75th Liberation Anniversaries

This month marks the 75th anniversary of the liberation of much of the Limburg Province. This was a result of the offensive that started with the Normandy landings on 6 June. The United States Army's 30th Infantry Division (nicknamed the "Old Hickory" division) crossed the Belgian border near Vise on 12 September. By 13 September they had reached our namesake, Margraten. They continued to push through the region, liberating Maastricht (14 September), Geleen (18 September), and Sittard (19 September).

In the middle of this push, Operation Market Garden kicked off to the north in the Eindhoven-Arnhem corridor. Although the objective of establishing a foothold over the Rhine River was not achieved, the operation captured several critical bridges and resulted in the liberation of Eindhoven, Nijmegen, and multiple villages in between.

There was still a long way to go before the end of the war; immediately after Market Garden, the Allied Forces began an assault on the Siegfried Line, which included the Battle of Aachen, the Battle of Huurtgen Forest, and the Battle of the Bulge. A combination of intense battle and an unusually harsh winter eventually cost 140,000 American lives as part of this campaign. To handle the mass casualties, the Americans assigned the 611th Graves Registration Company (a segregated African-American unit) to begin turning farm fields in Margraten as a cemetery in November 1944. By the war's end, over 22,000 Americans, Allies, and Germans were transported from as far as 600 kilometers away for interment (the years following the war saw most of the fallen remains exhumed and relocated to other cemeteries or returned to their families).

The liberation of our Dutch allies marked the beginning of a deep friendship that continues to this day, as evidenced by the existence of numerous friendship and cultural exchange organizations that exist to this day. Our friends also recognize and remember the enormous sacrifice that helped bring about their liberation 75 years ago. To both recognize this friendship and honor the sacrifice of Americans and the Allies that passed through this region, I encourage you to find and attend a celebration event this coming month (a full list of events in our community can be found at https://www.75jaarbevrijdinglimburg.nl/activiteiten/activiteiten-per/).

Post Commander
Dennis Owens
1st Vice Commander
Jim Brotherton
2nd Vice Commander
Joshua Steinlicht
Finance Officer
John Chandler
Adjutant
Rick Ojeda
Sergeant-At-Arms
Mark Chernek
Service Officer
Ron Macauley
Historian
William Tam
Judge Advocate
Jeff Danico

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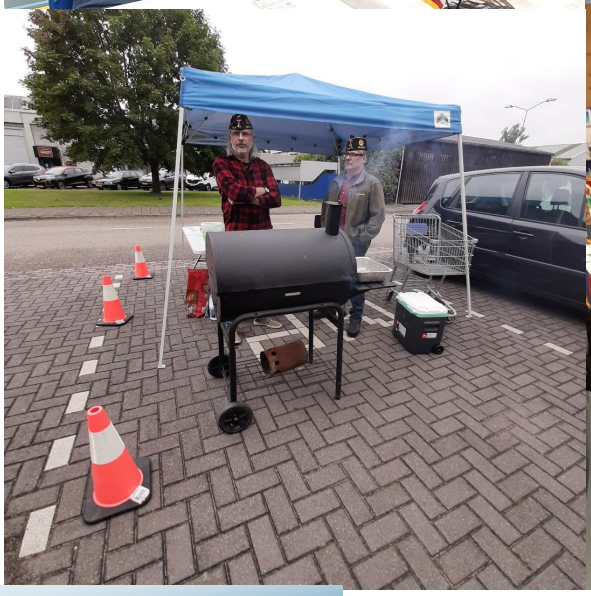
Your Legion Family-Out and About

Post NL01 and Legion Riders bagged groceries at USAG Schinnen Commissary on August 4th. The two groups raised $766 in donations and raised awareness about the American Legion family in our community!

The Schinnen Community Expo was held on August 17th. The Post sold Hamburgers and Hot Dogs and had an awareness table. Not only did we gain 3 American Legion members during this event, we also recruited potential members for an local American Legion Auxiliary unit! After this event, we are halfway to the number required to get started.



Disaster Preparedness Month

Fellow Legionnaires,

September is National Disaster Preparedness Month. Although we are all enjoying living abroad, we should remember that natural disasters, industrial accidents, and terrorist attacks can happen anywhere and anytime. The purpose of this article is not to spread fear; it is to highlight the risks you could face while living in the area, to provide you scenarios you can prepare emergency plans for at home, and to give you resources to keep you and your family safe.

Natural Disasters

The most likely natural disasters you could face in the Benelux area are severe weather events and earthquakes. In March of this year, a tornado struck a village near Aachen, damaging 40 homes. As recent as August, a tornado briefly spawned in central Amsterdam. This area is also susceptible to ice and snow storms during the winter months.

The area we are in sits in the Lower Rhine Graben Basin of the European Cenozoic Rift System, one of six areas north of the Alps that experiences regular seismic activity. In the last 30 days, 18 earthquakes (all under 2 magnitude on the Richter scale) have been recorded in the area. The largest earthquake in the area occurred in 1992 in the city of Roermond with a recorded magnitude of 5.8. Tectonic stress caused from gas mining in the northern part of the Netherlands is believed to be the cause behind frequent earthquakes (seismic activity is recorded almost daily) in the area around Groningen.

Man-made Disasters

The risk of an industrial accident in the area is very real and does happen on occasion. The Chemlot Industrial Complex in Geleen occasionally has fires or accidental releases. On August 3rd a toxic chemical leak was detected, resulting in orders for the local community to shelter in place. The Tihange Nuclear Plant near Liege in Belgium is slated to shut down in 2025. However, until that time comes the community should be aware that in recent years structural deficiencies have been identified requiring emergency repairs.

Terrorist Attacks

There has been a rise in terrorist attacks in Europe since 2014. At least 89 attacks have claimed the lives of 373 people. The Brussels bombings in 2016 impacted a family from our local community, killing an Air Force spouse and injuring the rest of her family. Attacks in Europe take form in shootings, vehicular based attacks, knife and machete attacks, and bombings. *Continued on Page 4.*

Quick Links	
Europe Weather Warnings	https://www.meteoalarm.eu/
Department of State STEP Program	https://step.state.gov/
Emergency Alert Registration-Germany	https://www.katwarn.de/en/
Emergency Alert Information-Netherlands	https://crisisprodwe.azureedge.net/media/57921/2019-05-22-nl-alert-factsheet-eng.pdf
Earthquake Safety Information	https://www.ready.gov/earthquakes
Earthquake Monitoring-Europe	https://www.emsc-csem.org/#2
Federal Disaster Preparedness Information	https://www.ready.gov/

Continued from Page 3.

Preparation through education is less costly than learning through tragedy.
Max Mayfield, Director National Hurricane Center, 2000-2007

What can I do to prepare for a disaster?

There are multiple steps you can take to prepare yourself and your family to prepare for a disaster. Now that you know some of the localized risks, the first and easiest step to take is to keep yourself informed.

All cellphones in the Netherlands are registered with the national emergency notification situation; if something is going on in the area you will receive a notification with an alarm (similar to emergency notifications you may have received its the United States). All bus and train departure boards will also have emergency information displayed. You can learn more about the program at nl-alert.nl. In our area specifically, 1Limburg's television and radio station will serve as the emergency broadcast systems. If you live on the German side of the border, take a look at KATWARN, an app that allows you to register up to 7 locations in Germany to receive localized emergency notifications.

You can monitor severe weather conditions across Europe at meteoalrm.eu. If you plan on traveling, make sure you look at weather along your route to identify and plan for hazards. If severe weather is approaching your area, prepare appropriately (based on the season).

If you experience an earthquake, your actions will depend on where you are. If you are indoors, take cover and protect your head. Stay away from glass or any fixtures that could fall. Do not stand in a doorway; most are not strong enough to offer you protection. Don't go outside until the shaking has stopped. If you are trapped under debris, do not light anything (potential that gas lines have been damaged), protect your airway with, and tap on nearby debris to draw attention to yourself. If you are outdoors when an earthquake strikes, move away from buildings and utility wires and stay put until the shaking stops. If you are in a moving vehicle, stop away from buildings, bridges, and utility wires. Use extreme caution when you continue.

In case you are forced to evacuate the area due to a natural disaster, it would be a smart idea to have an emergency kit. You can buy a commercially prepared kit, or build one on your own using www.ready.gov/build-a-kit as a guide. Make sure all members of your household know the localized risks and what your family's emergency preparedness plans are.

Be aware of your surroundings, especially in large crowds that could be a target for some kind of attack. Know where your exits are. It is highly recommended that Americans living abroad register for the Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). You will receive security alerts for Americans in your area with advice on how to protect yourself.

American Legion 101st National Convention

The American Legion's 101st National Convention was held in Indianapolis 23-29 August 2019. The week was full of workshops, competitions, guest speakers, and service projects and concluded with the General Session. There are many worthwhile recaps and videos about the convention that you can access at https://www.legion.org/convention. There were two major items from the General Session that all Legion members should be aware of.

Auxiliary Membership eligibility updated from "wives" to "spouses"

When the American Legion and Auxiliary were established, military membership was predominately male, making membership in one organization or the other clear cut. Today, 16% of enlisted members and 18% of officers are female, many with spouses that are non-veterans. To provide support to and inclusiveness for ALL military families, the American Legion Constitution and Bylaws updated the Auxiliary membership eligibility by replacing "wife" with "spouse." With this change, the Auxiliary will no longer call themselves the world's largest women's patriotic service organization. Updated information and messaging will follow in the coming months. New applications for spouses are expected to be accepted beginning 1 September.

Full Story: https://www.legion.org/membership/246928/faqs-about-change-'wives'-'spouses'-legion's-constitution

New National Commander

James W. "Bill" Oxford from North Carolina has been elected the new National Commander. Commander Oxford has held American Legion positions at all levels. He began his service with the U.S. Marine Corps and transferred to the U.S. Army Reserve and retired as a colonel after more than 34 years of service.

Photo by Ryan Young, published in story below

Read the full story and Commander Oxford's goals for the American Legion at: https://www.legion.org/commander/246919/'-foundation-future'

Help Expand our American Legion Family!

Our Post is the fastest growing in the European region. To maximize our ability to support veterans, military members, and families, our next step is to establish an American Legion Auxiliary unit and Sons of the American Legion detachment. Spread the word! If you or anyone you know are interested in making history as the founders of these units, contact anyone from the Post Executive Committee!

The American Legion Auxiliary's mission is to support the American Legion and to honor the sacrifice of those who serve by enhancing the lives of veterans, military, and their families, both at home and abroad. Their efforts center around three areas: Veterans/Military Support & Advocacy, Family Support, and Youth Development. Last year, the Auxiliary's was responsible for 40 million hours of volunteer service and $37 million raised and spent on mission outreach for a collective impact of $1.7 billion in service to communities!

Membership is limited to the grandmothers, mothers, sisters, spouses, and direct and adopted female descendants of all men and women who were in the Armed Forces between April 6, 1917 to November 11, 1918, and any time after December 7, 1941. Women who are eligible for American Legion membership are also eligible to join. If an Auxiliary applicant's eligibility is through a living veteran, the veteran must also be an American Legion member.

Much like the Auxiliary, the Sons of the American Legion (or S.A.L.) is a patriotic service organization whose mission is to strengthen the four pillars of The American Legion and serve veterans, military members, and their families through its outreach programs. Their service campaigns place emphasis on Americanism, Youth, Citizenship, and Veterans/Family care.

All male descendants, adopted sons, and stepsons of members of The American Legion and male descendants of veterans who died in service or after their honorable discharge from service are eligible to join the Sons of The American Legion.

Honor Guard

A staple element of posts around the world is a Post Honor Guard. The Honor Guard presents the colors at ceremonies and events and provides military honors for their fellow veterans. As we are getting closer to moving into our new permanent home, we are seeking interested members who would be willing to volunteer for the honor Guard. Interested members should contact Sergeant-At-Arms Mark Chernek.

Legion Riders Organize First Ride

The Legion Riders had their first ride on 1 September. Unfortunately, we had several members unable to attend due to work commitments, mechanical difficulties, or illness. The six riders (four members and two guests) that were able to make it were blessed with dry weather and beautiful scenic riding.

Our Road Captain and Safety Officer, Mike Snider, gave a comprehensive safety briefing and mapped out our rotes. It was an informative experience with a few minor lessons learned. All riders returned with their motorcycles in one piece. Our guests enjoyed the ride, and we are sure that we will see them again as future members of the American Legion and the Riders!

This was an orientation ride for the organization. We learned a lot and look forward to planning another ride in the near future before the weather turns. We are always on the lookout for additional riders and members. If you know anyone who rides please have them contact us...guests are always welcome on rides!

Jim Brotherton
Director, Legion Riders Post NL01

Become an American Legion Ambassador...

...by completing American Legion Basic Training ! This online self-paced course is available for FREE to all members. Learn about the history of the American Legion and the organization's four pillars: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth. The course takes approximately two hours to complete. You can stop at anytime and pick up where you left off at a later time. Upon completion, you will receive a certificate and be eligible to wear a graduate pin on your cap. If you have recently completed the course, be sure to let a Post Executive Committee member know so you can be recognized at the next general membership meeting.

Link to Training: https://www.legion.org/alei/basic-training

Time to Renew Your Membership!

As a member of the American Legion you are entitled to several benefits, from car retails to insurance, from entry in to events to travel opportunities. Some of these savings alone could cover the cost of your membership. Several of you have built up years of continued membership. Each year you delay in renewing lessens your chances of retaining that membership continuity. I have a few members at this moment who decided to rejoin the American Legion but lost years of continued membership and having to start from square one. Please don't let this happen to you. Your membership is good world wide, in more than 12,000 American Legion Posts. To renew is so easy, you can renew online at the American Legion website. If you have any questions about how to go about continuing as a valued American Legion member please contact 1st Vice Commander Jim Brotherton.

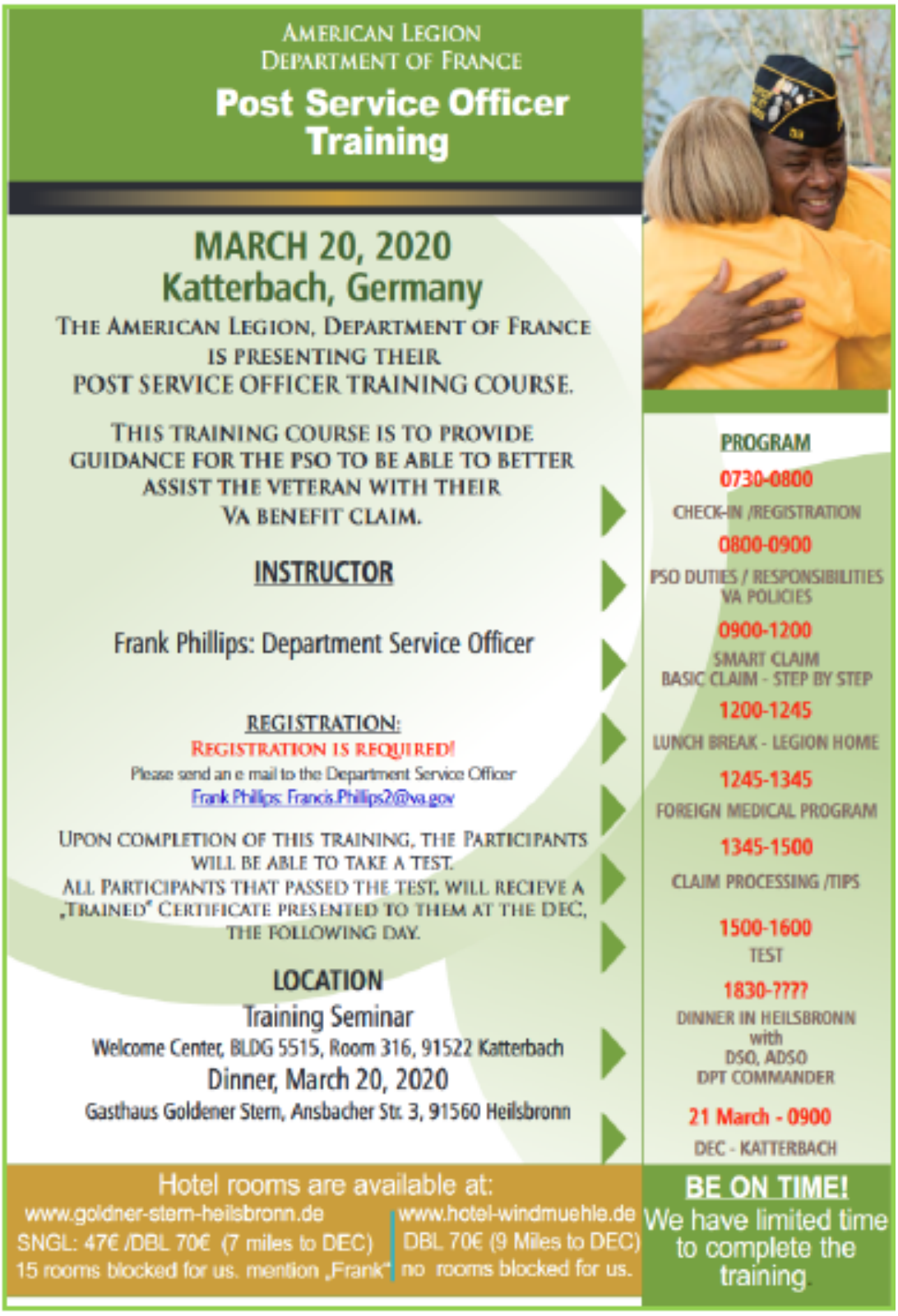
From the Department of France September Newsletter

News from the Department Service Officer:

Our Department Service Office is getting swamped with new Claims! We need your support. We will be offering a basic PSO training course on the 20th of March 2020. Anyone may attend this time. The course will give you an insight on how a PSO may help a Veteran. It will not allow you to "assist" the Veteran in filing a claim. You will learn the following:

- What forms are needed
- POC of our, current, 3 American Legion VA Reps
- What are presumptive condition
- What are secondary conditions
- Survivor Death Benefits
- Foreign Medical Program
- And so on…

At the end of the course, you will have to take a test. Upon successful completion of the test, you will awarded a certificate at the 3rd DEC the next day.
We need your support!



Meeting Recap-August

Our last meeting at USAG Schinnen was held on 16 August with a total of 18 members and 4 guests. It was announced that the Post would host a clean-up day for our new location on 8 September at 1300. Our first meeting at the G.O.C. will be on 13 September, with a family BBQ the next day that will see numerous special guests (including: Department of France Commander Jimmie Dale, Department Vice Commander At Large Charlie Brown, Department Vice Commander Guy Walton, and approximately 10 WWII Veterans that were part of Operation Market Garden) help cut the official opening ceremony ribbons. The American Legion Riders announced that their first organized ride on 1 September would be to the Dreilandenpunt where the borders of Belgium, German, and the Netherlands meet. A Retiree Appreciation Day was tentatively announced for 18 October. New members Jim Pererra, Clifford Evanson, Charles Hamilton, and Charles McDaniel were inducted into the American Legion by Post Commander Owens, Department Sergeant-At-Arms Andy Clevenger, and Post Sergeant-At-Arms Mark Chernek. After a dinner break of excellent tacos provided by the Owens family, the meeting resumed with new business, starting with a short presentation by Legionnaire Amanda Souren highlighting Disaster Preparedness resources for the local area. A motion was made to explore the development of a commercial website was passed. Several upcoming memorial events were announced. Legionnaires John Pope and Jim Pererra and Post Chaplain Scott Eidson were formally presented with their American Legion caps. Sergeant-At-Arms Chernek also presented Chaplain Eidson with a cross carved from wood from Margraten Cemetery. The meeting concluded with a presentation by Sergeant-At-Arms Chernek on service animals, challenges facing veterans overseas who need service dogs, and an introduction to his own service dog, Jax.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, September 7th
1000-1400 and 1400-1800
Tri-Border Nerdcon
Brunssum International Conference Center

The Post is running the concession stand for this event, and it is projected to be one of the largest fundraisers of the year for the Post. A minimum of 6 volunteers per shift are needed (but more are welcome). You can sign up at https://volunteersignup.org/FQKK3. As of 1 September, we still need 5 shifts filled. Seeing new faces at volunteer events is always welcome, please sign up to share the workload for events that benefit the Post!

Sunday, September 8th
1300-1700
New Post Home Clean-Up
G.O.C. Parkstad
Berenbosweg 1, Kerkrade

We need volunteers to help give our new home a thorough cleaning and perform some yard maintenance. We will also have Dutch veterans helping out with this event. Anybody available is welcome to come by and get a sneak peak of our new location!

Wednesday, September 11th
Patriot Day

Friday, September 13th
1730 Gavel
General Membership Meeting
G.O.C. Parkstad
Berenbosweg 1, Kerkrade

Our guest speaker for our first meeting in our new home is local historian Isabelle Engels, who will discuss the Joker, a B-17 that crashed in the area during World War II

Saturday, September 14th
1000 Ribbon Cutting
1100 Family BBQ

We will formally dedicate our Post with a large number of distinguished visitors joining us. Our first family BBQ will immediately follow. Meat and drinks will be provided by the post, please sign up to bring a side dish at perfectpotluck.com (Event Coordinator and Password are both NL01, or a direct link is available on the Post Facebook page).

Tuesday, September 17th
75th Anniversary of the Anniversary of Market Garden

Saturday, September 28th
1045-1800
Kerkrade Veterans Day
Kerkrade City Hall
There are a variety of events throughout the day that our Post has been invited to , including speeches and ceremonies from 1125-1200, musical performances, and walking visits to the local monuments.

Saturday, October 5th
Joker Memorial Ceremony