

The AMERICAN LEGION

Department of France



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DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

James Settle

My Fellow Legionaries

I would like to remind all of you this is neither mine nor the Department Newsletter Editor's Comrade Greaux Newsletter. It is yours. Department Officers, Post Commanders, Adjutants, and members of this department can and should submit articles for this publication. You cannot convince me that your post or a member of your post has done something worth mentioning, and here is the place to do that, let the entire department know what you are accomplishing. Take credit for what you are doing, to support your post, and its programs.

For those of you that are not aware of this, Chase Bank has given the department sixty (60) days to find a new bank, and transfer the department funds. The reason given by Chase Bank is, they are no longer handling foreign accounts. The Department Finance Officer Comrade Miller is actively working this issue, and has already sent out request for information to several banks in the USA. Once we have more information on the issue, I or Comrade Miller will advise the department.

Commanders Christopher Buchanan (GR1982) and Joseph Schram (BE02) have started American Legion Rider Chapters at their locations, let's all support their efforts in this endeavor. If you have any questions concerning The American Legion Riders, please contact the Department Director Comrade Russ Junkin at masterdmus@yahoo.com. In addition GR1982 is in the process of trying to establish a SAL Squadron, and an Auxiliary Unit at their location, and BE02 is in the process of

Department Officers

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From the Editor...

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

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

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starting an Auxiliary Unit at their location. Lets one and all support the efforts of these two posts.

The department 2nd DEC is the 26th of October 2013 hosted by GR79 in Heilbronn. We have many things to discuss at this upcoming DEC. Events like Oratorical, Boys State, JROTC, National Commanders visit to the Department, and many other issues. I know some of these events are months off, however I refuse to let these events like last year, be put off to the last minute. If we plan early enough, we can have a very successful year, in promoting our programs. Remember it is you that make these programs a success or failure.

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.

I have one more comment on Membership. Because of E-Mails received, regarding transmittals, Comrade Brown will be holding off a few days in submitting his transmittal to National. Hopefully by now those posts running late on submitting transmittals have been received by Comrade Brown.

In closing I hope to see all of you at the 2nd DEC on 26 October 2013, in Heilbronn. 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 OF FRANCE REPRESENTED AT THE AMERICAN LEGION NATIONAL CONVENTION 2013









MESSAGE FROM NATIONAL COMMANDER Dan Dellinger

Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

More than 83,000 American service members remain unaccounted for after serving in World War II, the Korea War, the Cold War, the Vietnam War and the Gulf War. To some, they are POW-MIAs. To veterans like us, they are comrades and will never be forgotten.

On Friday, Sept. 20, these heroic men and women will be remembered as part of POW-MIA Recognition Day. Of course, they should be recognized, remembered and honored every day.

The American Legion has long honored fought for a full accounting of our missing. At the 67th National Convention, Legionnaires approved a resolution that calls for designating a POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings of The American Legion.

In the past few days, many American Legion posts have reminded their communities about our missing comrades - the community's sons and daughters who never returned home.

Some examples:

- In Safford, Ariz., Swift Murphy Post 32 hosted a combined POW/MIA and 9/11 remembrance ceremony last Saturday. Post Commander Steve Oiler said, "One

question remains: Where are our loved ones? They are called POWs and MIAs. We call them comrades."

- Also on Saturday in Melbourne, Fla., about 100 veterans, family members and others gathered to remember POWs/MIAs at Legion Post 163. Longtime post member and former POW Tommy Pechacek was among those gathered. "We don't want the population to forget about this," he said. "We can't forget what has happened and could happen again."



Mr. Pechacek is correct. And that is why The American Legion is committed to achieving a full accounting of all POW/MIAs. This means returning living POWs, the repatriation of their remains, or finding convincing evidence why that cannot be done.

Thank you for what you do every day on behalf of veterans, servicemen and women, and our comrades who never made it home and are in our thoughts and prayers today and every day.

For God and Country,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Dellinger". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dan Dellinger
National Commander

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



*GR01 APPRECIATION AWARD FOR
LOCAL RESTAURANT*



*GR05 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
AND ELECTIONS*



*GR79 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
AND 9-11 CEREMONIES*



*GR79 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AND
9-11 CEREMONIES*

MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN THE AMERICAN LEGION

**IMPORTANT: EVERYONE MUST SUBMIT A COPY OF
DD 214 OR DISCHARGE.**

NEW MEMBERSHIP

Eligible veterans applying for first time membership must submit the following information to Post Membership Committee:

1. Complete American Legion Membership application.
Applications are available at the Post Home
2. **COPY OF DD214 OR DISCHARGE**
3. Membership Dues Payment. Dues. (Amount Shown on Application). Make checks payable to your Post ..
4. If the information is correct, membership will be approved and then a membership card will be mailed to you.
5. Please see eligibility dates below.

TRANSFERS

Veterans applying for transfers from your current Post to our Post must submit the following:

- a. Completed Member Data Form.
 - b. **COPY OF DD214 OR DISCHARGE**
 - c. COPY OF MEMBERSHIP CARD
6. Membership dues payment, if current year dues are not paid. If current dues are paid, please pay dues for next year's membership.

ELIGIBILITY DATES

MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY in the American Legion is based on honorable service with the U. S.

Armed Forces between:

(April 6, 1917 -November 11, 1918) World War I
(December 7, 1941 - December 31, 1946) World War II
(June 25, 1950 - January 31, 1955) Korean War
(February 28, 1961 - May 7, 1975) Vietnam War
(August 24, 1982 - July 31,1984) Lebanon/Grenada
(December 20, 1989 - January 31, 1990) Operation Just Cause
(August 2, 1990 - Today)* *Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm*

Because eligibility dates remain open, all members of the U.S. Armed Forces are eligible to join The American Legion at this time, until the date of the end of hostilities as determined by the government of the United States. Must have served at least one day of active military duty during one of the dates below and honorably discharged or still serving honorably. :

For any questions please contact our membership chairman,

joedan.pascal1@googlemail.com M-0170-1888034

Membership Chairman

Charlie Joe BROWN



DEPARTMENT
VICE COMMANDER
Jerry Aman

On 21 September I was able to attend GR 13's monthly General Membership meeting which was held at their new post home, the Gasthaus Deutsche Kaiser in Pfersee (Augsburg).

To take advantage of probably one of the last warm days this year the meeting was conducted outdoors. Ten members were present and Rick Cervenka, Post Commander, and wearer of several hats in the Post, conducted the meeting and covered several important post items. The meeting was performed in the manner expected of a Department of France legion post with a healthy exchange of ideas and suggestions from the attending members.

Although this post does not have a military unit in their area it does not stop them from generously supporting their host community and participating in local activities. One such

activity was the 24 August Plaerer Parade, a parade held by the Association of Americans in Augsburg. Because of funding restrictions the US Army could not send any participants however five GR 13 members rode through the parade route on a restored US Army "Deuce & a-half." The US Flag and Post colors was displayed

Commander Cervenka read a letter of thanks from the Fisher Haus for their recent contribution but had not yet heard back from the Legion Post in Moore, Oklahoma, in response to the \$500 donation the post sent for the victims of the recent tornado. (Contacting the local American Legion post in the US whenever posts want to make a contribution to an area suffering a catastrophe is one way of transferring funds).

After briefing the members with a biography of the Department's officers the Department Vice Commander invited members of GR 13 to participate in the next DEC; or especially the March DEC which is within an easy drive from Augsburg.

Visit to GR 79 By Jerry Aman

On 15 September I was able to visit John Wayne Post # 79 in Heilbronn and participate in a post 911 memorial service in observance of Patriot's Day. Additionally the post conducted a ceremony in memory of Edward Carr a former American soldier resting in peace in the Alte Friedhof (Cemetery).

A flag detail accompanied by 10 GR 79 members and Mrs. Carr marched to Carr's grave and after a solemn speech and prayers, Post Commander Brown thanked Mrs. Carr for her husband's service to his country. A moment of silence was held for the victims of the 911 and the Post Chaplain recited a prayer which was followed by a solo performance of "Amazing Grace" sung by Legionnaire Frank Miller, an accomplished vocalist.

After the ceremony everyone preceded to GR 79s new post home, Zum Hubertwirt for the monthly General Membership meeting. The Post Commander opened the meeting by introducing Department Commander James Settle and myself and then proudly announced that GR 79, with its 45 members, was the first post in the Department of France to reach 100%. Commander Brown thanked all present for

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their support in the membership drive. A distinctive feature of this meeting was that in addition to the discussion and conduct of post business the meeting was also “sprinkled” with humor and “light” moments, but important business was conducted.

It was very apparent that even if a Department of France Legion Post is not co-located with a US military installation, a post can still be very active with a signature of its efforts supporting activities in the local host nation. To list just a few of GR 79 activities; candy handed out to German trick-or-treaters, pumpkin carving contests, Christmas presents for kids who will be hospitalized over Christmas, and a large Thanksgiving dinner where the Chiefs of the Heilbronn fire and police and Lord Mayor will be invited. This is a large yearly event with a significant turnout of members and also generates fund for the post. Previously the post donated 264 Euro Red Cross International Cooperation and Disaster Management in support children that were victims of flooding within Germany.

After one visit it was very obvious that GR 79 has “its act together” and is a valuable entity for the Department of France.

FINANCE OFFICER Gary Miller



To all Posts...

Chase bank has decided not to support "foreign accounts" anymore and will close the Department checking account by November 4, 2013.

I am actively seeking a new home for the Department checking account (USAA).

So therefore, the checks due to all Posts for online renewals for July/August/September cannot be sent out until the Department opens a new bank account.

*Gary Miller
Finance Officer
Department of France*

DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICER George Hall



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

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



**DETACHMENT
COMMANDER**
Joshua J. Settle



My fellow Comrades

Please keep in mind that our 2nd DEC is the 12th of October in Heilbronn. I am sure that NECMan Odom has information to pass along to all the Squadrons and Detachment. Veterans Day is approaching fast, and I would like to know who all will be attending the Memorial in Saint Avold France. In addition SAL Programs need to be discussed. We also should have some changes to the Constitution and By-Laws to discuss. Also we have to finalize plans for our Fishing Event, which is tentatively scheduled for the April time frame.

By now all Squadrons should have their 2014 Membership Cards. I encourage all squadrons to start their Membership renewals NOW. Remember the Detachment has a Membership fund which will allow Squadrons to do a transmittal now and then reimburse the Detachment once the dues are collected from their members.

Some Good News. By now Squadron 79 should have or will very soon submit a transmittal reviving the Squadron which has been inactive over the last several years. Many thanks, to

Comrade Brown, who is the Post Commander, for JWP79, and also the Detachment Membership Chairman. In addition I have been advised that GR1982 is working very hard to also start a SAL Squadron in their post.

As posted in last month's Newsletter, the Detachment is trying to organize a fishing event for the Detachment and its members. We are thinking of going to GR1982's area, it is also possibly to make it a weekend camping trip if desired. We are considering the 1st or 3rd weekend in April. Please send your thoughts on this to the Detachment Adjutant; this can also be discussed at the upcoming SAL DEC in October.

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

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

In closing I hope to see all of you at this next DEC. Please keep those in harm's way and their families in your prayers.

Joshua J. Settle
Detachment Commander
Phone: 07138-67359
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**DEPARTMENT
PRESIDENT**
Isolde E. Settle



**Fellow Auxiliary
Members and
Legionaries**

Our 2nd DEC will be held on the 26th of October in conjunction with the legions

Departments 2nd DEC. The location is Heilbronn at JWP79's Post Home.

Some good news is Commander Schram (BE02) at this time has sixteen prospective members for the Auxiliary, and Commander Buchanan (GR1982) is also working on starting an Auxiliary unit at their post. This is great news for our organization; it will help us provide more assistance to post, Veterans and

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their families. Over the last several years we have had a hard time supporting post in their mission and helping the Veteran. We have also had a problem meeting the delegate requirement for our DEC'S hopefully this will all change and continue to change to the better.

Once again I encourage those posts that have an Auxiliary Unit to involve them in their events, and work together to help not only each other, but our Veterans and their families. To those post that wish to have a Unit, to help support you,

then please contact the department, we can assist you in getting started. I have attached a FAQ sheet to this Newsletter for your Convenience.

In closing I hope to see all of you at our next DEC. Please keep those in harm's way and their families, in your prayers.

Isolde E. Settle
Department President

PHONE: 07138-67359
E-Mail: isoldesettle@hotmail.com



WWII veteran Maj. Earl Tweed (91) of Dallas was officially honored by the French government with the Legion of Honor award at a reception hosted by the Daughters of World War II on Thursday, July 18. He was recognized for his service during the Normandy invasion. Past recipients of the award include Dwight D. Eisenhower and General Patton. See the write-up in today's The Dallas Morning News Metro Section

The Paris Post FR01 assisted the planner of the event by contacting the French Consulate in Houston to arrange for the special presentation of the French Legion of Honor medal. The following is speech written and delivered by FR01 Commander Carl Hale at this ceremony...

Thank you for the opportunity to meet our Dallas area veterans of World War Two. It is always an honor to speak with veterans and their families.

As the Commander of The American Legion Paris Post #1 my mission is to keep alive the memory of your service.

I want to let you know that the people of France honor your service throughout the year. For Victory in Europe Day, Memorial Day, individual town Liberation Days, and Armistice Day (our American Veterans Day) we are one family joined together with the common goal to remember those who sacrificed their youth for our freedom, security and peace.

The American Legion Paris Post received its charter on December 13, 1919. In 1920 the Paris Post organized the first Memorial Day ceremonies in France to honor the World War One service members who rest in peace within the

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American cemeteries named the Meuse-Argonne, St. Mihiel, Somme, Oise-Aisne, Aisne-Marne, Suresnes, and Flanders Field in Belgium.

The Memorial Day mission continued and expanded after World War Two to the American cemeteries in France at Lorraine, Epinal, Rhone, Brittany and Normandy.

The Paris Post continues to lead in planning Patriotic ceremonies in France.

We coordinate together with the Souvenir Francais and many other French veteran groups to participate in Patriotic ceremonies throughout France.

French veterans or regular citizens committed to patriotism (usually family members of veterans) serve as flag bearers of their specific military unit and are always present at our ceremonies. They are our friends, Friends of The American Legion.

The French children who witnessed the 6 June 1944 Operation Overlord invasion now lead the historical tours in Normandy. These same people ensured their children learned the history when the Allies arrived and liberated their towns and country. Their children participate in Memorial Day ceremonies. In Paris we were blessed each Memorial Day to have a group of French children sing the American National Anthem. I know this also is the tradition at the Flanders Field American Cemetery in Belgium.

Together we gather to pay tribute each year to those who served. We remember who died, either during the war or anytime after. We will always remember, because if the sacrifices are ever forgotten the risk increases that peace will again lose to tyranny. Peace is not easy. Peace is fragile and must always be nurtured to remain with us.

Your service helped secure peace. We thank you. We will always remember you.

Tonight we will specifically honor Major Tweed with the French Legion d'Honneur to be presented by Major General Zapanta. Other American veterans who received this distinction include General Dwight D. Eisenhower, General George Patton and Sergeant Audi Murphy.

On behalf of The American Legion I wish the best for you all. May God bless you and may God bless America.

Thank you.

NEWS BLAST...

The tourist office of Saint Mere Eglise just released the initial plans for the 2014 memorials and ceremonies honoring the 70th year after the D-Day arrival of Allied Forces liberating France and re-establishing Peace in Europe.

See the below link for the calendar of events which will be frequently updated as more plans are confirmed:

<http://www.sainte-mere-eglise.info/en/70%20th%20%20anniversary%20dday.html>

Submitted by Carl Hale FRO1

I NEED PICTURES...I NEED HISTORY

I have a BIG problem; I have run out of pictures to post on The Department of France Website. I know there are Legionnaires in the Department that have pictures that need to be posted on the Website. We NEED to preserve this part of our Department History.

If you have pictures for me, send me an e-mail, I will send you a link to a photo sharing program called "DROPBOX", when you get it go to "get started" and it will tell you step by step on how to use it. It is a program that National uses and it works great when you want to send a large amount of pictures. It's easy to use, I have

setup a folder called The Department of France, just create a file drag it into the Department folder; send me an e-mail with a short story plus date, the function, and location. I will pull it out of Dropbox and post it on the Website, it's that easy.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at dhaggan@sbcglobal.net

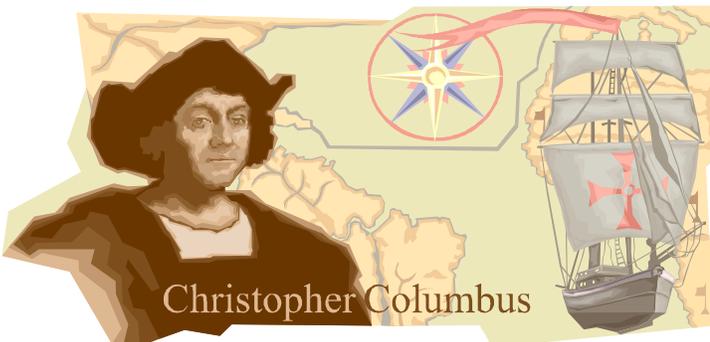
If you have a couple of minutes login into The Department Website and checkout the Photo Gallery.

LET'S PRESERVE OUR DEPARTMENT HISTORY FOR THE FUTURE

COLUMBUS DAY *14 OCTOBER 2013*

The second Monday in October is designated in the United States as Columbus Day. This day commemorates Christopher Columbus' first voyage and sighting of the Americas on October 12, 1492. However, Columbus Day as a federal holiday was not officially recognized until 1937.

The first recorded ceremony commemorating Columbus in America occurred in 1792, 300 years after his famous first voyage in 1492. To honor Columbus, a ceremony was held in New York, and a monument was dedicated to him in Baltimore, Maryland. In 1892, a statue of Columbus was raised at Columbus Avenue in New York City. Further, at the Columbian Exposition held in Chicago that year, replicas of Columbus' three ships were displayed.



Italian-Americans were key in the creation of Columbus Day. Beginning on October 12, 1866, New York City's Italian population organized a celebration of the 'discovery' of America. This yearly celebration spread to other cities and became known as Columbus Day in San Francisco in 1869.

Colorado became the first state to observe an official Columbus Day in 1905. Over time other states followed until 1937 when President Franklin Roosevelt proclaimed every October 12 as Columbus Day. In 1971, the federal holiday was officially changed by Congress to be observed on the second Monday in October.

Vet Groups Reject Proposed Retirement Changes

Veteran service organizations pushed back against a recent defense panel's recommendation that the Defense Department make the military retirement system look more like private sector plans.

"The American Legion's position is that we oppose any changes to the current military retirement system because we believe if there are changes, such as those [that have been] proposed, it would negatively impact incentives for enlistees," said Joe Grassi, deputy director for the Legion's National Security Division.

The Legion is aware that times are tight, Grassi said, but "the Legion believes the budget shouldn't be balanced on the backs of people who make sacrifices for this country."

The Defense Business Board made a similar pitch two years ago that military retirement should be more like a 401(K), with contributions by the servicemember. It was re floated by the Defense Advisory Committee of The Stimson Center, a bipartisan Washington think tank.

The Defense Advisory Committee's 37-page report did not say if it endorsed all of the particulars in the original Defense Business Board's recommendations. For example, the Defense Business Board's plan would require retirees to wait until age 60 or 65 to begin drawing retirement pay.

Both reports recommend that retirees pay higher premiums for TRICARE. However, the Defense Advisory Committee noted that military retirees and their dependents currently "pay only a fraction of what their civilian counterparts pay." The low premiums provide incentives for non-essential medical care that overloads the system, according to the report.

The 17-member DAC, in its report, cited a Bloomberg Government analysis of the Defense Business Board's retirement recommendation that claimed implementing some variation of the proposal would save \$700 million in the first year, close to \$2 billion in fiscal 2015, and then grow to \$7 billion annually by 2020.

The board's proposal to raise retiree premiums, including increasing means-tested beneficiary cost sharing

requirements for "TRICARE for Life," would save about \$5 billion by fiscal 2015 and continue to grow after that, according to the report.

The advisory committee is made up of 17 members including two former vice chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a former Air Force chief of staff and former chief of naval operations. It also includes former executives from defense industries.

"With the budget contracting, the military retirement system must be reformed," the Defense Advisory Committee report states.

The committee, like the Defense Business Board before it, noted that under the current system servicemembers may put in 10 and 15 years or more but get nothing for retirement if they leave before 20.

By adopting a plan more like civilian retirement packages a servicemember leaving before 20 years would still get something for the time he or she has put in.

However, veterans service organization officials said the military is not like the private sector, and the kind of changes recommended by the Defense Business Board and now the Defense Advisory Committee would actually cause harm to the all-volunteer force that the U.S. has come to depend on.

Joe Davis, national spokesman for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, said retirement, including low-cost healthcare for the member and spouse that comes with it, are "the only two carrots the Defense Department can offer to first get someone to volunteer 20, 30 or 40 years of their [life] to the nation."

"To earn it, however, also requires moving a dozen or more times, uprooting children from multiple schools, preventing spouses from any semblance of a career, and zero equity in homeownership," he said. "Add in multiple family separations, dangerous deployments, the threat of age discrimination when starting a second career, and now having to listen to so-called think tanks continue to compare military service to civilians is insulting to the long-time service and sacrifice of all military retirees."

Army Adapts to Fewer Troops in Europe

The Army will close two more bases in Germany in 2015 and scrap what had been ambitious plans to garrison troops in Bulgaria as the Army comes down in size, the commander of U.S. Army Europe (USAEUR) said Thursday.

"We were at 213,000 in 1989," Lt. Gen. Donald Campbell said of the number of Army troops based in Europe, but the troop strength now was 32,000 and was projected to go to 30,000 by 2017.

"Times have changed," Campbell said of the evolving U.S. military commitment to Europe.

"But that doesn't mean Europe is not important. It's a great launching pad to get to different parts of the world," he said.

Campbell said an Army force of 32,000 could still accomplish the mission of shoring up NATO, providing for Europe's security and being ready to respond to contingencies, particularly in support of Army Gen. David Rodriguez as head of the Africa command.

One of Campbell's main tasks now was in supporting the 400 U.S. troops manning Patriot missile batteries in Turkey to defend the NATO ally against the threat of air attack from Syria.

USAEUR's 10th Army Air and Missile Defense Command (AAMDC) and 44th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, joined by the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Air Defense Artillery (3-2 ADA) based at Fort Sill, Okla., and the 32nd AAMDC from Fort Bliss, Tex., were scheduled to stay in Turkey at least through January, Campbell said.

During military exercises in Croatia last month, Campbell suggested that more joint efforts with

NATO partners could alleviate the impact of the budget cuts.

"I have a vision that we can bring in more nations to the exercises we host and that they become more joint -- Army, Navy, Air Force from the different nations," Campbell said. "Then we will better be able to secure funds from the Joint Staff."

Last week, USAEUR closed the Staff Sgt. Charles L. Campbell Barracks in Heidelberg, Germany, which had served as the 7th Army headquarters since 1952. The garrison at Mannheim, Germany, which once housed 8,500 soldiers, has already been shuttered and Campbell said that bases in Schweinfurt and Bamberg, also in Germany, would close in 2015.

The closures will leave the Army with seven major bases in Europe -- one at Vicenza, Italy, one in Belgium and five in Germany at Weisbaden, Grafenwoehr, Kaiserslautern, Ansbach, and Stuttgart, Campbell said in a conference call with reporters from his new headquarters in Weisbaden.

At the height of the U.S. military presence in Europe in 1953, the U.S. had 450,000 troops from all the services in Europe operating at 1,200 sites.

An assistant to Campbell said the Army bases in Eastern Europe in Bulgaria and Romania will continue to be facilities funded by the U.S. Army for joint and multinational use.

UPDATE: An earlier version of the story stated that the removal of the two brigades was motivated by the sequestration cuts. The decision was in fact made in 2005. A previous version also stated that plans to permanently garrison U.S. troops in Bulgaria and Romania had been shelved. This was not in U.S. Army plans.

American Legion issues report on VA health care for women veterans

Findings show that many former women service members do not identify themselves as veterans

WASHINGTON (Sept. 17, 2013) -- The American Legion has issued its report on the quality of health care for women veterans at 15 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers across the country.

Key findings of the Legion's report include the fact that many former women service members do not identify themselves as veterans, many VA medical centers lack long-term health care plans for women veterans, and VA facilities often have no inpatient or residential mental health programs for women veterans.

"We found one case in which a woman veteran in Colorado had to fly to Coatesville, Pa., just to receive her mental-health care," said Verna Jones, director of the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (VA & R) Division. "Many women who have served in uniform may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, military sexual trauma or depression. VA will be treating many more women veterans in the future, and it needs to make access to mental-health services for women one of its top priorities."

The "2013 Task Force Report on Women Veterans Health Care," released to the public on Sept. 17, is based on site visits by the Legion's System Worth Saving (SWS) Task Force to VA facilities in Buffalo, N.Y.; Augusta, Maine; Fargo, N.D.; Chicago; Tampa, Fla.; Erie and Coatesville, Pa.; Dublin, Ga.; Salem, Va.; Las Vegas; Tuscaloosa, Ala.; San Antonio; Texas; Madison, Wis.; Spokane, Wash.; and St. Cloud, Minn.

During these visits, SWS task force members and American Legion field service representatives interviewed each facility's leadership and staff on the delivery of health care for women veterans.

The report's objectives were to understand what perceptions and barriers prevent women veterans from enrolling in VA health care, determine what challenges women veterans face with their health care, and provide recommendations that VA can take to improve access to health care for women veterans.

Challenges and recommendations from the Legion's report include:

1. Women veterans do not identify themselves as veterans and/or do not know what benefits they are eligible to receive.

Recommendation: VA should develop a customized women veteran's health benefits track to assist in making them aware of benefits available to them.

2. VA medical centers evaluated in the report do not have baseline, one-, two- and five-year plans to close the gap between the catchment area, enrollment numbers and actual users among women veterans.

Recommendation: VA should consider implementing baseline facility enrollment and unique women veterans seen as percentage goals in relation to the facility's catchment area.

3. Women veterans do not receive their mammogram results in a timely manner

Recommendation: While the law requires that non-malignant and/or non-suggestive mammograms be reported in 30 days (three to five days for malignant and/or highly suggestive mammograms), The American Legion views this as a minimum standard. VA should provide the necessary funding and resources to expedite the implementation of the mammography package. This package should allow women veterans the option of self-referrals, and allow VA staff the ability to schedule, track and review mammogram results.

4. Many VA facilities do not offer inpatient/residential mental-health programs for women veterans.

Recommendation: Since women make up about 15 percent of active-duty servicemembers, as DoD begins to draw-down and women veterans begin to leave military service, VA should continue to expand the number of mental-health inpatient/residential treatment programs made available for women veterans, and ensure these programs are offered in each Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN).

5. VA's legislative authority for the child-care pilot program is due to expire Oct. 2, 2013.

Recommendation: VA should work with Congress to make the child-care legislation a permanent authority.

Dr. Robert Petzel, VA's under secretary for health, and senior staff of the Veterans Health Administration were briefed on the report Sept. 17 by staff members from the Legion's VA & R Division. "Dr. Petzel agreed to evaluate further several of the report's recommendations," said Jacob Gadd, the division's deputy director for health. "He has requested a separate briefing to evaluate our recommendation of providing mental-health inpatient programs for women veterans at all 21 of VA's Veteran Integrated Service Networks."

Gadd said that Petzel thanked The American Legion and the SWS program for its candid feedback and evaluation of VA's health services for women veterans.

The American Legion's SWS program, created in 2003, is the organization's primary health-care evaluation tool for assessing the quality and timeliness of VA health care. On Sept. 11, the SWS Task Force delivered copies of the report to members of Congress, VA officials, American Legion leadership and its members.

[Click here](#) for a copy of the report. For more information on the SWS program, contact Jacob Gadd, the Legion's deputy director for health care at jgadd@legion.org or (202) 861-2700.

Share your post's legacy on Centennial Celebration page



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

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

How to get started

Posts are encouraged to form centennial committees now, made up of members who will collect historical artifacts and data on the post. For example, the centennial committee may identify:

- Who founded the post and when
- Who the post was named after
- Important dates in the history of the post

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- Families involved with the post for multiple generations
- Notable members
- Notable alumni from youth programs such as Boys State, the Oratorical Contest or Legion Baseball
- What makes the post special or unique
- Great things the post has done for its community

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

Share your story

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

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

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

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

And for step-by-step instructions on how to share your post's legacy and vision, download the Legion's [Centennial Celebration Workbook here](#).

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

For more information, please email: ledwards@legion.org