DEPARTMENT COMMANDER...James Dennis

Fellow Legionnaires and Legion families,

Another year has gone by and we as a Department are standing tall and confident for the upcoming 2019 year.

We had our Memorial Day ceremony in St. Avold France on the 27th. As the Legion Family we were represented by the Department of France, District of France Auxiliary, The Detachment of France, The Legion Riders, Kaiserslautern Post GR01, and the Grand du Germany 40/8. I had the privilege of laying the wreath for the Department. It was a great ceremony. Our members then went to Kaiserslautern Post GR01 for their Memorial Day cook out. I was unable to attend due to my commitment to greet the National Commander’s party at Frankfurt on the 28th at 0800.

National Commander Denise Rohan, National President Diane Duscheck, the Sons of the American Legion Commander Danny Smith are visiting our Department. Accompanying them is Comrade Mike Rohan (Aide to the National Commander), National Secretary Mary Buckler, Auxiliary member Donna Smith (wife to the S.A.L. National Commander), John Raughter a National Media representative, and Ms Verna Jones & Mr. Joe Sharpe representing the Veterans Affairs Division. We travelled to Stuttgart, Wiesbaden, Ramstein, Landstuhl, and Kaiserslautern. We were greeted by many of our members and was escorted by Mrs. Margo Ziegler from the Legion Riders while we were in Wiesbaden. They are now on their travels to Normandy then to Paris to end their tour. I would like to thank all the Posts, members, and their families for the great support on this event.

At our Convention on 21 June to 24 June in Wustenrot, Germany. I am proud to say, the meeting all went well and professionally. First, I would like to thank all my staff from the 2017-2018 year for their hard work and dedication. Second, I would like to welcome the new staff for the 2018-2019 year. I have been elected as Department Commander for the second year and will carry on with the missions at hand and all to come before this Department. We have a lot of work before us and we, the Department of France, will need the support and assistance of all the Posts, Units, and Squadrons. Our new Officers list and the Post mailing list will go out soon. Please all Posts, Units, and Squadrons get the Officers list to the Department Adjutant Rice, Detachment Adjutant Dennis and Unit Secretary Mattson to comprise a master list to keep the Department family in the loop of information to come from this Department. Thank you again goes out to Heilbronn Post GR79 who worked very hard to insure a good atmosphere and comradery. Sonja and I had a great time.

The Department list of Newly Elected Officers are as follows;
National Executive Committee: James Settle
Alternate National Executive Committee: Hans Stockenberger
Commander: James Dennis
Vice Commander at Large: Joe “Charlie” Brown
4 Vice Commanders: Casby Logan, Jimmy Dale, Dennis Owens, and Donald Chamberlain
Historian: Ray Perez
Sgt. @ Arms: Andy Cleveenger
Chaplain: Harvey Briggs

NEC Maloney is in the United States at her home. She is doing well but still has a long way to go for a complete recovery. She is in good spirits and eager to join us.

I would like to inform the department of my agenda for the month of July-
August.

July 7th 4th of July Celebration in Heilbronn
July 8th Celebration at “My Place” in Kitzingen (cookout)
August 23-31st National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota

Please contact me in advance if you wish me to stop by.
James Dennis /Commander / Department of France.
Images of Department Convention 2018...Wüstenrot, Germany. Hosted by John Wayne GR79

Special thanks to Dennis Owens for the pictures...for more pictures go HERE
Memorials and Monuments

If you have Memorials or Monuments in your community, can you please take five or ten minutes go to COMMUNITY MEMORIALS / MONUMENTS on The American Legion National Website, and registrar them and tell us about local memorials or monuments.

I know Ansbach, Ramstein AB, Rhein Main, and Flanders Field just to name a few all have monuments.

WE NEED TO TELL OUR STORY FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE

Doug Haggan...FODPAL Secretary/Past National Vice Commander/Past Department of France Commander
“Still Serving America’s Veterans...Around the World”
A celebration that belongs to all of us

By National Commander Denise H. Rohan - June 24, 2018

The American Legion story is chiseled in rock, stamped in bronze, codified in law, and inked in the parchment of charters signed nearly a century ago by wartime veterans with a vision.

The centennial of the nation’s largest and most influential veterans organization belongs to all American Legion Family members who have fulfilled – and continue fulfilling – that vision through individual obligation to community, state and nation.

When the American Legion 100th Anniversary Observance Committee drafted a five-year plan in 2013, it identified some important priorities: local and regional involvement, using the legacy of the organization to drive a vision for the second century, and engagement with the entire community, especially those who have benefited from American Legion Family values and services.

Local posts across the land have dug into their scrapbooks and pried open boxes to discover how their Legion families have strengthened communities over the past century. Veterans memorials (2,000 and counting) have been revisited, cleaned up, documented and recorded in a national database. Events have been planned, post profiles (more than 2,900) have been created on the centennial website, and media messages have been developed.

“The Greatest Legislation: An American Legion Centennial Salute to the GI Bill” exhibit is now a year into its nationwide tour, sharing the story of how the measure drafted by our founding generation and shepherded into the 21st century by subsequent Legionnaires changed the world. The traveling exhibit debuted at the National WWII Museum in New Orleans and has since been on display at the Student Veterans of America national convention in San Antonio, Bob Hope Patriotic Hall in Los Angeles, the Montana Military Museum at Fort William Henry Harrison in Helena, and the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum at Camp Dodge in Johnston. More stops are in development.

A Team 100 membership drive is ready for launch, to turn this milestone into growth to help us continue building an even greater legacy in the future.

This is an exciting time to be in the American Legion Family, a time to reflect on the foundation laid for our century of success and use it as a springboard for the next 100 years. Members are encouraged to use the materials developed by the Legion’s National Headquarters to do just that both internally and externally, including the Centennial Celebration Workbook and 100th Anniversary Media Toolkit.

The 100th American Legion National Convention in Minneapolis in August will be like none before, with reflections on past conventions – and war eras – right back to the first in 1919 in the same city, and the birth of the Legion’s first century of service.

Watch this summer for the rollout of a new web platform at www.legion.org/centennial and more as we show our communities, states and nation the timelessness of our values.
RAMP
Rapid Appeals Modernization Program

RAMP is a temporary program that allows early participation in the Supplemental Claim and Higher-Level Review lanes in the new modernized review process. Participation in RAMP is voluntary; however, taking advantage of this unique opportunity to use several aspects of the new process may help you avoid the delays you are experiencing in the current appeals process. The Veteran does not have to receive an invitation.

Participation in RAMP requires withdrawing your pending compensation benefit appeal(s) and substituting the review procedures set forth in the Appeals Modernization Act. VA will process all your eligible appeals under the review lane you select.

For the issues addressed under RAMP, you will not be able to request additional review of VA’s decision under the current (legacy) appeals process; however, you will have access to all the review options and benefits of the new process.

Who is Eligible for RAMP?

- Must have an NOD (Notice of Disagreement) already filed
- A Case that has been Certified to the Appeals Board, but not activated.
- A Case that are on Remand from the Appeals Board

Best Case Scenarios for RAMP

- New evidence since the filing of NOD or Form 9 (i.e. Doctor letter, vocational expert, new diagnosis etc.)
- Cases where the Rater or DRO was clearly biased. (Note factual findings that are favorable to the veteran cannot be changed unless evidence to the contrary is clear and convincing.

As a RAMP participant, you will benefit from

- Early participation in the new, more efficient review process
- Potentially faster decisions and early resolution of disagreements
- Multiple review options

Frank Phillips (Francis Dale Phillips) Neuendettelsauer Str. 15, D-91560 Heilsbronn, Germany
Tel: +49 172 687 9915 email: fdphillips59@gmail.com
The same potential effective date for your benefits regardless of the review option that you choose

The option to ask for a fresh look at a previous VA decision by an experienced claims adjudicator

A new requirement that VA must have clear and convincing evidence to change any findings favorable to you in a VA decision

RAMP processing times will be significantly faster than current appeal processing times. VA’s goal is to process reviews under RAMP in an average of 125 days. Currently, Veterans are waiting an average of three years for a resolution of their appeal. For those appeals that are decided by the Board, on average, Veterans are waiting an average of six years from filing of their Notice of Disagreement (NOD) until the Board issued a decision.

WHAT LANE SHOULD I SELECT IF I HAVE NEW EVIDENCE TO SUBMIT?

You should select the supplemental claim lane. In this lane you can submit or identify additional evidence and VA has a duty to assist you in gathering evidence to support your claim. If you elect to first have a Higher-Level Review, VA cannot accept or consider any evidence that you submit after you request a Higher-Level Review. However, if you remain dissatisfied with VA’s Higher-Level Review decision, you will have a full year to use the Supplemental Claim lane or appeal to the Board of Veterans’ Appeals. You should consult your representative, if you have one, for assistance with selecting the lane that best meets your needs.

- **Supplemental Claim Lane**
  - Select this option if you have additional evidence that is new and relevant to support granting your benefit claim. VA’s goal is to complete these supplemental claims in an average of 125 days.
  - VA will assist you in gathering new and relevant evidence to support your claim.
  - VA’s review will include any new and relevant evidence submitted since they last decided your claim.
  - If necessary, you can continue to submit supplemental claims with new and relevant evidence or use the Higher-Level Review Lane after you receive a decision in the Supplemental Claim Lane by making an election for further review within one year of the date on your decision notice.

- **Higher-Level Review Lane**
  - Select this option if you have no additional evidence to submit in support of your claim but you believe that there was an error in the initial decision. VA’s goal is to complete these higher-level reviews in an average of 125 days.
A higher-level review consists of an entirely new review of your claim by an experienced claim adjudicator.

- Factual findings that are favorable to you cannot be changed unless there is evidence to the contrary that is clear and convincing.
- The Higher-Level Reviewer will only consider evidence that was in VA’s possession at the time you opt-in. You and/or your representative will NOT be able to add new evidence during this process. VA will stop developing for any pending evidence.
- VA cannot assist you in developing additional evidence. However, if the Higher-Level Reviewer discovers an error in VA’s duty to assist in the prior decision your claim will return to initial decision makers for correction of the error.
- You or your representative can request an optional one time telephonic informal conference with the Higher-Level Reviewer to identify specific errors in the case. Requesting an informal conference may cause some delay in the processing of your higher-level review.
- If necessary, you can use the Supplemental Claim Lane after you receive a decision in the Higher-Level Review Lane, by making an election for further review within one year of the date on your decision notice.

**Appeal Lane of Appeals to the Board**
- This lane provides you with the ability to appeal directly to the VA Board of Veterans' Appeals (the "Board"). You'll have the ability to choose between three options for review at the Board:
  - Direct review: Choose this option if you do not have additional evidence to submit and you do not want a hearing.
  - Evidence submission: Choose this option if you don't want a hearing, but you do have additional evidence to submit.
  - Hearing: Choose this option if you want to testify before a Veterans Law Judge, and submit additional evidence.

**WHY CAN'T I SUBMIT ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE TO THE HIGHER-LEVEL REVIEWER?**

During a Higher-Level Review, VA will take a de novo, or “new,” look at the previous decision based on all of the evidence of record at the time that you elect to opt into RAMP. The Higher-Level Reviewer can overturn a previous decision based on a difference of opinion, or return a decision for correction. If you would like to submit new evidence in support of your compensation claim or would like VA to assist you in gathering additional evidence, we encourage you to select the Supplemental Claim lane. You should consult your representative, if you have one, for assistance with selecting the lane that best meets your needs.
I HAVE MULTIPLE APPEALS WITH MULTIPLE ISSUES. DO I HAVE TO
CHOOSE THE SAME LANE FOR ALL OF THEM?

Yes. Under RAMP, you must choose either the Higher-Level Review lane or the Supplemental Claim lane for all compensation issues under appeal. However, if you remain dissatisfied with the decision you receive in one of these lanes, you will have a year to use the other lane or appeal to the Board of Veterans’ Appeals, and your potential effective date for your benefits will always be protected.

Summary

If you are contemplating using the RAMP, please contact your Post Service Officer or the Department Service Officer for help. You can download the Opt-in form at https://benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/docs/appeals-RAMP-Opt-in-letter.pdf?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=govdelivery&utm_campaign=may 2018&utm_term=ramp-opt-in&utm_content=link#page=6

Be advised that if you have an active Appeal, for over 2 or 3 years, your place in line, at the Appeals Board, will be vacated. Should you want to appeal the RAMP decision, you may, but your position at the Appeals Board will be at a lower level. It could take more time.

If you have a decision, within the past 360 days and do not agree with the decision, Opt In for the RAMP. It will be quicker.

On July 4, 1776, the thirteen colonies claimed their independence from England, an event which eventually led to the formation of the United States. Each year on July 4th, also known as Independence Day, Americans celebrate this historic event.

Conflict between the colonies and England was already a year old when the colonies convened a Continental Congress in Philadelphia in the summer of 1776. In a June 7 session in the Pennsylvania State House (later Independence Hall), Richard Henry Lee of Virginia presented a resolution with the famous words: "Resolved: That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved."

Lee's words were the impetus for the drafting of a formal Declaration of Independence, although the resolution was not followed up on immediately. On June 11, consideration of the resolution was postponed by a vote of seven colonies to five, with New York abstaining. However, a Committee of Five was appointed to draft a statement presenting to the world the colonies' case for independence. Members of the Committee included John Adams of Massachusetts, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania, Robert R. Livingston of New York and Thomas Jefferson of Virginia. The task of drafting the actual document fell on Jefferson.

On July 1, 1776, the Continental Congress reconvened, and on the following day, the Lee Resolution for independence was adopted by 12 of the 13 colonies, New York not voting. Discussions of Jefferson's Declaration of Independence resulted in some minor changes, but the spirit of the document was unchanged. The process of revision continued through all of July 3 and into the late afternoon of July 4, when the Declaration was officially adopted. Of the 13 colonies, nine voted in favor of the Declaration, two -- Pennsylvania and South Carolina -- voted No, Delaware was undecided and New York abstained. John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress, signed the Declaration of Independence. It is said that John Hancock's signed his name "with a great flourish" so England's "King George can read that without spectacles!"

Today, the original copy of the Declaration is housed in the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and July 4 has been designated a national holiday to commemorate the day the United States laid down its claim to be a free and independent nation.
First meeting of the PCC for the 2019 Membership Year!

PCC President Leland Zickuhr

PCC Secretary Raymond Perez Jr.

Who is eligible 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 eligible to join

Initial dues for the Past Commanders Club is only $25.00
Renewal dues for the Past Commanders Club is only $10.00

Our next meeting is planned in conjunction with the Department of France Second DEC 2018
Dear VA Beneficiary,

Did you know that you may be eligible for an annual clothing allowance if you use a prosthetic or orthopedic appliance and/or medication for a service connected skin condition that causes permanent damage to your outer garments?

If you’re eligible, and you haven’t yet applied for this year, you need to act fast! If you have already submitted your application, then no further action is required on your part. Your application should be submitted on or before August 1, 2018. To apply, submit (in person, by mail, or fax) VA Form 10-8678, Application for Annual Clothing Allowance, to the Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service at your local VA medical center.

Additional information on this benefit is available at https://www.prosthetics.va.gov/psas/Clothing_Allowance.asp.

Thank you for your service!

Sincerely,

Veterans Benefits Administration

From your DPT Service Officer:

IMPORTANT: Fax number to send your Clothing allowance reimbursement form (VA10-8678) 412-822-3736.
This applies for Veterans outside of CONUS. Deadline is August 1st, 2018

From your DPT Service Officer:

INTERNATIONAL CRISIS HOTLINE!
There is a new international Crisis Hotline for Veterans living abroad.
00 800 1273 8255 / DSN 118
Online Chat: https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/ActiveDuty.aspx

Please spread the word. (The number listed on the ad below is for CONUS. Please use the number above (00 800 1273 8255)
Detachment officers for the 2019MY

Commander...Joe D. Brown...vcalbrown50@gmail.com
NECMAN...James Dennis...orphff@gmail.com
ALT. NECMAN...Casby Logan...casbyj@hotmail.com
First Vice Commander...Donald Chamberlain...chamberlaidw@hotmail.de
Second Vice Commander...Jonathan Settle...johnny1286@hotmail.com
Chaplain...John Portal...johnportale@arcor.de
Sergeant-At-Arms...David Greaux...davidg1959@t-online.de
Adjutant/Judge Advocate...James Dennis...orphff@gmail.com

The Detachment of France Second DEC will convene on Saturday, 20 October 2018!

Hosted by Omar Bradley Squadron GR42

Location and times to be Announced.

Do you want to see what the other department post are doing?
Do you want to let other post know what you are doing?
Do you want to keep up to date on what is happening?
Do you need to get in touch with other post members?
Do you want to learn some of the department´s history?

The answer is the Department of France website…

http://www.amerlegiondeptfrance.org/index.php?id=1

If you have any comments, suggestions or need to update information on the web site contact the Site Administrator Doug Haggan...dhaggan@sbcglobal.net

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Hello Ladies and Legionnaires;

Congratulations to all the Officers of the 2018-2019 year and Thank you to all the Officer's 2017-2018.

I like to Thank John Wayne Post 79 for holding the Convention and I like to Thank all Unit's that attend at the DEC's and Convention. I would like to Thank everyone for voting me at the District President for the 2018-2019 year. I was happy that I could attend this year Convention. You may of heard that I been ill for many months. I am doing better and will continue to assist this Department and District. I like to intrude the American Legion Auxiliary District of France Officer's for 2018-2019 year.

President
1. Vice President
2. Vice President
3. Vice President
Secretary
Treasure
Historian
Chaplain
Sargent at Arms
Sonja Dennis
Anne Marie Mattson
Carolyn Cochran
Isolde Settle
Anne Marie Mattson
Isolde Settle
Vacant
Margot Ziegler
Karin Fleming

We still have the Position of the District Historian open this time. If anyone is interested in being Historian contact me or one of my Officer's.

I would like Thank all of you one more time for great meeting and a great Convention. Also, I like to Thank Comrade Charly Brown for allowing us to have the Memorial Service for our departed members again. Everyone present I believe was touched by the Ceremony. I was asked to continue with this Ceremony at our next Convention. I would be honored and privilege to continue this Ceremony. I would like to give a special Thanks to Past Chaplain Chamberlain, District Chaplain Ziegler, Commander Dennis and 2nd Vice President Cochran for their assistance in this Memorial Service.

I hope to see you all of you on the 27.7. in October at the 2nd DEC.

Thank you very much. Be save and take care.

Thank You.

Sonja Dennis / President / Department of France
I would like to take advantage of using Direct Deposits from PenFed. This saves everyone time and money by not using snail mail.

Those posts that have a US bank account, please send me your routing and account number. This way you get your money within a day versus 1 to 2 weeks.

billsfan_gary@hotmail.com or mail them to me…

8212 Hillers Road
Oklahoma City, OK 73132

Army training will now focus on actual battlefield skills, not social issues

Photo by: John Bazemore
In this Oct. 17, 2017, photo, U.S. Army soldiers hone their long-distance marksmanship skills as they train at Ft. Benning in Columbus, Ga. The soldiers are members of the Army's new Security Force Assistance Brigade that is scheduled to deploy to Afghanistan next year to help train and advise Afghan forces. The Army’s new training brigade is looking beyond traditional best practices to see if soldiers meet the cultural and personality criteria to train local forces in dramatically different cultures. (AP Photo/John Bazemore)
Hi All Legion Riders,

I would like to introduce myself; my name is Lee Preston and the newly elected Department of France Commander has appointed me to be the Department Director of the Legion Riders. This is a job that I will take seriously and try to do what’s right for both the riders as well as the Department of France and National. I have many ideas as to ways that we can ALL come together and complete rides to enhance our visibility within the Department and all the way to National but first; I must get my feet on the ground and get to know everyone within our program. Therefore, I am asking all rider chapters to please send me the contact information for all of your members in your chapters. I want to make a spreadsheet with this information as well as an E-mail group to blast out information as to what each chapter is doing to give others the ability to participate. There are a couple of runs that I am aware of such as the Toy Run in Erlangen normally conducted the first weekend in May each year which my wife and I participated in this year. The Rainbow Run in Heilbronn which will be held on 14 July 2018. I will participate in this as well and would like to see riders from all over the Department of France participate.

I have a couple of other ideas that I would like input from all of the riders. First, I would like to set up a weekend that we could all get together. We could BBQ, set up tents, talk and just enjoy the company of other riders. I would hope that this could be setup at a possible central location that no one would have to travel extreme distances to attend.

As mentioned before; there is the Rainbow Run in Heilbronn on 14 July 2018 in which monies will be donated to the Children’s Hospital as well as other needy organizations. There is also a large event at the Strohoffer autohof located on the A3 autobahn at the Schluesselfeld exit which could be fun for all in August this year (more info to follow).

I guess that what I am saying is that I will need help in order to make this happen. We need to be an organization that steps up and supports all of the chapters as best we can. I welcome ALL of the Chapters to submit to me the events that they have in their areas and I will get this out in the Department newsletter as best as I can.

In closing; I would ask for all of your support and help as I try to way through the rigors of understanding how this program functions.

Here is a link to some information on the Heilbronn Rainbow Run:


Newsletter Editor...David N. Greaux

REMINDER...all newsletter articles should be turned in prior to months end!

Davidg1959@t-online.de
Member Discounts

Discount programs are offered exclusively to members of The American Legion and Sons of The American Legion.

Auto Rental
Alamo
National Car Rental

Financial & Insurance
Mutual of Omaha
USAA

Medical
Amplifon Hearing Health Care
CVS Caremark
LifeStation

Moving & Relocation
Allied
North American Van Lines

Post Discounts
Office Depot/Office Max

Retail
Office Depot/Office Max

Travel & Lodging
GOV Vacation Rewards
Motel 6
Veterans Holidays
Wyndham Hotel Group
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Site of the 100th American Legion National Convention
August 24th to August 30th 2018

If you are planning on attending the 100th National Convention in Minneapolis, MN (and I hope to see some new faces in Minneapolis) please e-mail me at dhaggan@sbcglobal.net with the following information, THE DATE YOU WILL ARRIVE AND DEPART, THE PERSON YOU ARE SHARING A ROOM WITH IF ANY, AND ANY SPECIAL ROOM REQUIREMENTS.

Updates will be e-mailed out, posted on the Department Website, and posted on the Department Facebook page in the coming weeks.

Hope to see you in Minneapolis