

DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

[HTTP://AMERLEGIONDEPTFRANCE.ORG](http://AMERLEGIONDEPTFRANCE.ORG)

JANUARY 2010

FROM THE COMMANDER

Hello my fellow Legionnaires. I want to wish all a Happy and Joyous New Year with many blessings to come.

On 12 December, Post GR03 hosted a lovely Christmas party, including a visit from Saint Nick, from whom the children all received presents. I would like to thank Post Commander Ed Sherman and the rest of GR03. I also made arrangements to visit Post GR42 that same day; however, I didn't get the chance due to weather conditions. To GR42, I apologize. On 19 December, I was to attend a Christmas party at Post GR13. Commander Rick Cervenka had invited me, however, due to weather conditions and then an over turned semi-truck, and I called to inform them that I could not make it. Again, my apologies. On 16 December, GR01 held a Christmas dinner for returning soldiers, families, and friends. It was a tremendous turnout. There were 70 plus people in attendance. My hat is off to Commander John Fleming, 2nd Vice Commander Mike Young, and many more that

made this a great event. On 24 December, GR01 held its annual Christmas Party, and a good time was had by all who attended.

Membership: We are up to 75%, but we need to be hitting 80%. All Department and Post Officers need to hit Membership hard as we start this New Year. We need to insure we start picking up Renewals.

Convention: As everyone knows, our Convention is scheduled to be in Ireland in June. All Department Officers and Post that have not contacted Convention Chairman Liam Kane, need to do so immediately to inform him of your room requirements.

Now that we are in the New Year, we have many upcoming events to concern ourselves with. In talking to the Oratorical Director, Douglas Clemence, he has assured me that any Post wanting to host a contest can contact him and he is more than willing to provide all assistance possible to include traveling to your Post. In last months and



this months newsletter, he included an article with his e-mail address. I would appreciate if the Post Commanders or Adjutants would contact Douglas for any Oratorical contest information you need. The next event which needs planning and consideration is the National Commander's visit the end of May. I would like all Post to consider hosting him and his party during their visit. I will be keeping the Post informed of the events as they happen. If you have any ideas, please forward them.



DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

Commander

Robert Gray, GR01

Adjutant

John D. Fleming, GR01

Vice Commander At Large - DK 01, GC-1.

PO01, NL01, FR01, IR02, IR03, & SP292

Liam Kane, IR63

Vice Commander - GR09, GR13, GR30, GR42, & GR79

Michael Besant, GR1982

Vice Commander - GR01, GR06, GR14, GR20, GR45, GR1982, & IR63

James Dennis, GR30

Vice Commander - GR03, GR05, & GR07

VCAL Kane

Vice Commander - BE02, CP01, FR05, & IT01

Kevin B. Keehnen, GR01

National Executive Committeeman

William "Bill" Marshall, GR42

Alternate National Executive Committeeman

John Miller, GR1982

Chaplain

Ronald Moore, GR05

DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICER

Happy New Year,

Let's start this year out with open arms and minds. I would like to get with each Post Service Officer:

1. How are you doing with your VA Issues?
2. Who are they and are you keeping a file for them?
3. Where is their VA Form 21-22?
4. Where is their DD Form 214?
5. Are you keeping up with the Widow?

Need Help? Call or email me.

George T. Hall
Office: 06221 57 8236 or
DSN 370-8236
Phone Mobil 0171 937 9871
hallgt@yahoo.com
Your DSO is here to Help
VA CLAMS, SSA, DFAS

Post Events

Thomas W. Barnett Post GR14 will hold their Post Elections on Wednesday, 10 February 2010, at 2000hrs, at the Post Home in Orleshausen. All are welcome. Contact Post Adjutant Carl Hackworth, carl@hackworth.de

John Wayne Post GR79 will hold its 25th Red Leg Ceremony on 10 January 2010, at 1400hrs on the Waldheide in Heilbronn, for the 3 Servicemen killed in the Pershing accident in 1985. There will be a get together afterwards at the Jaegerhaus on the Waldheide. Contact Post Commander Darrel Shannon, postgr79@live.com

VFW Liaison

Greetings Commanders & Comrades,

It's an honor to serve as the Department of France VFW Liaison Officer. I'm proud to be in both Organizations. Both Organizations work closely on Capitol Hill and at their National Conventions. The VFW Department of Europe is strong in membership with over 12,000 members. Membership is our voice on Capitol Hill. We should ask every Veteran to join The American Legion. Every member of every American Legion Post should attend their Post meetings and be active within their Post. Don't rely on a few members to conduct the Post meetings and to be active in their Community. We need to support the Auxiliary in the Department and Posts. Communication is the key to a successful program. Do we communicate to our Post members? The Department of France produces an outstanding Department Newsletter. Do Post members receive the Department of France Newsletter? Again, communication is the key. The next Department of Europe Council of Administration is 23 January 2010, 1 p.m. Location: Ramon's Café (above the gym). Schweinfurt VFW Post is having an Open House (Food, drinks, music, & poker) on the 22 Jan.10, 1800-2400, Location: basement Conn Officer's Club (adjacent to the Bradley Inn). Mannheim VFW Post has a Social every Friday evening after 1800 located at Bldg. 678 (across the street from the Mannheim CDC and the Mannheim Elementary School) BFW Benjamin Franklin Village (Jefferson Street). Food, drinks, music, & games. I plan to be at both Department Conventions this year because of the different dates. Support your Department of France Convention 16-20 June 2010, Royal Hotel, Bray, Co Wicklow, Ireland. Please contact Liam Kane (Convention Chairman) as soon as possible. commliam@gmail.com. Don't wait till the last minute. The VFW Department of Europe Convention is 24-27 June 2010, Edelweiss Lodge and Resort, Garisch, Germany. If you would like to attend, contact the Edelweiss at: <http://www.edelweisslodgeandresort.com/home.html> or call 49-8821-9440 (outside Germany) 08821-9440 (inside Germany). Group code: 1006VFWANN VFW Annual European Conference Please contact the Department of Europe Adjutant (Pete Mascetti) pokerp@yahoo.com for accountability (attendance). Many thanks for supporting your Post, and Department.

In Comradeship;

STEPHEN A. WARD
VFW LIAISON
DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE

POST MEETINGS

Below is a partial listing of Post and their General Membership Meetings. If you would like to attend a Post meeting, please contact the respective Commander and/or the Adjutant.

GR01: 1st & 3rd Wednesday monthly, Post Home

GR03: 1st Thursday monthly Post Home

GR06: 2nd Wednesday monthly Post Home

GR07: 1st Tuesday monthly Post Home

GR13: 3rd Saturday monthly Post Home

GR14: Second Wednesday of the month Post Home

GR42: Third Sunday of the month Post Home

GR79: Second Saturday of the month Post Home

GR1982: Third Wednesday of the month Post Home

PO01: Third Wednesday of the month Past Com. House

IR03: First Saturday in April, first Sat. in Oct for elections

DEPARTMENT OFFICERS (CON'T)

Historian

Eric Thoresen, GR01

Finance Officer

Gary Miller, GR06

Service Officer

George Hall, GR03

Judge Advocate

Michael Young, GR01

Sergeant-at-Arms

Hal Rittenberg

VCAL CORNER

Hope all in the Legion Family had a Great Christmas and I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Another Calendar Year gone and half way through our Legion year. From now on we will be talking about going to Department Convention in Ireland this year. Our Convention Committee will meet on Monday, 11 January, in Dublin and at that stage we sincerely hope that all Posts and Department Officers have replied to our request for your commitment to attending in June. We need this information now, thank you in advance.

Apart from working on the Convention, I had my usual "chores" to carry out and a few trips to make. In the past month, and as it draws to its conclusion, I think I succeeded in contacting or visiting all my Posts. I went to Portugal, and although the weather was only 16 degrees, it was hot for me but they thought that it was cold. As ever, Gilbert Wells and his wife Justin were my host. The Post is very angry with the loss of its APO service and to them and me too its removal doesn't make sense. We should try to have it restored to our veterans and we as a body should do what we can to help our fellow Legion Members. It's a very small world as I sat drinking coffee in Lisbon Airport I met the IR63 Post Chaplin who was also flying back to Dublin. On my travels I had the opportunity to meet the Post Adjutant of Rome Post, Lionel Morais and we had a very interesting meeting just after Christmas. Lionel sends his regards and best wishes to all in the Department France for 2010. During the month of December I had a few engagements in Germany and stayed with our Department Commander and we went through a lot of Legion business and met other Department Officers and lots of Department members. Once again in Ireland, I met with the many Veterans who are very angry that they are still awaiting their stimulus payment of \$250.00. Why should ones home address matter, they all served in the same US Armed Forces.

I would like to make another plea to all Posts to get out and reel in those outstanding members during the next month and try to recruit to offset the loss of those who are not contactable down range or gone home. We can do it, as we have done it in the past.

Don't forget to keep your Vice Commanders; James, Kevin and Michael informed of your activities. They are there to help, as I am and also our Department Commander.

Have a great 2010.

For God and Country
Liam Kane.

LATEST NEWS from IR63 (Convention)

Thank you to those who have intimated that they are travelling to Ireland in June. Hopefully all Posts and Department Officers have answered our request for such information by now. The Convention Committee meet again on Monday, 11 January and we need this information. Thank you all in anticipation. The following should be of value to you reference travel; from Germany, Ryanair flies from many small airports. You can check Ryanair.com for more details. Aer Lingus from Frankfurt (Main), Dusseldorf, Munich, and Berlin are options. See aerlingus.com for deals. When you arrive in Dublin Airport and exit you will see AIRCOACH BUSES in front of you, colored Blue, and you take the Bus going to GREYSTONES. It stops in Bray near the Hotel. We will meet you at the bus stop and take you and your luggage to Royal Hotel, about 200yards away. The Agenda for the 4th DEC and 86th Department of France Convention has been drawn up and approved by Department Commander Robert Gray, Department Adjutant John Fleming, and Convention Chairman Liam Kane. The Convention Coin has been designed and meets all the specifications. It looks very well and will be a real collectors item. We are working hard here in IR 63 to ensure that our second hosting of a Department Convention is a huge success. We will be inviting some Guests including members of Irish Veterans Organizations. The bus trip will be really interesting and educational too. The BBQ will be held outdoors {we have checked the weather and everything is FINE}. We will keep you up to date and during the next few weeks we will be forwarding some Brochures to each Post together with details of cheap flights which can and should be booked ASAP. Any query BIG or small that you have will be answered within days. Our Bank is giving us problems that we hope to have resolved by 12 January. If not, we go elsewhere, as we want to keep the finances of our Post and the Convention separate. We plan to hold a Monster Raffle at Convention with great prizes. Tickets will go on sale in February. That's all for now except to wish you all a Happy New Year and a Great Department Convention. One other Important piece of Information Libby Coyne is the person in charge of all matters pertaining to Auxiliary.

Beannacht De oraibh i rit an Ait Bliana.

Liam Kane, 2010 Convention Chairman

Chaplain's Page

Special Days/Legion Events: 1st- New Year; 18th- Martin Luther King Jr. Day; 27th- Vietnam Ceasefire (1973); 30th- Start of Tet Offensive (1968)

Christian Religious Days: 1st- Mary, Mother of God; 5th- Twelfth Night; 6th- Epiphany, Three Kings; 7th- Feast of the Nativity (Orth); 18-25th- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity; 25th- Conversion of St. Paul

Jewish Holidays (Year 5770): 30th Tu B'shvat

Islamic Holidays: None that I know of.

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

Post Everlasting reported from November 28th to December 30th:

Wendell Tedder, GR06, survived by his wife Waltraud

Prayers for the Sick:

George Hall, GR-03	Isadore Pink, GR-07
Shawn Ashe, GR-42	Niece of Comrade Dave Mendez, GR-01
Doug Clemence, GR-06	Cyndia, wife of Comrade Dan Halsey, GR-03
Nola Maloney, GR-03 and Past Department Commander	Marie-Anne Godefroid, wife of Comrade Carl Hale, FR-01
John H. Miller, GR-1982 and PDC & present Dept Alt NECman	James W. Johnson,
Phil Gatchell, GR-03	Mike Paguaia, GR-03
Edward Hayes, GR-03	Jerry Deaver, GR-07
Kenneth Grasser, GR-09	Rose Jeffries, GR-07
Brenda Dearborn, Dept of Maine present Americanism Chair and past chaplain	Harry Jeffries, GR-07
Harold M. Wild, GR-13	Gorrell Cheek, GR1982
Ronald (Ron) Hansen, GR-06	Dick Knoll, GR-09
Marlene Watson, Widow of GR-13 charter member William Watson	Kevin Murphy, GR05
Paul Johnson, Dept of Wyoming 3rd District VC and Past Chaplain	Bill Tilman, GR14
Larry "Yard Dog" Ewerds, GR-07	George Davis, GR42
Edwin F. Hoffman, GR-13	Michael Umland, GR-06 and Past Department Commander
Robert Downs, GR-79	A. "Ray" Cline, GR14
Brian Charters, IR-63	Joe D. Brown, GR42, IPDC and Department Vice Commander
Michelle Gerdeman, daughter of Comrade John Gerdeman, Sr. GR-07	David Lehrman, a Legacy Run Rider from the states
Harry Hall, GR-42	Pat Daniels, a Legacy Run Rider from the states
	Elaine Bock, wife of Past National Commander Tom Bock
	Fae Casper, Past National Historian and Past Department Commander (GA)
	Harley W. Rae. Past National Vice Commander

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.

Greetings Comrades, Sisters and Brothers of the American Legion Family,

Congratulations on having survived another year of economic crisis and global warming.

We have a lot to thank God for when we really consider all of the blessings we have received. Our neighbor may appear to have nicer possessions and we may be envious when our neighbor tells us how well he/

she is doing, but we should remember that our personal happiness and satisfaction may also be found in the small things that we experience or have. Most are not willing to trade their known pains and aches for someone else's illnesses. Think about it.

As The American Legion, we will face quite a few challenges over the next few years. Some of those challenges include:

- God being under attack in our coun-

try although our Nation was founded upon a strong belief in God,

- Veterans and Veteran benefits under fire as spending cuts are discussed, Decrease in active Post membership as age of membership increases,

just to name a few.

How do we positively counter the negative influence of these challenges:

- Through our firm belief and adher-

ence to the Preamble to the American Legion Constitution. "For God and Country" are not just a couple of words, but an ideal of which we can be proud and stand behind,

- Continue to serve our community, state and nation, Continue to foster a 100% Americanism.

now, don't some of the answers sound familiar somehow?

As you can see, we already have a compass and guideline to overcome a lot of the problems we may face as veterans and citizens. Let each of us dust off these ideals and principles so that others will see them shine also.

May your family, home, Post, Unit, Squadron, Department, community, state and nation prosper during the upcoming year

and may your efforts to have a positive influence in each one be fruitful.

Happy New Year! May God bless you and your family and keep all safe.

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

Rev. Ronald Moore,
Dept of France Chaplain
Home: 0049-(0)6196-569027
Mobile: 0049-(0)172-7417812
Email: revronmoore@yahoo.de

Oratorical

The Department of France High School Oratorical Contest will be held in Stuttgart at the Community Center on Saturday, 20 February 2010. The contest will begin at 1300 hrs. and each Post that has a participant should insure that their candidate arrives no later than 1200 hrs.

The winner of this competition will be eligible for participation in the National Contest held on 10 April 2010 in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Any Post who needs more information on the High School Oratorical Contest can go to the National web site or contact the Department Oratorical Director at the below email. In addition, any Post who needs help with hosting their own competition can also contact the Department Director.

Douglas Clemence
Oratorical Director
Dclemence@aol.com

Social Security Benefit Information

DD FORM 214 -- SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFIT Please share this with anyone who's had active duty service between January 1957 to December 31, 2001 and planning for retirement. In a nutshell it boils down to this:

You qualify for a higher social security payment because of your Military service, for active duty any time from 1957 through 2001 (the program was done away with 1 January 2002). Up to \$1200 per year of earnings credit credited at time of application - which can make a substantial difference in social security monthly payments upon your retirement. You must bring your DD-214 to the Social Security Office and you must ask for this benefit to receive it!

Soc Sec website: <http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/military.htm>

This is something to put in your files for when you apply for Social Security down the road.. It is NOT just for retirees, BUT anyone who has served on active duty between January 1957 to December 31, 2001.

FYI - this benefit is not automatic, you must ask for it! We've all been on active duty between 1957 and 2001 or know someone who has.

Passing on good information for all you military folks when you apply for social security. I know this may be too early for some of you to think about social security but, keep living and you will reach that age.

Please see the attached page for information directly from the Social Security web site.

departmentadjutant@gmail.com

Retirement Planner

Special Extra Earnings for Military Service



- [Planners Home](#)
- [Retirement Planner Home](#)
- [Retirement Estimator](#)
- [Benefit Calculators](#)
- [Eligibility/Issues](#)
- [Near Retirement?](#)
- [Apply for Benefits Online](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Other Resources](#)

Note: Change in special military service credits.
In January 2002, Public Law 107-117, the Defense Appropriations Act, stopped the special extra earnings that have been credited to military service personnel.
Military service in calendar year 2002 and future years no longer qualifies for these special extra earnings credits.

Since 1957, if you had military service earnings for active duty (including active duty for training), you paid Social Security taxes on those earnings. Since 1988, inactive duty service in the Armed Forces reserves (such as weekend drills) has also been covered by Social Security.

Under certain circumstances, special extra earnings for your military service from 1957 through 2001 can be credited to your record for Social Security purposes. These extra earnings credits may help you qualify for Social Security or increase the amount of your Social Security benefit.

Special extra earnings credits are granted for periods of active duty or active duty for training. Special extra earnings credits are **not** granted for inactive duty training.

If your active military service occurred

- **From 1957 through 1967**, we will add the extra credits to your record when you apply for Social Security benefits.
- **From 1968 through 2001**, you do not need to do anything to receive these extra credits. The credits were automatically added to your record.
- **After 2001**, there are no special extra earnings credits for military service.

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How You Get Credit For Special Extra Earnings

The information that follows applies **only** to active duty military service earnings from [1957 through 2001](#). Here's how the special **extra** earnings are credited on your record:

Service in 1957 Through 1977

You are credited with \$300 in additional earnings for each calendar quarter in which you received active duty basic pay.

Service in 1978 through 2001

For every \$300 in active duty basic pay, you are credited with an additional \$100 in earnings up to a maximum of \$1,200 a year. If you enlisted after September 7, 1980, and didn't complete at least 24 months of active duty or your full tour, you may not be able to receive the additional earnings. Check with Social Security for details.

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Department Convention 2010

We in IR63 thank you for selecting us as the host Post for next year's convention.

Cead mile Faile

There are many reasons to visit Ireland next year. First of all you may use it for your summer break. The beautiful countryside will cheer you no end and we at IR63 together with our fellow Legionnaires in IR02 and IR03 will guarantee you a pleasant time.

Bray is the nearest big town south of Dublin. It has everything you need: shops, eating out in restaurants –Irish, Greek, Italian, Chinese, Indian, French and American.

The clean, fresh air by the sea, which is only 20 minutes away on foot, where there are amusement arcades, coffee shops on the sidewalks, aquarium and golf available free of charge.

Pubs galore around the town with nightly singsongs and traditional Irish music.

Dublin City is only an hour away by bus and rail link (beautiful scenery on the way). Places of interest include Europe's oldest Zoo, Guinness Brewery, Irish Distillers, Dublin Castle, St. Stephens Green, The General Post Office, scene of the Easter Rising against the British in 1916, Kilmainham Jail, where the Irish leaders were executed, including one who was strapped to a chair and shot. Yes we have our history on your doorstep so enjoy.

To Get to Bray you can fly from Germany by Aer Lingus from Frankfurt, Dusseldorf, and Munich and by Ryanair from many smaller local airports to Dublin. Flights are also available from Paris, Lisbon, Madrid, Brussels, Copenhagen, and Amsterdam, you can go on line: www.aerlingus.com, or www.ryanair.com. Lufthansa and germanwings also fly to Dublin. You can arrange a group flight of 20 or more people with Aer Lingus. There is a direct bus link from Dublin airport to Bray leaving on the hour every hour.

What to bring:

Besides your ordinary summer wear, you might need a light raincoat (not needed in 2003). Your Post Flag (we will supply poles

Department of France Convention 2010

Hosted by IR63

16 - 20 June 2010

Package consists of the following:

Fare consists of:

Bed and Irish or Continental breakfast.

1 Convention coin for each person registering.

Banquet on Saturday Night.

Bus Trip & BBQ.

3 Night package Single room €19.00

Double room €90.00

Triple room €93.00

2 Night Package Single room €55.00

Double room €11.00

Triple room €82.00

4 Night package Single room €90.00

Double room €77.00

Triple room €06.00

1 Night Package Single room €0.00

Double room €24.00

Triple room €59.00