Department Commander John Shanahan

**Apologies for Delayed Newsletter.** Please accept my apologies for this delayed newsletter. There’s been a lot going on over the past several weeks and I had asked our Editor, David Greaux, to “hold the presses” as news came in, and it just kept coming. Finally, here we are.

**Comrade Bob Hale to Post Everlasting.** One of the saddest items we have to report on is the passing last Sunday, 7 May of Comrade Bob Hale to Post Everlasting. A long-time PUFL member of Post GR-79, Bob was an Army veteran of Vietnam and an active and much-loved member of his Post and this Department. At this writing, funeral details are still pending. Please stay alert for those details and send your condolences to Ursula Hale, Beethovenstrasse 4, 74172 Neckersulm, Germany.

**2017 Membership Drive & Current Standings.** The 100% membership reporting date is today and we have reported 95.50% of our 2017 goal of 3,200 members. As a result, we stand at number 3 in the nation on membership and 5% above our actual numbers from last year. Please know my sincere thanks to all on the membership team, from Post membership committee workers to Post Commanders to our terrific team of Vice Commanders – and especially Joseph Schram, our unstoppable Membership Chairman. I should point out that the year is not over and our transmittals need to continue. I recruited a new member this afternoon and that transmittal is on my desk, ready to go. I earnestly encourage you to do the same. We need to do all we can to see that every veteran has an opportunity to join the American Legion.

**Commander’s Travels and Events.** This has been a busy month for me for events, primarily here in Ireland. I started the month of April with memorial ceremonies in
Ballyhaunis, County Mayo for a Vietnam veteran and native son, Corporal Patrick (Bob) Gallagher, USMC. Corporal Gallagher was awarded the Navy Cross for distinguished gallantry in battle in Vietnam and was killed defending his Marines on the very last day of his tour in-country. The American Embassy Marines turned out to honour one of their own, as did Marine Corps veterans coming from as far away as the United States. I had the honour of joining with the Embassy delegation to represent the American Legion and was especially pleased to see Post IR-03 Commander Ron Howko and Adjutant Michael Noone leading the honour guard for memorial services at his gravesite.

Later in the month, I journeyed to Listowel, County Kerry in the west of Ireland to serve as the principal speaker at the 2017 Listowel Military Tattoo. This year’s event continued the focus on Vietnam and honoured Major John O’Sullivan, late of Termonfeckin, County Louth, Ireland. John was the second most highly decorated aviator from the Vietnam War, an achievement made possible by John’s personal motto of “Nothing Impossible.” Irish members of the American Legion had the privilege of knowing John as a fellow Legionnaire and member of the John F. Kennedy Post IR-63. John left us too soon as the result of injuries in an accident at home just a few years ago. He was given a proper memorial in Listowel with the fly-over of a Huey helicopter, the very same type of aircraft that John flew in Vietnam. His uniform, decorations and citations were given a fine display in the center of town and a number of his veteran and aviator comrades came to Ireland for the event. I am especially pleased to report that all of the Irish American Legion Posts sent representatives to Listowel and joined together with Irish Defense Forces veterans to form a guard of honour at the end of the ceremony.

Finally, as the month of May began, I travelled to the port city of Cobh, County Cork, Ireland to serve as the American Legion’s principal representative at ceremonies honoring the arrival of the United States Navy in Cobh exactly 100 years ago to begin America’s involvement in the march to victory in World War One. The first American assets to enter the war were a squadron of destroyers under the command of CDR Joseph K. Taussig, USN. When CDR Taussig arrived in Cobh and reported to the British admiral commanding on his arrival, he was asked when he could be ready to put to sea. His answer was “We are ready now, Sir” – a phrase that has survived in the folklore of the American Navy to this day as a testimony to readiness. Once again, members from all four American Legion Posts in Ireland took part in ceremonies organized by the Port of Cork at what was formerly Admiralty House, now a convent of Benedictine nuns, as a memorial marker was unveiled by the Naval Order of the United States. The ceremony was well attended and had the support of the American Embassy, the United States Navy, the Ancient Order of Hibernians – and of course, the American Legion and the Irish Naval Service veterans.
Department Convention and Officer Vacancies. Our Department’s 2017 Convention is coming up this next month – June 15-18, 2017 in Ludwigshafen, Germany. We are returning to the BEST WESTERN Leoso Hotel, a venue that worked very well for us two years ago and made especially convenient with a train station right at its front door. We are organizing a training program for this year to go along with the regular convention program and are excited about what we believe will be a busy and valuable weekend for all of our members. I want to encourage all Legionnaires in the Department to make a special effort to join us for this weekend. You’ll find additional details and registration information in this newsletter.

Our convention is also our Department’s AGM and election. I want to put out a special call to all members to consider opportunities to be part of the Department’s leadership team and to make yourself available to serve in either an elected or appointed post. Our Department’s long-time Finance Officer, Gary Miller, is planning on returning stateside later this year and we’ll be looking to fill this important position with a new Finance Officer. All other positions are up this year as well. If you are ready to roll up your sleeves and accept the challenges of one of our leadership positions, we urge you to give this serious thought and come prepared to offer your services to the Department and to your brother and sister veterans.

Planning for the Legion’s Centennial. The work of our Department’s Centennial Committee continues. We will be meeting in Paris on Thursday, 11 May to discuss the scope of this event and to meet the event planning consultants who are working with us to plan and execute the 2019 Centennial celebration. I am especially grateful to Chairman Curtis Bartosik and to the Committee for their support to date and for their work on behalf of our members to make this an outstanding event. We invite you to mark your calendars for March, 2019 and to plan on joining comrades from Europe and from the United States for this event.

Our Centennial Coin Programme. We are continuing to get very positive support for our Coin Programme (see the great article on this programme and NEC Lady Nola Maloney in the Legion’s National Newsletter). I want to encourage each of you to keep up this good work. The program has a number of benefits for the Department and for each of you. It provides us with a supplemental source of revenue; it provides Posts with an opportunity to share in the revenues through coin resales (and we’ve kept the price down to make that possible); and it is a great way to build the reputation and awareness of the American Legion here in Europe. Let’s continue to make it a success!

See you in Ludwigshafen next month! For God and Country, John
### Department Officers - 2017 Membership Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commander</td>
<td>John Shanahan IR01</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jshanahan@gmail.com">jshanahan@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjutant</td>
<td>Maxwell Rice GR79</td>
<td><a href="mailto:colwichboy@yahoo.com">colwichboy@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NECMAN</td>
<td>Nola Maloney GR03</td>
<td><a href="mailto:NEMaloney@gmail.com">NEMaloney@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALT. NECMAN</td>
<td>James Settle GR42</td>
<td><a href="mailto:james.settle@kabelbw.de">james.settle@kabelbw.de</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VCAL</td>
<td>Joseph Schram BE02</td>
<td><a href="mailto:joseph.schram@gmail.com">joseph.schram@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICE COMMANDER</td>
<td>Laura Buckner BE02</td>
<td><a href="mailto:04lg6@sbcglobal.net">04lg6@sbcglobal.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICE COMMANDER</td>
<td>Carl Hale FR01</td>
<td><a href="mailto:crth@btmail.com">crth@btmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICE COMMANDER</td>
<td>Christopher Buchanan GR1982</td>
<td><a href="mailto:christopherbuck@hotmail.com">christopherbuck@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VICE COMMANDER</td>
<td>Marcus Briscoe GR06</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mbriscoe@online.de">mbriscoe@online.de</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPLAIN</td>
<td>Casby Logan GR07</td>
<td><a href="mailto:casby@btmail.com">casby@btmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HISTORIAN</td>
<td>Tyler Johnson</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Tyler.Johnson@outlook.com">Tyler.Johnson@outlook.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINANCE OFFICER</td>
<td>Gary Miller GR06</td>
<td><a href="mailto:billfan_gary@hotmail.com">billfan_gary@hotmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERVICE OFFICER</td>
<td>Paul Claybough GR1982</td>
<td><a href="mailto:profsoldier72@yahoo.com">profsoldier72@yahoo.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JUDGE ADVOCATE</td>
<td>Keith Abernathy GR79</td>
<td><a href="mailto:keithabernathy1942@yahoo.de">keithabernathy1942@yahoo.de</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SERGEANT-AT-ARMS</td>
<td>Percival Tumbaga</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tambaga.perciva@stripes.com">tambaga.perciva@stripes.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSISTANT ADJUTANT</td>
<td>James Settle GR42</td>
<td><a href="mailto:james.settle@kabelbw.de">james.settle@kabelbw.de</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSISTANT ADJUTANT</td>
<td>Robert Fuelling FR01</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Rfuell1704@aol.com">Rfuell1704@aol.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSISTANT ADJUTANT</td>
<td>John Fleming CH01</td>
<td><a href="mailto:pastcmdr.fleming@gmail.com">pastcmdr.fleming@gmail.com</a></td>
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The American Legion, Department of France website

http://www.amerlegiondeptfrance.org

Also Visit The Department of France Facebook page

WANTED TODAY…pictures and stories of your posts, your members. Share your experiences, let everyone know what you are doing and contributing to your “American Legion Family”
My Fellow Legionnaires, SAL Members, Auxiliary Members and all other VIPs;

I sincerely the hope the month of April was a good one for each of you! May is going to be busy as we prepare for visitation from National Commander Schmidt, National Auxiliary President Davis, and National SAL Commander Brain. More on that later.

Let me start off with some news of some of the Hearings from Capitol Hill: On 7 March the new VA Secretary David Shulkin announced the VA will start providing health care to veterans with other than honorable discharges. The VA previously recognized that this population needs services, but said they are prohibited by law from caring for them. This announcement came during a House Veterans’ Affairs Committee hearing on expanding the Choice program and reforming the department.

Here are three measures the House passes on Veterans’ Affairs:

**H.R.1259:** VA Accountability First Act of 2017, by a vote of 237-178. This measure will provide Shulkin the tools needed to discipline employees who fail in their mission to provide world-class health care and services to the men and women who served. This legislation does not build back the trust of America’s veterans; it gives VA employees the trust to know that bad actors within the department will no longer have the power to taint the VA’s good name.

**H.R.1181:** Approved by vote of 240-175, Veteran’s Second Amendment Protection Act. The bill would prohibit VA from considering any beneficiary who is assisted by a fiduciary as “mentally defective” without magistrate or judicial authority ruling that the beneficiary is a danger to themselves or others. This would stop VA from allowing these veterans to have their legally owned fire arms confiscated.

**H.R.1367:** The House by a vote 412-0 passed legislation to improve VA’s ability to recruit and retain high-quality health care providers and other professionals. The measures contains a number of provisions that would strengthen VA’s ability to identify staffing shortages, recruit employees to fill vacant positions, quickly on-board new hires, and retain high-performing workers across the country. It also contains provisions that would improve leadership and accountability throughout VA and increase the number of veterans in the federal work force.

All three measures now await action in the Senate. While our veterans in overseas areas may not feel the impact of these measures if approved our brothers and sisters in the US would start to see long overdue change for the better within the VA. We must continue to try to seek an outreach program for folks living overseas.

The American Legion has launched a special web page – [www.legion.org/family](http://www.legion.org/family) - to make it easier for veterans, service members and their families to access Legion Support programs in one location and to receive immediate assistance. The page features direct links to the Legion’s Operation Comfort Warrior, Temporary Financial Assistance and Family Support Network Programs, as well as information on the Children and Youth program, the latest news and videos about each program.

**National’s Visit to Department of France:**

Now I better get the National Tour Group visit lined out for you. While the group cannot visit every installation we have in Europe, the headquarters are targeted to inform military leadership of what The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion offers and to gather information on what The American Legion Family can do to assist those leaders.

During the tour the National Commander would like to continue the Walk for Veterans program at any/every opportunity. Given security issues for Europe this is best accomplished while on installations. We
are encouraged to incorporate a walk during their schedule. These can be done on Wiesbaden, Ramstein
and K-Town. Time to be determined. There is a special yellow shirt that is designated for this walk the
National Group will most likely wear – you do not need to purchase this shirt to do the walk, our caps or
other insignia of The American Legion Family will suffice – all are invited to join in.

In addition, while on tour the National Commander will be accepting donations to fund Service
Officer training and emergency grants for needy military and veterans families. Those contributions can be
made to American Legion Charities (write in the memo portion of check: “Commander’s Charity Fund”). All
donations are tax deductible.

Commander Schmidt has expressed a desire to have as many Legionnaires, Auxiliary, SAL and
Legion Rider Members as possible to attend any social functions available to them.

The Group will be in Wiesbaden area 29-30 May. While there they will receive briefings from military
leaders, pay a short visit at the VRA Town Hall Meeting at the USO (0900-1200), have lunch with the troops,
pay a visit to the USO and have dinner in a local restaurant. Anyone wishing to have dinner with the group
should let your Post GR07 leadership be aware so reservations can be made to accommodate all.

On May 31st the Group will move to Ramstein for briefings with military leadership in the area and
visits to Fisher House, USO Warrior Center, and Post GR01 home over the next two days. Dinner on 31
May will be with the Group and Department Leadership only. Dinner on 1 June will be at GR01 Post home
for one of their famous BBQ’s. If planning to attend let GR01 know so they can prepare enough food for all.

Jun 2nd the Group will depart for France. This portion will be visiting prominent American Legion
sites throughout the day followed by dinner with FR01 Legion Leadership and Family Members.

Jun 3rd - Jun 5th The Group will be in Normandy.

Jun 6th the Group will arrive in Belgium. BE02 has put together an itinerary for this area and will
share with its Post members on activities planned.

Recent Congressional Developments: Since 3 January 2017 The American Legion has participated
in eight congressional hearings during the First Session of the 115th Congress. There are 33 bills the
Legislative Division has worked on during the First Session of the 115th Congress.

The American Legion Marketing Staff, 100th Anniversary Observance Committee, along with Legion
Legislative Division are working together on a limited edition American Legion Centennial coin for 2019.
This would be legal tender. The US Mint produces just two commemorative coins per year. There is also
work in progress on a US postage stamp for the 100th Anniversary.

Next week will be Spring Meeting for the NEC (May 10-11). Will send you a report via the June
Newsletter.

I need to make a correction to something I said in the 3rd DEC Meeting. I informed you the National
Constitution stated there is no alcohol during official meetings of The American Legion. There is no such
wording in the National Constitution. The ruling came from National JA – it is an unwritten rule of no alcohol
during official meetings. I stand corrected! That does not mean it cannot be incorporated into our
Constitution as I am sure it has been to other Departments Constitutions within the American Legion.

I look forward to seeing many of you while on tour with the National Group as well as in
Ludwigshafen for our Department Convention in June.

With that I will close out this month’s article with wishes for a successful month and safe travels for
all!!!

Most Sincerely, Your NECLady…Nola

“No matter our outward differences – we’re all in this together” President O’Bama – during his outgoing
speech in office.
Saying Goodbye to C.J. (Clyde Joseph) who was like a Department Mascot for several years. Many of you knew C.J. while I was Commander for three years and follow-on years up to October 2007. He attended every meeting with me from the time I first got him, and at times had run of the hotels we stayed in. This little free spirit will be leaving us 3 May 2017. He has great pain in his left hip (yes, the one you used to see him hop with many times as he would disengage the hip but knew how to put it back in himself) and he has many neurological symptoms now; his eye sight is very limited to just what is in front of him now so he stumbles a great deal into doors and other objects he passes by; his hearing is almost gone and he stopped barking over a year ago. I feel it would be selfish and unkind to not let him pass on to Dog Heaven. He has had a good life, a well-traveled life. His Vet is just amazed he has lived as long as he has (16+ years) with all he has endured over his life. I thank all of you who were kind to him, those who only tolerated him, and the many who have asked about him since my return to activity in the Department.

**Memorial Day is observed on the last Monday of May. It was formerly known as Decoration Day and commemorates all men and women who have died in military service for the United States. Many people visit cemeteries and memorials on Memorial Day and it is traditionally seen as the start of the summer season.**
DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER AT LARGE  _Joeph Schram_

National Oratorical Contest

I had the opportunity to attend and volunteer to work at the National Oratorical Contest in Indianapolis on the weekend of 22 & 23rd of April. It was a privilege to listen to the contestants give their speeches.

For those Posts that conduct Post level Oratorical Contests the Assigned Topics for the 2018 Contest have been published. The assigned topic discourse must not consume less than three (3) minutes or more than five (5) minutes for delivery. The purpose of the assigned topic discourse is to test the speaker's knowledge of the subject, the extent of his or her research, and the ability to discuss the topic as related to the basic principles of government under the Constitution.

Membership

• Current Status: The Department reached its 95% cutoff during the membership blitz and is on its way to make its 100% goal of 3200 members. While it is difficult now to recruit new members, there are over 500 members that have yet to renew their membership. This is the time of the Posts and Department to contact these members to renew. The best way for these legionaries to renew is to go to www.Legion.org/renew

• The Department was visited by National Vice Commander Paul Martel from 01-07 April during his tour of Germany. With the Vice Commander’s assistance the Department conducted a membership blitz with 6 Posts (GR01, GR07, GR20, GR45, GR1982 & EG02). The efforts of the members of these Posts
• Names of recruiters: The National Commander awards recruiters who have recruited 3 or more new members. I would like to personally thank the following for doing an excellent job.

  - Paul Haney (BE02)       Tim Litherland (EG02)       Darrin Dahlke (GR06)
  - Kevin Jordon (BE02)     Gary Thomas (EG02)         Marcus Biscoe (GR06)
  - Laura Buckner (BE02)    Wyatt Hall (EG02)          Casby Logan (GR07)
  - Larry Barnwell (GR20)   Tiny Rehmert (EG02)        James Joyce (GR45)

I would also like to thank Department Commander John Shanahan for recruiting over 50 new members for the Department.

Convention
The Department of France Convention is scheduled for 15-18 June at the BEST WESTERN Leoso Hotel Ludwigshafen, Germany. For those wishing to attend, the deadline is 15 May.

One change to the reservation letter is the choices for the Saturday evening banquet.

1. Salmon Filet
2. Supreme from corn-fed chicken with tarragon foam & fine noodles on nest of vegetables
3. Pasta tagliarini arrabiata with peccorin

National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Representative Visit
Louis Celli and Verna Jones will be in Germany and Belgium to provide a briefing for veterans & Servicemembers seeking information regarding VA Disability Claims. A press release will be issued soon to provide more details on what will be available. I would like to ask Post membership from the areas to please attend and give support to this endeavor.

• Tuesday, 30 May          Wiesbaden, Germany
• Wednesday, 31 May        Kaiserslautern, Germany
• Thursday, 01 June        Stuttgart, Germany
• Thursday, 01 June        Ansbach, Germany
• Friday, 02 June          Spangdahlem Airbase
• Wednesday, 07 June       SHAPE, Belgium
Department of France Convention  
15-18 June 2017  
BEST WESTERN Leoso Hotel Ludwigshafen

1. Guest Details:

Last Name: 
First Name: 
Street: 
Zip / City: 
Country: 
Telephone: 
E-Mail: 

2. Accommodation Selection:

- Payment: Guests will be responsible for payment of their rooms and meals in the hotel. Includes breakfast buffet. **Please check one of the options below:**

  - **4 days / 3 nights** (Arrive 15 June, Depart 18 June)
    - Single Room: € 159
    - Double Room: € 255
    - Suite: € 342
  
  - **3 days / 2 nights** (Arrive 16 June, Depart 18 June)
    - Single Room: € 106
    - Double Room: € 170
    - Suite: € 228
  
  - **2 days / 1 nights** (Arrive 17 June, Depart 18 June)
    - Single Room: € 53
    - Double Room: € 85
    - Suite: € 114

3. Saturday Evening Banquet

Meal will include:

- Roast beef is a cold starter.
- Consomme with marrow dumplings and swabian ravioli.

Your Main Entrée Choices **(Please select your choice)**

- Salmon Filet
- Lamb Rump
- Vegan Pumpkin-Thai Curry and Basmati Rice.
Extra Fees
1. Registration Fee: €25
2. Saturday Evening’s Banquet: €25.00 (paid to hotel at end of stay)
3. Parking fee per car: € 8.00 (for entire stay)
4. Lunch Buffet: €18 (per meal)
5. Dinner Buffet: €20 (per meal)

Registration Fee: to be paid before start of Convention to the Convention Chairperson

VAT Form will be accepted from Eligible persons
Children up to 03 years are free of charge
Children between 3-12 years pay 50\% of the price for the buffet. Children over 12 years pay normal price for the buffet

Cancellation deadline: No cancellation fee if cancelled before 15th May 2017. In case of cancellation after 15th May 2017, we reserve the right to charge 90\% of the expected revenue.

4. Payment Methods for Registration Fee: €25
   (Include a message with Your Name & Department Convention)

   (1) By Check (only US checks, no Foreign checks)
   Send to:                Or
   American Legion Post BE02        Joseph Schram
   attn: Department Convention       attn: American Legion
   Unit 28100, Box 017               Meersenstraat 33 C2
   APO AE 09714                      8310 Assebroek

   (2) Cash at the convention

   (3) Foreign Bank Transfer
   ING Account:
   IBAN: BE98 3774 3999 7693        BIC: BBRUBEBB

   (4) US Bank Transfer
   Andrews Federal Credit Union – Routing #: 255074111
   American Legion Post BE02 - Account #: 82019102

Send This Reservation Form to:  
vcal.schram@gmail.com

Deadline for Reservations is 15 May
DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER  Marcus W. Briscoe

It was reported that Comrade Michael Parizo Sr. reported to PEL on or about 20 March 2017. Sister Robyn Messer and her husband flew in from the states to attend to the trying task of burial arrangements and closing out matters in Comrade Parizo’s personal matters. Comrade Parizo was laid to rest on 07 April 2017 in Gross Gerau, Wallerstadten, Germany.

Marcus Briscoe
Vice Commander

POST GR 30 Easter Party
Many Americans celebrate Armed Forces Day annually on the third Saturday of May. It is a day to pay tribute to men and women who serve the United States' armed forces. Armed Forces Day is also part of Armed Forces Week, which begins on the second Saturday of May.
The two most significant April events of my continuing service are Normandy Camporee of the Boy Scouts of America, Transatlantic Council and the funeral of Colonel (Retired) John Ruddock Davis.

THE AMERICAN LEGION SUPPORTS SCOUTING
I have actively supported the Boy Scouts of America, Transatlantic Council, since 2010 when my son joined Troop 457 at the Brussels American School. I have served as the Troop Committee Chairman and Scoutmaster. I am now the Assistant Scoutmaster for the Order of the Arrow. I also simultaneously served as the Charlemagne District Training Chairman and continue as the District Camping Chairman. It is as the District Camping Chairman that I supported the Normandy Camporee. My son and I served with 7 additional volunteers as “Camp Staff” at the Omaha Beach campground. We ensured the many Troops that arrived from all over Europe were provided a secure camp ground and enjoyed a positive experience in the historic Normandy region of France. Over 3,500 participants gathered on Omaha Beach on Saturday, 22 April, and at the Normandy American Cemetery on Sunday, 23 April. The Scouts visited the many museums and memorials. Cub Scouts crossed the bridge to Boy Scouts on Omaha Beach. Many Boy Scouts received their Eagle Scout rank on Omaha Beach. Several Scouters received their Wood Badge beads on Omaha Beach. The blue skies and warm sun was a beautiful bonus to the weekend. The Transatlantic Council will plan the next Normandy Camporee for April 2019 in honor of the 75th anniversary of Operation Overlord, D-Day, the Battle of Normandy.

VETERANS SERVING VETERANS
While in Normandy I received word that World War II veteran, COL (Ret) John Ruddock Davis, had passed away on 20 April in Paris, at the age of 97. COL Davis was born in Oakland, California, on November 18, 1919. He joined the U.S. Army in December 1941 after attending the University of California in Berkeley, where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree. COL Davis received his commission from the Officer Candidate School in 1943 and became a member of the 106th Infantry Division. This is the very unit that was overrun at the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium, Christmas 1944. COL Davis used to share the stories of the Christmas 1944 battles from the men he knew in the division. After the war, COL Davis left the Army and returned to California. He was recalled to serve as a Reserve Officer in the Transportation Corps when the Korean War began. He was reassigned to France where there was a large U.S. Army presence. This is when he met his wife, Jeannette, from Granville, France. Jeannette died in March 2009.

COL Davis built a career in the moving business, specializing in transporting the household goods of the U.S. military personnel to and from France. He was a resourceful businessman. When the American Forces left France in the late 1960’s he found other employment in France related to his specialty, shipping.

COL Davis did exemplary work supporting American Patriotic activities in France. He was Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Benjamin Franklin Post 605. He was an important member and supporter of the Reserve Officers Association. For many years, he also chaired the Memorial Day ceremonies at Belleau Wood American Battle Monument and Cemetery, southwest from Reims, France. COL Davis was well known and consulted on veteran’s affairs by the French authorities of the 16th Arrondissement (District) of Paris. The American colony in Paris, and the United States, have lost a great patriot.

A Military Honors memorial service for COL Davis that included a military Honor Guard from the US Army Garrison Benelux was completed on 25 April at the Pere Lachaise cemetery in Paris. He is survived by his daughter, Laura, son, Philippe, and four grand-daughters. His family plans to spread his ashes off the Normandy coast.
Photos of COL Davis.
DEPARTMENT FINANCE OFFICER  Gary Miller

ALL,

Due to my tax situation here in Germany, I must resign from the Department Finance officer position effective 17 June 2017 at the 1st DEC of 2018. I should be available to assist the newly appointed finance officer to ensure a smooth transition.

Some of the qualifications you might want to consider when appointing a new Finance Officer.

1. SOFA status, or access to an American post office, for receiving and sending mail.
2. Has enough spare time to dedicate to the position (retired).
4. Be able to be bonded.

I served the last 18 years as the Department Finance Officer, I think it is time to take a break and become just a Legionnaire again.

v/r
Gary
Online registration now open for 2017 Legacy Run

March 21, 2017

It’s that time of the year again.

Online registration for the 2017 American Legion Legacy Run went live March 21. To register or for more information, click here. This year’s ride will leave Fort Dodge, Kan., Aug. 12 and travel west to Reno, Nev. – site for the 2017 American Legion National Convention. The cross-country motorcycle ride raises more for The American Legion Legacy Fund, which provides college money for the children of U.S. military personnel killed on active duty on or after Sept. 11, 2001, as well as the children of post-9/11 veterans with a VA disability rating of 50-percent or higher.

Last year's Legacy Run raised more than $1 million for the second straight year; in 11 years, the ride has raised more than $7 million.

Those registering online will be provided with a copy of their registration and release form, as well as a confirmation email. Those preferring to print out and mail a registration form with a check or money can send do so via email. A downloadable registration form will be available soon.

Registration packets and commemorative patches are expected to be mailed out in early August. To pre-order Legacy Run T-shirts, click here. These orders will be shipped directly from Emblem Sales.

Registration is open to passengers and riders, as well as to non-riding supporters. Non-riding supporters who register for $25 or more will receive the full registration package with map books and patches.

Because of the distance needing to be covered and the geography of the area along this year’s Legacy Run, mid-day stops cannot be planned for Legion posts or other large venues that provide food for purchase on-site. Participants are encouraged to purchase lunches during registration; those who do not pre-purchase the lunches will be expected to bring their own food each day and safely transport it.

Meals must be ordered in advance of departure. There will be no food available for purchase on stops, and there will be neither time nor available food outlets for riders to leave the group to find and eat lunch on their own each day. Those who do not sign up for lunches during registration but later decide to add them can do so via email.

Check back at www.legion.org/riders for updated route information and hotel suggestions within the next few weeks.
Department Award Committee meets

On Saturday 29 April members of the Awards Committee met to select the posts and individuals who will be recognized for their contributions to the American Legion and the Department of France during the past year. Although the number of recommendation certificates submitted were comparable to those of previous years the Committee was disappointed in that more posts did not participate. “It is extremely important that everyone who gives of his or her time to support the American Legion should receive some recognition” said James Settle, Past Department Commander before starting the selection process.

Selecting the winners was not that easy as several individuals were closely matched in their contributions but the committee was confident they selected the deserving individuals and posts. The committee also agreed that a Department priority for next year will be to get more posts to participate. The awards will be handed out during the convention in June.
Boy Scouts of America

While visiting London in 1909, Chicago publisher W. D. Boyce had become lost in foggy London when he met the “Unknown Scout” and assisted Boyce, guiding him to his destination. Boyce was so impressed with the Scout that having met with the Staff at Boy Scouts Headquarters and Lord Baden-Powell. Upon his return to America he incorporated Boy Scouts of America on February 8, 1910. Leaders within the organization realized the importance of BSA and June 15, 1916 President Woodrow Wilson signed the BSA’s Federal Charter.

The current mission statement of the BSA is “to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law”. When one reads the Scout Oath and Law, is it any wonder that at the first Convention of The American Legion adopted Boy Scouts of America as their first children and youth program to support? The Scout Oath and Law, and the Preamble to The American Legion have many similar mission statements which have continued to promote the alliance of Boy Scouts of America and The American Legion.

Today 2,451 Scouting Units are chartered by The American Legion Family. 61,765 youth are supported by 24,297 Adult Leaders. With those numbers The American Legion Family makes up the largest civic organization charters Scout Units and are in the top ten Chartered Organization Partners.

Traditional Scouting has four main programs. They are:

- Cub Scouting is available to boys from first to fifth-grade or 7 to 11 years.
- Boy Scouting is the flagship program of the BSA generally for boys ages 11 to 18.
- Venturing is the program for young men and women ages 14 through 21.
- Sea Scouting is the program for young men and women ages 14 through 21 focused on nautical activities.

The Boy Scouts of America offers several other programs and subprograms beyond the traditional membership:

- Varsity Scouting is a sub-division of Boy Scouting available to boys ages 14 to 18; it adds a program of high adventure and sporting activities.
- The Order of the Arrow is the Boy Scouting national honor society for experienced campers, based on American Indian traditions and is dedicated to the ideals of brotherhood and cheerful service.
- Lone Scouting is a program designed to allow those who would otherwise not be able to become Boy Scouts or Cub Scouts—usually due to residence in an overseas, isolated, or unsafe community—to participate in the Scouting experience.
- STEM Scouts is a pilot program of the BSA that focuses on STEM learning and career development for boy and girls in elementary, middle, and high school.

Learning for Life is a school and work-site based program that is a subsidiary of the BSA. It utilizes programs designed for schools and community-based organizations that are designed to prepare youth for the complexities of contemporary society and to enhance their self-confidence, motivation, and self-esteem. Exploring is the worksite-based program of Learning for Life with programs based on five areas of emphasis: career opportunities, life skills, citizenship, character education, and leadership experience.

As The American Legion prepares to celebrate its 100 year Anniversary, our commitment to “Foster and perpetuate a true spirit of Americanism” in supporting The Scouting Movement is just as important in 2017 as it was at that first National Convention of The American Legion.

For God and Country,
Richard C. Pond, Jr.
Alternate National Executive Committeeman
Detachment Membership Chairman
Detachment of New Hampshire
Mother's Day is a holiday honoring motherhood that is observed in different forms throughout the world. The American incarnation of Mother’s Day was created by Anna Jarvis in 1908 and became an official U.S. holiday in 1914. Jarvis would later denounce the holiday's commercialization and spent the latter part of her life trying to remove it from the calendar. While dates and celebrations vary, Mother's Day most commonly falls on the second Sunday in May and traditionally involves presenting mothers with flowers, cards and other gifts.

May is a special month for both those in and out of the military. For service members and veterans, it’s a chance to pay tribute to supportive families and spouses on Military Spouse Appreciation Day, and honor the memory of those who have sacrificed for this nation on Memorial Day. For the general public, the entire month provides an opportunity to say thanks to all those, past and present, who have contributed to the U.S. military.

What is Military Appreciation Month? ...Congress designated May as National Military Appreciation Month in 1999 to ensure the nation was given the opportunity to publicly demonstrate their appreciation for the sacrifices and successes made by our service members -- past and present. Each year the president makes a proclamation, reminding Americans of the important role the U.S. Armed Forces have played in the history and development of our country. May was selected because it has the most days set aside for celebrating and commemorating our military's achievements. In addition to the special days already mentioned, important dates for the military in May include Loyalty Day, which was established in 1921, Victory in Europe (VE) Day commemorating the end of WWII in Europe in 1945 and Armed Forces Day.

Military Appreciation Day ...Many locations also celebrate a specific Military Appreciation Day. Although not a nationally recognized holiday, areas use the day to hold parties and picnics in honor of their local active duty, Guard, Reserve and military veteran communities. Local businesses may offer discounts, while local sports teams may give free entrance to military families and veterans.

We honor you ...Join Military.com this month in honoring, remembering, recognizing and appreciating those who have served and those now serving -- read special features, and learn the history behind Military Appreciation Month. If you're a service member, military family member and veteran, you can find out about major events taking place throughout the month, as well as important discounts being offered by companies in thanks for your military service.
John Wayne Post GR79

Easter Party 2017
National Poppy Day supports veterans, honors the fallen

The American Legion - Apr 27, 2017

The American Legion Family has called upon Congress to designate May 26, 2017, as National Poppy Day to expand awareness and provide support everywhere for all who have served and sacrificed in the U.S. armed forces.

“The American Legion is pleased to bring Poppy Day to the United States, joining countries around the world who use the symbolic flower to remember our fallen and support the living,” American Legion National Commander Charles E. Schmidt said.

This year, the Boeing Company is premier sponsor to help The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and American Legion Riders increase public understanding of the poppy, its meaning and the ways in which it can be used to help veterans today and remember those who have served in the past.

The American Legion Auxiliary has been conducting a Poppy Program for many years and their members’ raise over $6 million annually to provide support for veterans, military servicemembers and their families.

“By wearing poppies on May 26, we honor every U.S. servicemember who has given his or her life in the name of liberty, freedom and democracy,” Schmidt wrote in the May issue of The American Legion Magazine. “At the same time, by wearing this simple red flower, we show our support for veterans of generations to come.”

A new website at www.legion.org/poppyday offers multiple ways The American Legion Family can expand awareness locally and regionally. Included on the site are media tools, message points, sample proclamations for elected officials and easy access to the American Legion Emblem Sales “Poppy Shop,” which offers an assortment of affordable items including the new National Poppy Day pin, kits for making lapel poppies for distribution, fundraising containers, charms, scarves and more.

Also through the website, National Poppy Day donors can make safe, secure contributions with their credit cards and dedicate their gifts to personally honor veterans now living or in memory of those who have passed. All donations directly support military veterans and families through American Legion programs.

The site also provides, under the heading “Get Involved,” a new set of media tools and promotions that can be modified for local use, including press releases, sample social media posts and downloadable high-resolution graphics. The “History” section of the site has a full-color, downloadable poster featuring the poem “In Flanders Fields,” which led to the red poppy’s emergence as an international symbol of military sacrifice.

American Legion Family members who plan poppy distributions and similar commemorations around May 26 and the week leading into Memorial Day are urged to use the hashtags #PoppyDay and #LegionFamily so activities can be shared on Facebook, Twitter and other social media channels.

American Legion Riders participating in their annual Run to Thunder event in Washington, D.C., as well as chapters conducting local rides heading into Memorial Day weekend, are also planning to make the red poppy a visible symbol of sacrifice and encouraging the public to wear or otherwise display poppies to honor those who have served.

The American Legion designated the red poppy as its official flower at the organization’s second national convention, Sept. 27, 1920. Since then, members of The American Legion Family have raised awareness in communities, inspired by the 1915 poem of Canadian Lt. Col. John McCrae, M.D., who saw firsthand from the front lines of World War I the emergence of red poppies around the graves and in the battle zones where blood was shed to protect freedom and democracy. He put that image into words:

In Flanders fields the poppies blow, Between the crosses, row on row, That mark our place; and in the sk, The larks, still bravely singing, fly Scarce heard amid the guns below.

A video from the Salute to Heroes Inaugural Ball in January 2017 features Korean War veteran, California Legionnaire and actor James McEachin onstage reciting the complete poem, which was written in May 1915 and published on Dec. 8 of that year.
**Department of France Past Commanders Club**

**PCC President Anthony Giordano / PCC Secretary David Greaux**

**Who is eligible 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 eligible to join.

Initial dues for the Past Commanders Club is only $25.00  
Renewal dues for the Past Commanders Club is only $10.00

*Our next meeting is planned in conjunction*  
*with the Department of France Convention 15-18 June 2017.*

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**The season is now for National Post History Contest entries**

Post historians who have been chronicling the activities of their post over the last membership year should start finalizing their entries for the first round of judging in the National Post History Contest, which will take place during department conventions this spring and summer.

Entries in the One-Year Post Narrative and One-Year Post Yearbook categories will be judged by the department historian during the convention. The first-place finisher in each category, certified as such by the department historian, will be sent to National Headquarters in Indianapolis where it will be judged by a group of past and present department and national historians during Fall Meetings, Oct 9-12. All department-winning entries must arrive at National Headquarters by Sept. 15.

Contact your department historian for more information; a directory of departments can be found at [www.legion.org/departments](http://www.legion.org/departments). The National Department History Contest, for the best narrative and yearbook entries by department historians, will also take place during Fall Meetings, and those entries must arrive by Sept. 15 as well.

Now is also a good time to start planning a narrative or yearbook for the next membership year. They can serve as references and templates for future post members to continue the activities and community service that make your post special. Guidelines and advice can be found in the Post Officer's Guide ([www.legion.org/publications](http://www.legion.org/publications)), beginning on page 147.
President Donald Trump extended the Veterans Choice Act on Wednesday to set the stage for a push in Congress to expand the program and allow more access to private care for veterans.

Flanked by veterans at an Oval Office ceremony, the president signed the bill to extend the Choice program, which was to expire on Aug. 7, and allow the expenditure of the remaining $950 million in the program.

The Choice Card program allowed vets facing lengthy wait times at Veterans Administration facilities or living more than 40 miles from the nearest VA to seek care in the private sector. Those already in the program will not need to re-apply under the bill signed by Trump, VA officials said.

The new bill -- the Veterans Choice Improvement Act -- addressed a major complaint of veterans service organizations by directing the VA to cover co-pays and deductibles directly for private care rather than reimbursing veterans for paying up front.

Trump used the signing ceremony to renew many of the pledges he made on the campaign trail to reform the VA.

"I've been telling all of our friends at speeches and rallies for two years about the VA, how we're going to turn it around, and we're doing that," the president said.

"So this is called the Choice Program Improvement Act. It speaks for itself," he added. "This bill will extend and improve the Veterans Choice Program so that more veterans can see the doctor of their choice -- you got it? The doctor of their choice -- and you don't have to wait and travel long distances for VA care."

VA Secretary Dr. David Shulkin, the only holdover in the Obama administration in the Trump Cabinet and the only cabinet member to win unanimous confirmation in the Senate, said at the signing ceremony that the Choice extension was a precursor of "the great things that are to come to fulfill the president's commitments that he made to veterans."

Shulkin has said that he will present to Congress this fall proposals to overhaul the Choice program to give veterans more options for private care and better integrate the VA with the private sector.
RENO NEVADA
Site of the 99th American Legion National Convention
August 18th to August 24th 2017

The Reno Strip
The Atlantis Casino Resort & Spa

If you are planning to attending the National Convention in Reno (and I hope to see some new faces in Reno) please e-mail me at dhaggan@sbcglobal.net with the following information, THE DATE YOU WILL ARRIVE AND DEPART, THE PERSON YOU ARE SHARING A ROOM WITH IF ANY, AND ANY SPECIAL ROOM REQUIREMENTS.

The room cost per night is $135.00 plus tax. Cutoff for the reservation is 1 July 2015.

Plan now to be there, a good time will be had by all
Leaders Are Born, Not Made

That is the old truism. There is some truth there since we are all born with skills that make us unique, one of which is a tendency toward leadership. That is just the beginning though. All good leaders during their lifetimes has had the opportunity to observe, small posts that don’t have previous district and department leaders to learn from or those from posts being revitalized after a period of inactivity, leadership training is a necessity.

The American Legion College, both at the department and national levels, provides that opportunity for leadership training, but we are going beyond that. This training newsletter will lead the way to much broader training for Legionnaires wanting to know more but really wanting to do more. What we know is important but what we do with what we know is crucial. It is my hope that the training opportunities made available through this newsletter will be widely spread throughout The American Legion. Doing that will help us create a better organization as we enter our second century.

Commander Rehbein was elected as the 91st National Commander of The American Legion in August, 2008. He is a U.S. Army veteran of the Vietnam era. Commander Rehbein holds a bachelor’s degree in physics and a master’s degree in metallurgy. Following graduation, he accepted a position as research metallurgist at the Ames Laboratory, U.S. Department of Energy, where he remained until his retirement in July 2008. Commander Rehbein currently serves as the National American Legion College Chancellor.

We WANT YOU!

Welcome to the new training newsletter published by the Internal Affairs Division.

This periodic, Legionnaire-driven newsletter will highlight training that other departments and individuals are conducting in The American Legion. Focus will be given to:
- best practices
- ideas
- creative thinking

To make this newsletter work, we need your submissions on best practices, ideas and creative thinking. Send all the above to train@legion.org.

Submissions should focus on stimulating training and what your department and posts are doing.

All contributions will be properly credited to the author.

Hope you enjoy!
Looking for Leaders

What should we look for in the Legionnaires we elect to lead our posts? The most obvious is a desire to serve. Legionnaires who really want to serve as leaders, usually make better leaders than those who do not.

Here are some thoughts on the kind of things we should all look for, in Legionnaires we select as leaders:

- A true passion for the American Legion.
- A willingness to learn more about our history and programs.
- The time and energy needed to succeed.
- The ability to develop a clear vision for post success.
- An effective and frequent communicator.
- Effective computer skills, which are increasingly becoming important.
- Ability to get the job done and keep the Legion Family together.

The Legionnaires we elect to lead our posts are important. Seek out and elect the best Legionnaires available to lead, then work hard to support them, as we work hard to serve all our veterans.

What are post leaders responsible for? In the broad view, they are responsible for the success of our post. To find a more detailed answer to the question of what leaders do, look in these documents:

- Your post constitution, bylaws and standing rules. These should be available from the adjutant.
- Post Officer Guide and Manual of Ceremonies.

Post leaders are elected by the post membership or appointed by the newly elected post commander, per the post bylaws. The key post leadership roles are commander, first vice commander, second vice commander, adjutant and finance officer. Good post commanders work with and through other post leaders.

To help our newer Legionnaires better understand what these key leaders do, here is our "grass roots" perspective.

Post Commander: "First among equals" is a good way to look at the relationship of the post commander to other post members. The commander ensures the
post's vision of success is completed and keeps the post family together in the process. The post commander traditionally serves as the president of the board of directors for incorporated posts.

The post commander is also the voice of the post, within the post and at meetings beyond the post. Post commanders also work with and through other leaders to complete the business of the post, as they cultivate and guide them for future leadership roles.

**Second Vice Commander:** The duties of a post second vice commander can vary from post to post. Most posts ask their second vice commander to follow the guidance given in the Post Officer’s Guide, “The second vice commander is responsible for building an “I like my post because...” atmosphere in which Legionnaires have fun while doing the work of the Legion.”

**Finance Officer:** Much of the post finance officer's work is defined and determined by standard accounting practices and the needs of the post. The post finance officer is the person of integrity that helps develop a post budget and administers the post book of accounts. Finance officers also advise post leaders on the formulating and administering of financial policies, including the annual post budget.

**Post Adjutant:** Whether the post adjutant is seen as a post ‘first sergeant’ or a continuity officer, the adjutant is a critical leader in the long term success of a post. Adjutants are responsible for keeping official records of post business, minutes of meetings and a number of key administrative duties.

The post commanders, finance officer and adjutant, working with and through the post

Executive Committee, make up a significant portion of a post's leadership team. They have a big influence in the success our posts achieve.

Good post leaders must give an adequate commitment of time, sufficient personal energy and must communicate effectively, to give our posts strong roots in the communities where we serve our veterans. Our post leaders should ensure good green grass grows at our posts and the roots grow strong. The grass roots of The American Legion, always grow best at local posts.

Rick is a Vietnam Era, USMC veteran. Prior to becoming involved with The American Legion, Rick spent much of his free time as a volunteer Boy Scout leader and has extensive experience in teaching leadership training for volunteers. He also has 20 year’s experience as a volunteer webmaster for the Boy Scouts of America and The American Legion.

Rick is a member of the California American Legion Press Association (CALPA) and the National American Legion Press Association (NALPA).

If you need help or have questions about graphic images, give Rick a call at 805-925-9144. No promises, but he will try hard to give you a helping hand.
Sons of The American Legion

National: The National Management Institute is a three phase, one day training course conducted on the Saturday before the Spring National Executive Committee Meeting. A recommendation from your Detachment National Executive Committeeman is required prior to acceptance into the three year program.

All training is developed and conducted by SAL members and focuses on developing leadership tools:

PHASE 1 THE JOURNEY BEGINS
Remembering the Basics; Effective Communications

PHASE 2 THE JOURNEY CONTINUES
Time Management; Personal Administrative Skills

PHASE 3 THE JOURNEY ENDS
Integrity, Credibility & Ethics; Planning for Success; Leader & Coach; Driving for Results

LEAD: A LEAD training course is now available through request of your department. The SAL program is an important member of our American Legion Family. By implementing best practices, a squadron can be a true asset of our posts.

The majority of SAL training is available, produced and developed at the detachment level of the organization. Please contact your detachment directly to determine what would best suit the needs of your area.

Leadership, Education And Development

(L.E.A.D) is a collection of training sessions (modules) designed to provide professional development for posts, districts and department level members.

National staff subject matter experts have developed a number of courses covering a wide range of topics relevant to the operations of The American Legion.

Instructors, lesson plans, handouts and training materials are provided at no expense to departments. Departments choose the training topics, provide the training venue (to include AV support) and attendees.

Most modules are approximately two-hours in length. Some, like "Leadership Development in The American Legion", are four-hour modules and can be extended to six or eight-hour training classes.

If you are interested in any of the LEAD modules, please contact your department headquarters to coordinate the training.

FIND IT ONLINE

myLegion.org is a FREE website designed to connect members of The American Legion to their post and department leadership.

myLegion includes a site at each level of the organization:

Members - view information on file at National Headquarters, messages and events published through department and post myLegion sites, and network with other myLegion members.

Departments - membership information, reports and electronic membership tools such as data change forms for all posts and squadrons within their departments.

Posts/Districts/Counties - provides Legion and SAL information for all members in their posts. Allows posts to submit member data change forms and Consolidated Post Reports electronically. Upload post images, newsletters, messages, and calendars. Create membership listings, view members renewing online, search for members who have expired or are members of the department headquarters post, and chat with other officers discussing veterans issues and sharing membership ideas.