THE DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE
JULY 2009 NEWSLETTER

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**
George W. Bush 06 July
Shawn Ashe 07 July
Douglas Clemence 12 July
Keith Abernathy 21 July
J.D. (Charley) Brown 24 July
Michael Besant 25 July
John Miller 30 July

**Department Commander’s Corner**

**My fellow Legionaries**
As your newly elected Department Commander, I will like to thank those who came out and participated in the elections, and, for allowing me to serve all comrades both in the post and department. The transition phase from outgoing Commander to present Commander, was smooth. I also would like to take this opportunity to thank certain people who assisted with a smooth transition. Starting with Past Department Commander, Joe E. Brown, for updating me on the situation where the department stands, and still willing to serve as one of the Department’s Vice Commanders. Vice Commander at large, Liam Kane, for working with me in establishing the posts for our Vice Commanders. The department Adjutant, James Settle. his tireless devotion in orchestrating and managing the administrative details in completing transfer of leadership. Mike Umland, as outgoing membership chairman, for allowing Fred Lane, of GR1982, the incoming Membership Committee Chairman, time to transition to his position.

As with transitioning, they’re losses, I regret to say. Mike Umland, resigned from membership chairman, Frank Hanchak, resigned from, Vice Commander, News Letter Editor, SAL Committee Chairman, VFW liaison. Shawn Ashe, Vice Commander, Children and Youth. Jerry Aman, resigned from Vice Commander. we will miss their expertise.

Again, as we are transitioning, they are gains, that I wish to welcome on board. Our new Membership Chairman is Fred Lane, Fund Raiser, Joe James. Eddie Kane, one of the founding fathers of the American Legion Riders. John Odom Sr., is now officially assigned to Boys State. Vice Commander, Michael Besant. James Settle, Vice Commander. Keith Abernathy, Vice Commander. Judge Advocate, Michael Young. Joe Brown, Vice Commander. Stephen A. ward, VFW Liaison, Sal Committee, John Odom. Constitution/ By laws, Mike Young.

As the Department Commander, I’m looking forward, working with all post Commanders and Adjutants. I am always open to suggestions, how to help improve, the understanding of our presence in the communities, amongst different organizations, to also support community and organizations which has a common bond geared to our interest. To establish a more family orientated presence. I Would like more awareness of the Scouting Programs, Sons of the American Legion, Legion riders organizations and the role in the community, oratorical awareness, within the school system, auxiliary programs and scheduling most events in the communities. I would like to see more participation in membership drives fund raisers and better communication between post commanders.

To the post commanders and adjutants, I would like to have
a working address to your post, which I can install on my navigator, so I may come and visit posts. I look forward to working with the post commanders. Please take the time to keep those in harms way not only in your thoughts, but also your prayers. Take care

For The Good Of The Legion.

For GOD and Country
Robert Gray
Department Commander

From the Department Adjutant:
My Fellow Legionnaires,

As you know the Department had its annual Convention from the 17th 21st of Jun 2009. We did not have a big turn out again this year; however we were able to conduct Department business and conduct our Elections. I am positive that we will have another great year within the Department, so long as we all remember to keep the communication lines open and the flow of information going. I wish all the newly elected/appointed Department Officers and post a successful year. Those of you that supply inputs to the Department Newsletter please send your input to americanlegion@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 Comments
NO REPORT FOR THIS MONTH
William Marshall
Department NECman

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

Off we go on another year than you for electing me as your Vice Commander at Large I will serve you ALL with pleasure it’s an honor to do so once again it was a major blow to our new Dept. Commander that there no Vice Commanders elected at Convention. Michael Benson stepped up to the plate on the night of the Convention Ball, our Department Commander has now appointed 3 Vice Commanders who will have to be voted on and approved at our next DEC in October. I would like to publicly thank GR01 for the outstanding job that they did in hosting our Department Convention thank you. To all the Officers and Committee Chairmen who served last year thank you all for your effort, To the newly elected and appointees {by the Dept. Commander} I wish you luck and look forward to serving with you all I sincerely hope that we all put our shoulders to the wall and assist Robert Gray as our Elected Commander over the next 12 months we must make ourselves available to help all our members after all that’s what we are elected to do.

June was an interesting month for me, I did a bit of travelling and I was very proud to have received an invitation the Presidents of France and the USA to attend the 65th anniversary in Normandy. I arrived in Paris on the 5th of June and stayed at the home of the Paris Commander, early on the 6th I made my way into Paris again and boarded a Special Train to Caen it was FIRST Class in every sense of the word we had “hotel” food specially brought on board, veterans from the landing, diplomats film stars the French Minister with responsibility for veterans I had great and pleasant company with some the members of the French Embassy in Washington, we received some lovely gifts including Photos from The Landing on arrival we were taken by special buses to The Site of the Memorial in Normandy the roads were closed to allow us to travel in convoy at high speed, our invitations were for the VIP section. I enjoyed the Ceremony and on the way out I met our National Commander, I thought that he would have been escorted by some of the Legion members from our Department. I also met a few Legion members from the Department.

Our National Commander was very impressed by the Friends of the Legion that he met from Paris Post and congratulated them on their caps. Our return journey was good fun, the lady sitting across from us was very grateful to me for all the extra drink’s that she got. I visited the Paris Post and returned home on Tuesday. Over the next week I was in touch with my Posts to get them to try to reach 100%.

Next stop was GR01 and the 4th DEC and Department Convention. It was a very poor start as we didn’t have a quorum and the 1st session of Convention lasted 48 minutes before a very small attendance. Our Elections were very quiet affairs and as I referred to earlier we found it hard to get anyone to stand only two positions were contested Commander and Vice Commander at Large. We have to make a decision to reduce the working days at Department Convention as numbers are falling at a fast rate.

Congrats to those who won Awards you deserved them I will have proposals for the new method of judging and marking awards ready in August and I will be looking forward to receiving you comments and suggestions for presenting to the 2nd DEC in October.

Since my arrival home both the Department, Commander and I have been in touch with each other on an almost daily basis.

Wishing you all a nice July especially those on vacation.

Liam Kane
Vice Commander at Large

Vice Commander Michael Besant
GR09, GR13, GR30, GR42, GR79

Greetings my fellow Legionaries, Auxiliary, and S.A.L. Members
I ask that we use this year to reconnect with each other and coordinate our Posts’ efforts to strengthen and grow our Department. I have no magic plan, no secret ideas. But I am sure that each of you have a piece to the solution. My goal as VC is to learn from everyone that I come in contact with. Take those ideas, plans and experiences gained and share that knowledge with others. Information dissemination may be the key that stimulates our growth. Share your great ideas! We need to let others know how great the Legion is.

I may be contacted at mbesant@t-online.de or on my phone number 0160-7177-151 0800-2000
Michael Besant  
Department Vice Commander

Vice Commander/IPC Joe Brown  
GR03, GR14, GR45, GR1982

My Fellow Legionaries

My time as Department Commander has come to an end. Together we had a great year, we had our ups and downs, but the Department of France fulfilled its mission. I would like to thank all the Department Officers, the posts, Auxiliary, and SAL within this Department that gave your all to the Department. A big thanks to the following post that made 100% for the membership year.

GC01, IT01, IR03, IR63, GR01, GR03, GR06, GR07, GR09, GR14, GR30, GR42, GR79, GR1982, DK01, CH01, PO01, thanks to all of you for a job well done. We had seven post that did not make 100%, we made 97% in Membership at National level we missed it by 117 members. My congratulations to all the newly elected Department Officers, I know you all will do a good job, and my best wish’s go to you for a successful year. My special thanks to the Department Adjutant Comrade James Settle, for putting up with me for the last two years, and the Membership Chairman Comrade Michael Umland for the outstanding job he did for the Department membership, and to NECMan Comrade William Marshall for guiding me in the right direction at National, Past Department Commanders Comrade John Miller, and Comrade Nola Maloney who were always there for me. Vice Commander Comrade Frank Hanchak thanks for a job well done and to your support of the department. Finance Officer Comrade Gary Miller, thanks for your support, and help to me during the last two years. To the National Security Chairman for ensuring that the department was well represented at National Headquarters, and for all the support you gave to the department during National Conventions time, Carl Hale thanks to you for a job well done on the Department Web Page. I have stepped up and accepted Commander Gray’s request to be a Vice Commander, and will support him to the fullest. My assigned post are as follows GR03, GR13, GR1982, GR45 and IR63, for all you Post Commanders and Adjutants I am your Vice Commander for this year. Could you please provide a post roster and a post activities calendar, I will be contacting you in the near future. My E-mail address is djcharlybrown@hotmail.com my handy number is 0171 9259949 you can call me day or night, I am your VC and I am here for you. So let’s start helping our Legion Family. 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.

Joe Brown  
Department Vice Commander/IPC

Vice Commander Keith Abernathy  
FR05, BE02, CH01, GR05, IT01, IR63

Keith Abernathy  
Vice Commander

Vice Commander James Settle  
GR01, GR06, GR07, GR20

I will be contacting Post GR01, GR06, GR07, and GR20, in the near future. I want to set the ground work to visit your post, and to provide any assistance that you might need. Let’s all work together to keep this department moving forward. If you need to contact me in the meantime, please use the below listed E-mail and phone number.

Contact me at E-mail Address pisces@t-online.de or phone number 07138-67359

For God and Country

James Settle  
Department Vice Commander

Department Chaplain Ronald Moore  
Chaplain’s Page July 2009

Special Days/Legion Events: 4th of July- Independence Day; 17th-25th- Boys Nation, Wash. DC; 18th-25th Girls Nation, Wash. DC; Korean War ended (July 27, 1953); 30th- 3 day Service >Officer’s School.

Christian Religious Days: 11th-St Benedict Day (Cath.); 15th- Saint Vladimir’s Day; 24th- Pioneer Day (Mormon); 25th- St James the Great Day.

Jewish Holidays: (Year 5769); 30th- Tisha B’Av

Islamic Holidays: None that I know of.

Please visit the church, temple, synagogue or mosque of your choice.

Post Everlasting reported from April 25th to May 26th:

Gerry Owens, GR03 and longtime DSO survived by wife, Anne Marie.

Newt Heisley, Designer of the POW/MIA Flag dies at 88

Alvin Thompson, GR-03

Prayers for the Sick & Ill:

George Hall, GR-03

Shawn Ashe, GR-42

Doug Clemence, GR-06

Nola Maloney, GR-03 and Past Department Commander

John H. Miller, GR-1982 and PDC & present Dept Alt NECman

Phil Gatchell, GR-03

Edward Hayes, GR-03

Kenneth Grasser, GR-09

Brenda Dearborn, Dept of Maine present Americanism Chair and past chaplain

Harold M. Wild, GR-13

Ronald (Ron) Hansen, GR-06

Marlene Watson, Widow of GR-13 charter member William Watson

Paul Johnson, Dept of Wyoming 3rd District VC and Past Chaplain

Larry “Yard Dog” Ewerds, GR-07

Edwin F. Hoffman, GR-13

Robert Downs, GR-79

Brian Charters, IR-63

Michelle Gerdeman, daughter of Comrade John Gerdeman, Sr. GR-07

Harry Hall, GR-42
Isadore Pink, GR-07
Niece of Comrade Dave Mendez, GR-01
Cyndia, wife of Comrade Dan Halsey, GR-03
Marie-Anne Godefroid, wife of Comrade Carl Hale, FR-01
James W. Johnson,
Mike Paguia, GR-03
Jerry Deaver, GR-07
Rose Jeffries, GR-07
Harry Jeffries, GR-07
Gorrell Cheek, GR1982
Dick Knoll, GR-09

are undergoing, were undergoing or were scheduled for, medical treatment.

No other deaths or other illnesses were reported to me, but we continue to pray for those comrades, family members and friends of the Legion who have passed away or are ill.

Greetings Comrades, Brothers and Sisters of the American Legion Family,

Happy Independence Day!

Thank you for your trust and vote of confidence in allowing me to continue to serve as your department chaplain. I have been honored to serve you in this capacity since March 11, 2006 and I hope I get it right this year.

At the Department Chaplain’s Conference in Indianapolis, the duties and responsibilities of chaplains are often discussed, sometimes very heatedly. A military chaplain is responsible for a specific creed and denomination, be it Roman Catholic, Protestant, Jewish or Islamic to name a few. The American Legion Chaplaincy serves all members of the Legion Family and all veterans and their families, regardless of their religion, so it has to be a non-denominational and non-sectarian position. To make the duties even more challenging, the American Legion chaplaincy requires that the chaplain be non-political and impartial in his actions.

The Preamble to The American Legion Constitution says it all for me. With the words, “For God and Country”, I know I am serving an organization that seeks to do God’s Work by helping others. We restate this purpose at every meeting of The American Legion. It is a principle to stand up for and a principle we can live by. I serve God and I serve our Country by helping others as much as I am able. I thank God that I have been given the opportunity to serve with and for you. If you disrespect God by using His name in vain, I will let you know it immediately. There is no excuse for a Legionnaire to use such language and it falls under “conduct unbecoming for an officer or Legionnaire”. If you don’t like that, at least respect the Legion Family and keep your language clean and respectful.

Let me give you a little story from one of those hard lessons learned in my life. When I was a young teenager, I felt one of my teachers was being unfair to me, so I decided to show her my displeasure by not doing my homework, taking the tests or participating in class. I was sure she would be hurt by my actions and that she would personally feel badly. Surprisingly, I received a failing grade in that class which definitely stood out like a sore thumb where my other lowest grades were “B’s”. I spent six weeks in summer school listening to other kids playing outside, but I managed to get a “B” for the class. I think the lesson (let’s call it “Lesson Geometry”) I learned is clear, so I won’t spell it out.

I heard similar stories from Americans, who didn’t vote in a presidential election and then complained they didn’t vote for the elected person, so won’t support or condone him. Voting is a democratic principle that our country was founded upon. If your or my candidate was not elected, then there were more votes in favor of someone else. The elected president is automatically Commander-in-Chief, and any servicemen or woman is required to respect the office and continue to follow orders. I never put that to the test after “Lesson Geometry”.

We have new officers and committee chairpersons this year. Some department positions have been filled, but others are still open and desperately in need of committed Legionnaires. Voices are loud that the department is not doing its job and it appears that the principle of non-participation is being used as an alternative. I hope not, because we would be going against the principle of “For God and Country”, if that is the case.

My personal thanks goes to all members of The American Legion family of the Department of France for supporting our veterans and their families in the past. I look forward to personally thanking members for their support and assistance again this year.

May God bless you and your family and keep all safe.

God bless our servicemen and women, as well as their families, no matter where they serve.

Service to God and Country!
Pastor Ronald Moore,
Dept of France Chaplain
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Email: revronmoore@yahoo.de

Rev. Ronald Moore
Department Chaplain

Membership Chairman
The new Department Membership Chairman is Comrade Fred Lane Commander of GR1982. He can be contacted at the below Address, E-mail and phone number
Fred Lane
CMR454 Box J
APO, AE 09250
Phone: 0152127017724
A word from Past Department VC Frank Hanchak

Newly Elected Commander Robert Gray is to be commended, not only for the great job he has accomplished in the past, but for his leadership skills and abilities that he has shown and will continue to exhibit as the leader of the Department of France. He is a qualified and capable leader and I know he will earn the trust and respect that we have placed in him as our newly elected Commander. Thank you Commander Gray for accepting the challenge and I personally wish you well as you lead us into another Legion Year!

During my last few weeks as Department Vice Commander, I traveled to Riley Leroy Pitts Post GR-07 in Mannheim on Tuesday, June 2nd to assist with the election and installation of Post Officers. It was an historic day in that it was the last meeting chaired by Commander JENNIFER EWERDS. Commander Ewerds has completed a successful year and is moving on with her career with the US Army. Jennifer will be deploying to Iraq. (She will be deployed by the time you read this). I wish her success and I pray for her safety and ask all Legionnaires to keep her in your thoughts and prayers as she will be serving our country at the front lines for the next 15 months.

Commander Ewerds handed the gavel over to JOHN NORTHINGTON. Commander Northington has quite a legacy to maintain as he assumes command of a great post with a long and storied past. Good luck John and I wish you well.

My next official visit as Department Vice-Commander happened the following day on Wednesday, June 3, 2009. I visited Kaiserslautern Post GR-01 for their last general membership meeting before the annual Department Convention. Commander JOHN FLEMING has business well under control. Although he is a newly elected officer, he has a good handle on Post operations and he has the support of all who attend. I know Kaiserslautern Post GR-01 will continue to be at the forefront of the Department of France.

I attended the Legion Riders meeting on Tuesday, June 9. I met with Director LARRY EWERDS and his wife, Immediate Past Commander Jennifer Ewerds. The American Legion Riders (ALR) meets every 2nd Tuesday of the month on Spinelli Barracks in Mannheim. If you are a Legionnaire and are interested in camaraderie with other legionnaires and motorcycle enthusiasts, come out to the next meeting on July 14th at 1900.

The 10th of June found me at Stuttgart Post GR-06 where I assisted with the election and installation of Post Officers. Congratulations to Commander DOUG CLEMENCE. Who was re-elected to the position of Post Commander. Other officers elected were IVC ROBERT MALDONADO, 2VC DAVE WEISS, SO CHARLES MCCAMMON, Chaplain KEN WHITE, Historian MIKE UMLAND, and SAA JAMES MOSS.

Commander Clemence also conducted a Post Everlasting Ceremony for Frank Decico and Paul Tucker who passed away recently. The ceremony was very moving and was a great example of how we must remember our fallen comrades. Thank you Commander Doug for such a memorable ceremony!

Although I was not elected or appointed to a position within the Department of France, I remain loyal to the principles and programs that Commander Gray and the officers of the Department of France now exhibit. I wish all of them well and I pledge my support to each and every officer and chairman of this organization.

Finally, Commander Gray has appointed Department Adjutant James Settle as Newsletter editor. This is not a new job for Adjutant Settle as he held this position in the past and proved to be quite capable in the production of the newsletter and I know he will continue in the high standard he has shown in the past. Thank you Adjutant Settle for undertaking this valuable position as the Voice of the Commander!

Frank J. Hanchak
Past Vice Commander

Department Service Officer George Hall
Please call me or e-mail, if you need help with DFAS, SSA, VA, TRI CARE,

Yours in Comradeship
George T. Hall Sr.
Office: 06221-57-8236 DSN: 370-8236
Home: 06223-5475
Mobile: 0171-937-9871
E-mail: hallgt@yahoo.com

Sons of The American Legion Frank Hanchak
Fellow Sons of The American Legion

I thank all Sons of The American Legion who are still serving. Don't forget to mark your calendars for the 2nd Sons of The American Legion Detachment Executive Committee meeting. The meeting will be in Schweinfurt on Saturday, September 27th. I hope to see many of you there.
Sal Membership cards have been released to Squadron Commanders. See you Commander or Adjutant now if you don't have yours.
Please contact me and let me know when your next meeting or event will be.
Thanks to all who serve our Organization and the youth of our community?

Frank J. Hanchak  
Commander,  
Detachment of France  
Sons of The American Legion

Americanism  
Carl Hackworth  
NO REPORT FOR THIS MONTH  
Carl Hackworth  
Americanism Chairman

VFW News  
There will be a VFW District meeting on July 18th at 1000 at GR-30 Post Home in Kitzingen.  
Information provided by Comrade Frank Hanchak

A.L. PE  
Department of France  
Ron Moore

Open letter to:

1) Department of France American Legion Riders  
2) Posts and members interested in participating in the newly formed Department of France AL Pony Express Messenger Service for the 2009 Legacy Run.

1) Last year’s donations and registrations for 2008 Legacy Run from Department of France Legion Riders

I don't really feel responsible for what happened last year although I am very sorry that it happened due to poor communication. The package that was meant for me was given to Gino Cantu who gave it to John Odom, who in turn gave it to the Sons of the American Legion at their convention. When I asked Gino and then John about the check (and my donation) at the Convention last year, I was told this after the fact.

Both Gino and John confirmed this to me per email last year.

2) Registration for 2009 Legacy Run, including package with maps and patches. Open to all members)

The registration deadline to be able to receive Run materials and patch is August 1, (as it was last year).

After August 1, the registration fee increases to $50 instead of the rider/supporter $35 and no package will be issued.

If AL Riders or Post members wish to register to receive the packet, please print out the registration form under the following link and send it with your check, money order or credit card information to Indianapolis directly in order to meet Aug 1st deadline.

http://legion.org/programs/legacyrun/about

Please remember, funds paid as a rider/supporter are not tax deductible because you receive the Legacy package and patch.

Tax deductible donations to the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund can also be made at:

https://join.legion.org/legacyrun/

3) Department of France AL Pony Express Messenger Service

The Department of France Pony Express Messenger Service was approved at the 1st DEC in Kaiserslautern in June of this year, so we are no longer provisional. I am the Department of France Coordinator and all Department of France Way Stations and messengers must register with me to be recognized.

The program can not be restricted to AL Riders only and is open to all in accordance with the National AL Pony Express policy. The Department of France restricts messengers to members of The American Legion, Auxiliary or Sons of the American Legion at this time however.

I have reserved AL Pony Express Badges to be issued at no charge (normal price $9.95 per badge) for:

- The first 10 Posts and with maximum two messengers per Post who apply as Way Stations

- The first 10 active American Legion Riders in good standings who apply to me.

My goal is to have as many Posts as possible involved as Way Stations and collecting donations on a best effort basis. A collection will be by the end of July or first 3 days in August, so please prepare for it.

I had hoped to have support on the European Legacy Run this year, but I received a cryptic message from
TuCan that he is now in the States. I have not received answers to my messages to the GR07 ALR.

I believe the Legacy Scholarship Fund is a very worthy cause. I wouldn’t go through the expense and take the risk involved riding a motorcycle with for the full run, which I have done for the last two years. I am registered for this year and leave on August 5th.

Please contact me as soon as possible if you are interested. Those messengers who took the oath and received the badge at the 1st DEC, do not have to contact me again. I will be sending out a confirmation email by Friday, so if you got your badge, but don’t receive the confirmation, please let me know after Friday.

I ask all Posts to make an effort to collect donations for the 2009 Legacy Run. Put out a collection jar or ask for donations. Every $ received helps a qualified child of a fallen serviceman or woman since September 11, 2001 to help pay for an undergraduate education.

I will ensure that your funds are received and given to the National Commander at the Convention. All donations should be by check or money order in US dollars drawn on an U.S. bank.

If you have any questions, please send me an email with Legacy Run Question in the header.

Service to God and Country!

Ron “Gypsy” Moore
Department of France AL PE Coordinator

Department Events

CONVENTION TIME 2009

The following pictures are of the Department of France 85th Convention in Kaiserslautern Germany 17-21 June 2009.
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