country Music Hall of Fame. The Oak Ridge Boys were also named as celebrity “spokesband” for The American Legion and have done several educational announcements about the services and programs offered by the Legion. Moreover, the band has been active in the Legion-supported Soldier’s Wish, a group that creates events to support military members.

The Patriot Award will be presented to The Oak Ridge Boys in Baltimore, Md., during The American Legion’s 97th Annual National Convention, Sept. 1-3.

With a current membership of 2.3-million wartime veterans, The American Legion was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism, and youth programs. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through nearly 14,000 posts across the nation.

Legion launching tribute to Old Glory

The American Legion, the nation’s largest veterans organization, is launching a multimedia tribute to Old Glory that will explore the flag’s meaning, the price paid for all it symbolizes, and the special place it occupies in our conscience and culture.

The American Legion wants the public to be a part of this tribute to our flag. Social media users are encouraged to post photos of Old Glory, or share what the U.S. flag means to them, on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram using the hashtag #MyUSFlag. Those who want to participate also can pin photos of the flag to the Legion’s Pinterest page. (https://www.pinterest.com/talhq/).

“Indivisible: The Story of Our Flag,” will be a collectible American Legion Centennial bookazine. Through illustrations and text, it will tell the story of the U.S. flag from the American Revolution to the Global War on Terrorism. Voices, unique facts, historical anecdotes and more will team up with beautiful illustrations to tell that story.

Combining with the bookazine will be a web platform housed on www.legion.org that will include videos, frequently asked questions, U.S. Flag Code standards, stories of interest and other valuable resources. A mobile app also will be available as part of the campaign, and will feature information about the display of the flag, photos, videos and flag etiquette.

The American Legion has a long-standing history of flag advocacy. On Flag Day, June 14, 1923, the Legion convened a summit in Washington, D.C., to draft a code of flag etiquette. The Legion and 68 other patriotic, civic and military organizations created the U.S. Flag Code, which was signed into law by Congress on June 22, 1942.
WASHINGTON — House lawmakers said Tuesday they will unveil a defense budget this week that calls for overhauling the military retirement system by 2017.

The measure is being supported by the leadership of the House Armed Services Committee as part of its version of the annual defense authorization act, according to committee leaders who sat down with Stars and Stripes. Meanwhile, the lawmakers said the committee will not pursue any changes to Tricare health insurance or commissaries in the defense bill.

A blended 401(k)-style retirement system was suggested in January as part of a landmark study by the congressionally appointed Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission and has sparked wide-ranging debate among servicemember and veteran groups.

“We think there is benefit in requesting the [Defense Department] come back to us probably within six to eight months with an implementation plan,” said Rep. Joe Heck, R-Nev., who is chairman of the Armed Services subcommittee on military personnel.

Under the blended retirement system, the military would give all new servicemembers a Thrift Savings Plan account and provide matching contributions throughout their service. Troops who separate after 20 years would still get a pension but only 80 percent of what those already in the system today will get.

Heck said the Armed Services committee will modify the compensation commission proposal by continuing the TSP contributions beyond 20 years for those who want to continue serving. The loss of contributions was a sticking point for some military groups.

Servicemembers who are serving now would see no change or reduction to their retirements if they choose but could opt into the new system.

The bill will require the transition to the new retirement system be complete by October 2017, according to Heck, who will introduce the legislation Wednesday, and Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, chairman of the Armed Services committee.

The Senate Armed Services Committee signaled that it is also still considering the overhaul for the National Defense Authorization Act.

Staff for Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., who chairs the SASC, said he supports Heck and Thornberry.

The Senate committee is “continuing to examine all options for modernizing the current system and providing greater value and choice to military servicemembers and their families,” McCain spokesman Dustin Walker wrote in an email to Stars and Stripes.

Other key issues that will not make it into the committee’s defense bill:

- The MCRM panel recommended replacing the Tricare system with a wider selection of private insurance plans similar to what is offered to federal employees, but Heck and Thornberry said the issue is too complex and there has not been enough time to study it and make changes.

- The proposal to consolidate military grocery and exchange stores will be put on hold until a contractor can finish a study of the two systems ordered in last year’s defense authorization act.

The Armed Services subcommittees will spend this week crafting various sections of the National Defense Authorization Act, and then the full committee is slated to pass a final version in a marathon session next week.

The committee’s bill must pass the House and eventually be merged with the Senate’s version, but the work this week — including the retirement overhaul — will set the course for what eventually gets passed into law.
Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of remembrance for those who have died in service of the United States of America. Over two dozen cities and towns claim to be the birthplace of Memorial Day. While Waterloo N.Y. was officially declared the birthplace of Memorial Day by President Lyndon Johnson in May 1966, it’s difficult to prove conclusively the origins of the day. Regardless of the exact date or location of its origins, one thing is clear – Memorial Day was borne out of the Civil War and a desire to honor our dead. It was officially proclaimed on 5 May 1868 by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, in his General Order No. 11. “The 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land,” he proclaimed. The date of Decoration Day, as he called it, was chosen because it wasn’t the anniversary of any particular battle. On the first Decoration Day, General James Garfield made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, and 5,000 participants decorated the graves of the 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers buried there.

The first state to officially recognize the holiday was New York in 1873. By 1890 it was recognized by all of the northern states. The South refused to acknowledge the day, honoring their dead on separate days until after World War I (when the holiday changed from honoring just those who died fighting in the Civil War to honoring Americans who died fighting in any war).

It is now observed in almost every state on the last Monday in May with Congressional passage of the National Holiday Act of 1971 (P.L. 90 – 363). This helped ensure a three day weekend for Federal holidays, though several southern states have an additional separate day for honoring the Confederate war dead: January 19th in Texas; April 26th in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi; May 10th in South Carolina; and June 3rd (Jefferson Davis’ birthday) in Louisiana and Tennessee.
Warrior Transition Units

The Department of the Army announced the inactivation of ten Warrior Transition Units (WTUs) as the number of wounded, ill and injured Soldiers requiring care in the WTUs continues to decline.

Since February 2014, the number of soldiers receiving care and support in WTUs has decreased from over 7,000 to less than 3,700. Based on a comprehensive assessment of WTU force structure and the declining population of Soldiers in WTUs, the Army will be able to reduce the number of WTUs from the 25 units to 15 by August 2016.

The Army WTUs scheduled for inactivation are at the following locations: Fort Gordon, Georgia; Fort Knox, Kentucky; Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia; Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri; Fort Sill, Oklahoma; Fort Polk, Louisiana; Fort Wainwright, Alaska; Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska; Fort Meade, Maryland; and Naval Medical Center, San Diego, California.

WTUs will remain on installations where there is a large concentration of soldiers. WTUs will also continue to be co-located with major Army medical activities and centers providing support to wounded, ill and injured soldiers who require at least six months of rehabilitative care and complex medical management.

As units are inactivated, soldiers and their families will continue to receive care and transition assistance, and the Warrior Care and Transition Program will remain a scalable and reversible program fully capable of providing world class care to our wounded, ill and injured soldier population.

Soldiers who do not require day-to-day care to recover, and who receive their care from the TRICARE network closer to their homes, will not be affected by these consolidation efforts. The opportunity to recover closer to home, through assignment to Community Care Units (CCUs), will continue to be an option soldiers can explore.

Active Duty personnel assigned to units set for inactivation or force structure reductions will be reassigned in accordance with current Army assignment policies. Civilian employees impacted by the consolidation will be reassigned based on their skill sets, the needs of the Army and available employment opportunities. Every attempt will be made to allow Reserve Component cadre to serve out their tours.

The American Legion Riders Newsletter

The American Legion Riders Newsletter provides members and department leadership with periodic information on the American Legion Riders program, The American Legion Legacy Run, and other ALR program news and developments. Departments, Posts, Chapters and individual Riders are encouraged to sign up online at www.legion.org/newsletters for the newsletter.

Department of Virginia “Ride To The Thunder”. At the request of the Department of Virginia, Emblem Sales will provide merchandise and staff to operate an Emblem Sales Store in support the annual Ride to the Thunder (RTTT) rally hosted by the Department of Virginia over Memorial Day weekend, May 22-25, 2015. The annual ALR gathering at the Fairfax, VA American Legion Post 177, with vendors, bands, and food for the annual Rolling Thunder event in Washington, D.C. continues to grow in popularity with riders across the country. The Virginia ALR will conduct a police-escorted ride from Fairfax into the Pentagon North parking lot on Memorial Day, Sunday, May 25, 2015. The ALR office will relocate to the Fairfax post during this long weekend of activities.
Army Sgt. Wallace J. Dawson, 21, of Santa Barbara, Calif., was buried on May 1, in his hometown. In early February 1951, Dawson and elements of Company L, 3rd Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment (IR), 2nd Infantry Division (ID), were occupying a position in the vicinity of Sang-sok, South Korea, when their unit was overwhelmed by Chinese forces. This attack caused the unit to withdraw south to a more defensible position. Dawson was reported missing Feb. 14, 1951.

In 1953, during Operation Big Switch, returning American prisoners reported that Dawson was captured by enemy forces and died in June 1951 from malnutrition. He was reported to have been buried at prisoner of war Camp 1, in Changsong. In 1954, during Operation Glory, United Nations and Communist Forces exchanged the remains of war dead. All remains recovered in Operation Glory were turned over to the Army Central Identification Unit in Kokura, Japan, for analysis. The unidentified remains were interred as unknowns at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Hawaii, known as the “Punchbowl.”

In 2014, with advances in technology, the Department of Defense (DoD) laboratory in Hawaii, re-examined the records and concluded that the possibility of identification existed.

In the identification of Dawson’s remains, scientists from DPAA and the Armed Forces DNA Laboratory (AFDIL) used circumstantial evidence, chest radiography and dental comparison, which matched his records.

Today, 7,852 Americans remain unaccounted for from the Korean War. Using modern technology, identifications continue to be made from remains that were previously turned over by North Korean officials or recovered by American teams.

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**The American Legion Legacy Run**

**Baltimore, Maryland August 23-26, 2015**  USAA is the primary sponsor of The American Legion Legacy Run. We continue to seek additional corporate sponsorship for support vehicles, trailers, and other logistical needs.

**Registration is open to all.** As of today, 251 riders, passengers, and supporters have registered for the August event. We urge all departments, posts, squadrons, units and chapters to widely promote non-rider supporting registration at [www.legion.org/riders/registration](http://www.legion.org/riders/registration) as a means of supporting the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund. Each supporting registration of $25 earns a patch set and souvenir Event Guide commemorating the 2015 Legacy Run.
2016 Membership Cards Shipping Update

2016 American Legion Membership cards have been shipping and Alaska, Kansas District of Columbia and Florida have all been shipped.

This year’s card features a watermark of our organizations’ four operating principles: “Veterans, National Security, Americanism, and Youth.

Annual Bulk Shipments

The bulk shipments will be completed this Friday. Departments will have received their requested materials from the Membership and Internal Affairs Divisions. The bulk shipments are a major undertaking and takes about three weeks to complete with the shipping department working overtime to complete.
Here is a copy for the Hotel Booking Form. Please pass this on to all your Member that will be going to the Department Convention. POC for this is John T. Purdy from GR01. All questions should be directed to him and all mail in forms.

John T. Purdy / Tel 06371-62687 / jothspur@t-online.de

BEST WESTERN Leoso Hotel Ludwigshafen
Reservation Department
Pasadena Alle 4
67059 Ludwigshafen
Tel: 0049 - 621 - 59 51 500
Fax: 0049 - 621 - 59 51 104
Email: sales@leoso.hotel-ludwigshafen.de

BOOKING – American Legion Department of France – Convention 2015

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 52.00 per Single room / night
0 EUR 83.00 per Double room / night
Children (0-11 years) sharing parent’s room free of charge without extra bed

Parking $2.00 for entire stay
Banquet - reservation:

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<td>EUR 32.00 per person for BANQUET Dinner-Buffet</td>
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Conditions:

Cancellation deadline: A cancellation free of charge is till 01st May 2015 possible.

In case of cancellation after 01st May 2015 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 over 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: