A Brief History of Veterans Day

Veterans Day, formerly known as Armistice Day, was originally set as a U.S. legal holiday to honor the end of World War I, which officially took place on November 11, 1918. In legislation that was passed in 1938, November 11 was “dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be hereafter celebrated and known as ‘Armistice Day.’” As such, this new legal holiday honored World War I veterans.

In 1954, after having been through both World War II and the Korean War, the 83rd U.S. Congress -- at the urging of the veterans service organizations -- amended the Act of 1938 by striking out the word “Armistice” and inserting the word “Veterans.” With the approval of this legislation on June 1, 1954, Nov. 11 became a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

In 1968, the Uniforms Holiday Bill ensured three-day weekends for federal employees by celebrating four national holidays on Mondays: Washington's Birthday, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and Columbus Day. Under this bill, Veterans Day was moved to the fourth Monday of October. Many states did not agree with this decision and continued to celebrate the holiday on its original date. The first Veterans Day under the new law was observed with much confusion on Oct. 25, 1971.

Finally, on September 20, 1975, President Gerald R. Ford signed a law which returned the annual observance of Veterans Day to its original date of Nov. 11, beginning in 1978. Since then, the Veterans Day holiday has been observed on Nov. 11.
Veterans Day 2016: We celebrate Veterans Day (Armistice Day) in Europe this month and make a special effort to reach out to all veterans to remind them that they are not forgotten. Each Post should have a plan for its Veterans Day ceremonies in your local community – and remember, it’s a great time to remind the locals that we always respect and honour our veterans. For me, I will be at the Lorraine American Cemetery in Saint Avold, France on the day, then on to Paris for the AGM for Paris Post FR-01, then back to Ireland for Remembrance Sunday events in Glasnevin Cemetery with American, Irish, British, Dutch and French veterans – and the placement of American flags on the graves of American veterans interred in Glasnevin Cemetery with brother members of Post IR-01. We remember!

Building Teamwork: Our annual work program is now entering its fifth month of this yearly cycle. I believe that it is useful to pause for a moment and consider a key principle enshrined in the Preamble to our American Legion Constitution: “Mutual Helpfulness.” The text from which this is taken and repeated at every meeting says the following: “For God and Country, We associate ourselves together for the following purposes... To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.”

In plain language, I believe this means that we promise to work together as a team, devoted to accomplishing the work and ideals of the Legion as described in our Four Pillars. Sometimes, teamwork is hard. To accomplish it, we have to agree to follow the rules of procedure that our organization has given us. We have to select our leaders on a democratic basis and then we have to work with and support our leaders. “Sanctifying our comradeship” means that we have to listen to one another with respect and treat one another with dignity, even if we have differences of opinion. We have to keep in mind that our work in the Legion obliges us to mutual helpfulness, always placing service and mission before self. Leaders have an obligation to lay out annual programs and ensure that they are communicated to all. Once in place, we have an obligation to all come together and move swiftly to the finish line. It’s called teamwork. I respectfully encourage your consideration of “mutual helpfulness” and building teamwork.

Member Renewals, 2017: Within two weeks we will have arrived at the 65% cut-off date for member renewals. We’ve done well so far and I fully expect us to clear this hurdle -- well and early. Post commanders and membership chairmen should be well along in collecting and processing member renewals at this point. Please allow me to make an important point -- don’t hold up your transmittals. Assistant Adjutant for Member Administration John Fleming has published a schedule for closeouts of each milestone date, shown elsewhere in this Newsletter. Help us meet/exceed this schedule by getting your renewals and new member subscriptions in as soon as possible.

October Fall Meeting and National Executive Committee Meeting: Each year in the fall, the Legion’s National Office brings in Department Commanders and Adjutants for training and orientation on Legion programs and an opportunity for two-way communication about the status of work in each of the Departments. This is also done in connection with meetings of the Legion’s policy-making body, the National Executive Committee. Our NEC officers represent us in the latter meeting – Department Commanders may attend, but do not have a voice or vote. This fall, Department Commanders met both individually and as a group with the National Commander and National Vice Commanders to share initiatives and to ask and answer
questions. The Department of France is grouped with the Northeast Region of the United States. We are working directly under the oversight of National Vice Commander Jim Troiola of New York, who has very effectively engaged with all of us on his team.

Several important outcomes arose from the NEC Meeting this fall:

(1.) The Ad-Hoc Committee no longer has any concerns about the ability of the Department of France to perform independently and it is no longer considering the removal of Department administration and leadership to National Headquarters. While I am very grateful for this outcome, I urge all to remember that we need to keep our performance in tip-top shape and meet or exceed all the goals that are set for us. I know that we can do this and want to thank all for your continued good work to support both our membership efforts and our delivery of quality programs.

(2.) The National Executive Committee has voted to adopt a policy resolution that supports the full restoration of Pershing Hall in Paris to use by the Legion and the transfer of operations and oversight to the American Battle Monuments Commission. This action is the first step in a process that has to be approved by Congress to and will lay the groundwork for Legion legislative initiatives when the Congress returns to its new session early next year. A positive first step – and truly good news.

(3.) The NEC has voted to remove Thailand Post TH-01 from the Department of France and to place it under the Department of Alaska, effective January 31, 2017.

Update -- Department’s Membership Plan: VCAL and Membership Chairman Joe Schram and our Vice Commanders are working hard to execute the membership plan that has been agreed. Two weeks ago, a very successful recruiting drive was held at USAG Schinnen to support and revitalize Post NL-01. We closed out the day with a total of 20 new members and transfers from inactive status in the States. We’ve done the same at ASAG Vicenza, again with new members to Rome Post IT-01. At USAG Wiesbaden, we’ve just wrapped up a RAD presentation and recruiting drive that brought in 17 new members and transfers for Post GR-07. Scheduled next are recruiting drives and information days in Nice, France (FR-05) and Lakenheath, England (new Post). Additional details are shown in this Newsletter in VCAL Schram’s report. We need you to be part of this effort and to join us in recruiting new members and building new Posts.

VA Claims Help: We have been especially fortunate to have had VA Service/Claims Officer Ms. Ceit Lanier in attendance at USAG Schinnen last week, USAG Weisbaden today (30 October) and at the DEC last Saturday (22 October). Ceit will be publishing a new point of service schedule soon and it will be available from the Service Officer. Her contact details are below:

Ms. Ceit M. Lanier
Sgt USMC -- Veteran
Certified Veterans Service Representative
VA Regional Office Phoenix
Germany Overseas Military Service Coordinator
E-mail: germany.va.rep3@gmail.com

Happy Thanksgiving: We celebrate a uniquely special American holiday this month – Thanksgiving. I urge you to express your thanks for our service to one another as veterans and to find ways to reach out to your local community and engage them in our annual event.

Voting 2016: All Americans living overseas have the right to vote. Register and be sure to do so. See www.fvap.gov for additional details on voter registration.

For God and Country, John
To my fellow Legionnaires and Legion Family members in FRANCE:

My theme this year is “Carry the legacy forward.” This is essential as our centennial approaches and we commemorate the great history and accomplishments of our founders and Legion predecessors. And by carrying it forward, we ensure that their accomplishments are a living history that will continue to benefit veterans and their families for generations to come.

But carrying the legacy forward doesn’t mean just focusing on the past. We can create new legacies and carry them forward as well. For instance, we spoke loudly when we heard that the military was trying to recoup bonuses from thousands of National Guard veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Our voices were heard and we will not rest until the government drops this bad idea and makes full restitution to those who were inconvenienced.

We can make a real difference in the lives of more than half a million veterans if Congress heeds our call and finally modernizes the VA’s archaic appeals process.

We will continue to emphasize The American Legion’s strong support for the men and women who are fighting the Global War on Terrorism. Please visit your local military installations, Reserve centers and Guard armories. Welcome back those who are returning from deployments and remind them that they will always have a home in The American Legion.

We have outstanding programs and I am asking for your support in raising money to provide training for our outstanding corps of service officers and temporary financial assistance for children in need.

Membership growth is essential if we are to successfully continue the great legacy of The American Legion. If each of you would recruit just one new member, The American Legion would magnify its effectiveness and influence to an unprecedented level.

I thank you for your service as military veterans, as Legionnaires and as members of the Legion Family. Best wishes for a productive and enjoyable conference.

For God and Country,

Charles E. Schmidt
National Commander
Images of the Department of France Second DEC which was conducted 22 October 2016 in Heilbronn, Germany hosted by John Wayne Post GR79
The difference between Veterans Day and Memorial Day

Memorial Day honors service members who died in service to their country or as a result of injuries incurred during battle. Deceased veterans are also remembered on Veterans Day but the day is set aside to thank and honor living veterans who served honorably in the military - in wartime or peacetime.
DEPARTMENT NECMAN  Nola Maloney

My Fellow Legionnaires, SAL Members, Auxiliary Members and all other VIPs;

My month has been very busy with a trip to Indianapolis for the NEC Fall Meeting, with follow on visit to see my Grandsons. I drove this trip so C.J. (The Wonder Dog many of you know) accompanied me as he is getting on in years now and I wanted them to see him one more time.

My NEC Report was sent to the DEC to be read to those present, but the report is quite long and time did not permit for its reading. As it has a lot of useful information for many of you in it, it will be sent to all Department Officers, Post Commanders and Adjutants I have an email for, I ask you please share with your Membership.

I would now like to address some realities we must face in our Department this year and perhaps in some coming years. The American Legion National Commander, Charles Schmidt, is committed to raising the Membership throughout all Departments. Even though we are the largest Veterans Organization in the world, our membership total is what helps us get things passed in Congress and the House – trust me, there are a lot of issues that affect many of us on the agenda (307 resolutions that have to be presented eventually; and they are constantly being added to as others are passed or rejected). There are Membership Revitalization programs going on throughout the organization. Our Department has many untapped new membership resources and other areas that need revitalization in letting other Veterans know we are here and to come join us. Our Commander, VCAL, VCs and Posts are committed to enlarging our Department for the betterment of all!!

This is a project that must be shared by all in one way or another. Our VCAL and Vice Commanders have very stringent schedules in working towards Nationals goals of membership while still keeping up our other critical, important programs they play a part in. This may mean some of our Posts will not see their VC as often as they did in the past. It does not mean the Department is deserting you, but rather asking you to understand if your VC cannot be there for the special functions they attended at your Post in the past.

However, I know every effort will be made to assist you when needed. In lieu of your VC you may see one of the other VCs, or the Department Commander, or another Department Officer, a designated Department Representative, Past Department Commander or Past NEC. In looking at the VCs schedules for assisting in getting new Posts started and Post revitalization those folks are where the rubber is meeting the road in helping new Posts and struggling Posts meet membership goals. We have many strong Posts who can support themselves in the programs they conduct and taking care of their membership and elections – I would ask they support the Department in having understanding over the remainder of this membership year if their VC cannot make a critical function but is substituted with an alternate.

We must also keep in mind that our budget this year is very tight – we withdrew money from our investment fund to supplement the budget. As we are embarking on a huge membership revitalization and establishing/re-establishing Posts in many areas this year, time and money may not be available for Posts visits as often by some of the VCs. Getting our membership where it should be based on the demographics for our Department should alleviate this in outlying years, perhaps even putting money back into the fund.

Several of our priority issues have been resolved at the National level taking great weights off the shoulders but getting our membership up while still maintaining our other critical/important programs are the real challenges now we must all be involved in.

The entire Department Membership should understand and be involved in all the Department does in one way or another - we are all Comrades, a part of the Team, and should have the same goals in mind for our Department. I would hope we could all share in the Department victories as all played a part one way or another for us to achieve those victories. This organization was not founded on “I” but rather on “We” – let us never forget that!! Let us also never forget that communication with one another is the greatest thing we can ever have – we don’t/won’t always agree but communication with one another will always be our greatest tool in resolving or understanding issues.

From one Veteran to another – I sincerely wish you a Blessed Veteran’s Day and a very Happy Thanksgiving!!! Safe travels to all!!!

Most Sincerely, Nola Maloney Your NECLady

C.J. – The Wonder Dog!!

DEPARTMENT NECMAN  Nola Maloney
Congratulations goes out to Anthony Giordano from GR14 on being elected President of the PCC for the 2017 Membership Year. David Greaux has the privilege of serving as Secretary for another year.

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 Third DEC.*

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**ASSISTANT DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT  John Fleming**

**2017 MEMBERSHIP TRANSMITTAL TARGET DATES**
(Updated 17 September 2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Due</th>
<th>Holiday/Activity</th>
<th>National</th>
<th>Department</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Early Bird/NEF Kickoff</td>
<td>14 SEP 16</td>
<td>3 Sep 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55%</td>
<td>Fall Meetings</td>
<td>12 OCT 16</td>
<td>1 Oct 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65%</td>
<td>Veterans Day</td>
<td>16 NOV 16</td>
<td>5 Nov 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75%</td>
<td>Pearl Harbor Day</td>
<td>14 DEC 16</td>
<td>3 Dec 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>Mid-Winter</td>
<td>19 JAN 17</td>
<td>7 Jan 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85%</td>
<td>President’s Day</td>
<td>8 FEB 17</td>
<td>28 Jan 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90%</td>
<td>Legion Birthday</td>
<td>8 MAR 17</td>
<td>25 Feb 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95%</td>
<td>Children &amp; Youth</td>
<td>12 APR 17</td>
<td>1 Apr 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Armed Forces Day</td>
<td>10 MAY 17</td>
<td>29 Apr 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delegate Strength</td>
<td>30 Days Prior to Convention 26 Jul 17</td>
<td>15 Jul 17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*This date is also a renewal notice cutoff date.*

Department Target dates fall on Saturday, 1 ½ weeks prior to the National Target date to insure receipt at National by the Target date.
NOW AVAILABLE !!!

The American Legion Centennial Coin

This special commemorative coin is issued by the Department of France, the birthplace of the American Legion from its founding in 1919.

The front of the coin is executed in a vibrant, deep blue, with gold lettering and the official logo of the Legion Centennial. The reverse shows the Legion family emblems against a bright gold background and the motto of the American Legion ringed in blue: For God and Country – Still Serving

**Coin prices:** €5/$5 each, plus €2/$2 shipping cost per coin, total €7/$7 for each coin if shipped. Send your order and US Dollar or Euro bank transfer payable to “Dept. of France, American Legion”

**Ordering By US Check (No European or Foreign Checks)**

Send to:
American Legion Post BE02
Attn: Centennial Coins
Unit 28100, Box 017
APO AE 09714

Or:
Joseph Schram
attn: Centennial Coins
Meersenstraat 33 C2
8310 Assebroek

- **PayPal:** Paypal.me/JosephSchram
- **Foreign Bank Transfer:** ING Account: IBAN: BE98 3774 3999 7693 -- BIC: BBRUBEBB
- **US Bank Transfer:** Andrews Federal Credit Union – Routing #: 255074111
  American Legion Post BE02 - Account #: 82019102

Europe and All Outside USA
Contact: Joseph Schram
American Legion Post BE-02
Unit 28100, Box 017
APO AE 09714
Email: vcal.schram@gmail.com
Phone: +32-479-178539

All USA
Contact: Nola Maloney
Department of France NEC Rep.
10095 N. Mill Crossing Way
Tucson Arizona 85743 USA
Email: NECMaloney@gmail.com
Phone: +1-928-235-1291
Do you ever wonder why we spend so much of our time on membership? Because it is the metric that National uses to determine how well a Department is currently progressing. While membership is important, there are other facets and programs to contemplate. Consider the oratorical contest, the fundraisers, ceremonies and other events that each Post hosts during the year. Each is important in its own right. However, without membership, these programs and events cannot exist.

With all that said, the Department membership plan is in full swing. During the month of October, the Vice Commanders have travelled to several key areas to either revitalize old Posts or to establish new ones. The first endeavour was a visit to the Grafenwoehr/Vilseck community to re-establish “General George S. Patton” Post GR45 by attending the Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) event and hosting an information table at the local AAFES PX.

The efforts of our Vice Commanders were successful with an influx of new members. I can now say that Post GR45 is revitalized and ready to proceed with programs and events. With the help of other Posts and the Vice Commanders, Post GR45 will host an Oratorical Scholarship Contest on Sunday, 12 February at the Vilseck High School.

The second endeavour was a trip to Vicenza, Italy to determine the prospects of building a new Post in that community. The Vice Commanders attended the local RAD and hosted an information table. However, while Vicenza is primed to have an American Legion Post, it will take more effort and visits before we can actually have a working Post.

The next venture was to revitalize NL01 in the USAG Schinnen/Brunnsum community. The Department Commander and I attended the local RAD and were positively received by retirement community. During the day, we had the opportunity to speak with a myriad of retirees and their spouses to learn of their needs from the VA and other government agencies. And by the end of the day, we had re-established NL01 as a functional American Legion Post.

While the Department of France did not make our 50% cut-off date, we well meet the 55% cut-off date which placed us in 12th place in the National standings. And with the 65% cut-off date coming up in November, we can now say that we have already passed the important benchmark.

As our Vice Commanders continue to follow the membership plan and its priorities, we will continue to build our Department membership. And with an increased membership come more programs and events to our communities throughout Department of France.
Legion outlines expectation for respect of U.S. flag

The American Legion

The American Legion believes in the U.S. flag and everything it stands for, and Legionnaires who fought for the nation’s symbol take deep pride in it. To continue its flag-protection efforts, the Legion’s National Executive Committee adopted a resolution at its recent Fall Meetings in Indianapolis that outlines the organization’s expectation for rendering proper respect to the flag during Legion program participation at the department and national level.

Resolution 16 – brought forth by the Americanism Commission – also comes in light of recent actions by professional athletes, and now that of several youth sports teams, who are kneeling during the national anthem out of protest.

“The American Legion does not deny the right to protest, for that is a privilege given to all citizens of this great nation that is protected by our military and the service of our membership to defend our democracy,” said Richard Anderson, Americanism Commission chairman. “To foster and perpetuate a 100 percent Americanism” defines our responsibility to instill character, citizenship and sportsmanship, among other values. Resolution 16 defines only a small commitment to our youth, to maintain the values upon which The American Legion was founded.”

As stated in the resolution, The American Legion expects participants of its programs to show proper respect to the U.S. flag at all times, including during the national anthem. It recommends for department and post leaders of all Legion programs to clearly state to individuals in advance of program participation about the organization’s expectation for respect of the flag. If a participant involved in any Legion program “cannot or will not” meet the Legion’s expectation, the resolution states that “the individual should not be a participant in American Legion programs.”

“While we cannot mandate this resolution to our respective departments, we hope that this will be a guideline for them to respond in a similar manner (as national) to teach and respect the honor and rights of American citizenship and its responsibilities,” Anderson said.

For individuals participating in American Legion programs at the national level, the resolution states that those who “cannot or will not” meet the organization’s expectations for proper flag respect “will be removed from the program and not be allowed any further participation.”

“The resolution is going to set an example for our youth, and our youth will lead by example, for respecting our flag and respecting our national anthem,” said American Legion National Commander Charles E. Schmidt. “And hopefully our youth, through our American Legion programs, will be examples for those professionals who choose not to respect our flag and our national anthem.

“That’s what The American Legion does – we are building great role models for the future of this organization and for this country.”
DEPARTMENT VICE COMMANDER  Marcus W. Briscoe

These are the events of the last months that took place on several posts which I attended and took part of...

Grafenwoehr 15th Oct USAG Bavaria Retiree Appreciation Day


MEMBERSHIP TOOLS

Automated letter invites headquarters post members to transfer

American Legion members can now invite state headquarters post members to transfer into a targeted post through a pre-written electronic letter available on www.mylegion.org.

The new customizable membership tool is a great way for posts to access active headquarters post members in their area, highlight the programs unique to the post, and share how the post supports veterans, servicemembers and their families.

The following directions explain how to locate and utilize the transfer letter:

1. Log on to www.mylegion.org
2. On the lefthand side under “Report Server” click on “Reports/Labels”
3. Under “Home” click on “Post Reports”
4. Under “Post Reports” click on “Letters-HQ Transfer Invitations”
5. Select headquarters members by ZIP code drop-down menu and select the target transfer post
6. Verify auto-filled post contact information is correct and update if needed
7. Select the post’s affiliated programs (Legion Riders, Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion). Please note that if “all” is selected, the “none” button must be unselected or the programs will not populate in the electronic letter.
8. Click “View Report” button to populate report with the post and member information, and to customize it if desired.
9. Export report to PDF or Word and print for mailing.

The letter is compatible with a window envelop so mailing labels are not needed. And there’s space for the member to update missing information such as phone number, email or war era.
Vice Commander Lyndon Hudson and I dedicated the month of October in planning to inform the USAG Italy Vicenza community about The American Legion with hopes to find a few interested eligible veterans willing to serve as active members of our Department of France Italy (Rome Post 1).

Our first full day at USAG Vicenza was nearly complete after meeting with the USO and High School counselor. We shared information about the Legion programs at the entrance of the Post Exchange. Lyndon courageously reached out to speak with many Airborne Infantry soldiers and other non-Airborne troops in front of the Post Exchange where we had a table with the USO. One Airborne soldier actually did return after his lunch and shopping and traded $22 for one of my Department Centennial coins and a one-year membership in the Rome Post.

We informed the few local VFW members that stopped to talk with us about our effort to revitalize the dormant Rome Post. We explained that we are also offering a scholarship program at the high school. We provided our contact information to the VFW. The High School counselor confided to us that the VFW greatly contributes to local scholarships.

We also set-up a Legion information desk inside the USO. Tuesday is Taco night at the Vicenza USA. The local Masonic Lodge members prepared and are served the Tacos to the Troops and thier young family members.

“I'm good” is the response that we heard most often when we were attempting to introduce the Legion program by handing out the Legion WHY JOIN pamphlets to soldiers passing along our path.

I do believe they are doing just fine at USAG Italy - Vicenza with a great amount of community support.

The question for the Department of France that has a goal to increase its active membership within Italy is what can the American Legion provide to this community? Why should anyone donate $22 for membership card and a monthly magazine? Sure, your membership helps the overall strength in numbers for the Legion's Washington office to lobby Congress for greater Veteran benefits and Veteran Administration accountability. The E4 with three family members needs a more tangible return for their investment.

What can the Legion do for young Troops and their family members? What is the Department of France capable of providing to the military community to demonstrate that membership is
worth the cost and effort?

Could the American Legion, Department of France, perhaps in funding partnership with the National Headquarters, provide a local scholarship to a Vicenza High School Senior in need? Could we provide free international calling cards? Could we donate to the Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers (BOSS) program? The American Legion needs to Lead by Example, to demonstrate WHY JOIN.

On the second day of our USAG Italy Vicenza visit, Vice Commander Lyndon Hudson and I traveled to the Health Clinic that was sponsoring a Retirement Appreciation Day (RAD). We continued gathering information about what is needed and what could be useful for this community that might help the Department generate interest in forming a Legion Post. This RAD at the Health Clinic was mostly the medical unit providing the local military retirees with their flu shot and a health check-up. The AAFES was there to provide each veteran with a shopping coupon. The VFW was there too. They allowed Vice Commander Hudson and I to set-up at their information table. During the RAD a military retiree spoke with us and later requested to become a member of the Rome Post. Another veteran completed the membership application and promised to mail the check to Vice Commander Hudson (fingers crossed that he does mail the check). All together I issued three Department Centennial coins for 3 members.

I personally purchased 100 Department Centennial coins with the self-imposed restriction that I would only give it to someone who joined the Legion to include payment for the full membership year. Gaining and maintaining organizational membership is not a simple task. Convincing a person to join an organization that requires an annual payment is difficult. We will continue to dedicate our efforts to improve our community of American veterans and membership in The American Legion, Department of France.

I will be at the Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery on 11 November at 1100 at Plot A, Row 11, Grave 11, to honor U.S. Army Second Lieutenant John Martin Wesoloski. He died on October 13, 1918 while serving with the 305th Infantry Regiment, 77th Division. He was the first “Doughboy” to be killed in WW1 from the local Imperial, Pennsylvania, area where the American Legion Memorial Post Wesoloski-Hays Post 335 was chartered on 29 June 1927. I am going to honor Lt Wesoloski on request from Post 335 member, Mr. Frank Mooney. He sent me an email on 11 June 2016 explaining and asking if I knew anyone from Paris Post 1 who could help him with this goal….

For God and Country.
Best regards,
Carl
American BBQ
Bastogne
10 December
101st Airborne Museum

MENU:
PULLED PORK SANDWICHES
GRILLED HAMBURGERS
HOTDOGS
BAKED BEANS

Sponsored by:
- American Legion Post BE02
- Patton Foundation
- 101st Airborne Museum
Hello Fellow SAL Members,
I hope that this newsletter finds everyone healthy and doing well. As we are into the new membership year I am finally getting information from National. We are at just above 50% and again leading the East by a large margin. I hope that all Squadrons will continue to work on membership to get our Detachment to 100% before the rest. We were number 1 in the Eastern Division for 2016 and I know that we can accomplish this again for 2017. Moving forward, we had our 2nd DEC on 1 October 2016. It was hosted by Squadron GR79. We had a great turnout and again Squadron 79 exceeded the expectations. We got a lot done and we have planned a fishing trip hosted by Squadron 79 next year. Our Great Adjutant will get the information for the location out to all of you as soon as Squadron 79 gets it to us. Our next DEC will be held 4 March 2017 which will be hosted by Squadron 42 in Kitzingen. Our past Commander Casby Logan has offered to host the convention in June under the name of Squadron 07. This is contingent on them getting their Private Organization Status approved in Wiesbaden. I am personally looking forward to having a DEC in another location. My goal is to have a DEC in a location that others do not have to travel so far to attend. I will order a wreath and attend the ceremony in Saint Avold, France on Veteran’s day. I hope to see more SAL members attending. Again, I want to thank Squadron 79 for the great job on the SAL DEC and thank all of the membership that attended. Please pay au mage to all of our veterans on 11 November and every day as well. We must always remember that many people died to give us the freedoms that we have and many more have perished to maintain those freedoms over the years (Freedom Isn’t Free). I will close with this statement and hope to see a lot of you at the DEC in March.
Lee Preston
Detachment Commander

THE THIRD DEC WILL BE ON 04 MARCH 2017 HOSTED BY GR42.
IT WILL BE HELD AT THE GR30 POST HOME IN KITZINGEN, GERMANY.
Military retirees and individuals receiving veterans benefits will see only a 0.3 percent cost-of-living increase in their federal benefits next year, a nominal increase matching 2016’s hike.

On Tuesday, officials from the Social Security Administration announced the small raise, the third consecutive year the benefits adjustment will be under 0.5 percent. Since 2009, the cost-of-living hike has been more than 2 percent only once, when it reached 3.6 percent in 2011.

Veterans benefits are not automatically tied to the Social Security increase, but in July lawmakers passed legislation linking the two benefits for 2017. In the last few decades, veterans have seen their annual adjustment differ from the Social Security COLA only one time, and then only due to minor rounding differences.

The Social Security COLA is calculated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics’ periodic Consumer Price Index, a statistical estimate of the anticipated price of a variety household goods and services. This year, officials are estimating only small increases in those costs, identical to the rise seen in expenses heading into 2016.

The Social Security, military retiree and veterans benefits changes affect more than 70 million Americans, about 22 percent of the country’s population.

According to the Associated Press, the 0.3 percent adjustment will mean less than $4 more a month for a Social Security recipient who sees the average payout of $1,238.

The adjustment will go into effect for beneficiaries starting Dec. 30.

Veterans using Medicare for health coverage may not see anything at all once those medical costs come into play. The Associated Press reports that Medicare Part B premiums, which are usually deducted from Social Security payments, are expected to increase next year, effectively wiping out the COLA hike.
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WASHINGTON – For the next five years, veterans will have an easier time seeking benefits for illnesses linked to service in the Gulf War because of an extension issued Monday by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Since 1994, the VA has automatically presumed a connection from Gulf War service, which included a toxic environment of oil fires and chemical weapons, to an increased risk for several illnesses. The connection enables veterans to receive a disability rating and benefits more quickly.

But the presumed connection and the ability to seek benefits was set to expire at the end of this year, after being extended four times previously. Effective Monday, the VA extended it a fifth time, to Dec. 31, 2021.

“This end date creates such an anxiety among the Gulf War veterans that gets so high as that deadline approaches,” said James Bunker, the executive director of the National Gulf War Resource Center in Topeka, Kansas. “[Secretary Bob] McDonald promised us the beginning of this year that this extension would happen.”

As justification for the extension, the VA cited a report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine in February that found veterans deployed to the Gulf War have an increased risk for chronic fatigue syndrome, functional gastrointestinal conditions and mental health disorders, as well as a myriad of symptoms including headaches, joint pain, insomnia and respiratory issues that make up Gulf War illness.

In the extension filed with the Federal Register on Monday, the VA wrote symptoms could manifest in Gulf War veterans at any point, and there was “no medical or scientific basis” for stopping veterans from seeking benefits at the end of year. The rule applies to veterans who served in Southwest Asia from 1990 to now, including ones from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation New Dawn.

“Currently, military operations in the Southwest Asia theater continue,” the extension read. “No end date for the Gulf War has been established by Congress or the President. If extension of the current presumptive period is not implemented, servicemembers whose conditions manifest after Dec. 31, 2016 would be substantially disadvantaged.”
The VA is accepting comments about the extension through Dec. 16.

Bunker has a 100 percent service-connected disability rating from his time in the Gulf War, he said. He deployed with the First Infantry Division out of Fort Riley in Kansas and was medically evacuated in 1991 after struggling with respiratory and muscle problems. The VA granted Bunker service connection in 1992 for symptoms included in Gulf War illness.

Through the National Gulf War Resource Center, Bunker has appealed to Congress to eliminate the deadline permanently. The VA secretary is the only one with the authority to extend it.

“I know veterans wish the end date would be removed,” he said. “I wish we could get rid of it. Congress is the only body that can get rid of the end date, and they should do that to ease the anxiety of veterans.”

Of the 700,000 servicemembers deployed to the Gulf War in 1990 and 1991, 36.5 percent were experiencing some symptoms of Gulf War illness in 2005, according to a previous NAS study. The federal government spent more than $500 million on research related to Gulf War veterans from 1994 to 2014, but there’s been few findings about Gulf War illness and specific chemical agents that could be causing it, according to the NAS study from February.

Besides fighting to allow veterans to continue to seek benefits for Gulf War illness, advocates are tackling high rejection rates for Gulf War claims.

In March, the group Veterans for Common Sense issued a report stating the VA denied about 80 percent of claims filed by Gulf War veterans in the first half of 2015.

At a hearing before the House Committee on Veterans’ Affairs that month, the Veterans of Foreign Wars charged the VA was denying claims to try to rule out Gulf War illness intentionally, Stars and Stripes reported. VA officials at the hearing said its accuracy rate on Gulf War claims was about 90 percent.

“VA still has a hard time properly rating these claims,” Bunker said. “They seem to be in a constant form of denial when they do make mistakes on the benefits side.”

To find out more information about filing a claim for chronic disability related to Gulf War service, veterans can go to benefits.va.gov:
http://www.benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/claims-postservice-gulfwar.asp

To file a comment about the extension, the VA is asking people to contact the VA’s regulation and policy management office at 202-273-9026 or by mail at 810 Vermont Ave., NW, Room 1068, Washington, D.C., 20420.
The Noble and the Brave: A Veteran's Day Tribute

When America had an urgent need,
These brave ones raised a hand;
No hesitation held them back;
They were proud to take a stand.
They left their friends and family;
They gave up normal life;
To serve their country and their God,
They plowed into the strife.
They fought for freedom and for peace
On strange and foreign shores;
Some lost new friends; some lost their lives
In long and brutal wars.
Other veterans answered a call
To support the ones who fought;
Their country had requirements for
The essential skills they brought.
We salute every one of them,
The noble and the brave,
The ones still with us here today,
And those who rest in a grave.
So here’s to our country’s heroes;
They’re a cut above the rest;
Let’s give the honor that is due
To our country’s very best.

By Joanna Fuchs