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

Birthdays
Comrade Kesting PO01

Department Commander’s Corner

The Month of December was really, a nice time for being I took time out to be with my family during the holidays. I was able to visit my post GR42 along with the Department Adjutant for their Christmas Party on the 13th of December 2008, my cap is off to those Legionaries/Auxiliary members that planned this event, a special thanks to Commander Hanhack and 2nd Vice Chuck Vaughan. I had he privileged to talk to GR01, GR03, GR05, GR07, GR09, GR13, GR14, GR30, GR42, and GR1982, before the end of the year, and all of the Membership Chairman, and all Department Officers/Chairman. My Cap is off to all those post that helped the Department to achieve the 80% target date. Hopefully all post will make the 85% target on 4 February 2009. Oratorical is upon us I encourage all post to support this program, if you are hosting this program, and need assistance please contact Comrade Clemence at the following E-mail Address dclemence@aol.com. We are still looking for a Boy’s State Chairman If interested please contact either myself or Comrade Settle. The 3rd DEC is coming up; GR01 is able to obtain a bus for transportation, however we need 49 passengers’, the cost for round trip from K-Town is 75 Euros. Once we have the bus reserved I can start working on Room Reservations for group rates. On the 7th of February the department IA will be reviewing and making important changes to the current Department Awards Manual. Now is the time for you to start working on your recommendations for Post Awards, however keep in mind their will be changes to the current manual. The National Commander will be in Europe from the 26th of May to the 4th of June 2009, start planning now for, any events that your post may want to organize for his visit. It is planned that he will be in the Department of France’s area for approx 5 days; we know he will be in Heidelberg, Stuttgart, and K-Town, for his briefings. So if your post would like to host a visit from the National Commander, start planning now, and try to have a Program/Protocol available by the 3rd DEC in March. Those of you that were under the weather during the holiday season, I hope that things are going better for you now. I would like to thank all the Department Officers/Chairman, and a special thanks to the Department Adjutant and Department Membership Chairman and Post within the Department for making this Department the best
at National. For the Membership year 2008, we finished at 98.330% and came in 36 from the 55 Departments. Wishing all of you a very prosperous and safe New Year. 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

Vice Commander’s Corner

Vice Commander at Large Liam Kane
BE02, DK01, FR01, FR05, FR02, IR03, IT01, GC01, NL01, PO01, SP292, CH01

NO INPUT FOR THIS MONTH

Liam Kane
Vice Commander at Large

Vice Commander Shawn Ashe
GR05, GR06, GR30
Greetings my fellow Legionnaires, Auxiliary, and S.A.L. Members

NO INPUT FOR THIS MONTH

Shawn Ashe
Department Vice Commander

Vice Commander Robert Gray
GR03, GR07, GR09, GR14

I want to start off by wishing everyone a good and prosperous new year. Last year, we had our ups and downs; however this year is off to a great start. On Dec 06, Post GR03, hosted a Christmas party. It was great, families and friends met at the local guest house. The host of ceremonies was Ed Sherman. There was even a live musician there, and even Santa Claus stop by to give out presents. Unfortunately, when it was my turn to sit on Santa’s lap, we took turns; he sat on my lap also. Again, as always my cap goes off to everyone in GR 03. On the 13th of December, I was invited to the American legion Riders Christmas party, which was hosted by Eddie Kane. A lot has to be said about Eddie, he was one of the founding fathers for the American Legion riders. Other organizations of motorcycle groups have benefited from Eddie’s experience, and knowledge of Europe. At the Christmas party I was very impressed of the historical values that bikers played in German American relationships. I went there and, had the opportunity to hand out awards as a vice commander, to those bikers who participated in the veteran ceremonies. Again, I wish to say thank you for having invited me to a Christmas party. On the 24 Dec, 08, my family and I hosted a Christmas party at post GR01, for soldiers, Vet’s and retiree’s, who had no place to go on that day. It was lovely; and we had a large variety of food/German and American. We also had what is called handing out roses to the ladies and flowers to the honored guest, which were grandmothers, and last croissants to the men. In closing, I wish everyone a prosperous new year.

Robert Gray
Department Vice Commander

Vice Commander Frank Hanchak
GR01, GR20, GR45

I want to begin this NEW YEARS article by stating my New Years’ Resolution. It is as follows: I resolve to do my job to the best of my ability for the betterment of you, the membership of The American Legion, and the Department of France. That sounds nice, doesn’t it? It is also a pile of garbage if I am not fulfilling your expectations of what it is to serve as an Officer and Leader of the Department of France. In an effort to add perfume to this pile, I have to ask a question; AM I DOING MY JOB? There it is folks > I asked the question > so, let me have it! Thanks to all members of this Department for all you have done so far this year. Let us continue to work with the Department leadership so we can correct our failures, strengthen our weaknesses, and continue our growth and progress towards
the future. The Department of France will celebrate a very important anniversary in 2009. This will be the 90th anniversary of the birth of The American Legion! And in honor of that event, we will meet at Paris Post 1.

I want to send special thanks to the members of Kaiserslautern Post GR-01, not only for their outstanding work on the upcoming convention, but also for their effort to assist the Department with the 3rd Department Executive Committee Meeting in March. Members of the post are working with Commander Brown to provide transportation and other amenities during our historic meeting that will be held at the birthplace of The American Legion. I am confident that our success during this meeting will rest greatly with the accomplishments of Post Commander Dave Mendez and his committee! And of course, thanks to Paris Post 1 and their leadership (Commander Clarita Geoghegan, and Adjutant Ed Canady) for accepting the responsibility of hosting this historic meeting. And now for a note about communication. We, as Department Officers, have to do a better job of communicating with the membership. Recent misunderstandings have proved to stem directly from a lack of communication and follow-up reports. I will strive to improve my communication skills with the posts under my direct care. I will also keep trying to use this medium as a tool to be used for this purpose.

You can help me by providing feedback and comments on these monthly articles. (I have received Emails about past articles and used them and the suggestions they contained). I am eager to hear from you! But don’t stop there! Help us to communicate with you by communicating with us! Feedback is most helpful when used in a timely manner. Contact your Post Commander and let him know what you, as a member, want from your Department Leadership. Post Commanders must likewise give continuous feedback to your Vice Commanders.

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

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

NO INPUT FOR THIS MONTH
Contact me at E-Mail Address Jerrya503@aol.com or phone number 07307-4492 or 073075752
For God and Country
Jerry Aman
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
Home: +49-(0)6196-569026
Fax: +49-(0)6196-569027
Mobile: +49-(0)172-7417812
Email: revronmoore@yahoo.de

Rev. Ronald Moore
Department Chaplain

Department Service Officer George Hall

If a retiree is eligible for both CRDP and CRSC, he/she may participate in the CRSC/CRDP Open Season. This annual election will be from January 1 through January 31, 2008 and allows the retiree to choose which payment is preferred (federal law states that you can receive CRDP or CRSC; (not both) beginning in late December, eligible retirees will be mailed a CRDP/CRSC Open Season Election Form. The retiree needs to return the form only if making a change from CRDP to CRSC or vice versa. If the retiree prefers to keep things the way they are, then do nothing, and the payment the retiree now receives will continue uninterrupted. To help the retiree make a more informed decision, the form will include a comparison of the CRDP and CRSC entitlement amounts as well as information about the collection actions and taxes to which each type of payment is subject. If the retiree wants to change from CRDP to CRSC or vice versa, the form must be completed and postmarked by January 31, 2008. If the form or envelope is dated after this date, it will not be processed and the current payments will continue. The change in the payment will be effective the first business day of February 2008. Due to a 30-day processing timeframe, the retiree may receive their first payment on the first business day of March 2008 and a retroactive adjustment for the payment that would have been paid on the first business day in February. The retiree’s election will remain in effect unless changed in a subsequent annual open season.

George Hall
Department Service Officer

Sons of The American Legion Frank Hanchak
I finally made a visit to Heidelberg Squadron GR-03 in early December and discussed some upcoming plans with Squadron Commander George Hall. Although he was very busy with upcoming holiday preparations at his Post, CDR Hall briefed me on his Squadron “Grab Bag” project. I hope to attend the event when it is announced. Squadron Commander Hall also proudly announced that the Squadron has raised enough funds to purchase their Squadron Banner. I eagerly look forward to seeing this new banner displayed at our future Detachment meetings. The next SAL Detachment Executive Committee meeting will be in March 2009 at Kitzengen Squadron 30.

Frank J. Hanchak
Commander
Detachment of France
Sons of The American Legion
Americanism Carl Hackworth
NO INPUT FOR THIS MONTH
Carl Hackworth
Americanism Chairman

Frank Hanchak Commander GR42
I am writing this message to update the membership on the OMAR BRADLEY Web Site (www.americanlegiongr42.org). We now have a page with links to other American Legion Posts. Unfortunately, I have few posts listed. If you have a web page, please let me know and I will establish a link to your page! Please link to ours as well! During my research for this project, I have discovered that our Post site is getting many hits and views every day. The data seems to indicate that our web site is viewed often and from many locations. If you don’t have a post web site, please consider getting one. It is proving to be a valuable tool that the post can use to get information out. I look forward to visiting with lots of Post Commanders and Adjutants at the DEC in Paris. See you there!

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

Rev. Chaplain Moore ALPE Coordinator Re-Run for info

Here ye, Hear ye!
To all members of the Department of France American Legion Family, consisting of The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion (S.A.L.).

The American Legion Pony Express (AL PE) Messenger System for the Department of France is being provisionally formed. We need Stations, Way Stations and at least two messengers assigned from each station. The supervision of the system remains under the auspices of The Department of France Commander and the Department of France AL PE Coordinator, Ronald Moore, who will also be transporting donations to the National Convention as Department of France messenger.

Post or messenger participation does not require any funding, extra dues or incur costs for the Post. The Post would act as a collection point for donations for the 2009 Legacy Run and ensure that those donations are received by the messenger who will be delivering the donations to the National Commander during the National Convention. All efforts of the Posts and messengers are on a voluntary, best effort basis.

The National AL PE Messenger System was in use during the 2007 Legacy Run for the coordinated movement of donations to ensure that Legacy Scholarship Fund donations were delivered to the National Commander along the Legacy Run route or at the National Convention. It is not a separate American Legion program but is recognized as a tool for use by The American Legion nationally.

Outlying departments were not considered to be part of the National plan and were not included in the setup.

Discussions were held with the National AL PE Coordinator who has been made aware of the oversight of not including The Department of France in the organization. He has now included us, subject to final Department of France Commander approval.

The plan and proposal have been made to the Department Commander, subject to approval at a DEC. We are to set up a provisional system which, if proven feasible, will become the official department organization after DEC approval has been obtained.

Why incorporate the system in your Post?
It is a win/win situation for our Department, Posts and indirectly for the AL Riders. It is not dependent on ALR membership which should make it interesting for all Posts at present, not just those who ride or have motorcycle riders.

What is involved?

- Collect funds for the 2009 Legacy Scholarship Fund as usual.
- Get at least two messengers and register your Post as a PE Collection Station with the Department AL PE Coordinator, Ronald Moore at revronmoore@yahoo.de giving Post Name, Post full Address, Post telephone number Post email address and Messenger name, contact telephone, email address and city/country of residence (don’t need full address of messenger). Messengers will be sent a return email confirmation
- Coordinate with the Department AL PE Coordinator to have donation checks and pledges moved to the final collection point by deadline July 31, 2009. All checks should be in U.S. $ and made payable to the Legacy Scholarship Fund. Please note- No other items will be transported by messengers.

That’s all there is.
We will be collecting for the 2009 Legacy Run again next year and you can use your AL PE Status to increase your visibility within your community. Increasing visibility should mean
increased interest in membership in your Post and an increase in
donations from outside of your Post.

What is the Legacy Scholarship Fund?
http://legion.org/programs/legacyrun/legacyscholarship

What is the Legacy Run?
http://legion.org/programs/legacyrun/overview

How can you donate?
- Sign up as a rider or supporter.
- Coordinate with the Dept of France AL PE Coordinator, Ronald
  Moore, to have your donations/pledges moved to the designated
  Department of France Final Collection by July 31, 2009
- Make an individual online donation at the legion.org site

Donations for 2008 exceeded $515,000 by the end of Convention,
surpassing the $409,000 collected in 2007.

Please remember, only those Posts and messengers registered
through and with the Department of France AL PE
Coordinator, Ronald Moore, will be part of the official
Department of France System.

Rev. Chaplain Moore
Department AL PE Coordinator

A word from GR14 Adjutant Carl Hackworth
TWB Post GR14, will hold its annual post elections on the
11th of February 2009 at 20:00 hours at the post home.
Come out and let your voice be heard, and support your
post and follow Legionnaires.

Carl Hackworth
Post Adjutant GR14

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 Post PO01
Department Events

GR01 Christmas Event

GR03 Christmas Event

GR01 Christmas Event

GR03 Christmas Event

GR01 Christmas Event

GR03 Christmas Event
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 Post Home
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