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Chaplain
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National Commander Fang A. Wong saluting during the wreath laying ceremony at the Memorial Day Ceremonies, Lorraine American Cemetery and Memorial on 27 May 2012, during his visit to the Department of France.

Photo by Comrade Doug Malin, Aide to the National Commander

(Department Officers Continued on Page 2)
Commanders Corner

Yes, that’s a picture of our National Commander Fang A. Wong as he lays a wreath at the Loraine American Military Cemetery in St. Avold, France during Memorial Day Services on Sunday, May, 27, 2012. I think it epitomizes the respect and honour we feel for our fallen heroes and the care we give and have for our military and veterans, with a willingness to go that extra mile in accomplishing the mission of The American Legion, “For God and Country!”

So far in his year in office, National Commander Wong had talks with our Commander in Chief and other politicians concerning the needs of our Military and its Veterans. He talked with soldiers, airmen, sailors and marines and, listened to what they had to say. He talked to Veterans and local governments about Veteran issues and solutions. His input was important for us all and we thank him for his efforts and accomplishments.

He took the time to visit our Department during a very exhausting year as our National Commander. At our National Commander’s Banquet in Heilbronn, put on by our Immediate Past Commander Joe D. “Charlie” Brown, he also talked and laughed with us. Sympathetic, able to listen and discuss, but you also realized this was the man who led our organization very well this year. A right hand salute to him, his family and the people who accompany him during his travels. Thank you for your service to our Nation and our great organization.

His picture on the front cover of our newsletter this month was more important for me than having my picture there. I’ll put my picture up eventually, but this issue of the newsletter should give us direction and a message for the coming year. It’s not about us as individuals, but it is about the Four Pillars of The American Legion and our duty as Legionnaires. I’m proud to call each and every one of you, Sister or Brother, because we are The American Legion Family.

Thank you for your support and trust in electing me as your 2012-2013 Department of France Commander, The American Legion.

I’ll quote a few words that I wrote earlier:

Quote-
As you are probably aware, I was elected as 2012-2013 Department of France Commander. My priorities for the Department of France lie in the following areas:

- Service to our servicewomen and men and their families
- Service to our veterans and their families
- Increase participation in the programs and services of The American Legion
- Cooperation and achievement of mutual goals between the organizations of The American Legion Family on National and Department of France levels
- Coordination of activities and combining of resources between Auxiliary Units, Legion Posts, AL Riders Chapter and SAL Squadrons in the Department
- Membership recruitment and retention in all Department (FR) organizations
- Expansion of the National Legion Riders Program in the Department (FR)

Unquote

Now, let’s see if I can work as much as I can write. By the way, what can I use as a smart saying this year? The first I thought of was, “RRM”, but that’s silly.

How about “F.I.R.M.”? Snazzy and appropriate, or?

F. = Find them.
I. = Initiate them.
R. = Retain them.
M. = Mentor them.

Let’s do it!

I wish all of you and America a blessed and wonderful Independence Day. Be safe.

For God and Country!

Rev. Ronald Moore
Commander
Department of France
The American Legion
Mobile: +49 (0) 172-7417812
e-mail: revronmoore@yahoo.de

FROM THE EDITOR

Please send all input for the Department Newsletter to my e-mail address by the 26th of the month. Please use Word document format. Constructive suggestions to improve the Newsletter are also welcome. Thank You.

John D. Fleming
Editor
E-Mail: pastcmdr.fleming@gmail.com
Vice Commander at Large

First let me congratulate the newly elected and appointed officers of the Department of France. I am positive that we will continue to move this Department FORWARD.

To the Commanders of Post GR45 Timothy Henning, GR79 Maxwell Rice, GR1982 Johnnie Walker, CP01 Fred Platt, we have all had both professional and personal conversation, and I believe we already have a good working relationship with each other, and this will bloom over the next few months. I am at your service, if you have a problem, suggestions, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

My work schedule follows on even calendar weeks, I work days, and I am home around 15:00 hours on odd calendar weeks I am home till around 13:00 hours and return around 23:00 hours. I can usually answer your E-mails within hours. If I do not have an answer to your questions, I can usually have an answer within 24 hours. I believe we have a great staff this year and we will move forward. My contact information is below. In closing, please keep those in harms way and their families in your prayers.

Department Vice Commanders Post Assignments 2013

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<th>VC STEPHEN WARD</th>
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<td>Phone: 06322-68168</td>
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Vice Commander

It’s an honor to serve as your Department of France Vice Commander this year. I’m looking forward to visit your Posts and to offer any assistance. Please email me your Post meeting dates, locations, and times.

Commanders and Adjutants, please review the Department of France Standard Operating Procedures-Definitions, approved 18 June 2011, Department By-Laws as revised 18 June 2011, Standard Operating Procedures-Internal Affairs approved 18 June 2011, and the Department Constitution adopted at the 2011 Department of France Convention. If you’re missing the documents, please contact me by email.

Vice Commander Thomas Rohde has converted the Department of France history documents into PDF files. If you require a copy of the PDF files, please contact me.

Our mail goals/objectives are to communicate from the Posts to our Post members by either a Post newsletter or by emails. Personal contact telephone is needed to insure the Post members are felt welcome to the Post. Stress the importance of membership to our Post members. Membership is our voice on Capitol Hill. If your Post requires any assistance, please contact me. Participation in community activities increases the Post awareness/presence. Importance of the Posts to submit at least four separate Committee Reports to the Department of France Chairmen. I have been assigned as the Department Recruitment Chairman, please send me your recruitment dates, times, and locations. Membership transmittals should be done at least monthly to the Department of France Membership Chairman Joe Brown. Please let me know if you require his contact information.

Many thanks to Post Commander Ron Howko and the Comrades from the Ireland Posts for their participation at the grave site, 9 June, for PFC Frank O’Brien, USMC, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim and Maureen Dowd visit, 26 June, to Ballinrobe to place a wreath.

I’m planning to visit the Mannheim Post this coming Tuesday (3 July 12). The family and I depart to the States for vacation from the 9th of July till the 29th of July 12.

Many thanks for your service and what you’re doing for The American Legion Posts in your Community.

Stephen A. Ward
Vice Commander
Department of France
The American Legion
Phone: 06322-68168
E-mail: wardtrans@yahoo.com
Fellow veterans’

I would like to introduce myself, my name is Dave Boedeker and I am your new Chaplain. I have been a member of the Legion for the past 11 years, but was not very active due to my job. In that time, I found myself missing something that was very special, that is the comradeship of my fellow veterans. I am now a member of the American Legion Post 1982 located in Katterback.

When I was asked to become your Chaplain, I thought that I was unworthy of this great honor, but after some serious reflection, I knew that this was what I wanted. I wanted to be able to give back something to my fellow veterans. I know that this will be a challenge, but I am willing to accept this. I hope with your prayers, I will be able to promote all that the Legions stand for and in doing so I will earn your trust. I will try to keep everyone informed of those who are sick and those who have passed away. We must always keep them in our prayers for what they have done for this great nation of ours.

In this regard, please keep the following Vets in our prayers:

Jerald Bass GR05
Horst Schulte GR13
Larry Bryant

Please forgive me if I left someone out.

Once again, I would like to thank the Legion and its members for this opportunity to serve you and all I ask is to please keep me in your prayers. Will talk to you again next newsletter.

Sincerely yours, Dave

David Boedeker
Chaplain
Department of France
The American Legion
Phone: +49 (03221) 2274818
E-Mail: dbgubfighter4@gmail.com

Thank you for all the photographs from our recent Department Convention. They will become part of our Department Records.

Please submit reports/photos from your 4 of July celebrations, as you must have plenty of them. I would also like every Post to submit some Post happenings, e.g., Annual General Membership Meeting, Party’s or anything else of note. At the end of the year 2012/2013 I intend to award a prize to the best Photograph submitted to me from either a Member or a Post "if you’re not in, you cannot win".

Looking forward to seeing you every month in our Newsletter.

Michael Coyne
Historian
Department of France
The American Legion
E-Mail: tommyc76@gmail.com

At the First DEC on 16 June 2012, Article IV, Section 3. d. of the SOP – Conventions was amended as shown below. The highlighted portion was added.

ARTICLE IV – STANDING RULES OF CONVENTION

Section 3. CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS The procedures for elections are as follows:

d. All nominations for office shall come from the floor. No Member shall be allowed to nominate another Member for any office unless the nominator shall have attended Session 1 and Session 2 of the Convention at which the nomination is offered. Nominees will not nominate more than one person for the same office. The Election Chairman will query each candidate on their desire to serve in the nominated position. If the nominee does not desire to serve in that position, he will not be considered as a valid candidate.

George W. Seeburger
Judge Advocate
Department of France
The American Legion
E-Mail: gwseeburger@yahoo.de
National Executive Committee Man

A new era is beginning, so hopefully we will have people reporting every month. Having sent in my piece on a regular time, it will be nice to see the new Newsletter.

In May, I travelled to Indianapolis to represent our Department at the NEC Spring Meetings in Indianapolis, keeping my proud record of 14 years of attending both NEC and DEC without missing a single one. During the NEC Meetings, I attended the Economic/Employment/Veterans preference meetings. Although I do not have a vote, I participate in all meetings and of course, having been given the position of being a member of the Liaison Economic Committee, was very proud to serve the additional "piece of work". I reported back to the Department on the main happenings, including the Mail problems, the Square Knot Resolution submitted by Dave Sears and the upcoming JOB FAIRS in Germany, which hopefully will be of value to us all. The dates are as follows: 19 July in Vilseck, and 24 July in Ramstein Air Force Base. Everyone who attended the recent DEC/Convention was given a hand-out regarding these very important events. If you require more hand-outs, please contact me. While in the USA, I attended to queries raised by members and had good success with some. I also attended the FODPAL Meeting and was given another task to do by FODPAL Secretary Doug Haggan; that of chairing a Committee to select the winner of the Special Earle Cocke Junior Award, given annually to a Member for Outstanding Work.

On return home, I went to the Memorial Day event in Lorraine Cemetery and then we had another trip to Germany for the National Commanders visit, a long, but well worth while one. Home for a little while and back to Germany for our Department Convention, where once again we failed to have a Quorum for the 4th DEC. Congratulations to all the newly elected Officers and I wish them well. The report on our Convention will be dealt with in greater detail in other Reports.

Liam Kane
NECMAN
Department of France
The American Legion
E-Mail: commliam@gmail.com

2012 Legacy Fund Donation Collection Procedure

Greetings Messengers, Way Station Managers, Posts, Units and Squadrons.

I hope we are continuing with our efforts to collect for the 2012 Legacy Scholarship Fund. I have talked to several Posts because I didn’t see their Legacy Donation can set out in an obvious place.

We only have a short time until we start collecting the funds for transfer to the States. I will be leaving for the States in August, so August 4th should be the last date of pickup for delivery to me.

I was elected as 2012-2013 Department Commander this month. The chief messenger reports to the Department commander, so I shouldn’t incorporate both functions while I’m commander. I may take that back over when I’m no longer in this position.

As of June 24, 2012, Howard "Fitz" Fitzgerald has been appointed as our Department of France chief messenger. His email is- susiefitz@t-online.de

In transferring records to our new chief messenger, I see that the following Posts have messengers or participate in the system:

ALR GR07, CP01, GR01, GR03, GR05, GR07, GR09, GR14, GR42, GR1982 and IR63

I ask the following Posts to contact us to get on board to help recognize and support the children of our fallen heroes:

BE02, DK01, FR01, FR05, GC01, GR06, GR13, GR20, GR30, GR45, GR79, IR02, IR03, IT01, NL01, PO01, SP292

If you are incorrectly listed, please contact me immediately, so that I may correct our records.

Please coordinate pickups or send U.S $ check/money order donations, made out to A.L. Legacy Scholarship Fund, to him or me. Please ensure that your Post or personal address and name are on the check or money order so that the National Commander can send the donor a thank you letter (above $100) or a plaque (over $500).

I will be participating in the 2012 Legacy Run and we will leave Niagara Falls with the National Commander on August 20, 2012. Chief Messenger Fitz will meet me at Niagara Falls to turnover the checks he has collected to me. Unfortunately, he will not be able to function as a support vehicle for the Run due to the number of vehicles already participating.

On August 23, the Run arrives in Indianapolis, location of this year’s convention. I will be wearing my Department of France Ride vest during the presentation of the donations on stage at the Convention. I will also be wearing it, both with the Riders and our Department, in the Convention Parade on August 26, which starts at 1600 Indy time.

Remember, your full donation goes into the Legacy Scholarship Fund with no deductions. Our Department is credited and thanked for the amount of money we bring to Convention, but that isn’t what is important. Every penny helps the children of servicewomen/men who die or died while on active duty or federalized service since September 11, 2001.

Rev. Ronald "Gypsy" Moore
Commander
Department of France
The American Legion
E-Mail: revronmoore@ahoo.de

Our Department is credited and thanked for the amount of money we bring to Convention, but that isn’t what is important. Every penny helps the children of servicewomen/men who die or died while on active duty or federalized service since September 11, 2001.
Nation Security/Foreign Relations Topics

TOPIC: NEW COMMO TECHNOLOGY & VEHICLES TO DEPLOYING BRIGADES

As the Army’s third Network Integration Evaluation concludes, the service in the midst of synchronized fielding efforts as it prepares to field the first integrated group of advanced tactical communications technologies to deploying Soldiers beginning this October.

This group of networked technologies, known as Capability Set 13, is composed of network components, associated equipment and software that will for the first time deliver an integrated voice and data capability throughout the entire Brigade Combat Team, or BCT, formation, from the brigade commander to the tactical edge - the dismounted Soldier.

The five-week Network Integration Evaluation, known as NIE 12.2, validated the connectivity, architecture and components of Capability Set 13, the tactical network baseline that will extend the network down to the individual Soldier and significantly enhance Mission Command On The Move and Soldier connectivity.

The NIE is a key enabler of the Army’s new Agile Acquisition Process aimed at rapidly developing, acquiring and fielding integrated mission command capabilities. This process allows the Army to assess capability gaps, rapidly form requirements, solicit mature industry solutions and perform laboratory and field evaluations - shortening years off the traditional acquisition timeline.

The Army’s Capability Set fielding plan supports a synchronized vehicle and network fielding strategy, prioritizes capabilities for our deployed forces, and improves alignment of limited resources.

Beginning in October, the Army will begin to field Capability Set 13 to up to eight BCTs with priority going to deployed forces (three BCTs), units scheduled to deploy next (three BCT training sets), a forward stationed brigade in Korea, and the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.

Key to this effort is bringing the Army’s Program Executive Offices, or (PEOs), and Program Managers, known as PMs, together during the NIE/Agile Process using the Capability Set Integrated Master Schedule, or IMS, for integration, production and deployment. The IMS is the backbone of Capability Set 13 as it serves to synchronize the network and vehicle PMs’ master schedules as they relate to integrating and fielding capability sets.

On May 1, the Army completed the mine-resistant, ambush-protected, or MRAP, final design review, which solidified how Capability Set 13 assets will be integrated into that vehicle platform. MRAPs will be utilized in the first Infantry Brigade Combat team formations that will be equipped with Capability Set 13.

The NIE has been vital to validating MRAP network design and architecture. Soldier feedback out of the NIE process has lead to many design and user interface improvements that are currently being incorporated into the final MRAP configuration. Under the current construct, networked Humvee platforms will be used as training sets by continental U.S., or CONUS, units as they prepare to deploy. Working with Army Research and Development Centers and industry, Capability Set fielding teams have nearly completed the Humvee preliminary design review.

Today, final engineering drawings for the first five “super configuration” MRAP prototype vehicles are being finalized at the U.S. Army Tank Automotive Research, Development and Engineering Center, or TARDEC, located in Warren, Mich.

"We are beginning to build and test the Capability Set 13 prototypes, which is an astronomical feat given that we started the production design only six months ago," said Elizabeth Miller, chief engineer, synchronized fielding, System of Systems Integration (SoSI) Directorate.

The remaining prototype vehicles to be equipped with Capability Set 13 will be built at the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command, or SPAWAR, in Charleston, S.C., and the Red River Army Depot in Texarkana, Texas. SPAWAR will build the MRAP production assets to support the October fielding of Capability Set 13, while Humvee training set production will be done at Red River.

These vehicles will be used to support safety release testing and network verification testing, both performed at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md.

As vehicle and system design and integration plans are finalized, equipping meetings with receiving units have swung into high gear. The first units to receive Capability Set 13 will be two brigades in the 10th Mountain Division. Recently, several key Army commands and staff offices including U.S. Army Forces Command, Army Materiel Command, G-3/5/7 and G-8, SoSI and several PEOs attended a three-day Capability Set 13 Unit Equipping and Reuse Conference with the 10th Mountain Division in order to develop, synchronize and schedule all Capability Set 13 new equipment training and fielding requirements aligned with the receiving brigade’s training schedule. New equipment training will begin with 10th Mountain Division units in October.

"We are very excited about the great integrated capability that we will soon field to our brigade and Soldiers," said Lt. Col. Darby McNulty, SoSI. "The Agile Process and three consecutive NIEs have built a very solid team across dozens of Army organizations. We are taking lessons learned from the NIEs and directly applying those to fielding CS 13 to the 10th Mountain and other units."

Following the fielding of Capability Set 13, the Army will program to field up to six BCT sets of network equipment per year for the fiscal year 14-18 Program Objective Memorandum in order to better synchronize its platform and network modernization efforts. (www.army.mil - http://www.army.mil/article/81506/).

During the American Legion National Executive Conference held in May, The American Legion approved a resolution that demands Congress and the Administration cease all efforts to reduce the defense budget from its current level. Furthermore, the Army’s budget demands must be fully funded. The American Legion urges Congress to ensure that the Army is fully staffed, trained, and equipped to achieve victory in any theater of war. A Congress that enables the Armed Forces in order to sustain the momentum of key programs while accelerating transformation is vital to maintaining a superior force.

FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMISSION

TOPIC 1: TURKEY DEPLOYS TROOPS TO SYRIAN BORDER
Turkish troops and antiaircraft batteries were headed toward the tense Turkish-Syrian border region Thursday amid reports that U.N. special envoy Kofi Annan was calling for a transitional “national unity” government as a potential solution to the crisis in Syria.

The Turkish deployment appeared moderate in scale and seemed more defensive, and perhaps symbolic, than offensive in nature.

On the diplomatic front, published reports have indicated that a new “road map” from Annan envisions a transitional government in Syria that would include representatives of the opposition and possibly some members of the current government.

However, the plan would reportedly exclude anyone whose presence could “undermine” the transition, wording that many interpret as aimed at President Bashar Assad.

However, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov cautioned that any reported additions to the Annan peace plan had not been finalized or agreed upon by all parties.

“There are no approved projects; the work on the possible final document is in progress,” Lavrov said at a news conference in Moscow.

Russia and the United States are among the nations expected to attend an emergency meeting Saturday of Annan’s so-called Action Group for Syria.

The session is a last-ditch effort to salvage Annan’s six-point peace plan, widely violated by both sides. Its centerpiece was a cease-fire that never took hold. Violence has escalated in recent weeks in Syria, where Assad’s forces have been battling an uprising for more than 15 months.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has said Annan’s “political transition road map” for Syria could signify a breakthrough in stalled diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis.

“You have to have a transition that complies with international standards on human rights, accountable governance, the rule of law, equal opportunity for all people of Syria, and this framework lays out how to arrive at that,” Clinton told reporters Thursday during a visit to Riga, Latvia.

U.S. officials appear set to argue that Assad’s continued presence in Syria would not fit into the proposed framework. Clinton and Lavrov are scheduled to meet Friday in St. Petersburg and discuss the issue.

A major question of any transition blueprint is the fate of Assad, who has been digging in and warning the nation that it is now on a war footing.

Washington and its allies say Assad must step down. But Russia and China so far have refused to go along with any international plan calling for his ouster.

The raging conflict in Syria has reverberated into Turkey, which shares a 500-mile border with the nation.

Turkish news reports said a convoy of about 30 military vehicles, including trucks with missile launchers, was being deployed Thursday along the border in southern Hatay province.

Turkish officials have emphasized that they want to avoid a military confrontation with Syria, but they were enraged last week when Syrian forces shot down a Turkish military jet off Syria’s coast. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said border security would be bolstered and that any Syrian military units approaching Turkey would be regarded as a threat.

The Turkish military buildup, and the increasingly tense relations between the neighbors, raises the possibility of a border clash. The Turkish frontier zone has become a haven for Syrian rebels and is also home to tens of thousands of Syrian refugees who have fled the violence.

The border has also become a conduit for fighters and weapons heading into Syria. Turkey denies reports that it has provided arms to the rebels or facilitated delivery of weapons from third parties, such as wealthy, pro-rebellion Syrians and the Persian Gulf Arab nations of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, both of which have publicly backed the idea of arming the rebels.

Meanwhile, state-run media in Syria reported a “terrorist explosion” Thursday in a parking lot outside a judicial complex in central Damascus, the capital. Television images showed smoke billowing from the site and firefighters with hoses dousing flames engulfing several parked cars. The report said three people were injured and 20 cars damaged.

Syria has seen a number of car bombings in recent months, mostly targeting government or security installations, with dozens of civilians killed in the attacks. The government has blamed “terrorists,” its label for antigovernment forces.

Rebels seeking to oust Assad have vowed to take the battle to the capital, and fierce clashes have been reported in recent days in its restive suburbs.

On Wednesday, gunmen stormed a pro-government television station outside Damascus, ransacked the offices and studios, set off explosives and killed three journalists and several other employees, state-run media reported. Press organizations worldwide and the White House condemned the attack.

TOPIC 2: UPDATE FROM DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POW/MISSING PERSONNEL AFFAIRS AND DIRECTOR OF THE DEFENSE POW/MISSING PERSONNEL OFFICEMAJOR GENERAL W. MONTAGUE WINEFIELD (RET.)

Last week, near Washington, D.C, we met with families, of service members lost in the Vietnam War, during the annual meeting of the National League of Families of American Prisoners and Missing in Southeast Asia. I personally sat-in on three one-on-one meetings that DPMO/JPAC provided to families. The passion these families have for the mission is nothing short of inspirational. The 2012 National POW/MIA Recognition Day poster, which was unveiled during the event, features a family and a missing soldier from the Vietnam War. The poster emphasizes our commitment not only to the missing service members, but also to their families.

On June 18, Mr. Verga, Chief of Staff for the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, hosted a Senior Leadership meeting, which I chaired, for organizations involved in the Accounting mission. The military services, combatant commands, Joint Staff, Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office, Armed Forces...
DNA Identification Laboratory, and supporting agencies, met to discuss developing a Departmental Strategy for the Accounting Community. We had three very productive sessions where we discussed the way-forward, friction points, and working together as a team. I am confident that this meeting will lead to more HARMONIOUS relationships, plenty of ENGAGEMENT, ANALYSIS of our work, and TRUST between partner organizations. We are bringing the H.E.A.T. to the accounting mission!

Also in June, Mr. Verga and I traveled to Moscow, where we met with Ms. Ekaterina Priyseyzheva, the new Russian Co-Chairwoman for the U.S. Russia Joint Commission (USRJC) on POW/MIA's, and Col. Andrey Taranov, the Executive Secretary for the Russian Side of the USRJC. In our meetings, we discussed scheduling a plenary session as early as possible. Another topic of discussion was assisting the USRJC. In our meetings, we discussed Executive Secretary for the Russian Side of the USRJC. We are bringing the H.E.A.T. to the accounting mission!

Additionally, Defense Secretary Panetta's recent trip to Vietnam continued to make progress on POW/MIA efforts. During his trip, three previously restricted sites were opened for investigations, and archival documents that we have been requesting for several years were turned over. We hope to continue to build on this progress. One possible avenue for enhance cooperation is JPAC's initiative to accelerate operations in Vietnam, called the Vietnam Recovery Team (VRT). This relatively new concept aims to make better use of existing resources. Anoth-

TOPIC 3: POW/MIA WEEKLY UPDATE
AIRMAN MISSING FROM VIETNAM WAR IDENTIFIED
On May 30, 2012 the remains of a U.S. service member, missing in action from the Vietnam War, were identified and returned to his family for burial with full military honors. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Arden K. Hassen- ger, 32, of Lebanon, Ore., will be buried June 8 in his hometown. On Dec. 24, 1965, Hassen- ger, and the crew of the AC-47D aircraft nicknamed “Spooky” failed to return from a combat strike mission in southern Laos. After a “mayday” signal was sent, all contact was lost with the crew. Two days of search efforts for the aircraft and crew were unsuccessful.

In 1995, a joint U.S./Lao People’s Democratic Republic (L.P.D.R.) team investigated a crash in Savannakhet Province, Laos. Local villagers recalled seeing a two-propeller aircraft, similar to an AC-47D, crash in December 1965. One man had found aircraft wreckage in a nearby field while farming, and led the team to that location. The team recovered small pieces of aircraft wreckage at that time and recommended further investigative visits.

Joint U.S./L.P.D.R. investigation and recovery teams re-visited the site four times from 1999 to 2001. They conducted additional interviews with locals, recovered military equipment, and began an excavation. No human remains were recovered, so the exca-

While much of my attention is focused on missing Americans from past conflicts, I am just as focused on our only missing American service member from current conflicts, SGT Bowe Bergdahl. I had the pleasure of meeting both of Bowe’s parents at the White House three weeks ago, and participated in a very successful USCENTCOM-led family update last week.

The level of attention that Secretary Panetta has brought to the POW/MIA issue in the past few months is unprecedented; he has raised the topic in meetings with governments around the world. I believe that the work that you do has helped elevate the issue to that level, and I am eager sustain this momentum.

All the best, Q. Winfield
It’s a New Day! We are the new DPMO!

In 1995, a joint U.S./Lao People’s Democratic Republic (L.P.D.R.) team investigated a crash in Savannakhet Province, Laos. Local villagers recalled seeing a two-propeller aircraft, similar to an AC-47D, crash in December 1965. One man had found aircraft wreckage in a nearby field while farming, and led the team to that location. The team recovered small pieces of aircraft wreckage at that time and recommended further investigative visits.

Joint U.S./L.P.D.R. investigation and recovery teams re-visited the site four times from 1999 to 2001. They conducted additional interviews with locals, recovered military equipment, and began an excavation. No human remains were recovered, so the exca-

In 2010, joint U.S./L.P.D.R. recovery teams again excavated the crash site. The team recovered human remains, personal items, and military equipment. Three additional excavations in 2011 recovered additional human remains and evidence.

Scientists from the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command used dental records and material evidence to identify Hassenger.

With the accounting of this airman, 1,666 service members still remain missing from the Vietnam War.

MARINE MISSING IN ACTION FROM WWII IDENTIFIED
On June 5, 2012 the remains of a U.S. service member, missing in action from World War II, were identified and returned to his family for burial with full military honors.

Marine Corps Pfc. John A. Donovan, 20, of Plymouth, Mich., will be buried June 8, in Ann Arbor, Mich. Donovan was a crewmember aboard a PBJ-1 aircraft that failed to return from a night training mission over the island of Espiritu Santo, in what is known today as Vanuatu. None of the crew was recovered and in 1945 they were officially presumed deceased.

In 1994, a group of private citizens notified the U.S. that aircraft wreckage had been found on the island of Espiritu Santo. Human remains were recovered from the site at that time and turned over to the Department of Defense.

In 1999, a survey team traveled to the site, which was located at an elevation of 2,600 ft. in extremely rugged terrain, and determined that recovery teams would need specialized mountain training to safely complete a recovery mission. In 2000, a Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC) team visited the site and recovered human remains. From 2009 to 2011, multiple JPAC recovery teams excavated the site and recovered additional remains, aircraft parts and military equipment.

Scientists and analysts from JPAC used circumstantial evidence and dental records in
More than 400,000 of the 16 million Americans who served in World War II died. At the end of the war, the U.S. government was unable to recover, identify and bury approximately 79,000 as known persons. More than 73,000 Americans remain unaccounted-for from the conflict.

HEROES TO HOMETOWNS

Marlene Hall, Assistant Director of Outreach, Heroes to Hometowns is continuing to process requests for assistance from wounded soldiers. This past week she helped to assist 14 wounded soldiers. She created a Facebook page that has 141 followers, up from 126 followers last week, and a twitter account that has 597 followers, up from 577 last week, that she constantly updates. There are currently about 32 Department websites, up from 31, linking Heroes to Hometowns to their website which she keeps following up on. She keeps updating her resources page which she sends to the wounded soldiers and the American Legion posts. She has been working on H2H’s marketing and got a coin designed for free as a possible template. American Legion has designed a logo and now we are coming up with 3 booth designs (table cloth, tent, and standing posters). The booth will be at the American Legion National Convention. She sent H2H brochures to a middle school in Newport News, VA who wants to help wounded heroes. She also gave them the contact info of the VA Department Adjutant. Contacted: http://militarywarriors.org/

She attended a paralympic event with BP at Union Station and met paralympian champion Chris Waddell. She attended the PTSD conference at Capitol Hill. She sent out an email to all wounded warriors who live in FL and GA for free furniture with Rooms to Go. She met with the Anthem Project that want to create a housing/ educational/ medical development for veterans in Miami and elsewhere.

She is setting a meeting with Randy Puschert of the Wounded Warrior Project at Walter Reed. She is working with 1Sgt Matlock to attend Tues meetings at Walter Reed with wounded troops’ spouses that share what they need. She is attending The ODEP, VETS, OFCCEP, and EEOC meeting Wed, July 11, 2012.

Doug Haggan
Foreign Relation and National Security Committee
Department of France
The American Legion

2013 National Commanders Visit

As the Department VIP Chair, I would like suggestions from the Posts as to what they would like the Department to schedule for the new National Commander. There are three things we must provide; the briefing at Stuttgart and Ramstein and the visit to LRMC. The rest of the time we, the Department Members should have him and the Auxiliary President visit with us, some of our Posts and hear what the Membership has to say. Now that I have said all that, we are looking at a five or six day window for the visit. With any luck we can accomplish the necessary briefings and visit to LMRC in three days, leaving the rest of the time to us. Please send any suggestions to me, so I can start putting a plan together. The Department has to respond to National with our suggested three dates NLT 15 Jul 2012, so I’m asking that any and all suggestions be sent to me by 8 July, so I can formalize a plan for the Commander Moore to review before we send it to National. Let’s put our heads together and plan a whirlwind visit that the National Commander will remember for a long time.

Thanks Legionnaires.

John H. Miller PDC, ANEC
VIP Chair
E-Mail: miller-roth@t-online.de
Letter from Athens Post GC01

American Legion Athens Post GC01
Tziraion #9
117 42 Athens, Greece

June 30th, 2012

To Department of France
Department Adjutant
Subject: Submission for inclusion in the Department Newsletter

Comrade Adjutant,

It is with pleasure and pride we inform all Legionnaires that the City of Athens Medal Award was awarded to our Athens Greece GC01 Post. The City of Athens Mayor Yorgos Kaminis presented the Medal to our Post Commander Elias Pendias in a ceremony held at the City Mayors’ Office Hall on April 24, 2012. Dignitaries present were Embassy Personnel US Ambassador to Athens, Greece Mr. Daniel Bennett Smith with his wife Dianne, US Council General Kate Brandeis, Embassy’s Military Attaché’s Offices personnel US Navy Attaché Captain John Braunschweig, Army Major Carolos Zouroudis, Gunny Anthony Talbert and GC01 Post Officers and members.

The City hosted all attendees in a reception following the ceremony. The Medal Award was the City’s gesture to thank the American Legion Athens Post GC01 for its donation to the City’s Foundation for the Homeless which feeds two and a half thousand indigent people per day. The building will be used by the Foundation as its Administration Center.

Following this event the City Administration appointed our Commander as Senior Legal Advisor to their Foreign Relations Committee with an office at the City Hall. Our Post is proud to be able to contribute to strengthening to our two countries’ relations and to promoting the American Legion ideals of Community Service.

From The Ambassador To Greece

Ambassador Daniel B. Smith recently attended an award ceremony hosted by the City of Athens honoring the American Legion Post 1 for their donation of a building in downtown Athens to the municipality. The building, which for 72 years housed American Legion Post 1, will now be used by the Office of Reception and Solidarity of the Athens Municipality “KYADA” to help the homeless. During the ceremony, U.S. Ambassador Daniel Bennett Smith commended the Legion for their donation of the property to the community. “In making the decision to donate their home of over 70 years to the City of Athens, Post No. 1 has embodied helpfulness and devotion to this community,” said Ambassador Smith. “Their actions mirror the Legion’s vital partnership with hundreds of communities and local governments all across the United States. That they are cooperating with the City to create a home for those who have none, is most appropriate in a country famous for its welcoming hospitality.”

Daniel B. Smith
US Ambassador to Greece
National Commander Fang A. Wong with Officers and Members of Department of France American Legion, Auxiliary and SAL, at John Wayne Post GR79, Heilbronn, Germany and Lorraine American Cemetery, St. Avold, France