Good Day Fellow Legionnaires!

Well, what can I say, this year has been a great and exciting year for Post GR01!

If this is your first Newsletter, let me fill you in on a little bit about Post GR01:

GR01 consists of a rich blend of Veterans who support our community in different capacities. Some are retired Servicemen and women, DoD Civilians, Contractors, Reservist and Guardsmen, and finally Active Duty Servicemen and women.

I am always amazed by the professionalism and dedication of our comrades who support the Kaiserslautern Military Community (KMC). As a patriotic Veterans organization devoted to mutual helpfulness, we provide services that are deliberately designed to support and aid communities with Veterans. As military units shrink and grow here in Europe, GR01 has been a haven for many comrades as the KMC will be a mainstay for the Military Overseas here in Europe.

This year, the Post has assisted in sponsoring a candidate to attend Girls State in Maryland with great success. We have supported the USO and our Wounded Warriors in numerous events, a multitude of KMC Activities (to include the BOSS Toy Drive, “Doggie Dash” and many Fun Runs in the Community), supported Memorial and Veteran’s Day Events (at the Post, in the Community and at Saint Avold, Lorraine American Cemetery, in Lorraine, France) and partnered with multiple organizations for great success.

Enough about what we’ve done though as a Post (although it is great and we’ve had a busy schedule), let me thank you, our members, our Comrades, and my fellow Legionnaires and Families. Thank you for all that you have done as Post GR01 would not be what it is and would not be able to do what it does without your support and the support of your families.

You make us what we are, you make us great. Not a day goes by that I do not think and consider how honored I am to be able to stand with you, our Veterans and Families, as we take care of our community and most importantly, each other.

I tip my hat, in fact, hats off to all of you for a phenomenal 2014 and here’s to an even better 2015!

PS: “Caps” as some of us are quick to forget ;)

Robert “Bobby” Leist
Commander
Kaiserslautern American Legion Post GR01
Post GR01 Recognition

This year Post GR01 celebrated a significant landmark—61 years of service to the Kaiserslautern Military Community. Our long, successful history is due to the dedication of our members. This year we were recognized as the Department of France Large Post of the Year and our Past Post Adjutant, Paul Skinner, was recognized as 2014 Legionnaire of the Year for the Department of France! Congratulations to all our Comrades for these awards.

A Message of Service from our Sergeant-at-Arms

On September 25, 2014, I received a phone call from Comrade Robert Gray, Service Officer, American Legion Post GR01. He informed me that Vogelweh Elementary School had had an electrical fire and the freezers containing the school’s food supply were down. He asked me if I could gather some BOSS (Better Opportunities for Single Service Members) support to help move the food from the Elementary School to the Kaiserslautern High School on Pulaski.

At this point my wife, SPC Andrea Willette, the 10th AAMDC BOSS Rep, and I started to drive to Vogelweh. As we were in route, my wife was making phone calls to some of the soldiers we knew in the area. As we pulled up to the school we made contact with SPC Robert Young of Charlie 5-7 ADA. He informed us he was on his way to help. We then loaded up my vehicle with food and headed towards the high school.

By the time we reached the high school, the kitchen staff were moving Burger King’s (BK), food from the high school freezers back to BK freezers. As we finished unloading my car, SPC Young pulled up with his truck filled with boxes of food from the elementary school. We quickly unloaded the boxes, and rushed back to the elementary school where we loaded up the last of the food and brought it to the high school. The food also included produce and milk that was delivered that morning.

I later found out, prior to our arrival there was an original estimated 33% loss expected in food supply. Then there was an estimated 50% loss expected in food supply due to having to move BK’s food. Due to the immediate response of all involved, a 0% loss incurred. We were able to change the issue of ‘What were the elementary students going to eat?’ to ‘How were they going to transport lunch from the high school to the elementary school?’

Without the promptness shown by all involved this could have been a costly event for the schools. Cost was mitigated due to the dedication and support from the BOSS Program, American Legion Post GR01, and the individual soldiers in the community. In total we moved several hundred cases of food. This helped feed the hundreds of children who attend our schools, who would have gone without lunch otherwise. I am proud to say that we were tremendously successful and that we are always prepared to help again when the need arises.

Arthur L. Ballou III
Sergeant-at-Arms
Kaiserslautern American Legion Post GR01
The History of Kaiserslautern Post GR01

Kaiserslautern Post GR01 was chartered on August 26, 1953 in Paris, France. The post was chartered as a patriotic veterans organization devoted to mutual helpfulness in the Kaiserslautern Military Community (KMC) and surrounding areas. The first Commander was Michael Luciano 1953-1954. Post GR01 strives to make a positive contribution to our KMC Community. Here are just some of the Post’s

- Donated over $500 to the American Legion Legacy Run. That program provides scholarships to children of military personnel killed since 9/11. The Legacy Run spanned 5 days and 1,336 miles from Indianapolis to the National Convention in Charlotte, NC. Total raised was $435,000.
- Donated over $5,000 worth of clothing to the Chaplain’s Closet at Landstuhl Hospital.
- Hosted 17 dinners for wounded troops, feeding over 1,500 wounded military members and providing them with hundreds of dollars in gifts along with the USO, Scouts, DODDS teachers and other community organizations.
- Conducted BBQ meals for hundreds of wounded military members at the USO Warrior Center on Landstuhl.
- Sponsored 15 high school students to attend Boys or Girls State programs, averaging $1,000 in support for each student. These programs teach students about our government and how they can be better citizens.
- Sponsored Scouting organizations within the KMC.
- Conduct an ongoing program to maintain American flags at the graves of Americans buried in 6 local cemeteries in the KMC area.
- Host a water point at the Post Home during community events such as the Army Birthday Run, Color Run, etc.
- Conduct ceremonies to provide dignified disposal for American flags that are no longer serviceable.
- Every year since 1972, the Post has laid a wreath at the Kinder Graves Memorial Service that is held each May in Kaiserslautern.
- Every year, Post GR01 attends the Memorial Day and Veteran’s Day memorial services at Lorraine American Military Cemetery located in Saint Avold, France to place a wreath in honor of fallen Servicemembers. Following the memorial service, Post GR01 hosts a reception for attendees at our Post Home.
- Every year for a period of four years, Post GR01 led the effort to obtain approval for an American businessman to come to Germany from Washington State to serve a BBQ meal to wounded soldiers and spouses of deployed military throughout the KMC. During that time, over 3,500 soldiers and families enjoyed his hospitality and great food!
- Every year the Post hosts the National Commander and his traveling group, to include the National Auxiliary President, Department of France Commander and Department of France Vice Commanders.
- Post GR01 has been recognized as Large Post of the Year for the Department of France 17 times since 1985.
- A GR01 member has been recognized as Legionnaire of the year 6 times.
- Received Americanism awards for our programs.

As the largest American Legion Post in Germany, Kaiserslautern Post GR01 continues to provide stellar services in support of veterans in the Kaiserslautern Military Community. The Legionnaires of Post GR01 work hard at upholding the pillars of fostering a strong national security (Defense), taking care of veterans (Veterans), mentoring the youth of our nation (Youth) and promoting patriotism and honor (Patriotism). The Comrades of this organization are recognized throughout the KMC for their many public service initiatives and strong ties with the community. Post GR01 continues to be at the pinnacle of veteran service organizational support.

“For God and Country”
Department of France Veteran’s Day Ceremony at St. Avold

It was a foggy morning on November 11th, Veteran’s Day 2014. Numerous motorcycles and cars with many passengers filled the parking lot of the Ramstein AFB Thrift Store, waiting for convoy departure to attend the American Legion sponsored Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Lorraine American Cemetery in St. Avold, France. The convoys were led by members of the Ramstein Military Chapter (RMC) Harley Owner’s Group. Members of the RMC were accompanied by members of the American Legion Post GR01, American Legion Riders, and the Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers (BOSS) from Rhine Ordnance Barracks. The convoys filled the parking lot of the cemetery and the better-than-expected weather brought out many Americans from the US military bases in the Kaiserslautern area.

The ceremony was led by American Legion Department of France Commander Settle. The honorary party providing brief speeches consisted of members from the US Air Force, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), the American Legion, and the Ramstein Military Chapter. Six wreaths were presented during the ceremony representing the American Legion Department of France, American Legion Post GR01, Sons of the American Legion, American Legion Riders, American Legion Auxiliary and the RMC. Many families were present for this event and the cloudy skies parted, allowing the sun to shine down on the participants and viewers. The temps warmed as the wreaths were laid as we came together to honor our local veterans and those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms.

The motorcycle riding participants departed the wreath laying ceremony along with the BOSS representatives and other car riding friends in convoy bound for the American Legion Post on Rhine Ordnance Barracks. The culminating event invited all participants to attend a BBQ sponsored by the American Legion Post. Hot dogs, hamburgers, baked beans, pasta and potato salad were prepared and provided by volunteer members of the American Legion.

This ceremony and event allowed several different organizations to come together to participate jointly in an event honoring American Veterans at a solemn resting place for American soldiers in the Lorraine valley in eastern France. This event is a yearly custom and has grown in the last several years as more US military organizations and individuals desire to participate and experience the camaraderie of being together in a foreign land. If you would like more information, please contact American Legion Post GR01 on Rhine Ordnance Barracks, Kaiserslautern, Germany.

Dennis Sarazin
POW/MIA Day Remembrance

On 19 September 2014, Kaiserslautern Post GR01, along with members of the VFW and soldiers from Rhine Ordnance Barracks (ROB), conducted a ceremony in remembrance of POW/MIA Day at the flag-pole near the front gate of ROB.

The ceremony was led by Post GR01 Past Commander Stephen Ward. Also in attendance were Post GR01 Commander Robert Leist, VFW Past Department Commander George Gilgore, VFW Sembach Post Commander Lisa Collins, and GR01 Post Adjutant Janice Lukacsko, along with other Post GR01 members and soldiers from ROB.

AFN covered the ceremony and conducted an interview with Past Commander Ward. The AFN report can be viewed at http://www.legion.org/legiontv?pid=PLHMR9MmnivfO45A8rSLvozeFp8Nfhrl-1

Early Bird Dinner

On 27 September 2014, the Kaiserslautern American Legion Post GR01 hosted an Early Bird Dinner to thank members of GR01 for their continued membership as well as to celebrate the Post Birthday. New members were sworn in. Thanks to our Comrades for your continued support and service!