### Department Officers - 2015 Membership Year

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<tr>
<th>Officer Type</th>
<th>Name/Title</th>
<th>GR/Post Numbers</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMANDER</strong></td>
<td>James M. Settle</td>
<td>GR42</td>
<td><a href="mailto:james.settle@kabelbw.de">james.settle@kabelbw.de</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADJUTANT</strong></td>
<td>Maxwell Rice</td>
<td>GR79</td>
<td><a href="mailto:colwichboy@yahoo.com">colwichboy@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NECMAN</strong></td>
<td>John Miller</td>
<td>GR1982</td>
<td><a href="mailto:miller-roth@t-online.de">miller-roth@t-online.de</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ALT. NECMAN</strong></td>
<td>Liam Kane</td>
<td>IR63</td>
<td><a href="mailto:commtiam@gmail.com">commtiam@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VICE COMMANDER AT LARGE</strong></td>
<td>Joe D. Brown</td>
<td>GR79 GR03 GR07 GR13 GR30 GR42 &amp; New Post Development <a href="mailto:Joean.pascal1@googlemail.com">Joean.pascal1@googlemail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VICE COMMANDER</strong></td>
<td>Stephen Ward</td>
<td>GR01</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wardtrans@yahoo.com">wardtrans@yahoo.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Quincy Foster</td>
<td>GR05</td>
<td><a href="mailto:achange@qcfoster.com">achange@qcfoster.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VICE COMMANDER</strong></td>
<td>Jerry Aman</td>
<td>GR09</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jerrya503@aol.com">Jerrya503@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VICE COMMANDER</strong></td>
<td>Casby Logan</td>
<td>GR07 GR05 GR09 GR45 GR79 DK01 NL01 <a href="mailto:casbyj@hotmail.com">casbyj@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPELAIN</strong></td>
<td>Ronald Moore</td>
<td>GR05</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gypsy_moore@yahoo.de">gypsy_moore@yahoo.de</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HISTORIAN</strong></td>
<td>Michael Keating</td>
<td>IR02</td>
<td><a href="mailto:michael.keating@t-online.de">michael.keating@t-online.de</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FINANCE OFFICER</strong></td>
<td>Gary Miller</td>
<td>GR06</td>
<td><a href="mailto:billsfan_gary@hotmail.com">billsfan_gary@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SERVICE OFFICER</strong></td>
<td>George Hall</td>
<td>GR03</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hallgt@hotmail.com">hallgt@hotmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>JUDGE ADVOCATE</strong></td>
<td>George W. Seeburger</td>
<td>GR14</td>
<td><a href="mailto:gwseeburger@gmx.de">gwseeburger@gmx.de</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SERGEANT-AT-ARMS</strong></td>
<td>Hal Rittenberg</td>
<td>GR09</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rittenberg@t-online.de">rittenberg@t-online.de</a></td>
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</table>
DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

James Settle

My Fellow Legionaries

I hope all of you had a safe and very Merry, and safe Christmas. And I do hope all of you and your families have a Very happy and prosperous New Year in 2015.

Our membership program has fallen off this year. We are way behind the power curve where membership is concerned. We did not manage to make a %100 percent renewal by 31 December 2014, and in addition we did not make the last two national target dates. Commanders, Adjutants, and Membership Chairman, we have let our members down, by not ensuring timely renewals, hopefully we will turn this around in 2015. As leaders of the largest war-time veterans’ organization in the world; we have an obligation to our members and to the organization to keep the American Legion strong. The way we do this is by having a growing and robust membership that allows us to continue to have the lead amongst the veteran’s community. We owe our members and our programs our maximum efforts in this endeavor.

Our next big event is The Department Oratorical Final which will be held in February 2015 in Stuttgart, hosted by GR01. Now is the time to start preparing for this event. I would really like to see more contestants at this year’s event, and more support from the posts. If your area does not have a DoD School offer support/help to a post that does, this worked out just fine the last few years between other post. If you have conducted your post finials please ensure that you provide the name of your contestant to the Department Adjutant, Comrade Rice so he can prepare some of the required paperwork, in advance. Comrade Rice’s E-mail address are colwichboy@yahoo.com or Max.Rice@lavatec- laundry.com. A Date, Time, and Location will be published shortly.

The American Legion National Commander Michael D. Helm will be visiting the Department of France from May 29th till June 3rd 2015. If you would like the National Commander to visit your post please let either myself or the Department Adjutant know, we are working on the itinerary, at this time.

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. I encourage and challenge all Commanders, Adjutants, and Membership Chairmen to contact those members who have not renewed for 2015, and have them renew their membership ASAP. If you have any questions on membership do not hesitate to contact me or the Membership Chairman Comrade Brown, at joedan.pascal1@googlemail.com. He can answer your questions and resolve any problems you are having with membership.

In closing, I wish all of you a Very Happy and prosperous New Year, in 2015. Please stay safe and watch out for one another during this upcoming year. Please keep those in harm's way and their families, in your thoughts and prayers also.

James M. Settle
Department Commander

Phone: 07138-67359
E-Mail: james.settle@kabelbw.de

The Department Web Page is: www.AmerLegionDeptFrance.org
The department has a Face Book page at the following

www.facebook.com/AI.DepFrance. Please visit and like this page. Thanks

To all Department of France Officers, Past Department Commanders, Post Commanders and Delegates, Committee Chairpersons and Program Directors...

The Third Department DEC is planned for 21 March 2015 and it will be hosted by GR30 / GR42

The Official Call will be sent out at a later date
Dear Legion Family Members and Friends,

As a new year soon dawns, individuals and organizations will look back and reflect on the highlights of the past 12 months. For individuals, those highlights might be the birth of a child or grandchild, a marriage, promotion or career change.

I hope this year has brought you and your family many moments to cherish for years to come. For our organization, it truly has been a remarkable and historic year of advocacy for those who have served our nation in uniform.

Most notably, The American Legion took the lead nationally when the VA crisis erupted last April. We stood up for the veterans we represent, and the values we stand for, when we called for reforms, including leadership changes at the highest levels of VA. We took that bold step in order to improve access to care, help untangle the benefits backlog and restore trust between veterans and VA.

We did not sit on the sidelines as details of VA mismanagement cropped up across the nation. The American Legion instituted Veterans Crisis Command Centers (VCCCs) in communities hardest hit by VA errors. At these centers, more than 3,000 veterans received personal assistance with their benefits claims, overdue appointments and many other issues. VA staff joined us in these events, seeing firsthand what it means to tackle a national problem at the local level, face to face.

Beyond our leadership on the VA issue, The American Legion has other success stories from 2014. Among them:

- When Congress approved legislation making future cuts to cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) for military retirees, The American Legion launched an aggressive campaign to have those cuts repealed. U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham said the Legion's efforts played a significant role in that move.

- The American Legion also focused support on the needs of the post 9/11 generation of veterans. We have helped secure credentialing changes in all 50 states, which will assist new veterans as they transition into careers ranging from emergency medicine to truck driving.

- Legionnaires provided comfort, relief and aid to thousands of veterans, military families and communities through our various programs. Your donations helped provide financial boosts to those in need, rehabilitation equipment for wounded servicemembers and scholarship funds for children who lost active-duty military parents in the war on terrorism. Among the success stories: the Legion Riders raised $1 million for the Legacy Scholarship Fund.

There are many reasons to look ahead to 2015 with an expectation of continued progress and impact. Our organization will conduct Veterans Benefit Centers next year on a monthly basis to continue providing boots on the ground, active engagement with VA staff and others, in communities where veterans are still having trouble receiving the assistance they earned through honorable military service.

We will continue to comfort injured servicemembers, provide assistance to families in need, and distribute aid to those recovering from natural disasters. Please consider a tax-deductible donation to support of the Legion program of your choice at this web page.

I wish you and your family a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

For God and Country,

Michael D. Helm
American Legion National Commander

DIGITAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN...

As you may be aware, The American Legion has recently embarked on an extensive digital marketing campaign involving internet advertising to stimulate interest in The American Legion, its programs and services. Part of this campaign directs interested people to a unique landing page that is designed to explain The American Legion, its values and its efforts to help veterans and communities.

This internet landing page has recently been updated, and now includes more information and a dynamic video that concisely explains what The American Legion is all about. I encourage you to visit the website at: www.thelegionserves.org

This site can be viewed by anyone interested in The American Legion. I encourage you to share this link with your friends and family. This site encourages individuals to join, donate and purchase patriotic merchandise from The American Legion.

While the site offers the opportunity to join online and become a member at the national level, the site can also be used as a recruiting tool at the local level. You can refer someone to the page to see all that we do, and then encourage them to become active at the local level by joining your post.

The purpose of this program is to spread the word about the great things that The American Legion does to help our veterans and to strengthen America. By expanding our reach, we are trying to engage people unfamiliar with The American Legion, and as a result continue to keep The American Legion a vital part of American life. This digital marketing campaign combined with the Direct Response Television (DRTV) campaign greatly enhances the perception and image of The American Legion.
American Legion National Commander Mike Helm’s fundraising goal during his year-long tenure as national commander is to raise $4 million in Legion family charity program donations. Donations will support The American Legion’s six charities: Operation Comfort Warriors, Legacy Scholarship Fund, National Emergency Fund, Child Welfare Foundation, Endowment Fund and Soldier’s Wish. Several Auxiliary charities are also a part of Helm’s $4 million fundraising goal, including the Emergency Fund, Spirit of Youth Scholarship Fund, Children of Warriors National President’s Workshop and American Legion Auxiliary Foundation. Helm is rewarding those who make a donation to American Legion Charities with his "Stay On Course" fundraising pin. Any individual who donates $100 or more to the funds will receive a pin. Three pins will be awarded to any Legion post, Auxiliary unit, Sons of The American Legion squadron or Legion Riders chapter that donates $500 or more. To donate to American Legion Charities, visit www.legion.org/donate.
Who is Responsible for Getting the Word Out? You!

The Legion Must Not Die on Our Watch! We Owe Growth to Our Predecessors, Current Veterans, and Those to Come

How to Recruit & Retain Members
1. Educate yourself as to the Legion’s Missions. Know the purpose of The Americans Legion Four Pillars.
2. Educate yourself on the past and present services to our Veteran’s, our Children, our Community, and Nation
3. Form a Membership Recruitment Team
4. Ask Wartime Vets to Join Your Post

Welcome the New Member
1. Find out His/her area of interest and expertise
2. Assign new members to a committee
3. Continue to mentor and teach new members about Legion
4. Elect new member to Post Office

How to Keep Existing Members
1. Create a District/Post Membership Team
2. Train existing members, and new Officers on membership recruiting and retention.
3. Improve Post Appearance
4. Recruit from Available Pools of Veterans
5. Review Expired Member List from www.mylegion.org
6. Keep your Post and Membership in the good eye of the General Public, dress the part at Post Meetings and in Public
7. Importance’s of Welcoming & Mentoring New Members

How to Retain Existing Members
1. Ongoing Mentoring Good officers just don’t fall from the sky armed with the knowledge necessary to do the job. Like new members, officers who have never been mentored remain as wet behind their ears as they were when they first joined the Legion. If they were never mentored or asked to be on a committee, then the office will either go vacant or be held by someone not fit for the job. In either case, the Post will gradually wither away like an unattended garden.
2. Active & Rewarding Committee Assignments
3. Importance of an Interesting Annual Calendar of Events
4. Advanced planning to encourage attendance at Post meetings and Post functions.
DUAL MEMBERS PUT ON THEIR 40&8 CAPS TO SERVE DINNER TO THE HOMELESS

The final year end push for Paid Up For Life membership has been a great success. Over the last 15 days, 751 American Legion members have converted their annual membership to a PUFL. As of today, Dec 11th -- 18,419 have joined. Becoming a Paid Up For Life member in The American Legion is easier than ever before. For more information regarding the fund go to www.legion.org/pufl. After providing a name and ID number, the member will receive a cost quote; he or she can pay by credit card or print out a personalized form and mail it in with a check. Those without an ID number can contact Customer Service at 1-800-433-3318 for their personalized offer.

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Department Total:

| TOTAL | REGULAR | DEP | GOAL | 3:300 | DEP 3:300 | GOAL 3:300 | 71.33% | 2354 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1723 | 2307 | 0 | 0 | 3300 | 493 | 0 | 3300 | 71.33% | 2354 |

100% By the 31 DECEMBER 2014

National Goal for Department is 3,300 Members

NL 01

GR 01

GR 04

GR 00

GR 01
Greetings, Commander’s & Legionnaires,

As the Department of France Vice Commander, I have been assigned the following Posts: John F. Kennedy Post IR63 Facebook site: www.facebook.com/AmericanLegionIRL, Einel Post GR-20, Riveria Post FR-05, Madrid Post SP-292, and Portugal (Nun Alvare Pereira) Post PO-01. Doug Haggan (FODPAL Secretary) is asking the Department and Posts to submit pictures and small articles to the FODPAL website: http://www.legion.org Click Members FODPAL site listed at Quick Links. FODPAL (Foreign and Outlying Departments and Posts of The American Legion) is asking for special programs & events and Facebook sites. The Department of France Newsletters is posted on the FODPAL website. Click Newsletters. Also, listed in the FODPAL Newsletter site is Lisbon Portugal Post PO01. It’s listed in the FODPAL site: www.legion.org Click Members Click FODPAL Click Newsletters.

The dedication ceremony at the Heritage Room (Lisbon U.S. Embassy) was renamed Lance Corporal Joaquima Vaz Rebelo Killed in Action Vietnam. Joaquima Rebelo was born and raised in Portugal until his parents relocated to New Jersey. He graduated from high school afterwards enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps. The presentation conducted (12 December 14) by Master Gunnery Sergeant Aaron Smith with the Portugal U.S. Ambassador John Sherman, Maria DeJesus (Cousin of LCPL. Rebelo), Gilbert Wells (Adjutant, Post PO01), Stephen A. Ward (Department Vice Commander), and the embassy staff. The pictures and article of the event were sent to the Department of France Commander (James Settle), Department of France Editor (David Greaux), and Doug Haggan (FODPAL Secretary).

Irish Veterans Charter #1 plans to dedicate (tentative April 17-19, 2015) to the memory of U.S. SEAL Lt. Michael P. Murphy, Medal of Honor, Killed in Action Afghanistan, 2005. His parents from the States plans to bring the MOH at the dedication ceremony. A special evening dinner is planned at the White House Hotel town of Kinsale (West Cork). The Irish Veterans Charter #1 plans to establish Irish Veterans International Research & Heritage Centre in the town of Kinsale, Ireland. Commander Ron Howko (Commodore John Barry Post IR-03) is a guest speaker at the event. For more information of the event, contact Declan Hughes Declan@irishveteans.org or James Sikora james@irishveterans.org

I stress the importance of membership in the Posts, Department, and the National Organization. Membership is our Voice on Capitol Hill. I encourage the Posts to transmit each month to the Department Membership Chairman (Joe Dan Brown). Check out the Online Renewal at: www.legion.org

Commanders & Fellow Legionnaires, many thanks for what you do for your Posts and the communities you serve. The Department of France Commander asks to continue membership and Post Renewals. Retention maintains strong membership within the Posts, Department, and the Organization. The Good Fellow Award must be submitted to the Department of France before the 3rd DEC. It’s a Recognition Award to a non-member of the Organization who had demonstrated outstanding service (Volunteer work) to the Legion Post. Please prepare the students for the Oratorical Contest (Department level, February 2015), Boy State and Girl State candidate. With a sad note, the family and I will be departing Germany to the States (8 Feb.15) I have been re-assigned to William Beaumont Army Medical Center (El Paso, Texas). I will greatly miss the Commanders and Comrades (Department of France) and Posts. Happy New Year’s to you and your family. God Bless America.

The following are pictures from the Veterans Day Observance Rokycany, Czech Republic. The Department of France Vice Commander (Stephen A. Ward) attended the Veterans Day Observance in the city of Rokycany, Czech Republic. Outside the city of Rokycany is the Demarcation Line where the Russian Army and American Army met during World War II. I received an Award from the Czech Veterans Association during banquet night. In the city square is Czech Scouts attending a ceremony. Wreaths laid at the city hall of Rokycany during the Veterans Day Observance. Since, I'm leaving Germany to the States (8 Feb. 15), next year, a Department of France representative for The American Legion will be at the Veterans Observance in Rokycany.
The following is a group pictures at the Lisbon U.S. Embassy Heritage Room dedication ceremony conducted by Gunnery Sergeant Aaron Smith (12 December 14). The Heritage Room was dedicated to Lance Corporal Joaquima Vaz Rebelo Killed In Action Vietnam received the Silver Star for valor. The U.S. Ambassador of Portugal (John A. Sherman of Massachusetts) was present for the ceremony with Maria De Jesus (Cousin of Lcpl. Rebelo), and Stephen A. Ward (Department of France Vice Commander). Also, present at the ceremony was the Portugal Post PO01 Adjutant (Gilbert Wells) World War II Veteran. Pictures taken by: SGT. Elliott (U.S. Marine Detachment, Lisbon U.S. Embassy).
I sadly report the death of Ronald Jordan, a longtime member of Thomas W. Barnett Post GR14.

I regret to inform you that Rev. Paul Freemesser, a Life Member of Paris Post 1 transferred to Post Everlasting. He will be remembered at the post meeting on 17 January 2015.

Department of France Past Commanders Club

Congratulations to Casby Logan as being elected PCC President
For the remaining 2015 Membership Year

Who is illegible to join the Department of France Past Commanders Club?

PAST AND PRESENT Department Commanders, Department Vice Commanders At Large, Department Vice Commanders, Post Commanders, SAL Detachment Commanders, SAL Squadron Commanders, Auxiliary Department Presidents, Auxiliary Unit Presidents... so if you were just voted into office you are ineligible to join

Initial dues for the Past Commanders Club is only $25.00 which will entitle the new member to a Past Commanders Club cap, Past Commanders Club pin and membership card

Renewal dues for the Past Commanders Club is only $10.00

Our next meeting will be on 21 March 2015 at the Third Legion DEC

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE... David Greaux, PCC Secretary “2015”
The American Legion has launched a new web platform to help those who served in uniform translate military skills to job skills, find employment, start businesses and make successful transitions. Among the key features of The American Legion's Veteran Employment Center are: (1) a Military Skills Translator and Veteran Job Search tool, powered by Military.com; (2) ten custom-produced videos to help veterans start and succeed in business; (3) a listing of American Legion-sponsored or produced veteran career fairs nationwide, with links to registration sites; and (4) links to important forms, sites and agency platforms that help veterans in the career search. For more information, visit the American Legion's Veteran Employment Center webpage at www.legion.org/careers.

For more veteran job news, job postings and transition advice, visit the Military.com Veteran Jobs Center.
The American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest

“A constitutional speech contest”

The American Legion Oratorical Contest exists to develop deeper knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school students. Since 1938, the program has presented participants with an academic speaking challenge that teaches important leadership qualities, the history of our nation’s laws, the ability to think and speak clearly, and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship.

Young orators earn some of the most generous college scholarships available to high school students. Over $138,000 in scholarships can be awarded each year. The overall national contest winner gets an $18,000 scholarship. Second place takes home $16,000, and third gets $14,000. Each department (state) winner who is certified into and participates in the national contest’s first round receives a $1,500 scholarship. Those who advance past the first round receive an additional $1,500 scholarship. The American Legion’s National Organization awards the scholarships, which can be used at any college or university in the United States. High school students under age 20 are eligible.

Speaking subjects must be on some aspect of the U.S. Constitution, with some emphasis on the duties and obligations of citizens to our government. Speeches are eight to 10 minutes long; three- to five-minute speeches on an assigned topic also are part of the contest.

The Prepared Oration

The oration must be on some aspect of the Constitution, with emphasis on a citizen’s duties and obligations to our government. The same subject and oration used in the department contest must be used in the national contest. Contestants may have a copy of their prepared oration while waiting in the first holding room. They may consult the copy until they exit to begin the contest. The copy will then be surrendered to the contest official monitoring the first holding room.

Quotations must always be indicated as such. Where quotations are more than 10 words in length, the author’s name must be given in the manuscript and cited orally. It is acceptable to utilize or incorporate short phrases in a foreign language to develop the argument, establish a point, etc. It should be understood that the vast majority of the prepared oration and/or assigned topic must still be delivered in English. Singing is not permitted and will result in immediate disqualification. The contestant may, however, quote a verse(s) of a song(s) provided proper attribution is made.

Assigned Topics

The assigned topic discourse must not consume less than three (3) minutes or more than five (5) minutes for delivery. The purpose of the assigned topic discourse is to test the speaker’s knowledge of the subject, the extent of his or her research, and the ability to discuss the topic as related to the basic principles of government under the Constitution.

Assigned Topics for 2015 Oratorical Contest

Amendment 5

No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a Grand Jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the Militia, when in actual service in time of War or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offence to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use without just compensation.

Amendment 6

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining Witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

Amendment 8

Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.
Amendment 19
The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.
Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Rules and Regulations

Eligibility
Eligible participants must be citizens of or lawful permanent residents of the United States. All contestants must be bona fide students herein described as any student under the age of 20 years on the date of the national contest who is presently enrolled in a high school or junior high school (public, parochial, military, private or home school). The curriculum of the school must be considered to be of high school level, commencing with grade 9 and terminating with grade 12. Students must be enrolled in high school or junior high school during the time of participation at any level of The American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest. Contestants must either be legally domiciled within or attend an educational institution within the department that they enter competition. Contestants can enter competition through only one department.
High school students that graduate early during the school year are eligible to compete if they are not enrolled in a college, university, trade school or other institution of higher learning at the time of the department finals contest.
The three finalists of the national contest are ineligible for further participation at any level.

Regulations
The use of notes, amplification, lectern or speaker’s stand or any manner of prompting is not permitted. Props are not permitted.
Contestants and audience members may not use any form of electronic/digital data gathering, receiving and/or transmitting equipment.
Contestants must deliver their prepared oration in no fewer than eight minutes and no more than 10 minutes. The assigned topic runs no fewer than three minutes and no more than five minutes.

What to wear
Uniforms are not permitted. Appropriate business attire is required for all contestants. Contestants may not wear awards and medals from previous competitions.

National Finals
The 2015 National Finals is April 10-12 in Indianapolis, at the Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel, 2544 Executive Dr, Indianapolis, IN 46241. Quarterfinal and semifinal contests are scheduled for Saturday, April 11, with the finals scheduled for Sunday, April 12.
All contestants and chaperones will arrive the Friday of the contest weekend. All contestants and chaperones will stay at the official contest hotel.
A mandatory pre-contest orientation session for all contestants will take place the Friday evening of the contest weekend. A banquet honoring all contestants will be Sunday afternoon, following the national championship contest. All contestants and chaperones will depart for home later that afternoon.

State and Local Oratorical Contests
Arrangements for contests leading up to the department finals shall be the responsibility of each American Legion department.
Each department may certify one contestant to the national contest. If for any reason the department finals winner is unable to compete in the national contest, the runner-up may be substituted following approval from the National Americanism Commission. A runner-up accepted into national competition will be entitled to all national awards, entitlements and compensation that the department winner would have received had he or she participated.

Department of France Competition – TBD
Stuttgart Post 6 Competition – Tuesday, 13 Jan. 2015

For more information on the American Legion Oratorical Contest please visit the American Legion National Website at www.legion.org Post 6 Oratorical Director: Douglas Clemence – refclemence@yahoo.de
The month of December started off with a surprise retirement party for Chris Sims, Associate Superintendent of the Flanders Field American Cemetery. Chris was honored on Wednesday, 03 Dec by friends, colleges and family. He is retiring after 40 years of service. Comrade Bill Matthys graciously provided the champagne for the event. Chris has been a great friend of the Flanders Field Post BE02 over the years and we will miss him.

Members of the American Legion Post BE02 served in the US honor Guard at Bastogne, 13 December during the annual “Nuts” parade and ceremony. Our Venture Crew 511 also participated in the activities that day braving the cold and the snow.

The USAG Benelux PAO conducted a Christmas party on Wednesday, 17 December on the community center on Chievres Airbase for a group of Belgian children. Santa made time to come and present the gifts to the children. The American Legion Post BE02 and ARMAF-B contributed to the event by donating some of the Christmas gifts.
On 23 December, Commissioner James (Jim) S. Whitfield, a 70 year member of the American Legion and a Commissioner of the U.S. World War I Commission visited the Flanders Field American Cemetery. Several members of the Flanders Field Post BE02 were able to meet with Jim and speak to him about our programs and projects. He was impressed with our initiation of the Adopt-a-Grave program. Jim also took time to honor our adopted grave of an unknown soldier of WWI.

On Christmas Eve, the Commanders of Flanders Field Post BE02, Paris Post 1 and members of Venture Crew 511 took time to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the Treaty of Ghent. The treaty was signed on 24 December, 1814 and ended the War of 1812 between the USA and England.

The officers and members of the Flanders Field Post BE02 would like to wish our Legion comrades a safe and happy New Year.
How to Use Military Discounts While Traveling

by Heather Sweeney

If military families are experts on anything it’s traveling. Whether we’re PCS’ing cross-country, taking a road trip to visit family, or sneaking away for a post-deployment vacation, we’re always on the go.

Traveling is even more fun when you find great discounts to help you out along the way. Military families also have access to benefits available to them for many of their travel needs.

There are lots of different ways to travel and lots of ways to use military discounts and benefits. What kind of traveler are you?

Travel by Air

One fun way to travel is to fly Space Available or Space A. Service members, retirees and their families can fill seats on DoD-owned or controlled aircraft that aren’t filled by space-required (duty) passengers and cargo.

While this is a great way to find discounted flights, it requires more flexibility and patience than flying on commercial airlines because schedules are subject to change and, as the name implies, seats aren’t always available on the flight you want.

Visit Air Mobility Command for more information on necessary documentation and terminals.

Want to stick with commercial airlines? Some airlines, like United, Southwest and US Airways offer discounts to military personnel so make sure to ask about military discounts when booking your flight.

You can even use your military benefits to ease the hassle of layovers in between flights by relaxing at a USO center. USO’s offer military families a place to kick back and watch tv, access the Internet, have a snack, let the kids run around in a play area, and even take a nap.

Click here to locate a USO center. Don’t forget your military ID!

Travel by Land

Not a fan of flying? You can find great military discounts when traveling by land as well.

Some families prefer to pack up the car and hit the road, but if you don’t want to put extra miles on your personal vehicle or travel requirements leave you longing for a larger vehicle, consider renting a car. You can find great military discounts at Ace, Alamo, Avis, Budget, Dollar, Penske and Sixt.

Have you always wanted to travel the open road with your family in an RV? No problem. Many MWR facilities rent campers (and you can find military campgrounds to park that camper as well). Check with your local MWR office for more details and pricing.

Want to leave the driving to someone else? Hop on a train. Greyhound and Amtrak both offer 10% military discounts on rail fare. Amtrak also shows their appreciation for our troops by allowing uniformed service members to the head of the ticket line.

Travel by Sea

Sometimes the best way to travel is by boat. A really big boat.

Cruises are fun and relaxing family vacation options. And cruise lines like Carnival, Norwegian Cruise Line, Princess Cruises, and Disney Cruise Line all offer military discounts.

No matter what your travel method of choice is, you can always find military discounts as well as military benefits you already have. Safe travels!

Need a place to stay? Click here to learn more about military discounts on lodging.

-- Heather Sweeney can be reached at Heather.Sweeney@monster.com.

Click here for a list of more Military.com articles about discounts.
Though pleased with some aspects of President Obama’s executive order regarding illegal immigration announced this evening, American Legion National Commander Michael Helm reiterated the organization’s long-standing position on those who enter into and then reside in the United States illegally.

The president said that two focuses of his executive order would be increased border patrol/enforcement, and the deportation of people who threaten national security – both areas of emphasis applauded by American Legion National Commander Mike Helm.

But Helm said the Legion remains steadfast in asking that those who live in this country do so as legal, naturalized citizens.

“The American Legion opposes illegal immigration and supports legal naturalization for those from foreign lands who wish to become U.S. citizens,” Helm said. “While aspects of the president’s executive order are in line with what The American Legion has repeatedly advocated, this order begs this questions: How does it affect future immigration laws, how does it ensure that the current number of illegal immigrants does not increase, and how does it address illegal immigrants who have been in the United States less than five years? And how does this order affect existing laws? Does it now fall on Congress to ratify this? These all are questions that need answered.”

Helm also questioned how immigration officials would enforce a third area of focus in the president’s executive order: Getting undocumented immigrants who have lived in the United States for more than five years and are parents of U.S. citizens or Lawful Permanent Residents to register for, and pass, criminal and national security background checks.

“While this part of the order sounds great in principle, execution is another matter,” Helm said. “How many will be willing – or even know they are required to – come forward and submit to these checks?”

The national commander said that while deporting all illegal immigrants isn’t realistic, the threat of deporting individuals or specific groups can be effective. “Deportation of select groups is an option that should be executed,” he said. “Effective deportation and possible incarceration would serve as a deterrent to those considering migrating to the United States illegally in the future.”

Helm noted that more than 300 American Legion posts nationwide offered citizenship programs in 2013, helping immigrants who came to this country legally to prepare for the naturalization process. “The Legion supports regulated legal immigration into the United States so immigrants can be smoothly absorbed in society and the economy,” Helm said. “But it has always believed that a path to citizenship should be a legal one, not one laden with shortcuts that cheapen the road taken for those who followed the correct path.”


Americanism Division  December 12, 2014

Boy Scouts of America
On Monday, December 15th, Shayne Abrahams, Assistant Director of Youth Activities, is attending the 19th Annual Governor’s Luncheon for Scouting at the J.W. Marriott Hotel located in downtown Indianapolis, honoring volunteers and major supporters of the Boy Scouts of America mission.

American Legion Baseball (ALB)
On Wednesday, December 10th, American Legion National Headquarters Executive Director, Jeff Brown, drew the official pairing brackets and game schedules of the 2015 American Legion Baseball World Series. He was assisted by Program Director Mike Buss and Assistant Director Steve Cloud. The brackets and schedules will be posted on the Legion Baseball website.

Operation Comfort Warrior (OCW)
Americanism Troop & Family Support staff will be meeting with the Regimental Command Staff of the USMC Wounded Warrior Regiment on December 16th at Quantico, Virginia, and will also meet with the command staff of the U.S. Army’s Warrior Transition Command on December 17th in Alexandria, Virginia, to discuss the future involvement of OCW in their upcoming events for 2015. We will meet specifically to discuss the USMC Warrior Trials and the US Army Warrior trials leading up to the overarching Warrior Games to be hosted in 2015 by the USMC.