THE DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE
FEBRUARY 2009 NEWSLETTER

THE AMERICAN LEGION
Department of France

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My fellow Legionaries

Thanks to those post that helped the department reach the 85% target date. Also thanks to the post that reached 100% you are doing a great job and my cap is off to you. The posts that have not submitted a transmital for this year, you need to get on the ball. Thanks to Comrade Umland (membership Chairman) for his support to the department for taking the time to drive to Denmark Copenhagen Post01 and help inspire their membership in less than two weeks the post has gone from 4 to 16 members. If the Chairman can do this why can’t the Vice Commanders do the same thing with their assigned post? The DEC is 20-22 March in Paris; Paris Post FR01 has done a great job in getting this event along with its planned Ceremonies organized, my cap is off to the Commander and the Adjutant for a job well done. We had an Awards Manual Review in Heilbronn the proposed changes will not take effect until the next membership year. I would like to thank all the Vice Commanders for getting actively involved in the process. I was able to visit GR01 ECM on the 14th of Feb at the Barbarosahof in K-town ref to the Department Convention 2009. We visited the proposed site, for the convention GR01 will present its final package at the 3rd DEC; they are doing a great job at preparing for the convention. I was able to talk to the following post via phone GR01, (1st Vice and adjutant) GR03 (Commander), GR07 (Commander/Adjutant), GR09 (Commander/Adjutant), GR13 (Adjutant) GR14 (Commander/Adjutant), GR30 (Commander), Gr42 (Commander/Adjutant), GR1982 (Commander), and GR01(Commander/Adjutant) Most of the post are doing good, however a few have problems and are doing their best to resolve them and move forward. GR03 conducted its Oratorical contest on the 7th of Feb, great job done by the members of GR03, and congratulations to the winner Blake W. Billmaier, 2nd place winner Stuart J. Gujrul, and 3rd place winner Eileen K. Shannon. GR06 also held its Oratorical Contest and their winner was Christina Lowery. The department final will be the 28th of February2009 in Stuttgart. It will begin at 1600 hours at the Community Center (next to the Theater) on Patch Barracks. Keep in mind the National Commander will be visiting us on the 27th-31st of May 2009. We are in the process of making a plan if you wish for him to visit your post please start working on it now and let us know what your plans are. For those posts that are going to

Department Commander’s Corner

The Department of France is not a USAREUR & 7th Army approved private organization.

Any Department Officer, Committee Chair, Program Director or Post can input material to this newsletter. Input is due the Last week of the month, not later than the 26th of the month for next month’s newsletter.

Department Calendar
February is Americanism Month
28 February Department Oratorical Finals (Stuttgart)

Birthdays
Comrade W. Wiessner GR06 03 February
Comrade D. Sears GR01 14 February
Comrade P. Gatchell GR03 16 February
Comrade R. Lindsey GR09 18 February
Comrade Hanchak GR42 21 February
As always, I stress to all of you to take a few moments out of your busy day and say a small prayer for all of our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines, that are still in harm’s way that they may return home safely to their loved ones. May God bless you all. If you are having any problems please do not hesitate to contact your Post Officers, Department VC, or myself.

For GOD and Country  
Joe D. Brown  
Department Commander

From the Department Adjutant: My Fellow Legionnaires,  
As you know the Oratorical event is upon us I do hope you are supporting this program. It is a great communication tool of our future leaders. GR03 conducted its Oratorical contest on the 7th of Feb, great job done by the members of GR03, and congratulations to the winner Blake W. Billmaier, 2nd place winner Stuart J. Gujral, and 3rd place winner Eileen K. Shannon. GR06 also held its Oratorical Contest and their winner was Christina Lowery. The department final will be the 28th of February 2009 in Stuttgart. It will begin at 1600 hours at the Community Center (next to the Theater) on Patch Barracks. If you have any questions concerning the Oratorical Chairman Comrade Clemence at dclemence@aol.com Please ensure you send Doug your contest winner’s names prior to the 28th of February 2009. The 3rd DEC will be held in Paris, France, March 20-22 2009. We will also support Paris Post FR01 to celebrate its 90th anniversary; (See attached document) I hope to see you all there supporting this great event. Those of you that wish to supply inputs to the Department Newsletter please send your input tojamericanlegion@hotmail.com. In closing please remember if you need to contact me I am just an E-mail away pisces@t-online.de. Please keep those in harm’s way and their families, not only in your thoughts but your prayers as well.

James M. Settle  
Department Adjutant

Department NECman’s  
A reminder, don’t forget the National Commander will be here in May. If you plan on hosting a event start planning for it now.  
William Marshall  
Department NECman

Vice Commander’s Corner  
Vice Commander at Large Liam Kane  
BE02, DK01, FR01, FR05, IR02, IR03, IT01, GC01, NL01, PO01, SP292, CH01

It’s nice to be back and out and about again thanks for the cards, e-mails phone calls etc. Since I last reported on my activities to you I have been busy In. December I attended the Installation of Officers at PARIS POST FR01 and it was as usual a big affair, the attendance was larger than in 2007. The meal that followed was its normal high standard of course Post Commander Clarita was responsible for meal. Four days later I was in Germany attending an important meeting of GR05 at the request of our Commander Charlie Brown. My next port of call was the AGM of GR03 where I again travelled with the Department. Commander and I returned home via a meeting of 40&8. On 13th Dec I met Santa in GR03 as Charlie was at another Post function VC Gray was also there to see Santa alias George Hall surely the best stand in that I ever saw...Off to Ireland again for a Post Christmas Celebration and then I hopped over to Portugal Post 01 and had the honor of presenting them with their Charter (I deputized for Department. Commander and ADJ James Settle who had finally resolved “The Charter Problem”. The Post held a lovely dinner in the Headquarters of the Portuguese Naval Academy in Cassias. After an overnight rest it was home sweet home, packed my bags and headed to Boston and spent a few weeks with my sister in a very cold spell. I had a meeting with Adjutant Lionel Morais of Rome post in January and then the BUG got me but thank God and good Doctors, it was caught in time despite losing a huge amount of blood I am now much better. Had a IR63 Post Meeting on a sad note we lost a real gentleman in our Post he was in the Legion for 23 years Michael Rudden was a great member and his wife Kathleen always was there to help out we will miss them. I have been in contact with my Posts to get them to reach their 100%. Most Posts are making the effort and hopefully we will meet our target again and we need to give Mike Umland all the renewals etc we can obtain and to reach him at his home address before 4th Feb. 2009 is here and of course the big DEC in March in Paris where the push is on to make it a memorable occasion for us all, so make your bookings early and don’t forget the “German Bus”. For the coming year my wish is for our Department to prosper, achieve goals (membership) to be united has one, to eliminate all but good feelings towards all fellow members we can achieve these goals if we want to. There is an Irish proverb and it goes like this---- Ar aídh linn le cheile ---- Forward Together -- Hope to see you all over the next few months, don’t forget the flowers on 14th Feb. P.S. to all collectors of American Legion Badges, Pins etc please contact me and I will put you in contact with a member who has some very old ones.

Liam Kane  
Vice Commander at Large
Vice Commander Shawn Ashe  
GR05, GR06, GR30  
Greetings my fellow Legionaries, Auxiliary, and S.A.L. Members  

NO INPUT FOR THIS MONTH  
Shawn Ashe  
Department Vice Commander

Vice Commander Robert Gray  
GR03, GR07, GR09, GR14  
Hello comrades, I wish everyone and their family’s good health and spirit. This month, I had the honor to visit post GR03. I was very happy to see the programs they performed, and the way they handled the swearing-in ceremonies of new members. I also would like to thank Commander Ed Sharman, for the way he conducted his meetings and for his membership. I also want to thank my fellow comrades of, GR03, for the way they look out for each other. I've also found the post to be very active in the community, especially, in their retirement areas to include children and youth. Going to month of January, we lost a lot of our membership. I also want to thank Commander, Ed Sharman, for the way he handled the swearing-in ceremonies of new members. I also want to thank everyone for doing their part in the membership drive, however, I would like to thank especially, GR03, GR07, GR09, GR14. I know you done your best and that makes me very proud to be a vice Commander. I also want to thank all of you all for keeping me informed of your upcoming events. As I communicate with other vice Commanders, I'm always proud of the posts in which I have. I personally feel bonded and gifted to have such posts. Although, I also want to take this time to remind everyone to start working on the award packages. For the commanders if they have any problems in addressing this issue, please, feel free to contact me and I will assist you in every way I can. Again, please keep me posted on upcoming events in your area, and on our fellow comrades. This being said I wish all a blessed and joyful February.

Robert Gray  
Department Vice Commander

Vice Commander Frank Hanchak  
GR01, GR20, GR45  
"On January, the 11th 1985 three members of "C" Battery, 3rd Battalion, 84th Field Artillery died when a section of a Pershing II exploded on the area of "Fort Red leg", in Southwest-Germany. 9 other members were injured... Let us not forget: SSG John Leach; SGT Todd A. Zepher, and PFC Darryl L. Shirley”  
(Excerpt from a speech by GR-79 Commander Darrel Shannon)

On January 11th, I visited with Commander Shannon and the membership of John Wayne Post GR-79 at Fort Redleg on the Waldeheide in Heilbronn. The Post holds this annual remembrance ceremony every year. This is the third time I have witnessed this solemn event. I feel great pride in my heart to know that as long as members of Post GR-79 are living in Heilbronn, these three soldiers, who gave all, will always be remembered. Thank you Commander Shannon and Legionnaires of Heilbronn for this wonderful service that you are offering! Plans are progressing for the DEC in Paris this March. It will be the 90th anniversary of the birth of this great organization. I can’t wait to tell future Legionnaires that I attended this historic event. Mark you calendars and let you Post Commander or Adjutant know that you want to be there too! You won’t regret it! I have to comment on the election of our new Commander In Chief. Although I voted for the other guy, I feel great pride and hope because of the election and inauguration of President Barack Obama. It makes me think of Leadership. President Obama seems to be off to a great start. He has surrounded himself with people who have a wealth of knowledge and experience and I hope he (and they) will guide us into a better future where we so desperately need to be. God Bless President Obama, and God Bless The American Legion!

Frank J. Hanchak  
Department Vice Commander  
frank.hanchak@gmail.com  
0171-473-9782

NO INPUT FOR THIS MONTH  

Vice Commander Jerry Aman  
GR13, GR42, GR79, GR1982, IR63  

Department Vice Commander  

Department Chaplain Ronald Moore  
NO INPUT FOR THIS MONTH  

God bless all of you and God bless our servicemen and women and all who are serving in our defense.  

Service to God and Country!  

Pastor Ronald Moore,  
Dept of France Chaplain  
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Rev. Ronald Moore  
Department Chaplain

Department Service Officer George Hall  
NO INPUT FOR THIS MONTH  

George Hall  
Department Service Officer

Sons of The American Legion Frank Hanchak  
CHANGE! MISTAKE! PAY ATTENTION! The next SAL Detachment Executive Committee meeting will be on March 14, 2009 at MANNHEIM Squadron 07. Last month, I wrote that the DEC will be in Kitzingen, which is INCORRECT. The error was mine and I thank SAL NECMAN John Odom and SAL ADJ James Dennis for catching my mistake.

Frank J. Hanchak  
Commander,  
Detachment of France  
Sons of The American Legion
Americanism Carl Hackworth
Don't forget February is AMERICANISM MONTH. Hopefully your post has planned events for this, and that you have either done a project or will do one in the near future. Please advise me of what your post did for the program.
Carl Hackworth
Americanism Chairman

Frank Hanchak Commander GR42
The Four Chaplains were four United States Army chaplains who gave their lives to save other soldiers during the sinking of the USAT Dorchester during World War II. They helped other soldiers board lifeboats and gave up their life jackets when the supply ran out; 230 of the 904 men aboard the ship were rescued. Life jackets offered little protection from hypothermia which killed most men in the water. Water temperature was 34 °F (1 °C) and air temperature was 36 °F (2 °C). By the time additional rescue ships arrived "...hundreds of dead bodies were seen floating on the water, kept up by their life jackets...."

Frank J. Hanchak
Post Commander
Omar Bradley Post GR-42
The American Legion

Edward Sherman Commander GR03
On Saturday 7 February 2009 we conducted our Oratorical Contest at the Heidelberg High School. Originally we had 5 to 8 contestants scheduled but only 3 participated.

The contestants were:
Blake W. Billmaier (12th Grade) (1st Place Gold) Contest Winner
Stuart J. Gujral (12th Grade) (2nd Place Silver)
Eileen K. Shannon (11th Grade) (3rd Place Bronze)

Mr Billmaier will compete at Department Level scheduled for 28 February 2009 in Stuttgart Germany. At the Community Center, Patch Barracks with a start time of 16:00 hrs. The start time may be moved up to an earlier time depending on Community Center availability.

Edward Sherman
Commander
Post GR-03
Heidelberg

Department Scouting Chairman David Sears
The American Legion annually honors The American Legion Eagle Scout of the Year at its National convention. The National winner of the competition receives a $10,000 scholarship and the three runners-up are each awarded a $2,500 scholarship.

Forms for nominating Boy Scouts for The American Legion 2009 Eagle Scout of the Year award are available on the internet at www.legion.org. From the main page, select Programs and Events, and then Scouting. From the resulting page, you will be able to download the 2009 nominating form.

Department of France Awards Board will convene in Early March. There for please submit any American Legion Department of France to the Department Scouting Coordinator no later than 25 February. A panel of Legionnaires will then select the Department Eagle Scout of the Year and that nomination will be submitted to National Headquarters. That National Eagle Scout of the Year will be announced during the 2009 Annual Convention of Fourth Department Executive Committee Meeting at Kaiserslautern in June.

The American Legion Eagle Scout of The Year: The nominee must be a registered, active member of a Boy Scout Troop, Varsity Scout Team, or Venturing Crew chartered to an American Legion Post, Auxiliary Unit or Sons of The American Legion Squadron. Or, be a registered, active member of a duly chartered Boy Scout Troop, Varsity Scout Team, or Venturing Crew, and the son or grandson of a Legionnaire or Auxiliary member. Additionally must have received the Eagle Scout, be an active member of his religious institution and must have received the appropriate Boy Scout religious emblem, have demonstrated practical citizenship in church, school, Scouting, and community, have reached his 15th birthday and be enrolled in a DODDS High School, International Schools or Accredited Home School program at the time of selection. Eagle Scouts still in high school who reached their 18th birthday during the nomination year remain eligible if otherwise qualified. (See attached Form)

The American Legion, Department of France Scouting Chairman is David Sears dsears@kabelmail.de

Scouting Chairman
David Sears

Info from Gilbert Wells Portugal Post PO01 Adjutant

Survival Guide for Veterans
Far too often, military veterans find themselves desperately short of the information they need as they make the torturous quest for benefits within one of this country’s most daunting bureaucracies, the Department of Veterans Affairs. Officials say help is on the way, but administrators are forever promising to streamline procedures for an era of conquered paperwork that never seems to come. That is why it is heartening to see that one promising form of help has indeed arrived: a 599-page guide to veterans’ issues, from educational help to vocational rehabilitation, from housing to citizenship. It’s
called “The American Veterans’ and Servicemembers’ Survival Guide,” and it comes, unsurprisingly, from outside the system. It is a publication of the nonprofit advocacy group Veterans for America, available as a free download at veteransforamerica.org. This electronic book is a descendant of “The Viet Vet Survival Guide,” which was published a decade after the end of that conflict — when veterans were still being routinely and shamefully denied their rights. The new book was written by veterans and lawyers for a new generation of soldiers with old problems, like post-traumatic stress, and new ones like traumatic brain injury, the brutal legacy of Iraq’s and Afghanistan’s roadside bombs. The authors caution that while the guide will help a veteran understand what’s going on, it is not a substitute for a good lawyer or other advocate. And it isn’t the only source of information: The government, too, has vast Web sites explaining things — for example, how officers help veterans through the disability evaluation system. (In military acronyms, it’s how the Physical Evaluation Board Liaison Officer, or Peblo, helps with the D.E.S.) The “Survival Guide” does this, too, but with a difference: It also warns veterans to “pay careful attention to what you say to your Peblo,” because the Peblo is not required to act in their best interests the way an attorney is, and things told to a Peblo are not necessarily confidential. No book will ever defeat a bureaucracy this large, but a book can help people to subdue it. Veterans and their families often praise the dedication of health-care providers, but at the same time express utter frustration over incomprehensible thickets of rules and the glacial pace at which benefits and appeals are decided. Unless and until the government significantly improves its treatment of veterans — and our hopes are high for progress under Gen. Eric Shinseki, President-elect Barack Obama’s nominee to run Veterans Affairs — they will have to keep looking to one another for help, as they always have. This veterans’ guide looks like a powerful updating of that old tradition. Article reported by New York Times, December 2008

Gilbert Wells
Adjutant Portugal PostPO01
Commander Edward Sherman Presents Blake W. Billmaier 1st Place, Gold Award and $300.00 Check
POST HAPPENINGS

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

GR01: First Wednesday day of the month at Post Home
GR03: First Thursday of the month Post Home
GR06: Second Wednesday of the month Post Home
GR07: First Tuesday of the month Post Home
GR13: Third Saturday of the month 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 Past Com. House
PO01: Third Wednesday of the month Past Com. House
IR03: First Saturday in April, first Sat. in Oct for elections

Editor’s Note:
Please support your Newsletter, send all inputs to the below listed E-mail address. Note new suspense date for Newsletter inputs is the 26th of the month. Remember anyone in the Department can submit inputs to the Department Newsletter.
americanlegion@hotmail.com
James M. Settle
Department Adjutant / Editor