

The AMERICAN LEGION

Department of France



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DEPARTMENT COMMANDER *James Settle*

My Fellow Legionaries

It was my sad duty to report to you that we had two Department members Report to PEL. Comrade's Phillip Gatchell, a charter member of Rhein Neckar Post GR03, Reported to PEL on 13 August 2014 and Past Department Commander Gorley Stokes (1994-1995)

reported to PEL on 18 August 2014.

Comrade Gatchell was laid to rest with Military Honors in Heidelberger, Germany on the 27th of August 2014

On the 12 of August 2014 Myself, along with VCAL Brown, VC Logan, VC Aman, and Madam President Settle, attended the Memorial Ceremony conducted for Comrade Richard Miller conducted at the GR1982 Post Home. The Ceremony was conducted by a Military Chaplin, and paid honors and respect to Comrade Commander Richard Miller. After the Memorial GR1982 conducted their General Membership Meeting, it was a good meeting, and very well conducted, it was very obvious that the post as a very good working relationship with the Military Community.

On the 23rd of August 2014 the SAL Detachment of France conducted its first ever fishing event in the Heilbronn area. Thanks to the hard work of Detachment Commander Logan and 1st Vice Brown the event was a huge success, which included a fish fry at JWP 79's Post Home.

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.pascall@googlemail.com. He can answer your questions and resolve any problems you are having, with membership.

During the Department Convention I again mentioned involving the SAL and Auxiliary, in our events. My goal is to continue to make this Department a total Legion Family orientated Department. However we must do this together through communications. If you have an Auxiliary Unit and or a SAL Squadron at your location communicate with them and get them involved in your Post activities. If you want to or have the capabilities to start an Auxiliary Unit at your post, please contact the Auxiliary President at isoldesettle@otail.com. In the case of SAL, you can contact the SAL Commander at casbyj@hotmail.com. Both will be more than happy to assist you in your questions.

The Department of France will conduct a Veterans Day Memorial Service at the Lorraine Cemetery Chapel, in saint Avold France on 11 November 2014 at 11:00 hours

In closing, I hope all of you had a safe and wonderful summer vacation. Please keep those in harm's way and their families, in your thoughts and prayers also.

James M. Settle
Department Commander

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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 - 2015 Membership Year			
COMMANDER James M. Settle GR42 <i>james.settle@kabelbw.de</i>	ADJUTANT Maxwell Rice GR79 <i>colwichboy@yahoo.com</i>	NECMAN John Miller GR1982 <i>miller-roth@t-online.de</i>	ALT. NECMAN Liam Kane IR63 <i>commliam@gmail.com</i>
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SERVICE OFFICER George Hall GR03 <i>hallgt@hotmail.com</i>	JUDGE ADVOCATE George W. Seeburger GR14 <i>gwseeburger@gmx.de</i>	SERGEANT-AT-ARMS Hal Rittenberg GR09 <i>rittenberg@t-online.de</i>	



DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER AT LARGE / MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN Joe D. Brown

Hello fellow Legionnaires,

LET'S MOVE THIS DEPARTMENT AHEAD. We can do this, but my fellow Legionnaires we need your help and support. Remember this is our department, let's move it ahead together, and have fun in doing so. We are a family of Legionnaires with a common goal, to keep the American spirit and tradition alive, we can this and do it well, with your added support.

I visited GR01-GR02-GR03-GR06-GR13-GR 79 and GR 1982 Membership meetings. I helped GR 01 with their membership drive, I recruited 4 new members, one for GR01 and three for GR02. I visited with the Second Vice Commander Mike Young from GR01 and the First Vice Commander William Beaver, we talked about membership for GR01. They stated they will make a 100% this year, thanks to the strong staff the post has, at the last meeting there were 18 members.

The charter for GR02 will be presented to the National Executive Committee for approval at our 96 National

Convention in Charlotte North Carolina. The Post will be on the way to the top because they have good leaders in Commander Jennifer Mefferd and First Vice Commander Melanie Deumeland.

GR 03 Membership is on a good start, but we need more legion members from GR03 to step up and help Commander George Hall with the post finances and day to day activities. Department Commander Settle and Finance Officer Gary Miller will do all we can to keep it going.

I attended Phil Gatchell's funeral.

I visited GR06 membership meeting, there was a nice turn out. Sean Setter is new membership chairman. Post 6 sponsored their 9th annual golf tournament on 9 August 2014. They solicited donations from many professional sports teams (NFL, MLB, NHL, NBA etc.) and received many donated items, Signed footballs, signed pictures, sign caps. This is one of the major fund raisers that help Post 6 support their programs throughout the year. The post rose over \$2100.00 to support Post 6.

Post 6 also sponsored the first annual Breast Cancer Awareness Softball tournament. The post raised \$1000.00 for a donation For the Sara Long Harte Memorial Scholarship fund. Sara lost her 18 month battle with breast cancer just before she was to start her 9th year of teaching. The scholarship is given to students that want to continue the journey (teaching degree) that Sara had begun before she was taken from us.

I visited GR 13 meeting, the post has new members supporting the post now and will be losing a long time member (26 years) and a Past Post Commander, Robert Burdette, who will be moving back to the USA. That will be a big loss, I wished him the best in his new home.

GR 14 - I talked to the Commander Joe James, the post is doing alright and the Post Adjutant is doing better. Back in Germany is Carl Hackworth and Claudious Jackson is doing better with his leg .

GR 09 - Jerry Aman the post ok and moving on.

GR 30 - I talk to Commander James Dennis and his father in-law is doing better. The membership is going to pay online this year.

GR 42 - The adjutant David is ok but move slowly and the commander Charles Vaughan was in the hospital and back home and recuperating.

I visited GR 1982 membership meeting. Past Commander Dick Miller was a good Comrade, he will be missed by all who knew him. The membership is doing well, like always keep up the good work.

GR79 - This month was good for GR 79, we picked up 4 new members. We helped sponsor a SAL Fishing trip and a Fish Fry at the post home. We had a nice turn out, the fishermen snagged the following, Sal Commander Logan for 9 fish, past Sal Commander Joshua Settle for 6 fish and the Department Commander James Settle for 3 fish. The VCAL Charlie Brown caught 8 fish and members James MacAndrew's and David Craig each nabbed one fish.

SEPTEMBER 13, GR 79 will be hosting a 911-2001 Remembrance Ceremony at the Post Home and on 27 September there will be a Legion Riders Bike fest at the post home. GR 79 was the first Post to make 100% Membership for 2015.

In closing I wish to remind all that September 11th is upon us, I do hope each post has planned something in remembrance of this tragic day in American history. I would remind all of us to say a prayer for all our service members and their families deployed into harm's way, that the good lord protects them and brings them home safely.

FOR GOD AND COUNTRY
VCAL COMMANDER
Charlie Brown

2014 - 2015 NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP TARGET DATES

EARLY BIRD/NEF KICKOFF	SEPTEMBER 10, 2014	50%
FALL MEETINGS	OCTOBER 8, 2014	55%
VETERANS DAY	NOVEMBER 14, 2014	65%
PEARL HARBOR DAY	DECEMBER 10, 2014	75%
MID-WINTER	JANUARY 21, 2015	80%
PRESIDENT'S DAY	FEBRUARY 11, 2015	85%
LEGION BIRTHDAY	MARCH 11, 2015	90%
CHILDREN & YOUTH	APRIL 8, 2015	95%
ARMED FORCES DAY	MAY 13, 2015	100%
DELEGATE STRENGTH	30 DAYS PRIOR TO NATIONAL CONVENTION	

AMERICAN LEGION MEMBERSHIP 2015 RENEWAL SCHEDULE

CUTOFF DATES

MAY 14, 2014
SEPTEMBER 3, 2014
NOVEMBER 5, 2014
JANUARY 1, 2015
FEBRUARY 25, 2015
APRIL 15, 2015

RENEWAL DATES

JULY 3, 2014
OCTOBER 2, 2014
DECEMBER 2, 2014
JANUARY 22, 2015
MARCH 13, 2015
APRIL 30, 2015

Transmittals received after a cutoff date will not prevent a subsequent note from being delivered at or around the renewal date.



← GR1982 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

GR06 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING →



← GR01 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING



GR13 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING →





DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER *Stephen A. Ward*

Greetings, Commanders & 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. Also, listed in the FODPAL Newsletter site is Post IR63 Spring Newsletter 2014 (check-out there events. November 11, 2014, Flowers and Memorial Service at the grave of John O'Sullivan Carstown County, Louth. November 27, 2014, Thanksgiving Dinner and Annual General Membership Meeting. If you like a copy of the Spring Post Newsletter 2014 from Post IR-63, Dublin, Ireland, please contact jhshanahan@aol.com Post IR-63 has many activities in the coming months, if you like to attend.

In the FODPAL site, posted is the Ireland's National Day of Commemoration to honor all Irishmen and Irishwomen who paid the ultimate sacrifice serving not only Ireland but in the uniforms of other Nations and the United Nations. The John F. Kennedy Post IR-63 American Legion members in Ireland joined with the Irish Defense Forces Veterans in solidarity for Justice for Privates Smallborne and Barnett murdered while on UN duty in Lebanon.

Irish Veterans Charter #1 plans to dedicate (October 4, 2104) to the memory of U.S. SEAL Lt. Michael P. Murphy, Medal of Honor, Afghanistan, 2005. His parents from the States plans to bring the MOH at the dedication ceremony. A special evening dinner (October 4, 2014) at the White House Hotel town of

Kinsale (West Cork). Commander Ron Howko (Commodore John Barry Post IR-03) is a guest speaker at the event. For more information of the event, contact Declan Hughes www.irishveterans.org

I'm looking forward to meet the Detachment Commander for the U.S. Embassy Lisbon, Portugal (26 September 14). The Marine Detachment at the U.S. Embassy Lisbon, Portugal dedicated the Heritage Room at the American Embassy to Lance CPL. Joaquim Vaz Rebelo served in the Marine Corps and went above and beyond the call of duty.

Recently, a dear friend and Comrade answered the call to Post Everlasting (Phillip Gatchell). His dedication as a Charter member of Heidelberg Post Rhein Neckar Post GR03 was evident. He maintained the best Post records and Post Website. He always offered sound advice. I'll miss his conversations on Skype but he will always be remembered.

I stress the importance of membership in the Posts, Department, and the National Organization. Membership is our Voice on Capitol Hill. Please send your Post transmittal to the Department Membership Chairman. I encourage the Posts to transmit each month to the Department Membership Chairman (Joe Dan Brown). Join the Paid Up For Life Program instead of paying Annual dues each Month and receiving renewal notices from National. If you have interest in the Paid Up For Life Program, please contact me at wardtrans@yahoo.com

Commanders & Fellow Legionnaires, many thanks for what you do for your Posts and the communities you serve. Friday, September 19, 2014 is POW/MIA Recognition Day. We as many Americans take the time to remember those who were prisoners of war (POW) and those who are missing in action (MIA) as well as their families. God Bless them and God Bless America.

STEPHEN A. WARD
VICE COMMANDER
DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE

The Landstuhl Ophthalmology Clinic and the Landstuhl Optometry Clinic have opened up their doors for us. We need to respond to this welcome. The Ophthalmology Clinic still has open appointments for cataract screenings on Friday 5 SEP and now the Optometry Clinic is hosting a diabetic exam day too! On Wednesday 10 SEP. Let us say "We appreciate you back" by filling up these appointments (of course only if you need them)



Stephen A. Ward received the VFW National Recruiter of the Year from the VFW National Commander in Chief at the VFW National Convention (St. Louis).



Uncle Sam Day...*September 13*

Uncle Sam Day celebrates a symbol of America. Uncle Sam is certainly one of America's most recognized symbols. Uncle Sam appears on everything from military posters to cartoon images to advertising media. He is perhaps, the most recognizable symbol in the world.

Did you Know? There are other human symbols representing our country. None anywhere near as popular as Uncle Sam. They include Brother Jonathan, who largely disappeared after the arrival of Uncle Sam, and Columbia, a female.

Origin of Uncle Sam Day:

There are two theories as to how Uncle Sam emerged. Both date back to the early 1800's.

The officially recognized theory dates back to soldiers stationed near Troy, New York during the war of 1812. Barrels of meat they received were stamped "U.S." The supplier was Samuel Wilson of Troy, New York. Soldiers jokingly referred to him as "Uncle Sam". In 1813, the first image of "Uncle Sam" appeared. In 1961, the U.S. Congress

issued a resolution recognizing "Uncle Sam" Wilson, and authorizing a monument in his hometown in Troy, NY.

There is a second, less popular theory of the creation of Uncle Sam. During the early 1800's, Irish immigrants were coming to America. Some believed that Uncle Sam emerged from these immigrants. In their Gaelic language, the United States of America was "Stáit Aontaithe Mheiriceá", abbreviated "SAM".

Uncle Sam Day became official in 1989, when a joint resolution of Congress designated September 13 "Uncle Sam Day". This date was selected, as "Uncle Sam" Wilson was born on September 13, 1776.



Past National Commander Jake Comer swears Mike Helm in as new American Legion national commander.

Department of Nebraska Legionnaire Mike Helm wants his fellow Legionnaires to “stay the course” this year. But don’t think for a minute that means maintain the status quo.

Helm, elected American Legion national commander Aug. 28 during the final day of the 96th Annual American Legion National Convention, said during his acceptance speech that he wants Legionnaires to stay true to the ideals of the organization’s founders and use them as a guide toward future progress.

“That is the plan for this year: stay the course,” Helm said. “And no, I do not mean that we shouldn’t raise the bar and constantly seek to improve. What I mean by ‘stay the course’ is to continue to live and honor the great traditions and values established by our founders nearly a century ago. These policies and traditions that got us here will continue to guide us forward.

We are a God and country organization, and we will not apologize for that. We know that a veteran is a citizen of this country who has offered his or her life to honor this nation’s commitment to justice freedom and democracy, and by that action has had his or her life radically and sometimes violently changed forever. We will not let this nation forget that we owe that individual respect and any help they need in making their lives whole again.”

Helm, a U.S. Army Rangers veteran and member of Jack Helt Post 313 in Lebanon, Neb., has served as post, county, district, department and national vice commander, and has chaired the National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation and Foreign Relations commissions.

He will use his VA&R experience this year to focus on current issues with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“Under the leadership of our (immediate Past National Commander Dan Dellinger), we have drawn the line in the sand,” Helm said. “We say now that the health-care needs of the individual veteran must be met in a timely manner. We say that the VA can do a better job in the claims and appeals process. At the same time, we will continue to seek out answers to what went wrong at the VA and why it went wrong.” Those people involved in the scandals have to be held accountable, Helm said.

“We know that what happened wasn’t an accident or a circumstance. There is an entrenchment in VA that is not helpful to veterans’ health care or compensation. We will find it and get rid of it. At the same time, we will continue to support the VA as a national provider of veterans’ health care. We need our VA medical facilities because we know it can be and is the best care anywhere if administrated properly. “Those calling for the end of the VA and privatization of veterans health

care are wrong. We continue to see The American Legion as partners and friends of the VA. We know they can and will do better."

National security also is on Helm's radar. "We cannot continue to see the mounting crises erupting in the world and still think it is a prudent thing to reduce our military force and training," he said. "Those forces of evil and hate are enemies of our way of life. This nation must be ready to answer that challenge."

"We will also continue our efforts to end illegal immigration. It is a national security issue of great importance. Fair and legal immigration is a good thing that has helped build this country into a great nation. We must continue that process. Anything else is a constant danger – especially amnesty proposals which seek to reward illegal behavior and penalize those who have waited patiently to immigrate the legal way."

Helm said the Legion will continue to support its youth and Americanism programs, saying those programs "make up the fabric that keeps us strong as a nation." And rather than focusing on a specific fundraising program, Helm has set a goal for the Legion family to raise a combined \$4 million for the various Legion charitable programs.

"I am leaving the choice of fundraising to you," he said. "All I ask is that you give. America is paying attention to The American Legion not just because we are right on the issues, but because we are doing these great things in our communities."

Many of those charities benefit not only members of the military and veterans, but also their families – which matters, Helm said. "Most veterans believe that the nicest thing you can do for them is to be kind to their families," he said. "The most common request of a soldier who is dying on the battlefield is 'tell my wife I love her.' Nothing will be appreciated by a veteran more than taking care of his or her family. And that's exactly what these programs are intended to do."

When it comes to membership growth, Helm said he wants Legionnaires to focus on the four Rs: recruiting, revitalization, renewals and reconnecting.

"We will always be about service first, but folks, we can't provide the programs or the service without the

membership," Helm said. "Practice those four Rs. Recruit every eligible veteran that you come in contact. Recruit their sons, grandsons, wives, daughters and granddaughters into the American Legion family."

"You don't need to be near a military base to reconnect with servicemembers. Reserve and Guard units have deployed in record numbers since 9/11, and most are eligible for American Legion membership."

"Renewal efforts shouldn't just include those who left your post in the past year, but check back on those who might have left five or even 10 years ago. They might have had a change of heart or simply forgot to renew because nobody was pro-active enough to take an interest in them. And National Headquarters also offers plenty of resources available for posts that wish to revitalize. Think of it as a 5-Hour ENERGY Shot for a tired post."

Helm took time to honor Jerry Hedrick, the longtime National Executive Committeeman from North Carolina who passed away unexpectedly Aug. 25 during the convention. "Jerry Hedrick ... was a presence in this organization for so many years that he has touched the lives of us all in a very good way," Helm said. "Jerry was always positive. I don't believe I ever heard Jerry say a harsh word about anyone. He would look at an issue and give you an honest course of action that he thought was best for you and best for the organization."

Helm was surrounded by many members of his family on the stage – and by two others from more than 6,800 miles away. Helm's son Aaron and his wife, Robie – both currently stationed at U.S. Army Camp Arifjan in Kuwait – were able to watch Helm be sworn in via Skype.

Elected as national vice commanders were **Doug Haggan, Department of France**; Paul O. Sanford, Department of Kansas; Richard W. Neville, Department of North Carolina; William R. Bryant, Department of Virginia; and Gerald L. Jacobs, of Wyoming.

Also appointed were National Historian Sue Mason, Department of California, National Sergeant-at-Arms Leon Hagan, Department of Nebraska; National Chaplain Randy Cash, Department of South Carolina.



Sick Call

- ❖ Comrade Shepard III from GR79 is in the Hospital in Stuttgart. He had heart surgery Last week and now is in intensive care with pneumonia. Once more Information is available it will be sent out.

Post Everlasting †



It is my sad duty to inform you that my friend and sidekick, Past Department Commander and Past Department Adjutant Gorley "Shipmate" Stokes transferred to the Post Everlasting. I have a lot of great memories of Gorley, as Department Adjutant he was a tremendous help to me the two years I was Department Commander and the two years I was NECman. I can still remember the look he use to give me when my speeches were getting to long winded, o that look, In closing could everyone please keep his wife Linda in your thoughts. I will miss you Shipmate. Doug Haggan-FODPAL Secretary-Past Department of France Commander



It is my sad duty to report to you that Comrade Phillip F. Gatchell, a Charter Member of Rhein Neckar Post GR03 reported to PEL on 13 August 2014 at 1800 hours. Please keep the Gatchell family in your thoughts and prayers during this trying time in their lives. Rest in Peace Comrade Gatchell.

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 OF FRANCE



PICTURES FROM FISHING FEST CONDUCTED 23 AUGUST 2014



DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE PAST COMMANDERS CLUB

Who is illegible 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 illegible 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 (*YES, the caps are here*), Past Commanders Club pin and membership card

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

Our next meeting will be held at the Second DEC

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE... *David Greaux, PCC President "1999"*

September 911 Remembrance Day

I doubt anyone will ever forget where they were on the morning of September 11, 2001, when they heard of the attacks on the twin World Trade Towers in NYC and the Pentagon in Washington. This horrible and tragic day is etched forever in our memories.

Like the attack on Pearl Harbor that brought us into World War II, the 911 attacks led us into a new war... the war on terrorism. It also touched and changed forever, the lives of each and every American.

On the anniversary of 911, we encourage you to spend a few minutes reflecting upon this event, and praying for the victims who died, and their families and friends.

- On the morning of September 11, 2001, nineteen Islamic al-Qaeda militants hijacked four planes. The hijackings occurred from Boston, Newark and Washington airports. The planes selected were long distance flights, which would have more fuel in the tanks.
- One plane each hit the north and south towers of the World Trade Center in New York city. The planes and engulfing firestorm, ultimately brought down both towers.
- A number of other buildings were also damaged or destroyed. Most notably was the Marriott hotel, which was also destroyed.
- A third plane hit the Pentagon in Washington, DC.
- The fourth hijacked plane ultimately crashed in a field in Shanksville, PA. Passengers on the plane learned of the fate of the other planes, and unsuccessfully attempted to take back control of the plane from the suicidal the hijackers. Everyone aboard died.
- In total, thousands were killed.

Department of France

American Legion Riders (ALR)



There are few programs within The American Legion Family where all parts of the family can participate together. The Riders' goal is to bring safe motorcycling principles to a family sport and ensure that there is additional support for the Post and its community.

The only requirement is that you or your spouse owns a motorcycle or trike, and it is registered, insured and the operator is properly endorsed to operate the vehicle. Members of the Legion, Auxiliary and Sons can be members of an American Legion Riders Chapter, either with a chapter sponsored by their own Post or with a chapter at another Post. The Post ALR Chapter sets the minimum motor size for the motorcycle or trike.

For some reason, I get a lot more attention and show of interest when I'm wearing my Rider vest and explaining about The American Legion Family.

The Department of France only recognizes ALR Chapters sponsored by Posts. To my knowledge,

there are chapters being sponsored by GR07, GR01, BE02 and GR05. There are other Chapters being formed and I will introduce them in next month's newsletter.

Rhein-Main Post GR05 told me that they decided to become a Legion Family Post and will be establishing an Auxiliary Unit and Sons of The American Legion Squadron as part of their Post Revitalization Program. Their planned GR05 ALR Chapter is already up and running.

If I can be of any assistance in setting up an American Legion Rider Chapter in your Post or you, as a member of the Legion, Auxiliary or Sons, are interested in affiliating with a Rider Chapter, please contact me.

Keep the dirty side down and ride with God.

Ron "Gypsy" Moore, AL Rider Director

Department of France

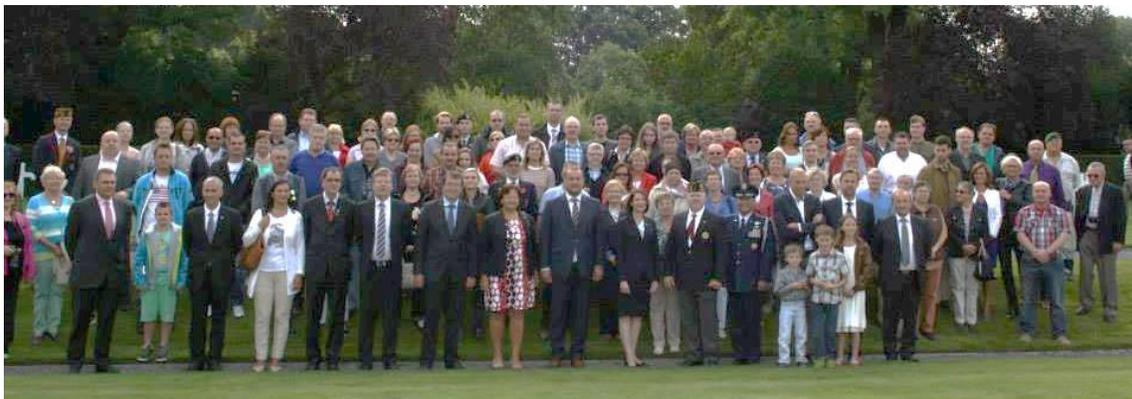
Cell: +49 (0)172-741-7812

Email: gypsy_moore@yahoo.de

Flanders Field Post BE02

The American Legion Post BE02 conducted the first official Adoption ceremony on Saturday, 16 August for their adopt-a-grave program at the Flanders Field American Cemetery. Over 400 adopters, family members and friends participated in the ceremony on Saturday. The US Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium, Denise Bauer, attended the ceremony and participated in the program by giving a speech and presenting the Mayor of Waregem his Certificate of Adoption. Post BE02 also had help from some members of the Venturing Crew 511 - Charlemagne District located here in Belgium. Two members of the crew made the program very special in that they read the names of every Soldier, the unit and their day of death. This had never been accomplished before. We also had help from members of Paris Post #1 and the Paris chapter of the VFW.

This program is special in several ways. The most important is that we are again remembering the sacrifice made by young Americans during WWI for the liberation of a small country. The second is that we are forming bonds between Americans and Belgians. Many of the adopters have already reached out to the families and communities where these Soldiers originated. Newspaper articles have already been written in New Jersey and Ohio. One of the adopters is in contact with a Post that is named after one of the Soldiers at the cemetery. Our hope is to have many of the families (next of Kin) come to the annual Memorial Day ceremonies and meet their adopters or their family members.



Stuttgart Post GR06

Golf Tournament 2014



Omar Bradley Post GR42



Post Adjutant GR42 David Greaux (L) traveled thousands of miles to present post member Edward Zackery with his 2015 Legion membership card...

While visiting Canada this past month Adjutant Greaux drove down to Medina, Ohio to visit with Comrade Zackery and his family who left Germany some seventeen years ago. Comrade Zackery is a 22 year member of the post and was very active with the post while he was in Germany. A great time was spent reminiscing about fun times. Still serving America Comrade Zackery works at the Medina County Veterans Service Office as the Director/Service Officer.



POW/MIA Recognition Day... *third Friday in September*

POW/MIA Recognition Day is a day of remembrance and hope for the speedy and safe return of American Prisoners of War, and those still Missing in Action. It also seeks the return of the remains of fallen soldiers.

The first official commemoration of POW/MIAs was July 18, 1979. It was the result of resolutions passed in Congress. The first national ceremony was held on this date. Over the next several years, it was held in varying dates of the year. Finally, in 1986, The National League of Families proposed the third Friday in September as a day to recognize and remember POW/MIAs. This date was selected, as it is not associated with any wars. Each year, the president of the United States issues a proclamation on this day.

Did you know? Federal law requires the POW/MIA flag to be flown on the following days:

- Armed Forces Day, May 16
- Memorial Day, May 25
- Flag Day, June 14
- Independence Day, July 4
- POW/MIA Day, 3rd Friday of September
- Veterans Day, Nov. 11

You will also notice the POW/MIA flag flown at all US Post office buildings, Veterans Administration, military memorial facilities, and many U.S. government buildings.

Please take a few moments today, to remember our missing soldiers, and those held as prisoners of war. Attend a ceremony in your area. Say a prayer for POWs and MIAs. Also, write to your senators and congressman to urge continued and increased effort towards bringing every service man and woman home.

JOHN WAYNE POST GR 79

You are cordially invited to the September General Membership Meeting (GMM) of the American Legion (JWP 79) which will begin Saturday, September 13, 2014 beginning at 1100 hours at the Post Home at Klostersgartenlaube Klosterstrasse 1, 74348 Lauffen am Neckar. At approximately 1145 we will close the meeting and have a short service in remembrance of September 11, 2001 (911). After services we invite all present to join with us inside for dinner from the menu. A menu is also attached to this correspondence but it is a couple months old. It's another chance for us to stand together for the good of all mankind and enjoy the comradeship as we socialize with our community, veterans, families, and friends of the American Legion.

Thanks to all the active duty, reservists, veterans, retirees, families and friends as well as our Host Nation Citizens that continue to offer and provide their support. We look forward to seeing you.

Please feel free to contact me in order to discuss, request, or clarify information concerning this correspondence by email at joedan.pascall@googlemail.com or by telephone at 01701-888034.

Charlie Brown
Commander JWP 79

NATIONAL SECURITY

Week ending 8/15/14

1. Iraq: Nouri al-Maliki Finally Steps Down

After eight years in power, Iraqi prime minister Nouri al-Maliki announced late Thursday that he would resign and endorse Haider al-Abadi (Reuters), the longtime political ally chosen by al-Maliki's own political bloc to succeed him and form the country's next government.

The White House commended the move, saying it marked "encouraging developments" that Washington hoped could set Iraq on "a new path."

The resignation follows weeks of international and domestic pressure on al-Maliki, who has been accused of exacerbating the country's sectarian divisions and facilitating the arrival of the Sunni Islamist insurgency engulfing the country.

2. Ukraine: Ukraine Says It Destroyed Part of Armed Vehicles From Russia

Ukraine on Friday said its troops attacked and partially destroyed an armed convoy that had crossed the border from Russian territory.

Ukrainian government troops engaged the vehicles that had arrived overnight through a rebel-held section of the border, Andriy Lysenko, a spokesman for the country's military, told reporters in Kiev today. Ukrainian soldiers continue to come under shelling, including rounds fired from Russia, he said.

The government in Kiev has for months said that separatist rebels in its easternmost regions are receiving support from Russia, which backs them with artillery fire. Russia has repeatedly denied any involvement in the Ukrainian unrest.

3. Asia-Pacific: Asia Pivot on Track According to Pentagon

The Defense Department's spokesman on Thursday said military leaders remain committed to carrying out President Obama's pivot to Asia, despite ongoing unrest in other parts of the world.

"I mean, more than 350,000 American troops are based somewhere in the Pacific, 200 ships, the majority of the Navy is in the Pacific. And we have five of our seven treaty alliances are in the Pacific region. We're very committed to that region," Pentagon press secretary Rear Adm. John Kirby told reporters.

Kirby also pointed out that Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel just returned from his sixth trip to the region and plans to make four visits this year. Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work will travel to the region next week, Kirby added.

The pivot, or rebalance, of U.S. military forces away from Europe and the Middle East toward the Pacific has been a major strategic goal for the Obama administration. The move is widely viewed as a means to counter China's rapidly expanding military and a belligerent North Korea.

However, U.S. military operations against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, and Russia's aggressive behavior toward Ukraine have overshadowed the effort.

But, Kirby warned, if sequestration "remains the law of the land, it's going to be harder and harder" for the U.S. to live up to its security obligations.

3. Border Security:

More than 600 convicted criminals, including felons, were among thousands of illegal immigrants freed under the Obama administration in advance of 2013 budget cuts mandated under sequestration.

That's according to a new report this week from the inspector general for the Department of Homeland Security.

According to the IG's report, at least two-dozen "aliens" were released by Immigration and Customs Enforcement even though they were in a "mandatory detention category." (After an internal review, ICE later redetained them.)

The report provides a scathing portrayal of budget mismanagement and flawed processes at the highest levels inside the nation's immigration enforcement agency.

The report can be found here: http://www.oig.dhs.gov/assets/Mgmt/2014/OIG_14-116_Aug14.pdf

4. POW/MIA Update

- **1st Lts. William D. Bernier and Bryant E. Poulsen**, U.S. Army Air Forces, 321st Bombardment Squadron, 90th Bombardment Group, 5th Army Air Forces, was lost April 10, 1944, in Papua New Guinea. They were accounted for July 18, 2014, and July 16, 2014, respectively. They will be buried with full military honors.
- **Master Sgt. Lawrence O. Jock**, Battery A, 955th Field Artillery, 8th U.S. Army, was lost July 14, 1953, in North Korea. He was accounted for June 25, 2014. He was buried with full military honors Aug. 1, 2014, in Malone, N.Y.
- Staff Sgt. Gerald V. Atkinson, U.S. Army Air Forces, 358th Bomb Squadron, 303rd Bomb Group, Eighth Air Force, was lost April 10, 1945, north of Berlin. He was accounted for June 20, 2014. He will be buried with full military honors Aug. 16, 2014, in Chattahoochee, Fla.

President signs VA reform bill

National commander joins ceremony that will provide emergency funds for veterans trying to get medical appointments.

WASHINGTON (Aug. 7, 2014) – American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger was at Fort Belvoir, Va., today where President Obama signed a \$16.3 billion emergency spending measure that provides greater veteran access to non-VA health-care providers, among other reforms in the system.

“Today, another step is taken in the journey to restore trust in VA among our nation’s veterans,” Dellinger said after the bill was signed this morning. “We all understand it’s going to be a long journey. Those veterans who have been waiting a month or longer for medical appointments do not have time to wait for the entire journey to end. They need to see doctors and caregivers now, and that’s what this funding is expected to provide, on a temporary basis. The long-term solution is not to voucher out VA health care.”

The reform package, which provides additional VA medical staff and allows VA greater authority to dismiss directors who fail to meet expectations, was introduced after VA whistleblowers came forward last spring to announce that they had allegedly been directed to falsify appointment records leaving some veterans on secret lists with no appointments scheduled at all.

Since then, The American Legion has conducted seven town hall meetings and has provided support by conducting Veterans Crisis Command Centers in seven communities, with more scheduled in the coming months.

So far, the American Legion command centers have personally helped more than 2,000 veterans gain access to the VA system, apply for benefits and receive other forms of help.



100 years on, buried WWI shells pose threat in French fields

Verdun the fields and woods around Verdun, site of one of the most devastating and protracted battles of World War One, may now appear tranquil. But remnants of the war - unexploded ordnance - still pose a threat 100 years on.

The 10-month Battle of Verdun ranks among the bloodiest encounters in the Great War, its unrelenting hailstorm of ammunition killing hundreds of thousands French and German soldiers from February to December 1916.

French and German Presidents Francois Hollande and Joachim Gauck both attended commemoration ceremonies in Alsace and Liege on Sunday and Monday to mark the war's start and pledge Franco-German solidarity.

But in this area of northeastern France, and across the border into Belgium, the fallout from the fighting still lingers.

Farmers and hikers around Verdun say they regularly find discarded artillery shells and grenades, vestiges of the war that are still potentially lethal.

Crosses are seen at the cemetery outside the WWI Douaumont ossuary near Verdun, northeastern France, ...

"I can't tell you how many I find sometimes," said Roland Dabit, a resident of the nearby hamlet of Somogneux.

"Even in the forest. How many are there in the forest? How many? Believe me, when we go

mushroom-picking, I see a hundred shells," Dabit told Reuters.

Farmer Alain Doyen says that after tilling the earth in his fields, he often finds old German shells.

"It is a bit scary sometimes because when you are in the middle of the field you don't feel like touching it," Doyen said. "It's better not to leave them in the middle so I try to move them to the side."

The bomb clearance unit from the nearby city of Metz has its hands full responding to the numerous calls from residents and collects some 40 tonnes of ammunition each year.

Craters from shelling during WWI are seen in the village of Bezonvaux, near Verdun, northeastern Fra ...

Every day a two-person team patrols the Verdun sector looking for shells, some 1 million of which were fired by the Germans in one of the first salvos of the conflict alone.

That heavy shelling works out to an average of six shells that fell on each square meter of earth in the area during the battle.

"If you have a million shells falling - besides all those that fell after - the turnover of the soil inevitably buried a large number of those that didn't explode," said Guy Momper, one of the 10 specialists in the unit.

The construction of new houses regularly reveals large quantities of shells during excavation, a delay

often taken into consideration when building a new house in the sector.

"Today we need more space, we build new houses, and what happens? We stir up the earth. When you stir up the earth, you keep the legacy of this war which are the shells, the grenades and the mortars," Momper said.

"So in this sense, the war is not over," he added. "And I think, in the area where we are now, it will continue for 100 or 200 years."

Although reckless inhabitants sometimes try to destroy the ammunition themselves - one local man used improvised means last month to explode a 155mm shell in the forest - Momper recommends

that the bomb clearance unit be notified and the dangerous work be carried out by professionals.

Precise figures on the number of deaths due to exploded shells are hard to come by, but two experts from the Metz unit were killed in 2007 after a shell they were transporting detonated.

Momper said that given the number of munitions that remain in the area and are yet to be discovered, "it's almost impossible that nothing will happen."

"Someone said once, 'the bomb does its own thing'. In normal conditions if it's in a certain position, you can carry it around taking a number of precautions," he said. "You might be able to carry a million of them but the next one might explode."

Legion charity ride raises \$420,000 for children of fallen service members

More than 270 motorcycles travel from Indianapolis to Charlotte, N.C., on American Legion Legacy Run

CHARLOTTE (Aug. 21, 2014) -- More than 270 motorcycles and their 56 passengers rolled into the Charlotte, N.C., area this afternoon, bringing with them \$420,000 for the children of fallen U.S. servicemembers.

The American Legion Legacy Run, sponsored by USAA, left Indianapolis, Aug. 17, and crossed eight states, traveling more than 1,300 miles before ending up at Legion Post 155 in Kings Mountain, N.C. American Legion Riders participating in the ride raised money for The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund, which provides college scholarships for the children of U.S. military personnel killed on active duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001.

More donations to the fund are expected during The American Legion's 96th National Convention in Charlotte next week. Eight previous Legacy Runs have raised more than \$4 million for the fund.

"This says, 'We have your back,' whether our servicemembers are living or dead," said American Legion National Commander Daniel M. Dellinger, who rode on a motorcycle the entire length of the Legacy Run. "It's our charge to take care of their children. It's what we need to do."

The Legacy Run traveled through Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, Virginia, Georgia and South Carolina before finishing up near Charlotte. Along the way, the participants battled heavy rains the first two days before sunshine and rising temperatures that hit 100 degrees this afternoon.

"I am amazed by the dedication and commitment these men and women have," Dellinger said. "To take the time out of their lives to raise money for the Legacy Fund, it's awesome. I have so much respect for The American Legion Riders."

Obama to Legion: VA making progress, but work remains

Addressing the 96th Annual National Convention in Charlotte, N.C., the president pledges to “do right” by veterans, their families.

CHARLOTTE (Aug. 26, 2014) -- Speaking to thousands of veterans attending The American Legion's 96th Annual National Convention, President Barack Obama said progress has been made in correcting issues that became a scandal that has rocked the Department of Veterans Affairs since late April.

But the president told a packed hall in the Charlotte, N.C., Convention Center that much more work remains to restore veterans' trust in their health-care system.

“The misconduct we've seen at too many facilities – with long wait times, veterans denied care, and folks cooking the books – is outrageous and inexcusable,” Obama said. “As soon as it was disclosed, I got before the American people, and I said we would not tolerate it. And we will not. And I know the Legion has been on the frontlines, fanning out across the country, helping veterans who've been affected.

“But what I want you to know, directly from me, is that we're focused on this at the highest levels. We are going to get to the bottom of these problems. We're going to fix what is wrong. We're going to do right by you, and we are going to do right by your families, and that is a solemn pledge and commitment that I'm making to you here.”

Obama said that steps have been taken to make sure that those manipulating or falsifying records are held accountable, as well as to get veterans off wait lists and into clinics to receive health care. “And to help get that done, you supported, and Congress passed, and I signed into law the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act, which means more resources to help the VA hire more doctors and nurses and staff,” he said. “It means if you live more than 40 miles from a VA facility, or your VA doctors can't see you fast enough, we'll help you go to a doctor outside the VA.”

Along with that, Obama said, is a new culture of accountability within VA. “If you engage in unethical practices, or cover up a serious problem, you should be and will be fired,” he said. “And by the way: If you blow the whistle on higher-ups because you've identified a legitimate problem, you shouldn't be punished. You should be protected.”

But, Obama said, despite the positive quality of VA health care and the progress the health-care system has made, “We are very clear-eyed about the problems that are still there. And those problems require us to regain the trust of our veterans, and live up to our vision of a VA that is more effective and more efficient, and that truly puts veterans first. And I will not be satisfied until that happens.”

Earlier in the day, the White House announced 19 new executive actions to improve mental health care for

servicemembers and veterans. The president gave a brief overview of some of the initiatives, which include expanding suicide prevention training, improving access to care, and making it easier for servicemembers being treated for mental health conditions to continue their care as they transition to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“We all know we need to do more,” Obama said. “Veterans called for it; we heard you. We're going to keep saying loud and clear to anyone out there who's hurting: it's not a sign of weakness to ask for help. It's a sign of strength.”

Obama said VA will continue to work toward reduce its benefits claims backlog, but “we need to make sure (claims) get processed right,” he said. Eliminating veterans homelessness remains a priority for the president, as does making sure military personnel and veterans have an opportunity to purchase a home. He said a new partnership with some of America's biggest banks and financial institutions “will simplify the process, proactively notify servicemembers who qualify for lower rates and make it easier to enroll

Touching on national security issues, the president also pledged that although he has authorized targeted air strikes against ISIS, that will be the extent of the U.S. military role in Iraq. “Let me say it again: American combat troops will not be returning to fight in Iraq,” he said. “I will not allow the United States to be dragged back into another ground war in Iraq. Because ultimately, it is up to the Iraqis to bridge their differences and secure themselves. The limited strikes we're conducting have been necessary to protect our people and have helped Iraqi forces begin to push back these terrorists. We've also been able to rescue thousands of men and women and children who were trapped on a mountain. And our airdrops of food and water and medicine show American leadership at our best.

“And more broadly, the crisis in Iraq underscores how we have to meet today's evolving terrorist threat. The answer is not to send in large-scale military deployments that overstretch our military, and lead for us occupying countries for a long period of time, and end up feeding extremism. Rather, our military action in Iraq has to be part of a broader strategy to protect our people and support our partners to take the fight to ISIL.”

Obama also said that as U.S. troops leave Afghanistan, the Afghan government needs to take responsibility for transitioning into the next step in the nation's path. “Afghan leaders need to make the hard compromises that are necessary to give the Afghan people a future of security and progress,” he said. “As we go forward, we'll continue to partner with Afghans so their country can never again be used to launch attacks against the United States.”



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