Greetings Legionnaires of Post NL01!

These last few months have been our busiest to date. We started out October doing some fundraising at the Schinnen Commissary. We also ran a vigorous membership effort that has put us well over 100% of our goal and #1 in the Department of France!

The Post also participated in several remembrance ceremonies. One being B-17 42-3195 75th Anniversary. Located practically in our own back yard. The following week we participated in the Retirement Appreciation Day at USAG Schinnen and had our Monthly Meeting! I have been very impressed with the Posts participation since having the honor of being your Commander! It warms my heart when I hear all the happy comments especially at the end of a busy week.

Once again Margraten Post had the privilege of hosting the 2nd Department Executive Committee (DEC) meeting at the Van Der Valk Hotel in Heerlen, NL. I couldn’t be prouder of you guys and all the support you gave towards the event. We had over 18 members and family take part over the weekend! It was a stellar event and went very smoothly throughout the two days.

For Halloween we did our 2nd Trunk or Treat and USAG Schinnen, NL. We had a wonderful time and were thankful for the break in the weather that allowed us to stay dry. We had over 7 legionnaires and their family members hand out candy to over 1200 kids! Lessons Learned from last year, we made sure we had enough candy! Next year we’re going to step up our decoration game! ;)

Now in November the Post continues to drive forward! We just finished up Veterans Day Weekend. The Post really stepped up this weekend. We had representatives at Geilenkirchen Airbase, Rotterdam, Margraten, and Henri-Chapelle. For Margraten and Henri-Chappelle we had 24 of our Post family taking part. We even picked up a friend from Houston, Texas. On this 100th Anniversary of Veterans Day, I want everyone to remember that no matter if your Active Duty, Non-Active, or Retired; we all continue to serve. Our organization more than most exemplifies this. This last weekend we paid direct tribute to over 20k of our fallen heroes. Our Post is full of pride and happiness.

As we continue into the last couple of months of the year, we have several wonderful events coming up. Please look over to the left and checkout the events in the coming months. The VA One-on-One is always fully booked! We also have our second Oratorical Contest, at Schinnen Classroom A. We will be killing two birds by having a meeting afterwards. We will have a great lunch available to!

14-16 December the Post will be at Post NL01 HQ in Bastogne for NUTS Weekend. That weekend will be one for the books. Will be a great lead in to next year’s 75th Anniversary!

As always remember these three things:

This is Your Membership Your Way
You will always have a Voice and a Vote
If you care enough about something, you will do something about it.
2nd Department Executive Committee Meeting @ Heerlen, NL

We had the honor and privilege to host the 2nd Department Executive Committee Meeting @ the Van Der Valk Hotel in Heerlen, NL. It was a wonderful experience for our Post and we truly treasured the opportunity to share it with the best of the American Legion! Many thanks to Col. Sean Kuester, Benelux USAG Commander for taking the time to stop by and give the opening remarks to kickoff the meeting! ~ Commander Ray
2nd Department Executive Committee Meeting @ Heerlen, NL
Veterans Day at Margraten ~ Through skies of grey Margraten Post NL01 rallied at our namesake to lay a wreath and pay our respects to our fallen heroes. Twenty plus came to participate in this 100th Veterans Day. The respect and comradery were felt by all. ~ Commander Ray

Top Left: Kiara Valencia did a wonderful job on the bugle. Middle Right: Commander Ray and Service Officer Ron had the honor of laying the wreath. Bottom: Pride, Respect, and Honor runs deep in Post NL01. There was nowhere else any of us wanted to be. #LegionStrong
Veterans Day at Margraten cont.
Post NL01 had the privilege of laying a wreath at Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery. 2nd Vice Harvey Briggs and Finance Officer Dale Snyder did the honors. We also laid floral tributes for David B. Todd, Ralph S. Snyder, Due Turner, Nate Moss, George Moten, Adam Curtis, Thomas Forte, James Stewart, George Davis, William Nellis, Ysmael Perez, and Frank Pipher.
Veterans Day at Henri-Chapelle cont.
The American Legion Post NL 01 attended several remembrance ceremonies this past weekend. One of the ceremonies we were invited to attend was in Oud Beijerland the Netherlands, just south of Rotterdam. There is a monument to honor the 87 aircrew members who crashed and died in the area of Hoeksche Waard from 1940 to 1945. 10 of these crew members were Dutch Air Force flying from England, another 10 were Americans assigned to the USAAF, 7 of which are interned at the American Cemetery located in Margraten the Netherlands, from where we take our name from.

Part of the monument complex is an area of 'digital' tiles of some of the aircrew who died there. This year saw the addition of two more tiles of English aircrew members. Family members of the Marshall and Cox families traveled from England to attend and place the tiles. Aside from the American Legion Post NL01, there was in attendance members of the Dutch Veterans organization, representatives of the five Hoeksche Waard municipalities, officers and members of the Royal British Legion.

A thank you to the Scouting group of Oud Beijerland and the children of the Oud Beijerland school De Klinker.

This was the third such ceremony we have had the honor of attending and look forward to participating in future events. Thank you, Anton De Man, for inviting us and letting us be part of this wonderful ceremony you organize.
I recently had the great pleasure of attending a tour of the Alfa Brewery at the invitation of The American Europe Friendship Association. The AEFA is run by their President, Mr. Arthur Lieuwen, a great organization and strong supporter of our Post! While going from table to table I happened upon Wil. From time to time you meet people that you know are going to be great friends. For me Wil Jansen is definitely that guy. Wil is a retired newspaper man and was instrumental in bringing the Dutch newspaper production into the digital age. Through our conversation that night, I learnt that Wil as a young boy of nine was an eyewitness of the development of Margraten Cemetery. He also told me that he wrote articles about it. Of course, I asked if I could put his story in our newsletter and Wil was happy to acquiesce to my request. ~ Commander Ray

Margraten: To Become Silent
By Wil Jansen

The silence on the American war cemetery in Margraten is overwhelming. You do not know why, and you cannot escape it. You feel small. The grassy fields are browned, and 8301 marble crosses and David stars light up. Spotless white. The dead soldiers of the Second World War lie there forever in the line; Gathered together on the battlefields of the Ardennes offensive, the Ruhr area and Limburg.

The Americans expected many deaths in the autumn of 1944 on their advance to Berlin and they did not want to bury victims in enemy territory. South Limburg was already liberated. Captain Shomon was instructed to find a suitable cemetery for the American 9th Army. Initially it would be in Sittard, but when the Americans deployed their heavy excavators, the Germans thought that a large tank battle had begun. Their shrapnel forced Shomon to search further. In some villages he knocked in vain. He did not understand him. But in early October he landed in Margraten where the municipal secretary spoke English and pointed out a wide area of beet, potato and stubble fields. In total almost 27 ha (66 acres). The decision fell to the Dutch government to make the land available to the United States forever. Some poor farmers could just save the last harvest. For various farmers with large families an important source of income was lost. But the farmers understood. "Even the best ground is not good enough for our boys," Shomon said. Only ten years later did the farmers of the government receive compensation for which they also had to pay tax.

In November the construction of the cemetery began. Barbarous conditions made the macabre work of the troops difficult. Unstopable rain made the loose soil impassable, filled the burial pits and the coldest winter in the last 30 years the spades on the frozen ground break off. It could be dangerous because the Germans did not hesitate to hide booby traps from corpses or to place sharp grenades under the armpits of the dead.

From December onwards, it was mainly black Americans who dug and buried. For many residents it was the first time that they saw a colored person in the flesh. The soldiers buried their dead companions without a coffin because they would later be dug up for a final resting place. They were identified on the basis of the identity plates. One was nailed to the wooden cross or Star of David, a second went into the grave together with personal belongings that were placed in a glass jar. The dead of other allies also found their destination as well as that of the Germans.

Until Berlin, the fallen soldiers were fetched with journeys of up to 1200 km. back and forth. Sometimes the GMC army trucks brought 500 body bags a day. They stayed there for days before they disappeared into the ground. In the spring of 1945 I saw how the stacks of nameless corpse bags were dragged out of the loading bins and mounted on the ground. Muddled, thudding and sometimes a crack like it was frozen surplus.
As a nine-year-old boy, I had driven to Margraten by bike. At home, in Maastricht, we received American soldiers almost every evening after the liberation. There was eaten, drunk, and American army records turned up on our gramophone. Jazz and all kinds of songs. We got green cans of turkey meat and corned beef. For the first time I got acquainted with peanut butter that came in blocks of green, greaseproof paper, with bananas, chocolate and white bread. Then there were of course the cigarettes and the chewing gum. The Americans exchanged them against our silver dimes. The residents also benefited. Especially the volunteers who helped. They received shoes, washing powder, soap, cigarettes, bread and remnants from the army kitchen, often in exchange for a warm shelter, a homely atmosphere, washing clothes. For those who suffered from fleas there was DDT. Shamrocks were gratefully grasped for the manufacture of curtains, aprons, shirts, tablecloths and garments which was a major shortage. Even used body bags found a new destination.

In March 1945, the backlog of burial was so great that it appealed to the local population. The stench was blowing to the village. The mayor of Margraten went home to mobilize the people. The inhabitants came to the rescue, dug tombs and carried the corpses to it. Miscellaneous got a trauma of the horrors they saw. Huub Bessems from Margraten, now 86 years old and then 15, says that he was only able to talk in interviews during 2009 about what he had seen in his father’s field: "Hundreds seem to be in a row. Those who died from their mutilations on the operating table were almost naked." Then, on May 30, 1945, the first Memorial Day broke. There were then more than 20,000 victims. 17,742 Americans, 700 Russians, 3075 Germans and 300 allies of other nationalities. The population of South Limburg was carrying a sea of flowers.

At the same time a citizens’ initiative was born to adopt the American graves. A year later, all 18,764 graves had been adopted.

In 1948 it began to be reburied in crates. Again, a huge job that offered work to many local residents. Approximately 10,000 American deaths were repatriated to the US. The Russians and Germans had already been transferred to their own cemeteries. Slowly "Margraten" got its final shape. The rectangular boxes were replaced by a brilliant range of white-marble crosses and David stars. There came a tower, a staff building, a promenade with ponds and the Walls of the Missing, the travertine walls in which the names of 1722 Americans were chiseled by four Germans.

Queen Juliana officially opened the cemetery on June 7, 1960. In 2005, President George W. Bush attended the ceremonies with Queen Beatrix. Many citizens’ initiatives have led to the publication of books and documentaries. Last year a project started that allowed 3000 photographs of the liberators to be placed near their graves and they were given a face. All 8301 graves and the 1722 missing have been adopted. And with that, all other American cemeteries are surpassed. Self of Normandy. The Foundation Adoption Graves American Cemetery helps the adopters to come into contact with relatives in the US. There are warm friendships, and many have stopped at the graves, found their loved ones, wept and prayed, often together with the inhabitants of the region.

"Interest in adoption remains high", says Ton Hermes, chairman of the foundation, "Not only in Limburg because there are adoptants from Rome to Amsterdam. The waiting list has 300 requests ".

The next Memorial Day is on May 28th A tribute with wreath layouts, speeches, the "Last Post" and the flyover where formations of four Dutch and American Starfighters each bring a thundering salute by flying low over the cemetery and the thousands of people present and end with the formation 'missing man'. Right above the cemetery, a device suddenly breaks loose and rises skyward perpendicularly.

Then the silence falls again over "Margraten" and thousands go home quietly.
Allen B. Wusterbarth

They say once you get Offutt you never get off it. Well after serving there for 11 years as my first duty station I was able to come to Germany. Since I have been here my family and I have had quite a wonderful experience. So much so that I extended my time here beyond the 4 years I originally agreed to.

My story begins in Southern California. While growing up in Palm Desert (near Palm Springs) I became interested in flying besides playing the Tuba in Marching Band, during my sophomore year I went to the AF Academy. I found out that my eyesight wasn’t good enough to be a pilot. After graduating from high school, I then went on to the local community college and then transferred to Collins College, Tempe AZ, and started my path down becoming a professional Computer Geek by earning my Associates of Applied Science in PC/Networking in 2002. Shortly before my graduation, the dot-com bubble crash had fully engulfed the tech industry and no one was hiring, in-fact they were downsizing, drastically. I looked into serving in the Air Force again, partially because of 9/11 as well as to fully scratch that itch to fly (I learned from one of my college classmates that Enlisted could fly!). I signed up in Phoenix, AZ to join in late 2002, but I broke my wrist mountain biking and the Doctor said I wouldn’t be able to do push-ups for at least six months let alone all the other tasks that Basic Training would require. I then delayed entering until October 2003.

My further exploration of the world began once I graduated AF BMT in November of 2003, after technical school, I finally arrived at my first duty station, Offutt AFB located in Bellevue, NE. While there for the next 11 years I worked as an Airborne Systems Engineer 1 aboard the RC-135 V/W Rivet Joint, becoming an Instructor and Evaluator. I got to work in multiple squadrons finishing in the 38 Reconnaissance Squadron. While on multiple TDYs I earned 4,954 hours flying around the world in support of many operations, including Operations IRAQI FREEDOM and ENDURING FREEDOM. I left Offutt AFB in March 2015 for NATO Geilenkirchen Air Base. I work in Squadron 1 as the Operations Superintendent and fly on the E-3A AWACS as a Systems Technician with about 700 hours on the E-3A. I earned my Instructor rating a couple of months ago. Working in this international environment is greatly rewarding, learning about all the other cultures and other viewpoints of basically anything has been quite the eye-opener as I expected.

Enough about me, now to talk about my family and hobbies. I married Amber, my better half, in 2011 and we have a son and a daughter; Abe who is four and a half, and Athea who is a little over a year old. We were only able to bring over one of our pets, our cat Peppey La Pew, named after the cartoon character except it's his belly that is white instead of his back. We enjoy travelling and seeing the history that Europe has to offer. Just recently we went on an epic road trip to Berlin, Poznan, Krakow, Prague, and Munich. Last year we were able to go to Normandy and see Omaha Beach in December.

For fun, I continue to educate myself about information systems. I am currently working on learning the Python programming language as part of my aspirations to become a full stack web developer (that involves designing web pages and the systems behind the scenes too); I earned my Bachelors of Science in Information Systems a couple of years ago. Before I get to mess around on my computer I try my hand at woodworking (I have many projects Pinterested), playing video games on my Xbox (currently Battlefield 1 at the moment, and am a huge fan of the Fallout and Elder Scrolls series), trying to play the Piano and Trumpet (nowhere near as good as when I played the Tuba), and playing with my son’s toys while he tries to take apart what I’ve made. I currently am the Community Director for the Top 3 for the Tri-Border area and the President for Catholic Parish Advisory Council at Geilenkirchen.

I look forward to becoming more involved with the American Legion post and seeing all of my fellow comrades at meetings and functions.
William Leonard Eagle Scout Ceremony

It was a great honor and privilege to present the Good Citizenship Citation to BSA Troop 100 newest Eagle Scout William David Leonard!

An OUTSTANDING achievement and a true credit to his wonderful family! Leonard gave thanks to his Mother Jodi and father Terry. He also thanked his scouting mentors, especially Scout Master Billy Raine! Huge thanks to Post Historian Dennis Owens for the photos! Post NL01 looks forward to providing continue support to Troop 100! ~ Commander Ray
The American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic, mutual-help, and community service organization, which now numbers 2.4 million - men and women - in more than 14,000 American Legion Posts worldwide. These Posts are organized into 55 Departments – one each for the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, France, Mexico, and the Philippines.

The American Legion has its headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana, with offices in Washington, D.C. In addition to thousands of volunteers, serving in leadership and program implementation capacities from the communities to the Legion’s standing national commissions and committees, the national organization has a professional staff of about 250 employees.

Membership eligibility in The American Legion is based on honorable service within the U.S. Armed Forces between April 6, 1917 and November 11, 1918 (World War I); December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946 (World War II); June 25, 1950, and January 31, 1955 (Korean war); December 22, 1961, and May 7, 1975 (Vietnam War); August 24, 1982, and July 31, 1984 (Lebanon/Grenada); December 20, 1989, and January 31, 1990 (Operation Just Cause – Panama); or August 2, 1990, until the date of the end of hostilities as determined by the government of the United States.

On October 14th Legionnaires Andy Clevenger and Historian Dennis Owens supporting the B17 42-3195 75th Commemoration. The ceremony started at 13:50hrs which was the time of day the B17 crashed. Always remember.

For God and Country we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the great wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and good will on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy; to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.
The Department of France Commander James Dennis and Department Chaplain Harvey Briggs III pay tribute to late veteran Robert Lee Smith at the start of the 2nd Department Executive Committee.

The Post did a great job doing “Bagger for a Day” at USAG Schinnen Commissary. We also had a Awareness Table going! Many Thanks to Krista Davis, Kiara Valencia, Ron Macauley & Son, Harvey Briggs, Jim Brotherton, and Andy Clevenger. ~ Commander Ray

Post Historian Dennis Owens visited the Irish Posts as part of his Department officer duties. He was able to mount our Post license plate on the wall of a historic pub on the 100 year anniversary of the end of the Great War.
The American Legion Extension Institute has been rewritten, updated, streamlined and enhanced with videos, digital photos, clickable links, a historical timeline and additional features. The program should take less than two hours to complete. It is divided into six sections, with a quiz at the end of each one, followed by a final exam.

The course is free for members. The training took me a little over 2 hours to complete, but there is no time limit on the course. You can return to where you left off anytime you wish for as many times as you want. Once complete you will get a printable Certificate of Completion and the opportunity to order the redesigned lapel/cap pin pictured above.

I found this training to be a great jumping off point for any new legionnaire. Anyone who participates in Awareness Drives should have this information in their toolbag!

As an Historian I of course found the History & Organization module to be the most interesting and fun but the section on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation was very eye-opening.

This Basic Training package is an outstanding gateway of knowledge into the nation’s largest veteran’s service organization and an opportunity not to be missed.

After taking the course it opens your eyes to what we really can accomplish and do. I never really knew how much the Legion was involved in. Should have joined years ago! ~ Post NL01 Sgt-at-Arms Mark Chernek
Words from Service Officer Ron

We consider ourselves quite lucky to have Ron Macauley as our SO. As you read in our last newsletter, Ron’s civilian job carries many of the responsibilities and tasks asked of a Legion Post Service Officer. Part of Ron’s job entails keeping veterans informed of their benefits and any change in policy that could affect those benefits. ~ Commander Ray

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Make a One-On-One Appointment!

DATE: 3 & 4 December 2018
TIME: 9 am-4 pm
PLACE: JFC Brunssum Library Conference Room

The Veteran's Administration (VA) will have a representative at the JFC Brunssum library on 19 & 20 Sep 2018 from 9 am - 4 pm to meet with anyone who would like a one-on-one appointment. If you have any questions about your *Veteran’s benefits, now or in the future, this is the person to speak with.

*To those who are looking for answers specifically on disability and compensation there will also be a VA representative present who specializes in this area.

To schedule an appointment, please call DSN: 314-606-244-3848 or CIV 045-526-3848 -or- E-mail: ronald.macauley.civ@mail.mil

November is Military Family Appreciation Month!

Throughout the month, military families are honored and recognized for their commitment and contributions in support of our military and nation.
Top Left: Max participations during October Meeting! Top Right: SO Ron and Warren T enjoying the Brisket!

Middle Left: Commander Ray presenting Jim Scott his Eifel Pin!

Middle Right: Presenting Rosalie Smith the Post POW/MIA Coin as a memento to honor her late husband Robert Lee Smith.

Bottom: MARGRATEN STRONG FRONT AND CENTER!
Faces of Margraten Initiative

Almost two-thirds of all soldiers now have a face!
Ever since Sebastiaain Vonk and the Faces of Margraten (FOM) Group allowed our Post to actively participate in and help with the setup and recollection efforts of FOM last May, we have been actively looking for the remaining faces of our fallen heroes. We will post on this page all the faces we have found as part of this effort. If you are interested in joining the effort, please contact us at Margraten.Post.NL01@gmail.com

We would like to thank Carbon County School District in Utah for their months of searching and finding the picture of TSgt. John Mancina!

1st Lieutenant Charles N. Todd
Sergeant Ray Beachler
TSgt. John Mancina

HAPPY THANKSGIVING