On the 21st of February 2015, I along with VCAL Brown, VC Aman, VC Logan Adjutant Rice, Department Historian Comrade Keating, Department Auxiliary President Settle, and SAL Detachment Commander Logan attended the Department level Oratorical Contest. Also present were the Post Commanders from GR06, GR07, GR09, GR79, BE02, and representatives from GR01, and GR1982.

Thanks to the post and its membership we had three contestants for this year’s department oratorical finals. Listed below are the candidates and the post representing them. 1. Osceola Williams Kaiserslautern Post GR01, 2. Reiwan Hussein Ansbach Post GR1982, 3. Austin Muraille Brussels Post BE02

All of these students had well prepared speeches, and presented them outstandingly, and professionally. On the drawn subject (5th Amendment to the Bill of Rights) to the US Constitution, all again done exceptionally well. All of these contestants are to be applauded for their efforts in the oratorical contest. It takes a great amount of courage, to stand before an unknown audience, and give a speech on what could be a very boring subject, and still be able to hold the attention of the audience.

All of these students were able to capture the attention of the audience, and hold their attention to the assigned speech and drawn subject. Congratulations are in order for all of them. Below is listed the outcome of the Department Level Oratorical Contest: First Place Winner Austin Muraille international School Brussels, Second Place Winner Reiwan Hussein Ansbach High School, Third Place Winner Brianna Osceola Williams Kaiserslautern High School

In addition to what these contestant’s received from the department of France, Commanders of Post’s GR09 (Jerry Aman), and GR79 (Joe Brown)donated monetary awards to these contestants. Many thanks go out to these Commanders for supporting the Departments Oratorical Program.

A big thank you to Stuttgart Post Commander Van Duyne, Comrades Gary Miller, Douglas Clemence, and the members of GR06 for hosting, organizing, and implementing the Department of France Oratorical Contest 2015. In addition a BIG THANKS to the Time Keepers and Judges, who supported the Department of France oratorical finals, Thank you for a job well done.

National Commander Michael Helm and party will be arriving here in Germany on the 30th of May 2015 at Frankfurt Airport. As it looks now we will have a busy schedule for the Commander. The Commander departs on or about 3 June 2015. His plans also include visiting Normandy, Flanders Field, and Paris. If you wish to help support this effort, or would like to have the National Commander visit your area, please contact me ASAP.

The Department has done a great job this year in membership drives at various locations throughout Germany, and more are planned or are in the process of being conducted, outside of Germany. A reminder to Commanders, Adjutants, and membership Chairmen, when planning a membership drive to not forget to add your current membership members that have not paid their dues for the current year.

Now is the time to start working on your Post Awards Packets. I am sure VCAL Brown is already working on the Awards Committee meeting which will be in the April time frame.

The Department 3rd DEC is the 21st of March 2015 hosted by a joint effort between Post’s GR30 and GR42 in Kitzingen (GR30 Post Home). The Call has been sent out do not forget your delegation paperwork.

The Department Convention will be conducted 18-21 June 2015 and is being hosted by GR01. For more information see information in this Newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP, MEMBERSHIP, MEMBERSHIP. I cannot stress membership enough. It is the bloodline of our organization. It enables us to perform our missions to the Veterans and their Families, and supports not only National Programs but ours also. While you are out there recruiting, new members do not forget your current members, get them to renew in a timely manner. If you have any questions on membership do not hesitate to contact the Membership Chairman Comrade Brown, at joedan.pascal1@googlemail.com. He can answer your questions and resolve any problems you are having, with membership.

In closing, please keep those in harm’s way and their families, in your thoughts and prayers also.
March 15, the designated birthday of The American Legion, is the day in 1919 when the first American Legion caucus, held by members of the American Expeditionary Force, convened in Paris. Much as the birthday of the United States is celebrated on July 4 – for the day in 1776 when revolting patriots declared the independence of the British colonies and the spirit of America was born – March 15 is the date on which the Legion came to life.
In a hearing room packed with more than 300 veterans and their families, American Legion National Commander Michael D. Helm laid out a wide-ranging legislative agenda before members and leadership of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans’ Affairs. “The prevailing concern,” Helm told the lawmakers, “is transition assistance.”

Helm called for action to expand VA-recognized treatments for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI). He cited 2014 American Legion survey results that showed 59 percent of PTSD-TBI patients felt no improvement as a result of their VA treatment plans and 30 percent had quit their plans altogether because they did not work.

“For tens of thousands, VA’s current prescription is not working,” Helm said. “This breakdown contributes mightily to the high rate of veteran suicide, substance abuse and homelessness that our nation – and The American Legion – cannot abide.” He asked Congress to study alternative treatments and call on VA to accept them. “Introduce and pass legislation that will require VA to recognize treatments other than those that are measured in milligrams and doses per day.”

During the hearing, Helm fiercely defended VA against any attempts to privatize its health-care system in the long term.

“The American Legion applauded emergency legislation to allow VA patients to use non-VA providers if they were waiting a month or longer to see doctors, or if they lived far from VA facilities,” Helm testified. “But let me be clear. The American Legion supports Choice Cards only as a temporary fix to the bigger problem of VA access. We adamantly oppose privatization or the vouchering out of VA care as a long-term solution. Veterans need VA. It’s up to us to repair the access problem and restore trust, not send veterans down the road for help somewhere else.”

Helm was introduced to the committee by Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kan., who calculated the distance from Helm’s home in Norcatur, Kan., to the nearest VA facilities. “It’s 267 miles to Denver,” Moran said. “It’s 287 miles to Wichita. It’s 287 miles to Omaha and the nearest CBOC (Community Base Outpatient Center) is 100 miles away. I appreciate the perspective that this commander will bring about caring for all veterans regardless of where they live in the United States.”

Rep. Jeff Miller, R-Fla, chairman of the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, credited The American Legion for setting up Veterans Benefits Centers and potentially saving lives in response to last year’s scandal.

“The American Legion sent expert teams across the country – from Phoenix, Ariz., to Bay Pines, Fla., and many places in between,” Miller explained. “You coordinated with VA, set up command centers, and tangibly helped thousands of veteran’s access health care and benefits, which had eluded them for years. You changed lives, and you may have saved lives.”

Miller also recognized The American Legion’s traditional role both as advocate and watchdog of VA. “As your testimony notes, The American Legion is working with VA, not against it, to improve service and restore trust,” Miller said. “Due to the hard work and dedication of The American Legion’s 2.4 million members, veterans have been provided with professional benefits counseling and claims assistance; transition assistance services; employment opportunities; and, countless other manners of assistance.”

Helm also reminded the committee that Americans are still in harm’s way as the Global War on Terrorism continues. “Sadly, some will come home from the fighting having made the ultimate sacrifice. They will arrive at Dover Air Force Base in coffins draped by our nation’s enduring symbol of freedom. I will ask once more for Congress to support the majority of Americans in co-sponsoring and passing a bill introduced in the House last month that would amend the U.S. Constitution to protect our flag from desecration.”

Helm was joined on the panel by Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation (VA&R) Commission Chairman Ralph Bozella, VA&R Division Director Lou Celli, Veterans Employment and Veterans Preference Committee Chairman James Fratolillo, Veterans Employment and Education Division Director Joe Sharpe, Legislative Commission Chairman Brett Reistad and Legislative Division Director Ian DePlanque.

For God and Country,

Mike Helm
DID YOU KNOW

Did you know that if every Post in the 12 Departments which make up the Northeast Region went out and RENEWED 3 MEMBERS we would wipe out the RENEWAL DEFICIT in the Northeast Region and it would put the Northeast Region solidly in first place National.

Example: On the afternoon of 29 January 2015 New Hampshire Alt NECman, Bill Roy and I went to Sweeney Post 2 in Manchester NH. They had 120 plus members who hadn’t renewed for 2015. I started make phone calls and in about an hour and a half I came across about 15 members with bad phone numbers, I left voice mail messages at another 15 plus members, and had renewal commitments from about 12 members. In the meantime Bill Roy was stuffing envelopes with personal renewal notices from Sweeney Post 2. All in all the two of us in one way or another touched about 94% of that renewal deficit. So you see it can be done in very little time.

Remember the 2015 membership year isn’t over yet, we still have a lot of time left.

Department of France Past Commanders Club

Who is illegible 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 ineligible to join

Initial dues for the Past Commanders Club is only $25.00 which will entitle the new member to a Past Commanders Club cap, Past Commanders Club pin and membership card

Renewal dues for the Past Commanders Club is only $10.00

Our next meeting will be on 21 March 2015 at the Third Legion DEC

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE... David Greaux, PCC Secretary “2015”
Greetings, Commander’s & Legionnaires,

As the Department of France Vice Commander, I have been assigned the following Posts: John F. Kennedy Post IR63 Facebook site: www.facebook.com/AmericanLegionIRL, Eifel Post GR-20, Riveria Post FR-05, Madrid Post SP-292, and Portugal (Nunv Alvares Pereira) Post PO-01. Doug Haggan (FODPAL Secretary) is asking the Department and Posts to submit pictures and small articles to the FODPAL website: http://www.legion.org Click Members FODPAL site listed at Quick Links. FODPAL (Foreign and Outlying Departments and Posts of The American Legion) is asking for special programs & events and Facebook sites. The Department of France Newsletters is posted on the FODPAL website. Click Newsletters. Also, listed in the FODPAL site is Ansbach Post conducts Four Chaplains lunch and FODPAL Legion Post (Kaiserslautern) represented at Stateside Girls State. It’s listed in the FODPAL site: www.legion.org

Irish Veterans Charter #1 plans to dedicate (tentative April 17-19, 2015) to the memory of U.S. SEAL Lt. Michael P. Murphy, Medal of Honor, Killed in Action Afghanistan, 2005. His parents from the States plans to bring the MOH at the dedication ceremony. A special evening dinner is planned at the White House Hotel town of Kinsale (West Cork). The Irish Veterans Charter #1 plans to establish Irish Veterans International Research & Heritage Centre in the town of Kinsale, Ireland. Commander Ron Howko (Commodore John Barry Post IR-03) is a guest speaker at the event. For more information of the event, contact Declan Hughes Declan@irishveteans.org or James Sikora james@irishveterans.org

Recently, we lost many Comrades to Post Everlasting. James Pritchard was the Post Commander of Portugal Post PO01. My dear friend (George Seeburger) Department Judge Advocate.

Recently, the National Organization mailed out over 1 million DMS renewal notices to the Unpaid members (2015). I stress the importance of membership in the Posts, Department, and the National Organization. Membership is our Voice on Capitol Hill. I encourage the Posts to transmit each month to the Department Membership Chairman (Joe Dan Brown). Check out the Online Renewal at: www.legion.org

The Kaiserslautern Post GR01 has sent the registration/hotel form (Department of France Convention) to the Department Adjutant (Rice) and VCAL Brown. If you require the registration/hotel form, please contact the Kaiserslautern Post Adjutant (Janice Lukacsco). Its listed on the Kaiserslautern Post website: www.kaiserslauternamericanlegion.org Please Commands & Comrades, don’t wait till the last minute to register.

Commanders & Fellow Legionnaires, many thanks for what you do for your Posts and the communities you serve. The Department of France Commander asks to continue membership and Post Renewals. Retention maintains strong membership within the Posts, Department, and the Organization. The Good Fellow Award must be submitted to the Department of France before the 3rd DEC. It’s a Recognition Award to a non-member of the Organization who had demonstrated outstanding service (Volunteer work) to the Legion Post. Please prepare the Awards from the Posts to the Department of France. I have been re-assigned to William Beaumont Army Medical Center (El Paso, Texas). I will greatly miss the Commanders and Comrades (Department of France) and Posts. God Bless America.
On 18 February I attended the Four Chaplains prayer luncheon sponsored by the USAG Ansbach Religious Support Office (RSO) and David Chavez Post GR 1982. The event was held at the Von Steuben Ballroom in Katterbach, Germany.

Several members of GR 1982 and the RSO put together this affair and it was heartening to see a military organization working together with the American Legion to pay tribute to these four heroes of World War II. GR 1982 Past Post Commander Chris Buchanan and Chaplain Derek Anderson organized the Legion participation and the RSO provided the facility and food.

Four USAG Ansbach Chaplains and between 50 to 60 individuals were in attendance with Legionnaires Buchanan, Anderson, Forsythe and Aungst reading individual tributes to each Chaplain and lighting a candle in their honor. After the closing prayer a cake was cut and served by the four legion “readers” and everyone enjoyed a social hour.

In addition to honoring the legacy of these four individuals the four active duty Army Chaplains stressed the importance of self-sacrifice and that “A greater love is when people do things for people they don’t know.”

This is the first time that the USAG Ansbach commemorated the legacy of these four heroes and the Chaplains of the RSO agreed that this was such a noteworthy event that they will sponsor it again next year.

The story of the Four Chaplains and their bravery and unselfish sacrifice of their lives so that others may live is one that each Legion member should be familiar with.

Congratulations GR1982 on another first and job well done.

On 21 February I attended the Department’s annual Oratorical Contest at Patch Barracks in Stuttgart and was privileged to assist as a judge in this important annual Department event. All of those who attended were witness to a stellar performance of patriotism of three American High School kids. The contestants were the winners of an oratorical contest held in their school and therefore had the opportunity to display their talents and knowledge of our Constitution and for the opportunity of winning Department’s $500 college scholarship and a trip to the US to participate in the National contest. Each student had an opportunity to speak on his or her choice of any section of the Constitution for a period of eight to ten minutes. After a brief pause they were assigned the topic, the Fifth Amendment, and were given five minutes to prepare and then speak on that subject. These kids knew the American Constitution, were well prepared, and without any trace of “butterflies” in their stomach spoke forcefully and eloquently. It was a pleasant experience and led confidence to the fact that these three kids would someday be outstanding citizens of our country.
Sadly the audience should have been larger. These kids deserved more and I hope that next year more of our Legionnaires will make the trip to Stuttgart to visit this event.

Our compliments and appreciation to those posts who recruited and vetted these young Americans and a special thanks to GR 06 for hosting this affair. It was conducted very professionally and was well organized.

GR09 2nd Vice Commander Carlos Fonseca after presenting the three participants with checks of $100, $75 and $50 contributed by the William D. Nelson Post, GR 09.

DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN  Ronald Moore

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

You think it would be easy to write a few encouraging words to you every month as your chaplain. Surprisingly, it seems to get more difficult each time because I need to cut down the many things I want to say to you. 350 words may sound like a lot, but it really is a small number when it is time to talk about the many principles that we, as members of The American Legion, need to uphold as protectors of the American value of life and those who served in defense of this great Nation.

Let us ensure that every serviceman, servicewoman and every veteran knows that we appreciate his or her service and let them know they have a place where they have friends and a caring ear. Tell them about the American Legion family and accept them into our fold with no hesitation or doubt.

God is important for The American Legion. God is important for our daily lives. There are many religions that celebrate religious holidays this month. Please remember to keep God in first place in our lives just as we do in The American Legion Preamble.

May God bless you and give you strength to continue His work in helping our service members and fellow veterans.

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

Rev. Ronald Moore,
Department of France Chaplain
Detachment of France Chaplain
Mobile: 0049-(0)172-7417812
Email: gypsy_moore@yahoo.de
Chaplain’s Page…March 2015

Special Days/Legion Events: 15th - American Legion Birthday, 21st- 3rd DEC at GR30, Community Service Month.
Christian Religious Days: 1st St. David of Wales; 17th - St. Patrick’s Day; 19th St. Joseph’s Day; 25th Annunciation of the Virgin Mary; 29th Palm Sunday;
Jewish Holidays (Year 5775): 4th Purim
Islamic Holidays: None that I know of.
Please visit the church, temple, synagogue or mosque of your choice.

Prayers for the Sick & Ill:
George Hall, GR03 Dept. Service Officer
James Settle, GR42, Dept. (FR) Commander
Joe D. Brown, GR79, PDC and DVCAL
Harry Hall, GR42

…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.

Post Everlasting

It is my sad duty to report to you that Comrade Frank Schlipf, a longtime member of SGT William D. Nelson Post GR09 reported to Post Everlasting on February 12th 2015.

It is my sad duty to inform you that Comrade James B. Pritchard, of Portugal Post P01 reported to PEL on 12 February 2015. Comrade Pritchard was a longtime member and Post Commander of Portugal Post P01.

It is my sad duty to report to you that Comrade William Wiessiner, a longtime member of Stuttgart Post GR06 and Grande du Germany reported to Post Everlasting on February 13th 2015. Comrade Wiessner passed on with his son and other family members at his side. Comrade Wiessner will be cremated per his wishes and will be buried beside his wife Hermine. The burial will be sometime around the April timeframe and will be in the Kornwestheim Cemetery.
From Post GR30 Commander James Dennis,

Sonja and I would like to thank all the veterans and their families for the cards and emails on the passing of Ewald Olbrich, Sonja's father.

Sincerely

James and Sonja Dennis

Consolidated Post Report

The 2014 – 2015 Consolidated Post Report is being printed and will be ready for shipment to department headquarters and via a post's mylegion.org site the middle of February.

Major changes for this year are in the mylegion.org site input. A text box will be added at the bottom of the form to allow those posts to make any needed comments to clarify their input.

The American Legion’s Consolidated Post Report (CPR) show the many ways Legioannaires are making differences in their communities and beyond. The CPR was established nearly 40 years ago to assist departments in the documentation of activities that a specific post completed during the 12-month (June 1 through May 31) reporting period.
Invites you to the Third Department Executive Committee Meeting

Date: Saturday 21 March 2015

Time: 11:00 – 12:00 Registration / 12:00 – 12:45 PCC Meeting / 13:00 Third DEC

Location: GR30 Post Home / Otto Hahn Str. 21, 97318 Kitzingen

Primary POC: James Dennis / 0160952600485 / orphfl@gmail.com

Secondary POC: David Greaux / 01715109356 / davidgreaux@t-online.de

Pick up arrangements from the Kitzingen Train Station (only Kitzingen Train Station) and if you need a room for overnight can be done by contacting James Dennis...be sure you make arrangements in advance.

Meals available at the DEC...to be served on or about 15:00 hours

Club Sandwich / Fries or Chips = €4.00
Half Chicken / Fries or Croquettes / Salad = €6.00
Jägerschnitzel / Fries or Croquettes / Salad = €6.50

* Drinks are pay as you go
SAN DIEGO — The Department of Veterans Affairs released a plan Friday to use a 387-acre tract of land in west Los Angeles to help end veteran homelessness in the city.

There’s a real focus on getting homeless veterans into housing quickly, said Gary Blasi, one of the attorneys with Public Counsel, which represented veterans in a lawsuit against the VA over the use of its West Los Angeles campus.

“Nobody falls through the cracks,” Blasi said.

The plan specifies that within the next 100 days, the VA will hire experienced people to help get homeless veterans into permanent housing, increase funding to support for veteran families, and make temporary housing available for those who cannot immediately move into permanent housing. By April, 650 veterans will get homes through a partnership with the Home for Good organization, according to the plan.

Beyond 100 days, the VA will coordinate with the Los Angeles mayor’s office to improve access to affordable housing, work with the Department of Labor and other organizations to increase job opportunities and access to federal, state and local services for homeless veterans, and open a 62-bed work therapy facility on the West LA campus.

In 2011, attorneys working on behalf of homeless veterans filed a class-action suit against the VA, saying its benefits programs discriminated against veterans who are homeless as a result of severe mental disabilities.

The lawsuit also accused the VA of misusing its West LA campus. The land was deeded to the federal government in 1888 to provide a home for disabled veterans, but it currently houses several rental tenants, including a hotel laundry facility and the UCLA baseball stadium.

Los Angeles has the largest concentration of homeless veterans in the country, and although the West campus had previously housed thousands of veterans, much of the land has been rented for other uses for the past several decades, Blasi said.

“This was a huge resource, and there wasn’t a single unit of permanent supportive housing on it,” he said.

In late January, the VA agreed to a settlement that required officials to create a plan for using the land to house homeless veterans.

During a January swing through the Los Angeles area, VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald said he was sending $50 million and 400 workers to the region, according to a Los Angeles Times report.

The VA is expected to immediately begin working to return the property to its intended use, but won’t release its master plan for the campus until October.

Ending veteran homelessness is a real challenge, Blasi said, but it is “nothing compared to what the veterans have done.”

“We have to step up,” he said.

hlad.jennifer@stripes.com
Legacy Scholarship Fund - March 2015 Update
Legacy Run 2015 - Scheduled for August 2015
Department of France Collection Date - July 2015

Why?
The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund is for children of fallen Veterans killed while on active duty or called to federal duty since 09/11/2001. Various organizations help with monthly payments, but these funds do not cover the full cost of a good college or university tuition with books, travel and food.

Why Riders and Posts?
The sole purpose of the American Legion Riders and the Department of France A.L. Pony Express is to bring Legacy Scholarship donations from outlying Posts to the National Commander. Status as a Way Station or Messenger is open to all members of The American Legion Family regardless of affiliation with the A.L. Riders or having a motorcycle.

How can you support the Department of France Effort?
Several Posts function as Department of France Pony Express Way Stations and several members were sworn in as Department of France Pony Express Messengers. These Posts and messengers should be actively collecting donations for presentation at the National Convention.

Every Post should have a donation can out and plans for further collection activities.

We have a little more time until the end of July 2015 and I hope that we can use that time effectively to raise funds for the Scholarship Fund.

What you can do:-
1. Please register your Post as a Department of France A.L. Pony Express Way Station. Each Way Station is authorized two messengers who will be sworn in and receive a badge from Ron “Gypsy” Moore as Coordinator for the Department of France A.L. Pony Express System.
2. Set out a collection can for the Legacy Scholarship Fund and hold these funds as dedicated funds until collection time at the end of July. Talk to people, set up an event to raise donations and then issue your Post’s U.S. $ check drawn on a U.S. bank or a U.S. Money Order for the amount you collected. These checks and money orders will be passed to the National Commander in an open envelope showing your Post’s name and address.
3. Let people know about the Legacy Scholarship Fund and the fact that they can also donate online at the Legion.Org site.
4. Have members of your Post directly sign up as a “Supporter” of the 2015 Legacy Run by registering directly with the Legacy Run Registration in Indianapolis. Their registration fee lets them receive the same packet and patch that the riders who participate in the Run do. Wear it with pride.

The following link leads to the registration page. You can sign up as a participating rider, passenger or supporter. Registered participants, passengers and supporters receive the full info packet including patches as long as supplies last.

http://www.legion.org/riders/225974/2015-legacy-run-online-registration-underway

I hope all Department of France American Legion Riders, AL PE Messengers and Way Stations will either ride with me in August or at least sign up as a supporter for $25. That way Legion Family members who are unable to take the time off to participate, can show their support by wearing the patch as a supporter.

I’m registered. It’s for a good cause and gives the Department of France a lot of visibility because we send someone from so far away. I’m proud to wear the patch with Department of France on my vest and happy to let them know the Department of France is one of the best departments of The American Legion. I ride for and with you. Thank you in advance for your support and help.

For God and Country!

Ron “Gypsy” Moore, ALR Department Director
Dept of France AL PE Messenger Service Coordinator
Mobile: +49-(0)172-7417812
Email: gypsy_moore@yahoo.de
Registration is now open at [www.legion.org/riders/registration](http://www.legion.org/riders/registration) for the tenth anniversary of The American Legion Legacy Run. During the first 48 hours sixty registrations have processed. **We urge all Legion Family leadership to register in support.**

**Critical dates:**
- February 3, 2015: Online registration opened.
- Assembly and final registration on Saturday, August 22.
- Departure from Indianapolis on Sunday, August 23.
- Arrival in Baltimore area on Wednesday, August 26.
- National American Legion Riders Meeting Thursday, Aug 27.
- National Convention Parade on Sunday, Aug. 30.
- National Convention activities Sunday-Thursday, Aug. 30-Sept 3.

**The American Legion Riders Newsletter.**
The American Legion Riders Update e-newsletter provides members and department leadership with information on the American Legion Riders program, The American Legion Legacy Run, and other ALR program news and developments. **We urge all departments to encourage newsletter participation among all riders and chapters.** [Sign up for newsletters online at][www.legion.org/newsletters](http://www.legion.org/newsletters).

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**Paid Up For Life**

The Paid Up For Life (PUFL) membership campaign has been a resounding success. At one day short of its anniversary, 19,605 American Legion members elected to become Paid Up For Life. In just the last three months, 3,270 members converted their annual dues paying memberships into a PUFL membership.

Plans for this year will focus on signing up the newest members along with a good mix of emails and direct mail solicitations. Various discounts for payment in full at time of application and extra giveaways will continue to be used.

For more information regarding the program please visit [www.legion.org/pufl](http://www.legion.org/pufl) or call customer service at (800) 433-3318.
DETACHMENT OF FRANCE
Squadrons: GR01, BE02, GR03, GR06, GR07, GR14, GR42, GR79, CH01

Re: Detachment of France 3rd DEC to be held on Saturday, March 7, 2015

From: GR07 Sons of The American Legion Squadron Commander Ronald Moore

Time: Registration 1100 to 1200 hours
       DEC Meeting- 1200 hours until adjourned

Location: Wiesbaden, Germany, specific location to be announced (TBA)

Registration Fee: EUR 5 per attendee including officers, delegates, alternates and guests.

GR07 S.A.L. Squadron is hosting the 3rd Detachment of France Executive Committee Meeting on Saturday, March 7, 2015 in Wiesbaden, Germany. Every effort will be made to ensure that the location is within walking distance of the Wiesbaden Main Train Station. The meeting place will probably not be on base.

Due to changes in Wiesbaden Military Command Policy concerning access and use of base facilities and services, only registered ID card holders and their accompanied guests may use such facilities (previously food courts could be used without the sponsor being present). ID card holder or sponsor are now required for access to Exchange, Commissary, Shoppette and Food Courts. If you are not a SOFA ID card holder, it is necessary to have a retired or DAV ID card and a pink customs card for access to the Commissary, Exchange or Shoppette. Just a reminder, there are cameras at all counters (Exchange, Commissary and Shoppette) and your ID card is scanned for purchases in the Commissary.

Attendees are kindly requested to inform GR07 SAL Squadron Commander Moore of your planned attendance. Please also advise if you require overnight accommodations at a local hotel.

Please inform Ronald Moore of your planned attendance or accommodation needs at Email address gypsy_moore@yahoo.de

Don’t forget your flags, stands and delegate letters please. Drive safe and arrive alive.

Signed: Ronald Moore
2014-15 GR07 SAL 3rd DEC Committee Chairman
Sons of The American Legion

The Sons of The American Legion achieved 75.3% for the sixth Sons membership target goal for the 2015 membership year on February 11, 2015. Son’s membership currently stands at 269,852 members and 10,409 ahead of this same date last year. At present twenty-nine detachments achieved the 75% membership target goal.

The 2nd Sons membership renewal postcard mailing was processed and mailed on February 3· 2015. A total of 147,611 Sons renewal postcards were mailed to members who membership dues show unpaid for 2015. We expect good results from this mailing for our next membership target date.

The next SAL membership target date is March 11, 2015 which will be their 80% membership target goal for the 2015 membership year.

I would like to thank those Squadrons who stepped up and got us rolling with your early transmittals for the 2015 MY. Unfortunately we still have one or two squadrons that are dragging the Detachment and keeping us from moving forward at top speed. I am sure that by our Third Detachment DEC on 7 March 2015 we will all be on the same track running forward. Remember to mark your calendar…SAL Convention 2015 hosted by GR42 on 6 June 2015…the Call will be sent out to the squadrons.

S.A.L. Membership Eligibility Requirements

All male descendants, adopted sons and stepsons of members of The American Legion, and such male descendants of veterans who died in service during World I, World II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf War and the War on Terrorism, during the delimiting periods set forth in Article IV, Section 1, of the National Constitution of The American Legion, or who died subsequent to their honorable discharge from such service, shall be eligible for membership in The Sons of The American Legion. There shall be no forms or class of membership except an active membership.
A congressional subcommittee has ripped into the Department of Veterans Affairs for issuing commercial leases on its sprawling West Los Angeles campus as thousands of homeless veterans slept in the streets. "It's an atrocity," said Representative Jackie Walorski (IN). "The veterans are sleeping outside in the cold, while the VA has to correct many, many years of wrongs."

Tuesday, February 10, hearing of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations focused on a scathing report in September from the Government Accountability Office, which found that the VA had failed to collect rent from commercial leaseholders at its 387-acre West Los Angeles campus. At least one leaseholder is under criminal investigation, officials said. A federal judge in 2013 struck down the leases, saying they had nothing to do with medical care for veterans. Subcommittee members were particularly irate that the illegal leaseholders had not been evicted immediately.

Representative Mike Coffman (CO) questioned why a nonprofit had its $250,000 rent waived for financial hardship, in violation of VA policy. Committee members also were critical of a botanical garden that was allowed to sublease property to an exotic bird sanctuary and a food pantry, another policy violation. "Homeless veterans and a bird sanctuary on the same ground," Coffman said. "I don't get it."

Representative Dan Benishek (MI) said a hospital laundry was allowed to stay without paying rent at all. "Seems like people in Los Angeles would collect the damn rent," Benishek said. Officials deferred most of the questions until Friday, when the VA is due to release a strategy plan to end veteran homelessness in Greater Los Angeles, or to October, the deadline for the VA's master land use plan for the property. The plans are part of a legal settlement VA Secretary Robert McDonald announced last month to turn the West Los Angeles campus into permanent and bridge housing for homeless veterans. Under the agreement, McDonald also pledged to set an "exit strategy" for the controversial leases.

Stephen Lord, the GAO's forensics audit chief, testified there were 25 "entities" with campus leases, and 400 agreements worth $25 million, although a full accounting was difficult, given problems with the VA's record-keeping. The campus now houses 818 veterans, mostly in emergency shelters or temporary housing, officials said. Skye McDougall, acting director of the Veterans Integrated Service Network, said she was "as appalled" as anyone when she learned about the lease irregularities after assuming administrative duties at the West Los Angeles campus in January. Donna Beiter, the VA's longtime Greater Los Angeles director, retired December 31, and Ralph Tillman, the facility asset manager, stepped down in September.

Walorski and other committee members demanded that those responsible for the lease blunders be held accountable. Walorski said Beiter, who lived in VA housing on the campus, paid $2,450 a month in rent for a 3,500-square-foot house whose market rate was $10,000 a month. McDougall promised another audit of the property in April, and said the rents would be part of the assessment.
New Legion e-newsletter honors and remembers

More than 10,000 people have already signed up for free monthly collection of stories, photos and videos that pay tribute to military and veteran history.

INDIANAPOLIS -- Based on the popularity of its Honor & Remembrance web platform -- www.legion.org/honor -- The American Legion has launched a new national electronic newsletter dedicated, as the preamble to the Legion's constitution states, to the preservation of “memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars.”

The free, monthly e-newsletter features news stories, personal recollections, videos and photo galleries that pay tribute to service members who have protected America’s freedoms from World War I through the current war era. Submissions from readers are encouraged through www.legion.org/legiontown. American Legion Media & Communications staff writers, freelancers and others also contribute to the e-newsletter. Stories and photos will be housed on the Honor & Remembrance web page at www.legion.org/honor, which also includes a directory of national memorials and sacred places, information about reunions and military history.

Those interested in receiving the Honor and Remembrance e-newsletter, and any of the other Legion e-newsletters, can subscribe by going to www.legion.org/newsletters.

Readers are encouraged to share stories about their family's military legacy, their time in the service, a community memorial, or other item related to honor and remembrance. More than 10,000 are already subscribers to the new e-newsletter.

For those without access to a computer, honor and remembrance submissions may be mailed to Honor and Remembrance, c/o The American Legion, PO Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206, attention: Henry Howard, Deputy Director, Media & Communications Division. Questions can be emailed to honor@legion.org

From the Editor...

Please send all input for the Department Newsletter to my email address at the latest three days prior to the end of the month. If possible, please use Word document format. Constructive suggestions to improve the Newsletter are also welcome.

If you want to stay informed on what is happening with YOUR Department you can also visit the following sites,


Thank You.
David N. Greaux
davidgreaux@t-online.de
A groundbreaking Pentagon study of soldiers who were at high risk of killing themselves shows that intense behavior therapy substantially reduced suicide attempts, a development that experts called a dramatic breakthrough.

The two-year study of 152 active-duty soldiers who either had attempted suicide or were found at high risk of it did better when given a form of counseling called brief cognitive-behavioral therapy.

Fewer soldiers undergoing that treatment tried to commit suicide than others given a more typical form of therapy.

The study, released hours after President Barack Obama signed a bill Thursday that aims to reduce suicides among veterans, offers hope to stem a tide of self-inflicted deaths among active-duty and reserve component troops, as well as veterans, that has risen for more than a decade.

“From my perspective, this is the biggest, most important thing that has happened in suicide research in the military, certainly in the last 10 years, and maybe longer than that,” said retired Air Force Lt. Col. Alan Peterson, a co-investigator of the study and a professor of psychiatry at the UT Health Science Center’s School of Medicine in San Antonio.

“I think the findings of this study are fantastic,” said retired Army Col. Carl Castro, research director of USC’s Center for Innovation and Research on Veterans and Military Families who has advised Defense Department research panels on psychological health. “It is the first-ever suicide prevention intervention showing that a brief treatment protocol can significantly reduce future suicide attempts.”

The military has been plagued by suicides and increasing psychological problems among troops since 9/11.

Psychiatric diagnoses skyrocketed more than 60 percent since the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq began, and more than 4,400 troops have killed themselves over the past 11 years — almost as many as the 4,489 U.S. troops killed in the long Iraq war.

The study, funded by the Army's Military Operational Medicine Research Program, was conducted at Fort Carson, Colorado and involved Peterson, as well as researchers from Tennessee and Utah, among other locations. Researchers randomly assigned 152 soldiers into two groups, one of them receiving brief cognitive behavioral therapy and the other a more standard form of treatment.

Soldiers in both groups were mostly lower-ranking Anglo men, reflecting the Army’s demographic, and also were similar in a number of other categories that ranged from psychiatric diagnoses to the use of medications. All had tried to commit suicide or had been diagnosed as being at high risk of suicide.

The risks of a second suicide attempt was close to 50 percent as they began their counseling.

All of the soldiers were given what the study called “treatment as usual,” a less structured form of counseling from military and civilian mental-health clinicians. But half of the soldiers also were given brief cognitive behavioral therapy, or CBT. A dozen formal, standardized outpatient psychotherapy sessions, held once every week or two weeks, followed.

Brief CBT was broken into three phases. The first five sessions involved a detailed assessment of the patient’s most recent suicidal episode or attempt, identified things that played into it and developed a crisis response plan. Patients also were taught stress-management skills.

The second phase worked to reduce beliefs that contribute to suicidal behavior, such as guilt, shame and hopelessness.

Phase III taught patients how to prevent a potential relapse by resolving crises.

“There are specific techniques and strategies that you’re teaching an individual or working with an individual on, on a session-by-session basis,” said Peterson, a retired Air Force psychologist with tours in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“Most outpatient counseling sessions, it’s more supportive counseling. How are things going? How are you doing today?” he continued, contrasting the therapies. “It’s supportive counseling, reflective, trying to help problem-solve, but there’s not this active ingredient that specifically targets what we think the root cause is, if you will, of the suicidal behaviors.”

Soldiers were tracked in the two years following their therapy sessions. Those given brief cognitive behavioral therapy were 60 percent less likely to attempt suicide.

Of 76 soldiers given brief CBT, eight, or 14 percent, tried to commit suicide. Of the 76 soldiers in the second
group that received the more standard therapy, 18 tried to commit suicide.

One soldier in each group committed suicide after treatment.

Researchers saw a difference in the rate of suicide attempts among the two groups as early as six months into the study, and Peterson said there were other benefits from brief CBT. Soldiers given the therapy were less likely to be forced out of the Army on medical grounds than those given treatment as usual.

While he did not know if brief cognitive behavioral therapy would become a standard treatment in the military, Peterson noted the law signed Thursday could help in facilitating its implementation at the VA as well as in the military.

“It would make sense that they would, but it’s not always easy no matter what treatment you’re looking at. It’s not always easy to disseminate it into the field,” said Peterson, director of the Army’s STRONG STAR Multidisciplinary PTSD Research Consortium, which involves 125 military, civilian and VA investigators nationwide. “There’s a lot that goes into it, there’s a lot of training and making sure therapists are doing it right, and so it’s not a simple task.”

sige@express-news.net  Connor Radnovich of the Washington Bureau
Department Convention 2015

Robert M. Leist, Commander
Kaiserslautern American Legion

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Meeting Date:
- 18th June 2015
- 19th June 2015
- 20th June 2015
- 21st June 2015

Seating:
- 18th June 2015
  - Meeting room for 40 persons in classroom style
  - Lunch buffet/ Dinner buffet (Soft drinks are included)

- 19th June 2015
  - Meeting room for 40 persons in classroom style
  - Lunch buffet/ Dinner buffet (Soft drinks are included)

- 20th June 2015
  - Meeting room for 40 persons in classroom style
  - Lunch buffet/ Dinner buffet
  - Banquet evening: round tables for 100 people

- 21st June 2015
  - Meeting room for 40 persons in classroom style
  - Lunch buffet (Soft drinks are included)

Banquet-evening:
- 19.00 – 02.00 h
- Room HALOPA for 100 persons
- Round tables with candles
- Alcoholic Drinks will be ordered by the Hotel staff and will be paid directly

Dinner:
- Fish and supplements
- Chicken and supplements
- Sauerbraten with Knödel
Guests will pay their rooms, lunches and Banquet dinner and drinks

**Costs:**
- Single room € 52,00 per room and night
- Double room € 83,00 per room and night
- Lunch-Buffet € 16,00 per person
- Dinner-Buffet € 21,00 per person
- Banquet-dinner € 32,00 per person,
- Soft drinks are included

**PARKING:**
Parking fee per car and day: € 8,00

**VAT Form will be accepted from Eligible persons**

**Notice:**
- The Bar will be open from 16:30
- Welcome drink on Friday: 5 bottles sparkling wine

**Technique:**
1 x microphone
1 x screen
1 x podium

**Rooms:**
18th June 2015 (arrival date)
21st June 2015 (departure date)
20-25 rooms + 1 Suite

**Cancellation deadline:**
A cancellation free of charge is till **15th May 2015** possible. In case of cancellation **after 15th May 2015,** we reserve the right to charge 90% of the expected revenue.

**Other conditions:**
- Rates are included service and the valid TAX.
- Please inform us at least 2 weeks prior the meeting about the exact number of participants.
- Child Policy:
  - Childs until 03 years are free of charge
  - Childs from 3-12 years will pay 50% of the price for the buffet Childs up to 12 years should pay 100% of the price for the buffet

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Robert M. Leist

Commander, Kaiserslautern American Legion, Post GR01