Hello, fellow Legionnaires!

I hope this newsletter finds everyone in good health and all of you were able to enjoy the holidays. Christmas is truly a magical time that is meant to be spent with family and friends. Likewise, I wish every one of you a very fortunate and happy New Year full of happiness.

On a personal level, I’ll share with you that I lost my father on 9 December, and it made my heart very heavy for the holidays. However, every day is a precious gift, and I am very grateful for the almost 52 years I had with my hero. He was a great example of a self-made man that worked extremely hard to provide for his family and to instill patriotic values in my brother and me. Having lost him, it made the time with my wife and daughters, as well as the time I was able to spend with my mother, brother, and his family, more precious than ever. Moreover, my mind went to those that have chosen to serve their country and must spend the holidays away from family and friends to defend our country. This includes those that set the example before us, those that fought on the battlefields of Concord and Bunker Hill, those from both sides that spilled blood at Gettysburg and Antietam, that charged up San Juan Hill, that cut their teeth at Belleau Wood, that stormed the beaches at Normandy and clawed their way inch by inch across Iwo Jima, that almost froze to death at the Chosin Reservoir, that were surrounded at Ia Drang, and those that have continuously deployed in the fight against terrorism.

I’m thankful for each and every one of them and the sacrifices they made. Honoring those that have sacrificed for us and our country is one of the most important things we, as Legionnaires, can do. I’m glad to say that some of our comrades from Margraten Post NL01 did just that for our World War II heroes at the annual Bastogne Remembrance Weekend on 16-17 December. Besides partaking in the annual march, post members cooked meals, served drinks, and held and participated in activities that raised funds and awareness regarding battle that raged there in 1944, where 50,000 Germans surrounded only 10,000 Americans. When the German commander asked for the Americans’ surrender, Brig Gen McAuliffe gave the one-word reply “Nuts!” The rest, they say, is history, as the Americans fought their way to victory.

Another important thing we do is to fight for veterans’ right and benefits. Besides having our annual dues assist with funding our efforts, our service officer actively assists veterans with any issues or questions they have. It is our duty to reach out to all veterans and ensure they have a voice through our organization. Please get in touch with Comrade Ron Macauley should you or any veteran you know need assistance.

I’ll wrap this month’s message up by saying thank you to each and every one of you for your continued financial support and the time you invest in making our post the premiere post in the Department of France. If we haven’t seen you in awhile, please try to make our next meeting and/or event. We’d love to spend some time with you. Until we meet again, I hope you all have a Happy New Year, and I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Commander Ray
General Membership Meeting Minutes

Friday, 8 DEC 2017, Dutch Veteran Institute, Heerlen, NL

1st Vice Commander Jim Call to Order: 17:30hrs
Presentation of Colors- Hand Salute
POW/MIA- (SA) Sgt at Arms Mark
Pledge of Allegiance
Preamble
Roll Call (Quorum) – Seven Officer’s present. Commander Ray and Chaplain Eric excused. Five members present
October Meeting Minutes- Reviewed 1st Vice Commander approved
Announcements- SA Mark welcomed Comrade Dennis Owens and guests Linda Chernek, Melissa Perez and Lita Snyder

Reports:
1st Vice Commander Jim- Membership numbers update. Addressed Department forecasted goals and his coordination with D.Haggan and VCAL Brown for clarification.
2nd Vice Commander Harvey- is making plans and preparations for March General Membership Meeting and Post Elections.
Service Officer Ron- Veteran’s Representative, scheduling VA Benefit appointments. Service Officer Training is available next March. Dale and Harvey are interested to attend.
Finance Officer Dale- provided report showing expenditures and balances.
No other Officer Reports and no active Committee’s.

-------------------------------Dinner break-------------------------------

Old Business:
Final details from 2nd DEC were provided.
Overview from Schinnen’s Halloween Trunk or Treat.
Review of Veteran’s Day activities and ceremonies.

New Business:
General Membership monthly meeting change.
Constitution and Bylaw review.
Announcement for complete Post election in March 2018.
Considering venue, itinerary and agenda for March 2018 meeting.
General Membership endorsement and appreciation of new meeting location.
PEC meetings to be scheduled as needed, no longer bi-monthly. Post Officer’s could meet ahead of General Membership timings.
Donations requested to offset Post costs for Veteran’s Day floral arrangements and Peace Candles.
During the meeting I had the honor of handing out Certificates of Participation and Appreciation from The American Legion Department of France to our members and supporters who contributed to the 2nd Department Executive Committee meeting held 21 October 2017.

The awards were accompanied with a letter from Department of France Commander James Dennis.

Fellow Legionnaires, Veterans, and Guests;

I am proud and pleased to send the enclosed awards to Margraten Post NL01 for their participation in the Department Executive Committee meeting on 21 October 2017. I have a few more awards, I will be giving out at the 3rd DEC to Margraten Post NL01 and your members. Everyone had a great time and you, Margraten Post NL01, did a great job in making the 2nd DEC a success.

~ James Dennis Department Commander
Margraten Post NL01 2017-2018 Officers

Commander                              Ray Vincent                            rvincent6603@yahoo.com
1st Vice Commander                     Jim Brotherton                         Jim.brotherton01@gmail.com
2nd Vice Commander                     Harvey Briggs III                      Harvey.briggsiii@gmail.com
Adjutant                                Andy Clevenger                         clevtdy@hotmail.com
Chaplain                                Eric Maddox                             ericlmaddox@yahoo.com
Historian                               Ray Perez                               raymond.perezjr@yahoo.com
Finance Officer                         Dale Snyder                             Oranje003@hotmail.com
Service Officer                         Ron Macauley                            Ronald.macauley.civ@mail.mil
Sergeant-at-Arms                        Mark Chernek                            markchernek@hotmail.com
Judge Advocate                          VACANT

Department of France 2017-2018 Officers

Department Commander                    James Dennis                            departmentdennis@gmail.com
departmentdennis@gmail.com
Department Adjutant                     Maxwell Rice                            colwichboy@yahoo.com
Asst Department Adjutant                Robert "Bob" Fuelling                   rfuel41704@aol.com
NECman/Finance Officer                  Nola Maloney                            necmaloney@gmail.com
Alt NECman/Special Asst.                James Settle                            james.settle@kabelbw.de
Vice Commander at Large                 Joe D. Brown                            vcalbrown50@gmail.com
Vice Commander                         Casby Logan                             casbyj@hotmail.com
Vice Commander                         Christopher Buchanan                    christopherbuch@hotmail.com
Vice Commander                         Dave Etter                              bigdavee59@gmail.com
Vice Commander                         Jimmy Dale                              jrdaletop@yahoo.com
Chaplain                                Don Chamberlain                         chamberlaindw@hotmail.de
Historian                               Ray Perez (NL01)                        raymond.perezjr@yahoo.com
Service Officer                         Laura Buckner                           ServiceOfficerDoFr@yahoo.com
Judge Advocate                          Keith Abernathy                         keithabernathy1942@yahoo.de
Sergeant-at-Arms                        Ray Vincent (NL01)                      rvincent6603@yahoo.com

On 09 December The American Legion ‘Flanders Field’ Post BE02 and American Legion "Margraten" Post NL01 held an Oratorical contest at SHAPE American Middle School. The purpose of the American Legion’s National High School Oratorical Contest is to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the Constitution of the United States on the part of high school students. Other objectives of the contest include the development of leadership qualities, the ability to think and speak clearly and intelligently, and the preparation for acceptance of the duties and responsibilities, the rights and privileges of American citizenship.

Six contestants from three American High Schools competed. All contestants performed very well and the contest was very close. Post BE02 Commander Joseph Schram said it was the best Oratorical contest to date. He went on to thank Legionaries John DuBose, Thomas Morgan Buckner, Laura Grant Buckner, Paul S. Haney, NL01 Ron Macauley, and BE02 Auxiliary Member Morgan Buckner for their outstanding help and contribution. Schram, also thanked the judges, Helen Ayer Patton, Department of France Vice Commander Jimmie Dale, and Marie-Lise Banet for their sound judgment in selecting the winners.

Congratulations to NL01 Service Officer Ron Macauley daughter Melany Maculey for placing 2nd!

Helen Ayer Patton stated:

*Six impressive young adults gave prepared and extemporaneous speeches about Aspects of the US Constitution. There were some very insightful thoughts about the third amendment, Internet and freedom of speech, and a particularly moving commentary about how uninformed voting could be as reckless as drunk driving. The age range from 14 to 17. And everyone of these young people deserved a standing ovation. Thank you so much American Legion for giving me the opportunity to listen and learn one more time maybe to get a few pointers. Main thing we had fun. I encourage everybody to pick up a copy of the United States Constitution and just read it through. It’s truly incredible. And needs to be protected.*
BASTOGNE “NUTS” WEEKEND

It’s been nearly 73 years since General McAuliffe’s famous “NUTS! Response to German Gen. Heinrich Freiherr von Lüttwitz threat of total annihilation of the US troops in and near Bastogne.

The Battle of the Bulge may have only lasted two months, but the conditions were some of the worst of the war and the battle accounted for some of the heaviest American losses. Every year in December, the Bastogne Memorial March takes place to pay tribute to the thousands of soldiers that fought and gave the ultimate sacrifice.

This Bastogne Weekend took place over the 16th and 17th of December. Our post along with post BE02 got together at the 101st Airborne Museum and did a BBQ. We cooked up American Style Pulled Pork, Hamburgers, and Hotdog for both days.

In the afternoon, our Post had the honor of laying a wreath at the General George S. Patton Monument. The monument stands at the Merceny square in Bastogne. Historian Ray Perez stood in for Cmdr. Ray Vincent, who was called back stateside for a family emergency. Historian Ray Perez was also interviewed for the “Men on the Street” segment in the Benelux Gazette.

When asked: “What does Bastogne mean to you?” Historian Ray said “Coming to Bastogne is an honor and a privilege, especially when you see the foxholes and monuments. You see the sacrifice that these brave heroes gave to their country. The 101st Airborne displayed great fortitude and courage during their successful defense of Bastogne. I think it shows the finest characteristics of the American Soldier.”
BASTOGNE “NUTS” WEEKEND Cont.

Vincent Speranza - Assigned to H Company, 501st Parachute Regiment, 101st Airborne Division. Not long after Operation Market-Garden, Vincent would find himself in a Bastogne foxhole. Freezing conditions, ill-equipped, and surrounded by German forces. Fortunately the 101st was able to keep the Germans out of Bastogne for the entire siege. Vincent is probably most famous for his method of carrying beer to a wounded friend. He carried beer in his helmet because all the glasses in the war-torn taverns were shattered. Of course I’m talking about story behind Airborne Beer. Click this link for the story in Vincent’s words.

Helen Ayer Patton - As the granddaughter of General George S. Patton, Jr., Helen started the Patton Foundation to champion the adoption of the timeless and effective leadership principles of General Patton by America’s business and non-profit organization to meet today’s unprecedented challenges. In addition, The Patton Foundation supports our brave men and women in uniform, veterans and their families, as they face health, vocational or financial challenges. Service members who sacrifice for us deserve nothing less.

Bastogne Weekend also falls into the Foundations mission to perpetuate the memory of the “World War II Generation.” We want to thank Helen and Hans Van Kessel for allowing us to set up on the grounds of the 101st Airborne Museum.
BASTOGNE “NUTS” WEEKEND Cont.

Several members of our post participated in the Bastogne March, which took place Saturday, Dec. 16th. There are three different walking options: 7, 13, or 21 kilometers. Warm beverages were provided along the routes. We also took the time to visit the 101st Airborne Museum and the Bastogne War Museum. The last event on Saturday is the throwing of the Nuts! As per the custom, every year handfuls of walnuts are thrown from the town hall balcony to the crowd below.

This year the special guests were WWII Veterans Jim Caroll, Robert Izumi, Joe Glawson, and Vince Speranza!

Post Adjutant Andy Clevenger must of grabbed atleast six or seven bags!

Just above Mark and Linda Chernek arrive to the help with TAL BBQ. To the right: Melissa Perez, Kiara Valencia, Helen Patton, Kenny Harris + K9 Abby pose for a pic after the weekend festivities.
Thirteen post and family members stayed in this beautiful farm house that we have since named Post NL01 HQ! It was definitely a great place to hang your cap! We have already booked it for the next NUTS Weekend as we plan to bring even more people and expand our activities to even more areas!
The Peace Light: From Bethlehem to Margraten

By Historian Ray

On the 30th of December Post NL01 “Margraten” was given the honor and privilege to participate in the Vredeslicht (Peace Light) event at the Netherlands American Cemetery in Margraten, NL. The Boy and Girl Scouts of Landgraaf, NL where given the honor to carry the Peace Light to their chosen location; The American WWII cemetery.

The origin of the Peace Light begins during advent when a candle is lit to an eternal burning flame, originating from the Grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem, Israel. The Peace Light is meant to promote peace, harmony and unity among the people of the world regardless of race, ethnicity or religion. For several decades the International scouting movement – Both Boy and Girl Scouts, have actively promoted global peace and harmony through the distribution of the Peace Light. Each year, a child from Upper Austria is named the Peace Light Child and travels to Bethlehem to receive the flame from one of the Grotto’s oil lamps. These lamps have been burning continuously for over 1,000 years. The light and child then travel back to Vienna, Austria where it is distributed at a Service of Dedication to delegations of Scouts from across Europe, who in turn takes it back, with a message of peace, to their own countries.

Post Commander Ray Vincent was asked to give a speech to open the event. Commander Vincent talked about the origins of the Peace Light and his personal opportunity to visit the Grotto in Bethlehem while he was on deployment. He went on to say, “To me personally, there’s no better place to remember the mission of the Peace Light than at this cemetery. For those who have given their all, are laid to rest. These heroes did not seek to promote war and death, but rather to end it so that the world can heal. Sadly we know this wasn’t to be the last war, war still rages around the globe today. But WE by partaking in this ceremony have not failed in the goal of the Peace Light Mission. Not at all. Cause WE are here today to honor those that gave their lives in the name of achieving peace. The only way we can fail in this endeavor is if WE stop trying.”
**Peace Light Poem**

Peace isn’t something you make alone. Peace is something you make together. How beautiful would it be if we come together as one because of peace. One little flame gives a lot of love. The love of so many. Will you light a candle so we can all share the peace light? Everyone touches each other’s hearts that is the answer of peace. Share so, have so. Haven’t they already suffered enough? Standing for each other, close to each other. Do not let your fellow man down. We can learn so much from you everyday, not just during this festive week. Open your heart and let the light in. It is an indescribable beautiful feeling. Let us start with the peace light we carry the same goal. We wait for all a world full of light. We wait for all the most wonderful days. Peace is not something you make alone. Peace is something we make together.
Maastricht was liberated in Sept of 1944. The 9th Army established an HQ there for about five months.

Approximately 800 American soldiers were positioned in Maastricht to prepare for Germany. They also provided protection to the supply chain against V1 and V2 attacks.

Fast forward to December and Maastricht is experiencing the coldest recorded winter with temperatures hitting at minus 32F. Many of the men had to still sleep in tents. A New York priest, Father Boleslaus Dobrzynski, along with 20 Brothers of the Immaculate Conception of Maastricht decided it would be good to give the men a Christmas Mass. So they knew of the Schark cave, which was safe and warmer. The men could worship, then drink coffee and hot cocoa, and eat donuts. Sal Barraecchia, a quiet solder from Rhode Island used charcoal to create a sweeping mural across from the wall of signatures.

Every year the Foundation of the Commemoration of the American Christmas Celebration 1944 (abbr. SHAK1944) organizes a Christmas Eve Mass to commemorate those brave boys who fought for the Liberty of Europe. Every year about 200 American soldiers attend this Service, together with their superiors, the American Ambassador or his representative, the King’s Commissioner of the province of Limburg, the Mayor of Maastricht among other people.
On Friday evening, December 29, The War Museum Eyewitness was shrouded in winter moods! Between 19.00 and 22.00 re-enactors both inside and outside the museum recreated the atmosphere of the cold winter in December 1944! Never before has War Museum Eyewitness been visited in the evening! The atmosphere allowed one to be carried away and experience the museum in a unique way. It definitely made for a memorable night during the Christmas holiday!

The Eyewitness Museum contains many unique treasures, especially if you’re interested in American and German paratroopers.

The Eyewitness Museum is centered around the story of fictional German paratrooper August Segel, a soldier in the First Fallschirmjäger Regiment, which was later partially absorbed into the Hermann Göring Division. Segel guides visitors through his war experience, from his enlistment into the German army in 1935, through the horrors of the frontline in France, Russia and Belgium, and to the final days of the war in Berlin. Using his story as a framework, the museum offers personal insights into life on the battlefield and the many hardships encountered by soldiers and civilians throughout the years of the Second World War.
Post NL01 Legionnaire Spotlight

From the Viet Nam era to active duty folks, our post is blessed with many incredible people representing all the services. Putting a few of our Legionnaires under the spotlight is a regular feature in our newsletter. I think it’s important to learn more about our comrades and benefit from their stories. ~ Historian Ray

MARK CHERNEK
My name is Mark Chernek, more commonly known as The Big Yank, my stage name. I grew up in East Brunswick New Jersey and graduated in January 1980 from East Brunswick High school and enlisted in the United States Marine Corps. I left for Paris Island in February of 1980 and graduated Marine boot camp May of 1980 with honors as a PFC. After recruit training I was stationed at Millington Tennessee for basic aviation training, after completion of that course I was sent to Camp Pendleton California to TME 33 for T-400 engine school and n the job training. Upon completion of my training I was sent to the flight line to work on Cobra Attack helicopters at New River North Carolina where I was stationed. In May of 1982 I deployed with HMM261 as an attachment from HMA 269 on the ship the USS Guam, at the time it was supposed to be a med cruise and just a normal sea duty tour. That however ended when we embarked to Rota Spain and started to take on mass amounts of Ammunition, and was redirected to Beirut Lebanon.

As a young Corporal my eyes were opened to the harsh realities of war, and the realization that all the training I did was now being put to good use. I was part of the peace keeping expeditionary force, which was deployed by President Ronald Reagan to West Beirut, and stationed at the Beirut international airport. During this time we had several missions, one was the evacuation of Americans and their families out of war torn Beirut, the other was to evacuate the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) and then set up a safe zone at the airport and protect the area. We were relieved from our duties sometime in November and made it back to Morehead city a day before thanksgiving 1982. In April 1983, our Embassy was attacked by a suicide Bomber and 63 people lost their lives, (17 Americans) several Army soldiers, including one Marine Sgt who was doing embassy duty.

In 1983, my life changed forever when on October 23rd our BLT (Barracks) was attacked by a terrorist bomber at the Beirut Airport, and 241 of my Marine, Navy and Army brothers were murdered while they slept, it’s a day etched in my mind, and I lost a few very close friends that day. One was my officer Captain Vince Smith. Two days later, Oct 25th 1983 my squadron HMM 261 was involved in Operation Urgent Fury off the Island of Grenada. Three of my pilots from HMA 269 were shot down and KIA, one survived. Their memory are enshrined on the Beirut Memorial wall outside Jacksonville North Carolina Camp Lejeune. I was responsible for the replacement cobras, which were sent on a C5 Galaxy down to the Island of Grenada, Point Salines international airport…
MARK CHERNEK cont.

After being discharged from the US Marines in 1984, I enrolled in aviation school in Teterboro NJ, where I graduated with honors, and received my Airframe and power plant license to work in the aviation field. I was recruited to work as a civilian for the government at the Naval Air Warfare Center in West Trenton NJ, where I was a aircraft engine test mechanic, and worked in the field of research, test and development of aircraft jet engines and other aviation projects for the United States Navy. I also was a member of the Marine reserves during this time working at Willow Grove Pa, and transferred to the Army aviation reserves for a year in 1988-89.

I left the United States in 1997 and lived in Belfast Northern Ireland for 10 years. There I was employed by FG Wilson an Caterpillar generator factory as a test technician, then Gill airways as a licensed aircraft mechanic, and finally Bombardier manufacturing regional jets.

I left Northern Ireland to go aircraft contracting in 2006 and landed a job at Fokker in the Netherlands, working on aircraft structures. I finally settled down and remained at Maastricht where I was a structural engineer working for Samco Aircraft Maintenance, I medically retired from aviation in 2015 and currently live with my Dutch partner Linda and my step son Lucas.

I have many interest to many to mention here, but my main hobby is to sing/play the guitar and perform. I started a foundation called Music 4 Vets Nederland where I use music as a tool to help Veterans who suffer from PTSD. The band travels around the Netherlands and have performed for many military functions and events, and I am quite proud of this group and it’s accomplishments. As well as being a member of the American Legion, I also am a member of Nail (Netherland American Institute Limburg) where my wife and I a regulars at events and nail functions…
Come out and Join the Margraten Legionnaires Bowling Team!

We’re always looking for more people to take part in the fun. Every Wednesday from 6-9 pm at the Schinnen Bowling Center. Events are always posted on the Post NL01 Facebook page.

If interested please contact Team Captain Dave Ehnis at davidehnis01@yahoo.com

Movie of the Month: A Bridge Too Far

The Fact-based drama recreating the famous Second World War battle for Arnhem, as Allied forces try to capture a series of strategically important bridges and cut off the Germans from their retreat through Europe. Starring Robert Redford, Anthony Hopkins, Michael Caine, Sean Connery, Dirk Bogarde, James Caan, Edward Fox and Laurence Olivier. Based on the book by Cornelius Ryan, and directed by Richard Attenborough.
The American Legion's official training program for officers, members, Legion College applicants and those who simply want to expand their knowledge of the nation's largest veterans service organization is now available online.

The American Legion Extension Institute has been rewritten, updated, streamlined and enhanced with videos, digital photos, clickable links, a historical timeline and additional features. The program should take less than two hours to complete. It is divided into six sections, with a quiz at the end of each one, followed by a final exam.

The course is free for members. The training took me a little over 2 hours to complete, but there is no time limit on the course. You can return to where you left off anytime you wish for as many times as you want. Once complete you will get a printable Certificate of Completion and the opportunity to order the redesigned lapel/cap pin pictured above.

I found this training to be a great jumping off point for any new legionnaire. Anyone who participates in Awareness Drives should have this information in their toolbag!

As an Historian I of course found the History & Organization module to be the most interesting and fun but the section on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation was very eye-opening.

This Basic Training package is an outstanding gateway of knowledge into the nation’s largest veterans service organization and an opportunity not to be missed.
How to Become A Sentinel of Memory
By Historian Ray

Over the past year the American Overseas Memorial Day Association (AOMDA) Foundation has been focusing on the restructuring the adoption program of over 14,000 American soldiers who have their last resting place in Belgium. The program to honor our fallen is call the Sentinel of Memory program. Last issue I wrote about what the program consists of. This article will cover the steps on becoming a Primary Sentinel of Memory.

1. Go to www.aomda.org and choose the language of your preference.

2. Click on “Register” and follow the instruction on the form. Your request is usually approved within 24 hours. Mine was a little over 48 hrs.

3. If your registration was successful, go to the site and click “Login”. Give your email address and password.

4. You are now automatically linked to the page for your personal account. Please take the time to fill in your profile information so that they can effectively reach you in the future.

5. Click on “Honor Them” and then click on “Serve as a Sentinel of Memory”. Once that page comes up, click on the hyperlink “Primary” Sentinel of Memory.

6. Fill out the Primary Sentinel of Memory Application. Make sure you give full detailed answers. Make sure you select the right cemetery. You will also be asked why you are able to fulfill the obligations of being a Primary Sentinel at the cemetery you selected. Saying you live locally and normally visit the selected cemetery a couple of times a year is an acceptable answer. If you’re interested in a particular serviceman please provide his name. You will also have the option to select to be put on a waiting list or be assigned any available serviceman.

7. Once you have completed the form, click on “Send”. Your application will be forwarded to the Administrator for the Remembrance Honors. After approximately 72 hours you will receive an answer. Mine took closer to 6 to 8 weeks but that was when the AOMDA was still getting going through the 14,000 graves. Should be much quicker now. Your name will then be on the page of the serviceman your Primary Sentinel for. (if you don’t want your name to appear on his page, you can make that adjustment through the privacy settings of your account)

8. You will receive an email from the AOMDA with your serviceman’s information and a Certificate of Appreciation for your commitment to serve as a Primary Sentinel of Memory. The pledges last for three years and you will be sent an email when the end of your pledge nears with the option to renew.
Department of France Centennial Challenge Coin!

March 2019 is firmly circled on The American Legion Dept. of France calendar. That’s when Legionnaires across Europe will celebrate the organization’s 100th birthday in Paris, where a gathering of soldiers, sailors and Marines that month in 1919 gave birth to what would become the largest organization of U.S. veterans. To honor the centennial, and to help cover anticipated costs of celebrating the anniversary, the Department of France has struck a commemorative challenge coin. The coins have been purchased by members, collectors and post leaders to distribute among military personnel, supporters and others who help the department fulfill the Legion mission in communities overseas. The challenge coin features the Eiffel Tower – the image of which is embroidered on Department of France Legion caps – above the organization’s national 100th anniversary logo. On the flip side appear the emblems of all four American Legion Family groups – the American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion, Legion Riders and The American Legion. The challenge coins are $10 each, plus shipping, add $2 per coin for standard shipping and $13 per coin for priority shipping. To date Post NL01 has sold over 110 coins!

The Faces of Margraten

Rows, endless rows of white marble crosses and stars of David. This is what one sees when overlooking the American War Cemetery and Memorial Netherlands in Margraten, the Netherlands. 8,301 American soldiers have been buried in this cemetery; another 1,722 names are listed on the Walls of the Missing. We do know the names of all these men and women, but who were they? Where did they come from and what did their lives look like prior to World War II? The Stichting Verenigde Adoptanten Amerikaanse Oorlogsgraven (Foundation United Adopters American War Graves) hopes to make a unique tribute to the men and women buried there by trying to give as many names of the soldiers buried in or memorialized at the Margraten Cemetery as possible a face, by decorating their graves or names on the Walls of the Missing with a personal photo through the project “The Faces of Margraten” during a Memorial week once every two years. The next tribute is scheduled to take place May 2-6, 2018.
Improvements in Preventive Care Coverage with TRICARE Select

On Jan. 1, 2018, TRICARE Select will replace TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra. As a result, beneficiaries will notice improved coverage for preventive services with TRICARE Select. Preventive care helps you take command of your health and manage potential issues before you experience symptoms. This type of health care allows you to address health problems before they become life threatening. Examples of TRICARE-covered preventive services include cancer screenings and vaccines, in addition to well-woman and well-child exams.

If you currently use TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra, you don't pay anything for certain preventive services. But for all other preventive services, beneficiaries pay between 15-25 percent of the cost after their yearly deductible is met, depending on the plan and beneficiary category.

"With TRICARE Select, beneficiaries won't pay anything out-of-pocket for covered preventive services if they are provided by a network provider," said Valerie Palmer, a health care policy analyst for TRICARE. "However, if they use a non-network provider, fewer preventive services are paid by TRICARE. This is why it is important to see a network provider for your preventive care."

The additional, no-cost preventive services beneficiaries can receive under TRICARE Prime that TRICARE Select will cover beginning in 2018 include:

*One Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (HP&DP) exam: This is covered annually for beneficiaries age 6 and older. In 2018, this exam will no longer require the inclusion of a covered cancer screening or immunization if you see a network provider.
*Lung cancer screening (low-dose computed tomography): This is covered annually for persons ages 55-80 with a 30 pack-per-year history of smoking who are currently smoking or have quit within the past 15 years. Screening should be discontinued once the individual has not smoked for 15 years or develops a health problem significantly limiting life expectancy or ability or willingness to undergo curative lung surgery.
*Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm (AAA): This is a one-time screening using ultrasonography for men ages 65-75 who have ever smoked.

A new preventive service added this year for both TRICARE Prime and TRICARE Select is aimed at adults with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 kg/m2 or higher and children or adolescents with a BMI value greater than the 95th percentile. Intensive, multi-component behavioral interventions to promote sustained weight loss (12 to 26 sessions per year) are covered when rendered by a TRICARE-authorized provider An authorized provider is any individual, institution/organization, or supplier that is licensed by a state, accredited by national organization, or meets other standards of the medical community, and is certified to provide benefits under TRICARE. There are two types of TRICARE-authorized providers: Network and Non-Network.. Types of behavioral management interventions include diet and physical activity guidance, strategies to promote and maintain lifestyle changes and more. This addition is a covered benefit regardless of whether the beneficiary uses a network or non-network provider, though costs are typically lower with a network provider.
Army identifies Green Beret killed in Afghanistan on New Year’s Day

Mihail Golin, 34, of Fort Lee, N.J., was a Special Forces weapons sergeant assigned to Fort Carson, Colo.-based B Company, 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group. He was killed in a New Year’s Day firefight in eastern Afghanistan.

Viewed through the prism of time, the years after World War II can seem like an idyllic era, with U.S. power supreme, the middle class thriving and families living stable “Ozzie and Harriet” lives after decades of war and economic depression. In reality, those years were also a time of legal racial discrimination, marginalization of women and an ever-present fear of nuclear annihilation at the hands of the Soviet Union.

Jerry Yellin, a WWII Army Air Forces bomber pilot who flew B-24s, gives the thumbs up at the National World War II Memorial in Washington D.C. on May 8, 2015, after a flyover of WWII military aircraft including B-24 Liberators. Yellin died Thursday, Dec. 21, 2017, in Orlando, Fla. He was 93.

PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

For God and Country we associate ourselves together for the following purposes: To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the great wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and good will on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy; to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.

THE AMERICAN LEGION – WHO WE ARE

The American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic, mutual-help, and community service organization, which now numbers 2.4 million - men and women - in more than 14,000 American Legion Posts worldwide. These Posts are organized into 55 Departments – one each for the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, France, Mexico, and the Philippines.

The American Legion has its headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana, with offices in Washington, D.C. In addition to thousands of volunteers, serving in leadership and program implementation capacities from the communities to the Legion’s standing national commissions and committees, the national organization has a professional staff of about 250 employees.

Membership eligibility in The American Legion is based on honorable service within the U.S. Armed Forces between April 6, 1917 and November 11, 1918 (World War I); December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946 (World War II); June 25, 1950, and January 31, 1955 (Korean war); December 22, 1961, and May 7, 1975 (Vietnam War); August 24, 1982, and July 31, 1984 (Lebanon/Grenada); December 20, 1989, and January 31, 1990 (Operation Just Cause – Panama); or August 2, 1990, until the date of the end of hostilities as determined by the government of the United States.