



# Legion News

## DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE



BELGIUM-CHINA 01-DENMARK-ENGLAND-FRANCE-GREECE-GERMANY-IRELAND-ITALY-NETHERLANDS-SPAIN-THAILAND

July 2024

Vol. 22 / No. 7



Greetings Department of France,

Let's start this 2024-2025 Membership Year out with a Bang! I hope all of you are participating in a military Community near you for the Fourth of July celebrations and for those of you that do not have a military community near you that you also feel the pride of the Independence Day celebrations you've experienced in the past. I will be on the Brunssum Garrison with Post NL01 selling beverages as a fund raiser during our Freedomfest. (Fireworks at 23:00).

Like those fireworks, let's get our memberships off to a heck of a great start by renewing right away. Consider conducting an inhouse membership drive to renew as many members as you can right away. By doing that, you are helping your Post get ahead of the power curve on membership. If you personally sponsor any family or friends, as I do with my brother and my father's memberships, please get them renewed as soon as possible. If you have not yet sponsored in the Legion any of your veteran family members or great friends, please consider it. I would highly encourage each Post to hold an Awareness Table once every *three months*. Please reach out to Our Director Department Service Officer Frank Phillips to see if he can arrange any of our DSOs to attend and participate in your Awareness Table.

Remember there's also our Auxiliary as well as the Sons of the American Legion that are possible for your friends and family to join. This is a mindset I carry all of the time. In addition, I would encourage every one of us to carry in your wallet a couple of blank American Legion Membership Applications. You never know when you meet a veteran looking for VA help and companionship with fellow veterans. Just last week at our High School Awards, I was asked for an application from the Senior US Military member at JFC Brunssum. Ding, one more member and one more Active Duty Veteran we can assist before he retires with his VA Benefits. Be prepared with an application and you will be surprised when it all comes together and you meet your Post goals along with the Department of France meeting our membership goals. Only because you were prepared with that membership application.

### DEPARTMENT OFFICERS 2024 - 2025MY

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As I mentioned in our recent Convention, I am retired now and I am dedicating my life to helping Veterans, I am a Paid Up For Life member of not only the American Legion, but VFW and DAV. To me, the American Legion is the best organization that I have ever been part of. Veterans helping veterans is such an honorable endeavor, one that provides a tremendous amount of rewarding feelings to be in a position that we can help others. Remember, we are all volunteers and with that in mind, I ask that we all treat each other with the respect due to volunteers. Now, I know that most of us, including me, are Type-A Characters. But I do not think that yelling at each other is the way forward. We should be praising in public and reprimanding in private, including in our EMAILS. We should be lifting our members up and bragging about their accomplishments. I've always said, if you take care of your people, your people will take care of the mission. My motto this year is simple, it is just two words... "Be Nice".

Helping veteran's families with our Children & Youth programs is also exciting to me. I get a huge kick out of seeing our youth compete for the Oratorical scholarships. Post NL01 has also launched an essay contest with the same four subjects as each year's Oratorical contest. First, it gets them in the books and familiar with the subjects early and second, we hope it encourages more participants in our local Oratorical contests. If you are interested in your Post hosting a Constitutional Essay Contest, please reach out to me for the details.

I intend to visit each or the most of our Posts including Ireland, England, Greece and Thailand this membership year. If your Post has any special events coming up, please let me know and if it fits with my schedule, I would love to be there and share that moment with your Post. I feel that we should put together a crack team of recruiters and work on creating a Post in both Rota Spain, and Vincenza Italy. They both look promising to bring into our

Department family. This will be a busy year.

On a personal note, I've spent a great deal of time last year and early this year to get my father (85) and his wife (91) into a retirement home that suits both of them. It was a privilege and a challenge to take care of my father for the past year. I have one last commitment to my father, that is to sell his house. I am going back to California on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July to do just that, then a short vacation with my wife at our ranch in Colorado, then on to our National Convention in New Orleans, and plan to be back on this side of the pond early in September. Naturally, I am always available via email at DfrCdrOwens@gmail.com.

I have already been invited to Post GR05's Elections meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September. I am really looking forward to seeing their young leadership grow. As I said, I am wishing to visit every one of your Posts. Please reach out to me with your special meeting dates and or events and I will do my best to pay your Post a friendly visit. In these visits, I hope to lift up your high achievers with Commander's Appreciation Certificates, so please keep that in mind.

I would like to encourage better communication between our Department and our Posts. Therefore, I am going continue hosting our every-other-month Post Commander's and Adjutant's Meeting, first one is on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July at 14:00 CEST. At this meeting, if you wish that day and time be changed, then lets vote on it then. I am not particularly partial to the first Sunday of the month at 14:00, but I am partial to *hosting* that meeting to hear of your concerns and to having our team there to answer your questions. I wish that meeting is predictable in its scheduling and productive in it's purpose. Participants should include every Post Commander and Post Adjutant along with any Post Vice Commanders who might be interested in leadership. For the Department Officers, myself, all of our Department Vice Commanders, Membership

Chairman, JA, Assistant JA and our Department Adjutant should get this meeting in their calendars and attend to not only share but to receive information for ways of improving our Department.

Naturally, on the other "every-other-month", I plan to keep with the Department Commander's Advisory Council meeting to keep myself and the Department informed on issues effecting us. Again, that first one will be as scheduled on the first Sunday, the 4th of August at 14:00 and we can then vote on changing that meeting time and day as you wish then. The Department Officers requested in this meeting are...myself, all our Department Vice Commanders, Membership Chairman, JA, Assistant JA and our Department Adjutant.

I do want to send a huge shoutout to Past Department Commander Robert Gray, he and his close-knit team worked so diligently in the reach to meet our Department Membership Goal. We bested over 45 other Departments with our Department Membership Goal, but in the end, we missed our goal by *less than 100 members*. That is SO CLOSE!!! We have pretty much the same team of Department Officers lined up this year. Missing it by that little really encourages me to work really hard to meet our goal this year.

I am honored and proud to have been elected as your Department Commander, I hope not to let any of you down in any way. I/we cannot do it without our dedicated Department Officers and the active Officers in your Posts. So, let's start this 2024-2025 membership year out with that Bang!

Very Best Wishes,

Dennis Owens

Commander  
Department of France  
American Legion

**DEPARTMENT VICE-COMMANDER'S ASSIGNED POSTS 2024-2025**

Jim Brotherton <a href="mailto:jim.brotherton1@gmail.com">jim.brotherton1@gmail.com</a>	DK01 / EG01 / EG02 / EG303 (Merge with EG01) / IR01 / IR02 / IR03 IR63 / TH01 TH02 / <b>BE02 / GR20</b>
Quincy Foster <a href="mailto:qcfoster@yahoo.com">qcfoster@yahoo.com</a>	CH01 / FR01 / GC01 / GR03 / GR07 / GR14 / GR1982 / NL01 / SP292 / <b>GR42</b>
John Gerdeman <a href="mailto:john.gerdeman@web.de">john.gerdeman@web.de</a>	GR01 / GR05 / GR06 / GR45 / GR79 / IT01 / <b>GR09 / GR13 (Closed) / GR30</b>

**Temporary** – will be moved to new Vice Commander at a later date.

**DEPARTMENT OF FRANCE MONTHLY MEETING SCHEDULE – 2024-2025**

Commander's and Adjutant's Meeting (C&A)	Commander's Advisory Council (CAC)
Sunday at 14:00, 7 July 2024	Sunday at 14:00, 4 August 2024
Sunday at 14:00, 1 September 2024	Sunday at 14:00, 13 October 2024
Sunday at 14:00, 3 November 2024	Sunday at 14:00, 1 December 2024
Sunday at 14:00, 5 January 2025	Sunday at 14:00, 2 February 2025
Sunday at 14:00, 2 March 2025	Sunday at 14:00, 6 April 2025
Sunday at 14:00, 4 May 2025	Sunday at 14:00, 1 June 2025

**Attendees for the C&A:**

- Post Commanders
- Post Adjutants
- Department Vice Commanders
- Past Department Commanders

**Attendees for the CAC:**

- Department Commander
- Department Adjutant
- Department Vice Commanders
- Past Department Commanders



**INDEPENDENCE DAY**

ALSO CALLED THE FOURTH OF JULY, INDEPENDENCE DAY MARKS THE HISTORIC DATE IN 1776 WHEN THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE WAS APPROVED BY THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS. THE WRITTEN DECLARATION STATED THAT THE AMERICAN COLONIES WERE TIRED OF BEING RULED BY GREAT BRITAIN. THEY WANTED TO BECOME THEIR OWN COUNTRY.

**Images of our 96<sup>TH</sup> Annual Department Convention Hosted by Audie Murphy GR30**  
*13 – 16 June 2024 – Best Western Hotel Polisina, 97199 Ochsenfurt, Germany*





**REMINDER...ALL NEWSLETTER ARTICLES SHOULD BE TURNED IN BY THE 28TH OF THE MONTH. I WOULD PREFER IF YOU SENT IT IN WORD FORMAT, PDF WOULD ALSO DO.**

**GET THE WORD OUT!**

*Davidg1959@t-online.de*

**DEPARTMENT  
Newsletter  
Editor**



*David N. Greaux*

**DEPARTMENT  
ADJUTANT**



*John Fleming*

Greeting Comrades,

As we start this new Membership Year with some new and old Officers, I would like to thank everyone for all your support. I will be traveling to Indianapolis to attend the Membership Workshop from 26-27 July, returning on 29 July. We have a wedding to attend in the Göppingen area on 2-4 August, and then we depart for the States on 6 August for some vacation and to attend the National Convention in New Orleans. We will return on 8 September. I will be answering emails, however, there might be some delay.

**Consolidated Post Report / Consolidated Squadron Report (CPR/CSR)** – We need to finalize these now. It is available on myLegion.org, so please log in and complete the Report. You must click the SUBMIT button at the end of the Report for it to be recorded. The final date to submit is 31 July 2024. The Department has 7 from 31 Posts SUBMITTED. We need to make this 31 from 31 Posts. The below table lists the status of each Post.

FR01	DRAFT
SP292	No Data
GR1982	SUBMITTED
HQ9999	SUBMITTED
BE02	DRAFT
CH01	No Data
DK01	No Data
EG01	DRAFT
EG02	No Data
EG303	No Data
GC01	SUBMITTED
GR01	DRAFT
GR03	DRAFT
GR05	No Data
GR06	No Data
GR07	SUBMITTED
GR09	SUBMITTED
GR13	No Data
GR14	DRAFT
GR20	DRAFT
GR30	SUBMITTED
GR42	SUBMITTED
GR45	No Data
GR45	No Data
GR79	No Data
IR01	No Data
IR02	No Data
IR03	No Data
IR63	No Data
IT01	No Data
NL01	No Data
TH01	No Data
TH02	No Data

**Certification of Officers:** Thank you to the Posts who have recently held elections and sent in the Notification forms. I can add all Post Officers to the Post Officers Roster on myLegion.org. Reminder, after Post elections or a change in Post Officers, it is required to send two forms to the Department Adjutant.

1. Notification of Post/Squadron Commanders & Adjutants: This

form must be sent to the Department Adjutant immediately (within 24 hours) after Post elections. The form should be dated the date of the elections / appointment.

2. Post Officer Certification of Service Form: This form has been revised and sent to all Posts. It needs to be forwarded to the Department Adjutant as soon as possible after Post elections (within 15 days). The Effective Date of Election of Appointment is the date of the original election or appointment. For example, if an Officer was elected on 1 May 2023 and reelected on 1 May 2024, the Effective Date block will show 1 May 2023.

These forms are critical to keep the current Post Officer informed of Department news. If I do not have the correct information, your Post may not receive vital information.

Please contact me for any questions or if you need the forms.

**Dates to Remember:**

- 7 July 2024, 1400-1500 CET – Commanders and Adjutants Meeting, via WebEx
- 4 August 2024, 1400 CET – Commanders Advisory Council
- 26 October 2024, 1300 CET – 2nd Department Executive Committee Meeting

I am excited to continue as the Department Adjutant again. I promise to be the best that I can be!

Thanks, and best wishes.  
John Fleming

**IPD  
COMMANDER**



*Robert Gray*

Hello, my American Legion Family and friends. May the month of July be prosperous and enjoyable.

I want to take this time to thank you for allowing me to represent the Department of France as one of the best-performing Departments in National.

We were able to bond and trust with both Department and Posts, to where we had a working understanding and progression of both sides.

We were able to identify each Post needing assistance, and we were able to categorize, identify, and allow each Post to correct, change, and update their Constitution, Bylaws, and Post procedures.

We identify a new direction and status for the Vice Commander at Large, which gives him more time to assist the commander and the four vice commanders.

We adjusted the funding to assist with travel expenses.

We closed two Posts and merged two Posts.

Again, I thank everyone for allowing me to serve you in handing over the best Department in National.

**DEPARTMENT  
Vice Commander**



*Jim Brotherton*

Welcome to a new membership year. Will be starting my 3rd year as a Department Vice Commander. I've been lucky enough to keep my previous assigned Posts, my wife told me if that did not happen, I would be walking home, so dodged that bullet. Picked up a couple of more Posts along the way so it should be a very interesting year.

I've enjoyed the work, as a team, the Department Vice Commanders (VC) have done. Even though we did come up one Vice Commander short, I know we all look forward to moving ahead in helping take our Department to the next level. I ask all the Posts to work together with your assigned Vice Commanders. A recent change to this year is that all Department Vice Commanders are responsible for getting your new membership cards to their assigned Posts. We can only do this with communication and cooperation with each Post. When your VC reaches out to you, please reply to his emails or phone calls. For example, all my assigned Post must provide me a name and an address where they would like their cards mailed to, if that is required or will be hand delivered. Without that reply, their cards will

remain with me until I know where and how I will get the cards to them. I am not relying on the contact list.

I know we, the Vice Commanders, look forward to serving you another year. Let's all make this a record-breaking year, let's do this together.

One last item. As well as being one Department Vice Commander short we are also in need of a Vice Commander at Large. If anyone out there is looking for a challenging, rewarding job I recommend stepping up and making your desires known to the Department Commander and/or Adjutant. You will not regret your decision and you would be doing a valuable service to the Department of France.

Jim Brotherton,  
Department Vice Commander

**DEPARTMENT  
Vice Commander**



*John Gerdeman*

My name is John Gerdeman.

I have been in the American Legion for 30 years, I am a member of Gro3 Heidelberg Where I am the Post Commander for the past 3 years. I am also a Department Vice Commander.

At the Department Convention near Ochsenfurt, Germany on the 15th of June, I was elected as one of the four Department Vice Commanders. This is my second year as Department Vice Commander where I was given several Posts to visit and It is my desire to personally get to know the members of

each post I am assigned to. I would like to learn what your Post is doing for our veterans and to pass on to you the Department Commander's goals for this new Membership Year.

If I do not have the answer, I will ask up the chain until I have an answer for you.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

John P. Gerdeman

**DEPARTMENT  
AMERICAN LEGION  
RIDERS DIRECTOR**



*Jim Brotherton*

Hello Riders

Welcome to a new membership year. I want to thank everyone for their

donations and generosity in helping raise over \$2200.00 for the Veterans & Children's Foundation. This program not only benefits Veterans but our young active-duty community. I encourage each Post to put this program on their Post calendar, raising funds throughout the year through Post events, 50/50 raffles and personal contributions.

Hoping to get a better grip on the Department management of our ALR program. We need to work as a team, as a team we are strong.

If anyone has ideas, inputs or recommendations on how we can

make our organization better I definitely want to hear from you, I can't do it alone.

Please be careful out there as we get into the summer season of riding, never assume the other person is doing the right thing, You are responsible for your own safety. As young bikers learn to become old bikers.

Let me hear from you.

Jim Brotherton  
Department ALR Director

**Department Voting  
Assistance Officer**



**Rick Simmons**

Dear Comrades,

The Department of France membership is unique in that most of us live in a foreign country, and yet we retain our American citizenship, and our ability to participate in the American political process by voting in our elections back home.

Whether you are active-duty military, federal civilian workforce, or if you are living overseas on a host country visa, you are still eligible to vote in the elections in your last U.S. home of record. Further, in some states, U.S. citizens who were born abroad — and have never resided in the United States — are also eligible to vote absentee.

The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) extends federal absentee voting rights to Service members, their eligible family members, and overseas citizens. UOCAVA covers U.S. citizens who are

18 or older AND active-duty members of the Uniformed Services, Merchant Marine, or commissioned corps of the Public Health Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; their eligible family members; and U.S. citizens residing outside the United States.

UOCAVA citizens can use the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to register to vote and request an absentee ballot simultaneously. They can also use the FPCA to update their contact information. The FWAB is an emergency backup ballot for UOCAVA citizens who did not receive an absentee ballot from their state in time to participate in the election.

Most states and territories require you to register to vote. Fill out an FPCA to register and request an absentee ballot at the same time. You should send in a new FPCA every January and each time you move. It is recommended that you send in an FPCA at least 90 days before the election in which you want to vote, but even as deadlines approach, we always encourage you to submit as state laws vary and you may qualify for a ballot containing only federal offices. The FPCA allows you to request an absentee ballot for all federal elections in the calendar year. Depending on your state, you may receive a ballot with local or state offices and initiatives as well (e.g., Governor, City Council). It is recommended that you send in a

new FPCA every January and each time you move.

Elections are run at the state level. You must communicate directly with your state to register, request a ballot, and vote. Most embassies and consulates will help you to fill out the FPCA and FWAB, but they are not polling places. Ultimately, you must be pro-active in voting, because your vote counts.

Refer to your embassy/consulate website for information on returning your voted ballots postage-free through the diplomatic mail. Each embassy/consulate will vary on dedicated hours and procedures for dropping off ballots for postage free return to the United States, so it best to call or check their website first.

**Here is the latest Department of State message on voting from Germany!**

**Routine:** U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Germany, January 19, 2024

**Location:** Germany

**Event:** Voting in 2024 U.S. Elections

**Your vote counts!** Did you know that many U.S. federal elections for the House of Representatives and Senate have been decided by a margin smaller than the number of ballots cast by absentee voters? All states are required to count every absentee ballot that is valid and reaches local election officials by the absentee ballot receipt deadline.



Follow a few simple steps to make sure that you can vote in the 2024 federal U.S. elections:

**1. Request your ballot.** Complete a new Federal Post Card Application (FPCA). You must complete a new FPCA after January 1, 2024, to ensure you receive your ballot for the 2024 elections. Submitting the FPCA allows you to request absentee ballots for all elections for federal offices (President, U.S. Senate, and U.S. House of Representatives) including primaries and special elections during the calendar year in which it is submitted. All local election officials in all U.S. states and territories accept the FPCA.

You can complete the FPCA online at [FVAP.gov](https://fvap.gov). The online voting assistant will ask you questions specific to your state. We encourage you to request your blank ballots be delivered electronically (by email, internet download, or fax, depending on your state). Include your email address on your FPCA to take advantage of the electronic ballot delivery option. Return the FPCA per the instructions on the website. The online voting assistant will tell you if your state allows the FPCA to be returned electronically or if you must submit a paper copy with original ink signature. If you must return a paper version, please follow the same instructions below for returning your ballot.

**2. Receive and complete your ballot.** States are required to send out ballots 45 days before a regular election for federal office and generally send ballots at least 30 days before primary elections. For most states, you can confirm your registration and ballot delivery online.

**3. Return your completed ballot.** While some states allow you to return your completed ballot electronically, others do not. If your state requires you to return paper voting forms or ballots to local election officials, you can do so free of charge at U.S. Embassy Berlin, U.S. Consulate General Frankfurt, or U.S. Consulate General Munich. Place your ballot in a postage-paid return envelope or in an envelope bearing sufficient domestic U.S. postage and address them to the relevant local election officials. You can also return

your FPCA or ballot to your local election officials via international mail or professional courier service at your own expense.

**Ballot Dropoff Instructions:  
Embassy Berlin:**

U.S. Citizens wishing to drop off ballots can do so at the Hüttenweg entrance (Clayallee 170, 14195 Berlin) of the U.S. Embassy building located in Dahlem between the hours of 1300-1500, Monday through Friday (except U.S. and German holidays). Please bring a form of identification (preferably a U.S. passport) and inform the guard that you would like to drop off voting materials. Ballots will not be accepted at the Embassy building in Mitte near the Brandenburg Gate.

**Consulate General Frankfurt:**

U.S. citizens wishing to drop off ballots can do so at the Consular entrance (Gießener Str. 30, 60435 Frankfurt) of the Consulate General between the hours of 0700-1600, Monday through Friday (except U.S. and German holidays). Please bring a form of identification (preferably a U.S. passport) and inform the guard that you would like to drop off voting materials. The guard will show you to the voting materials drop-box where you can leave your registration or ballot.

**Consulate General Munich:**

U.S. citizens wishing to drop off ballots can do so at the Consular entrance (Von-der-Tann Straße) of the Consulate General (Koeniginstraße 5 München 80539) between the hours of 1300-1500, Monday through Friday (except U.S. and German holidays). Please bring a form of identification (preferably a U.S. passport) and inform the guard that you would like to drop off voting materials. The guard will show you to the voting materials drop-box where you can leave your registration or ballot.

Please note that all visitors to the Embassy or Consulates are subject to security screening and you will not be permitted to bring electronic devices, including cell phones, inside the facility. Also note that it can take up to four weeks for mail to reach its destination if sent by an embassy or consulate via diplomatic pouch. All U.S. citizens are advised to submit their forms and ballots accordingly.

Any U.S. citizen voter in Germany, regardless of location, may elect to submit their ballot by mail within Germany to U.S. Embassy Berlin. U.S. citizens wishing to drop off ballots in-person at one of the U.S. Consulates General in Düsseldorf, Hamburg, or Leipzig can email [GermanyACS@state.gov](mailto:GermanyACS@state.gov) to coordinate a time to do so.

**Submission by Mail:**

U.S. citizens throughout Germany may mail their documents to the U.S. Embassy in Berlin using any local courier. Simply place your sealed envelope containing your ballot inside a local mailing envelope addressed to: U.S. Consulate Berlin  
ATTN: DPO/Election Material  
Clayallee 170  
14195 Berlin

Upon receipt, the embassy will forward the inner envelope to the United States using the diplomatic pouch. **IMPORTANT:** You must include your home address in Germany as the return address on both envelopes. Any envelope received without a return address cannot be forwarded through the diplomatic pouch and will be discarded.

**Research candidates and issues.**

Please see the FVAP links page for resources you can use to research candidates and issues. FVAP regularly sends information about election dates and deadlines through their Voting Alerts. Email [vote@fvap.gov](mailto:vote@fvap.gov) to subscribe or follow FVAP on Facebook or Twitter.

**Learn more at the Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) website,**

[FVAP.gov](https://www.fvap.gov). If you have any questions about registering to vote overseas, please contact [VoteBerlin@state.gov](mailto:VoteBerlin@state.gov), [VoteFrankfurt@state.gov](mailto:VoteFrankfurt@state.gov), or [VoteMunich@state.gov](mailto:VoteMunich@state.gov). Remember, your vote counts!

Also, please refer to the following websites for voting assistance: The Federal Voting Assistance Program for Voting assistance for Service members, their families and overseas citizens at <https://www.fvap.gov/>

U.S. Vote Foundation (US Vote) for election dates and assistance to your state voter registration at <https://www.usvotefoundation.org/state-election-dates-and-deadlines>

The Federal Election Commission 2024 Preliminary Presidential and Congressional Primary Dates at <https://www.fec.gov/resources/cms-content/documents/2024pdates.pdf>  
The Federal Election Commission homepage at <https://www.fec.gov/>

National Conference of State Legislators 2024 State Primary Election Dates at <https://www.ncsl.org/elections-and-campaigns/2024-state-primary-election-dates>

I have voted from overseas, in both my capacities as US Military, and as an Expatriate, in about 18 elections over the years, as best I can recall, and have never had an issue. To this point, be

pro-active, and stay in touch with your home county elections officials, so that they know you, and you are registered! If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [crsimmons.legion.europe@gmail.com](mailto:crsimmons.legion.europe@gmail.com).

Rick Simmons  
Voting Assistance Officer  
Asst. Judge Advocate  
Department of France

## DEPARTMENT BOYS STATE/HISTORIAN COMMITTEE



*Joseph Schram*

### Boys State:

A total of 6 Candidates (citizens) from 5 Department of France Posts attended the Boys State At McDaniel College in Westminster, Maryland. During the week, the citizens participated in state and

local government. Each day started with the raising of the USA flag followed by lectures, elections, mock court and various other activities.

Declan Mack (GR06)  
Andrew Scott Reed (BE02)  
David Serna (GR1982)  
Devin Howard (GR1982)  
Thomas Ravel (FR01)  
Mitchell Horrigan (IR01)





**Girls State:**

Four young ladies were sponsored by 3 Department of France Posts to attend the Girls State program at Salisbury University in Maryland. The young ladies learned state and local government, learnt how to write bills and run for a number of different political offices. Lucy Vedra was

elected as a city mayor and Sienna Perera was elected as the Lieutenant Governor.  
 Lucy Vedra (BE02)  
 Rayna Bailey (BE02)  
 Laysha Bobbitt (GR1982)  
 Sienna Perera (FR01)





**INTRODUCING YOUR  
ALA MARYLAND  
Governor**



*Kiara Caffrey*  
Lt. Governor  
Federalist | Shore City



*Sienna Perera*  
Lt. Governor  
Federalist | Charm City

**AMERICAN LEGION  
AUXILIARY  
Maryland  
Girls State**

# PARIS POST FR01

*PARIS, FRANCE*

PARIS

JULY 4, 2023 (THURSDAY)

INDEPENDENCE DAY

Join Paris Post 1 for an afternoon of ceremonies and events in Paris:

PLACE DES ETATS-UNIS @ 14h00  
PLACE ROCHAMBEAU @ 14h30  
PERSHING HALL @ 15h30

Please arrive at least 15 minutes before the ceremony.



Please RSVP below ([click link](#)) if you are interested in attending 4th of July at Pershing Hall.

Space is limited, please sign up today!

[RSVP: PERSHING HALL 4TH OF JULY \(updated link\)](#)

Paris Post 1 Website



Photo of WWII veteran Buck Sloan and Lt. Col. David Ashcraft upon arrival in

France for the 80th Anniversary of D-Day.



**Special Announcement: "On 4 July we will honor the life of Commandant George Aubrey."**

Merci beaucoup to the Vichy Chapter of the Association France Etats-Unis for their upcoming ceremony in honor of George Aubrey!

Please join the Vichy Chapter of the Association France Etats-Unis in Creuzier-le-Vieux on the 4th of July for

an Independence Day ceremony, and also a special event and ceremony in honor of George Aubrey.

George Aubrey was born in Northampton, Massachusetts in 1893. He entered the United States Army as a captain and served as company commander during WWI, eventually being promoted to the rank of major. He sustained multiple injuries in September 1918 at the Battle of Saint-Mihiel, and was discharged soon after. Following his military service, he married Frenchwoman Alberte Viette in 1919 before moving to the United States to study engineering. Two years later in 1921, he returned to France. He had two sons, Norbert and Guy. Aubrey was an active member of Paris Post 1 of the newly founded American Legion.

When France fell in 1940, Aubrey was one of only 500 Americans left in Paris, and he was forced to flee less than a year later. From his new location south of Paris near Saint Amand-Montrond, he continued his efforts by remaining in contact with the Allied forces, organizing a group of maquis fighters (his code name was LAFAYETTE), and assisting the Free French in North Africa until his death in July 1944. Aubrey was killed in the commune of Bétête when driving home from a meeting with other French Resistance leaders. After coming across a German unit, Aubrey and passengers in his car opened fire but were easily overtaken by the Germans. Aubrey was shot multiple times by machine gun fire, however, he managed to hide secret documents detailing Resistance plans before he was killed.

George Aubrey was buried in a nearby family vault but was moved to a cemetery in Creuzier-le-Vieux on May 5, 1948 for permanent, proper burial. Aubrey was posthumously awarded the French Croix de la Légion d'Honneur. 4 July agenda - Order de Jour  
 09h ~ Cérémonie au cimetière de Creuzier le Vieux (dépôt de fleurs/couronne et parole par VIP)  
 10h ~ Salle de la Mairie à côté de la mairie à Creuzier le Vieux (présentation sur la vie de George Aubrey par Patrick Alevèque)  
 11h ~ Salle de la Mairie (rafraîchissements et vin d'honneur offert par le maire)



**Mission Accomplished: Welcome Home Heroes!**

Special thanks to Lieutenant Colonel David Ashcraft, member of both Paris Post 1 and VFW Post 605, for meeting so many of our WWII heroes coming back to France for D-Day!

It has been truly an amazing experience: the weeks and months of events and ceremonies building up to and including the 80th Anniversary of D-Day with our WWII veterans visiting France!

From the springtime events like "Women of World War II" at the U.S. Ambassador's Residence in Paris to Memorial Day at almost 20 locations

throughout France, Paris Post 1 and our community in France have been in much anticipation of the week of events and the grand ceremony on June 6th in Normandy where over 200 American WWII veterans attended with President Biden and French President Macron.

You can tell from the photo above that Lieutenant Colonel David Ashcraft knows how to ensure our heroes are receiving an honorable salute, a big thank you and warm welcome when arriving in France. David spent time at the airports near Paris every day from May 30th to June 4th!

In the photo above, WWII heroes who served in the Pacific theatre: Mr. Patrick Ziliacus, Mr. Bill Dillon, Mr. Charles Cram, Mr. Bill Stewart, Mr. Wallace Johnson, Mr. Harry Hammer and Mr. Billy C. Hall.

For Paris Post 1, all hands were on deck for these historic ceremonies and events. Many from our community traveled throughout the Paris region and out to Normandy helping ensure a warm welcome and support for our WWII veterans who were all in their late 90's and up to 107 years old!



With our group of veterans, auxiliary and sons moving in every direction, Paris Post 1 is very proud to have been able to support many of our WWII veterans and their families plus the extraordinary organizations who stepped up to make this all happen.

Our members were very active personally welcoming almost 100 WWII veterans to France!

A very special thank you to Lieutenant Colonel David Ashcraft and Christine Dal Bello, who is assigned to the US mission to NATO in Brussels, for all of their activities in visiting veterans and families arriving in France. Seen above, David and Christine welcoming American heroes from WWII Mr. Young and Mr. Forever.

Christine and David's efforts led to the personal welcome for many of our veterans and their families. Thanks to their dedication to ensuring our heroes received a warm welcome, the start to

the week for the 80th Anniversary of D-Day was exactly what everyone wanted: to ensure our heroes know we have never forgotten their sacrifice during WWII!



Lieutenant Colonel David Ashcraft welcoming American hero from WWII veteran Mr. Joe Gorra.



Lieutenant Colonel David Ashcraft welcoming American hero from WWII veteran Ceo Bauer.



Lieutenant Colonel David Ashcraft welcoming American hero from WWII veteran Mr. KB Smith and his wife.



Lieutenant Colonel David Ashcraft welcoming American hero from WWII veteran Mr. Dennis Boldt.



Lieutenant Colonel David Ashcraft and Christine Dal Bello welcoming American hero from WWII veteran Mr. Eugene Kleindl.



Lieutenant Colonel David Ashcraft and Christine Dal Bello welcoming American hero from WWII veteran Mr. Hector Hila.



Lieutenant Colonel David Ashcraft welcoming American heroes from WWII Kreutzberg and Beamish.



**American Airlines flies nearly 70 WWII veterans to France for the 80th Anniversary of D-Day**

Paris Post 1 was very grateful to have the opportunity to spend time and collaborate with American Airlines and their WWII veteran group who traveled to Paris before making their journey to Normandy for the 80th Anniversary of D-Day.

Upon arrival at Charles de Gaulle (CDG) Airport, American Airlines had special ceremonies which took place at Suresnes American Cemetery on the west side of Paris, followed by a boat tour of the river Seine, and then the ravivage ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe honoring France's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier



Special thanks to active duty Master Sergeant Janet Poit of the U.S. Air Force and Paris Post 1 Auxiliary Jen Harlay for welcoming our World War

II heroes and family members at Charles de Gaulle (CDG) airport! As seen in above photo and videos, American Airlines organized a portrait for each WWII veteran for when their group arrived in France.



An extraordinary live performance from the Marymount International School performing the American and French national anthems for the World War II veterans and families as they arrived in France.

Special thanks to our youth for their amazing performance!



Giving thanks and welcoming each of our WWII veterans when they arrive in France is important!

Many members of Paris Post 1 introduced themselves to these heroes, and we thanked these veterans for the sacrifice they made 80 years ago.



U.S. Ambassador to France Denise Bauer and French Ambassador Philippe Etienne welcomed American Airlines' large group of WWII heroes to France at Charles de Gaulle (CDG) airport. We are grateful for their efforts in ensuring a huge turnout for our "Heroes Welcome" for all of the WWII veterans arriving!



In recognition of the service and sacrifice of our WWII heroes, American Airlines flew out nearly 70 WWII veterans for the 80th Anniversary of D-Day. This was a big endeavor!

Special thanks to Randall Stillinger, Manager of Military and Veterans Initiatives at American Airlines, and his extraordinary team for their hard work and dedication to honoring our military for D-Day in Normandy this year.



World War II veterans at Suresnes American Cemetery for their first ceremony in France on the top of Mont-Valérien.



The historic D-Day week started at Suresnes American Cemetery with an unforgettable remembrance ceremony and performance by the cadets choir honoring those who made the ultimate sacrifice during World War I and World War II.

We thank Superintendent Carly Mathieu for welcoming everyone to Suresnes American Cemetery, and we thank him for hosting an amazing ceremony!



Connie Palacios, 99, served as a “Rosie the Riveter” for four years and worked on B-17 planes during WWII, seen above with ABMC Associate Sandrine Deboté with Suresnes American Cemetery and the Lafayette Escadrille Memorial (LEM) Cemetery.

Special thanks to Sandrine for her dedication to the WWII veterans and “Rosie the Riveters” who were visiting with their families. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of Superintendent Carly Mathieu and Sandrine Deboté, among many managers and employees of the ABMC in France, our American veterans and families where provided with an abundance of care and service while they visited ABMC locations in France for the 80th Anniversary of D-Day.



The first stop on their agenda was paying tribute to American veterans from World War I and World War II at the Suresnes American Cemetery west of Paris. The cadets who traveled with the group came from America's military academies, they made a huge contribution in helping the WWII veterans and families.



During the ceremony, the cadets gave an inspiring performance while looking out from Mont-Valérien towards Paris.



World War II U.S. Army veteran Art Mederos shaking hands with U.S. Army Gen. (Ret.) Michael X. Garrett American Battle Monuments Commission Chairman.



### Paris Post 1's Starts Filming New Documentary

Our post's history has been accruing for many decades, to help preserve our history and share our legacy, Paris Post 1 is embarking on the production of a new documentary.

We are all very thankful for the extraordinary work and time that members of Paris Post 1 are dedicating to ensure this documentary is filmed

and produced. Special thanks to Legionnaire Robert Loftur-Thun who flew from the USA to France to start filming for the 80th Anniversary of D-Day.

One of the first locations to be filmed was Paris Post 1's Mausoleum, created after World War I for veterans of the great war, this American historic landmark is located near La Defense on the west side of Paris.

Near the Grande Arche of La Defense (seen in the photo above), Paris Post 1's Mausoleum is located in the Cimetière de Neuilly-sur-Seine where almost 300 American veterans are buried.



Many thanks to Paris Post 1's Judge Advocate Jason Mankiewicz who provided essential support for production management, location scouting and also helping out Rob when it started to downpour rain when filming!

Inside the same cemetery as Paris Post 1's Mausoleum, there are also military memorials and gravesites for the French military, the French resistance and the British military.



For the arrival of World War II veterans at Charles de Gaulle (CDG) airport near Paris, Legionnaire Rob was able to capture history taking place when nearly 70 WWII heroes arrived in France for the 80th Anniversary of D-Day!



Preserving history known by our veterans and community regarding their military service, activities with Paris Post 1 and involvement with Pershing Hall is vital to our understanding of our past legacy and history. Plus, its perfect opportunity to engage our youth and produce content for our new documentary together. Special thanks to Eagle Scout Thomas Ravel (and his family) for his contribution as a member of Paris Post 1's community, and for his help in filming Paris Post 1's documentary

with other veterans and at locations in Paris!



Filming was important not only for Paris Post 1's documentary, but also to capture historic moments during the 80th Anniversary of D-Day.

Seen above, the ceremony at the Suresnes American Cemetery with local maires giving thanks to the WWII veterans for their service, and welcoming them to France.

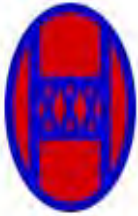


Safeguarding the history of Paris Post 1's members is very important!

While at the Arc de Triomphe for the ravivage ceremony, Chaplain Gary Nadolski and his wife Gigi were sharing their history of living in France. Gary was stationed in France with the U.S. Army, and Gigi grew up in Normandy surviving the D-Day bombing by the Allies as a child.







**AMERICAN LEGION  
LIBERTY WALK  
2024**

**Saturday, 24 August 2024**

Commemorate the " Battle of the Vierstraat Ridge"  
by the 27th & 30th US Divisions Aug/Sep 1918.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
[americanlegionlibertywalk@gmail.com](mailto:americanlegionlibertywalk@gmail.com)**

Our D-Day 80<sup>th</sup> celebration started at 05:00 hours to coincide with the 0:600 landing at Normandy. A big thank you to Michigan Congressman Jack Bergman for his letter, The Western People newspaper for their article and Ruth O'Hagen for her very moving poem. I had the honor of representing American Legion Post 03 at the ceremony. As well as commemorating the D-Day Landings of 6 June 1944, our ceremony paid tribute to Mrs. Maureen Sweeney who provided vital weather data which was used by General Eisenhower's staff to decide on 6 June date.

The Girl Who Changed The World - Maureen Flavin Sweeney



Please check. Please repeat.  
The howling winds at Blacksod spoke.  
Please check. Please repeat.  
Every hour precisely.  
The Summer rain and sea swept swain,  
Hold the fear of vagrants passing.  
Who will sit at Winnings End?  
Evil men or virtue?  
The neural moments register in the dark light of dawn.  
Places across the sea, calling fervently  
The unnamed and the maimed  
Who chime upon the clock.  
Each hour Eisenhower, waits.  
Please check. Please repeat.  
Please come. Please release.  
Our souls from mortal danger.  
Unknown thought that time has caught  
Between the torchlight and the flame.  
Of signals lost and signals tossed from one landing to another.  
Catching threads that weave the edge  
Of nature's cause abounding.  
Recording all, was God's sweet girl  
Never knowing she would change the World  
*(Ruth O'Hagan, May 2021)*

JACK BERGMAN  
BY DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-2201

June 3, 2024

Attendees,

I had the opportunity to lead the United States Congress in a commemoration of Maureen Sweeney's life in 2021. I was honored to play a small part in recognizing her service. Maureen's skill and poise as the weather forecaster at Ireland's County Mayo weather station during World War II saved countless Allied lives and ensured the success of the D-Day Invasion.

I know everyone in attendance today is surely aware of Maureen Sweeney's impact and how it reverberates today. On June 3, 1944 – her 21st birthday – Maureen compiled a report warning of stormy weather hitting the English Channel the morning of June 5. Unknown to her at the time, this was the initial date chosen by Allied command for the invasion of Normandy – an operation which required clear skies for air support and calm water to ensure the safety of those in amphibious landing craft. Maureen's weather report was passed along to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who made the fateful decision to delay the landings by 24 hours. A subsequent weather report predicted clear conditions the morning of June 6. Despite the ongoing rain and wind, General Eisenhower put his trust in the forecasters like Maureen and went forward with the invasion. As we know, the successful landings set the stage for Allied victory in Europe less than a year later. General Eisenhower would later comment, "I thank the Gods of War we went when we did."

On this 80th Anniversary of the D-Day landing, I am honored to again recognize the service of Maureen Flavin Sweeney on behalf of the United States Congress. Her skill and professionalism were crucial in ensuring Allied victory, and her legacy will live on for generations to come.

*Jack Bergman*  
Jack Bergman  
Member of Congress

## Major events in Erris village to mark D-Day anniversary

The Erris village of Blacksod is gearing up to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings with a series of events on Thursday, June 6th. This events will mark the crucial role played by Blacksod Lighthouse in the success of the Normandy invasion, a turning point in World War II.

On June 6th, 1944, Allied Forces landed on the beaches of Normandy, initiating the liberation of France from Nazi occupation. However, this vital operation was originally scheduled for June 5th but was postponed due to a critical weather report from Blacksod Lighthouse. The report, made by then 21-year-old Maureen Sweeney, predicted bad weather, leading to the rescheduling of the landings. Historians assert that this weather forecast significantly contributed to the success of the operation, as adverse conditions on the original date could have spelled disaster for the Allied troops.

The local community, led by Fergus Sweeney, a grandson of Maureen, of the Solas Visitor Experience and Tourism Hub, has organised a day-long programme to honour this significant contribution.

The day will begin with a Dawn Remembrance Ceremony at 5am at Blacksod Lighthouse. Exhibits will be open to the public, showcasing the roles of Met Éireann, An Post, and the Defence Forces during the war. These exhibits, enhanced with materials related to the D-Day weather forecast, will offer insights into Maureen Sweeney's life and Blacksod's key role. Highlights include displays from Met Éireann, An Post, Military Archives, Irish Lights, and movie props from Steven Spielberg's blockbuster, *Saving Private Ryan*.

Guest speakers, including US Army veteran Ron Howko and retired Irish Army officer Donal Buckley, will provide engaging talks on topics such as 'US Forces on D-Day' and 'Irish Neutrality, Then and Now.' Musical entertainment by Bridget McMahon and an aircraft flyover (weather permitting) dedicated to the men of the Lookout Posts will add to the day's commemorative atmosphere.

The day's events will conclude with a panel discussion chaired by Michael Kennedy, author of 'Guarding Neutral Ireland,' commencing at 5pm.



# SGT WILLIAM D. NELSON POST GR09 *NEU ULM, GERMANY*

## GR09'S ANNUAL INDEPENDENCE DAY PICNIC

With the 4<sup>th</sup> of July falling on a regular workday GR09 decided to hold its annual Independence Day picnic on the weekend prior to the fourth and it was the right decision as approximately 65 people participated in this event. Everything fell into place, perfect weather, large quantities of food, and enough volunteers to help make this a large success. Since the event was on a weekend, children were able to attend, a refreshing experience for the post.

As in previous years GR09 invited the members of its German partner unit, Ulmer Artillery Vereine 1906 and the group Donau Americans and Friends and everyone mingled and enjoyed seeing familiar faces again.

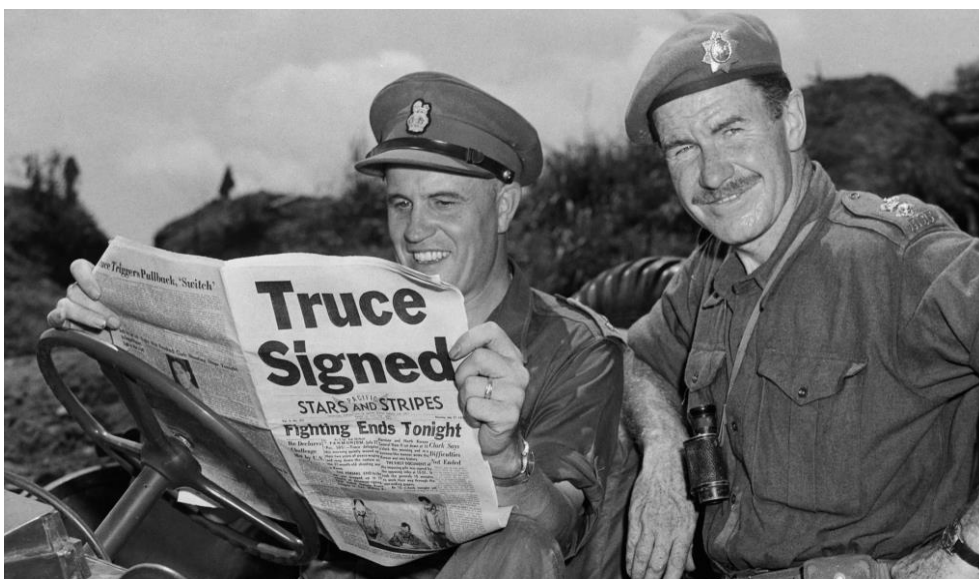
Post Commander Aman interrupted the events with a brief narrative of the functions of the American Legion and its post GR 09. Aman then presented the awards that were received at the Department Executive Committee meetings and annual Convention on 14 and 15 June which included: First post to reach 100% membership renewal, first post over the top, membership chairman of the year and the small post of the year award.

It doesn't get any better than that.

# OMAR BRADLEY GR42

*SCHWEINFURT, GERMANY*

Lee Preston and Andrea Preston visited France for D-Day activities 2024



## **Korean War ends (1953)**

**Jul 23, 2024**

After three years of a bloody and frustrating war, the United States, the People's Republic of China, North Korea, and South Korea agree to an armistice, bringing the fighting of the Korean War to an end. The armistice ended America's first experiment with the Cold War concept of "limited war."



Detachment Commander Fleming visits GR79 during the 2024 SAL Convention



GR79 Legion Riders



**THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY**

**John Wayne Post GR 79**

**INDEPENDENCE DAY GALA-HOSTED BY GR 79**

**WHEN JULY 13, 2024**

**WHERE** Gartenfreunde Klingenberg Im Bruch 74081 Klingenberg

**TIME 14.00**

**For Adults a Ticket is 30 €**  
**Children 10 and under eat FREE**  
**Not all you can eat**

POC Charlie Brown [vcalbrow50@gmail.com](mailto:vcalbrow50@gmail.com) H-0170-1888034“Still



**Serving America’s Veterans...Around the World”**



GR79 General Membership Meeting



GR79 member John Harris (2<sup>nd</sup> from R) with National Commander Dan Seehafer

**DETACHMENT  
COMMANDER**



*John Fleming*



# DETACHMENT OF FRANCE

**DETACHMENT  
ADJUTANT**



*James Dennis*

Hello Comrades,

I want to thank everyone who attended the annual Convention on 1 June and look forward to another momentous year serving as your Commander. It is my honor to continue to serve the Detachment. I would like to thank all of the outgoing officers. Your service to the Detachment helped ensure the continued operations of the Detachment of France. I also want to congratulate all of the newly elected and appointed officers. I look forward to working with everyone during the next year.



Your Detachment Officers for the 2024-2025 Membership Year are:

Commander	John Fleming	GR01
NECMan	Maxwell Rice	GR79
ALT NECMan	Lee Preston	GR42
Adjutant	James Dennis	GR42
1st Vice Commander	David Greaux	GR42
2nd Vice Commander	Robert Gray	GR01
Chaplain	James Fleming	GR01
Historian	Stephan Somers	GR79
Sergeant-at-Arms	Joe Brown	GR79
Finance Officer	Gary Miller	GR42

**Membership:** We missed the 100% cutoff by two (2) members. We did, however, surpass the 100% goal with 102.38% as of 24 June 2024. We need 4 renewals/new Members to reach the 105% Target by 24 July 2024.

I am asking all Squadrons and Posts to look at your membership rosters and contact every member who is marked as Expired. We should be able to find 4 Members who are just waiting for someone to ask them to renew. We can do this.

Also, let's get started now on our 2025 Goal! Get your members to renew early. Talk to your Post members to see if they are eligible. If your Post does not have a Squadron, contact the closest Squadron or the Squadron of your choice and sign up. Talk to family members and sign them up. I plan to do that during my travels to the States this summer. The Department has 3000 Members. The Detachment should have at least that many.

**Consolidated Squadron Report (CSR):** We need to wrap these up this month. It is available on myLegion.org, so every time you have an event you can start filling it in. The final date to submit is 31 July 2024. The below table shows our statistics.

FR01	No Data	BE02	No Data
CH01	No Data	GR01	SUBMITTED
GR05	No Data	GR06	No Data
GR07	SUBMITTED	GR14	No Data
GR42	No Data	GR79	SUBMITTED
NL01	No Data		

I started my Squadrons CSR last year when it became available on myLegion. I received a message when I saved it stating that the final day to submit for the 2023-2024 CSR is 31/08/2024.

The minimum you need to complete on the CSR to receive credit is to fill in the Paid-to-Date Membership Count, Current Year and Paid-Up Final Membership Count, Prior Year, and the contact information at the bottom of the form.

**Upcoming Events:**

- 12 October 2024 – 2nd DEC, Kaiserslautern, hosted by GR01.
- 1 March 2025 – 3rd DEC, TBA
- 7 June 2025 – 4th DEC/Conference/1st DEC, TBA

John Fleming  
Detachment Commander

**PCC President**



*John Gerdeman*

**PCC Secretary**



*Kerwin Hester*

**Department of France**  
**Past Commanders Club 2025MY**

**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 the 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*



GRANDE CHEF DE GARE *DAVID GARCIA*



GRANDE CORRESPONDANT *DAVID GREAUX*

La Société des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux (The Society of Forty Men and Eight Horses) is an independent, by invitation, honor society of American veterans, more commonly known as "The Forty & Eight".

The Forty & Eight is committed to charitable and patriotic aims. Our purpose is to uphold and defend the United States Constitution of the United States, to promote the well-being of veterans, their widows, widowers, and orphans, and to actively participate in selected charitable endeavors, which include among others, programs that promote child welfare and nurses training.

Membership is by invitation, and open only to honorably discharged veterans and honorably serving members of the United States Armed

**Grand Cheminot Lee Preston visited France for the D-Day Ceremonies**

**1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division Monument**  
On 4 June 2024 my wife and I began our quest to attend as many Memorial Services as possible at the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the D-Day Invasion to Liberate France and destroy the German Military Machine. I will give you some pictures of our most humble adventure as we moved through the multitude of visitors to the sites of the fallen. Our first Memorial was with the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division, 4 June 24 which

landed on Omaha Beach in the vicinity of Colleville Sur Mer, France. The Division encountered sever losses as they pushed on to the beach and up a slight hill encountering heavy fire from the German Forces. The Monument is a tall grey granite obelisk commemorating by name all of the First Infantry Division soldiers killed while fighting in the area. This memorial, overlooking the Easy Red sector of "Bloody Omaha" beach commemorates the

Big Red One's 627 dead between 6 June and 24 July 1944. There are three names engraved in Gold as they are Medal of Honor Recipients.





**5<sup>th</sup> Battalion Rangers Monument Plaque**

The 5th Battalion Rangers broke across the seawall and barbed wire entanglements, and up the pillbox-rimmed heights under intense enemy machine gun and mortar fire and with A, B and C Companies of the 2nd Ranger Battalion and elements of the 116th Infantry Regiment, advanced four miles (6 km) to the key town of Vierville-sur-Mer, thus opening the breach for supporting troops to follow up and expand the beachhead. We visited this Plaque on 5 June 24 while visiting the National Guard (Guard Monument).



**5<sup>th</sup> Engineer Special Brigade Monument**

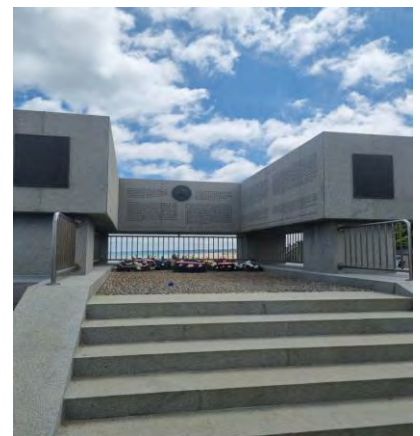
The next monument was the 5<sup>th</sup> Engineer Brigade 4 June 24. For the invasion of Normandy, the brigade had a strength of 6,756 men. It landed on Omaha Beach, where it was responsible for the eastern beaches, Easy Red, Fox Green and Fox Red. The brigade operated Omaha Beach until it was closed on 19 November 1944.



**Guard Monument**

We visited the Guard Monument and memorial dedicated to the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, National Guard, on 5 June 24. Known as the Blue

and Gray Division, the 29th Infantry Division is an Army National Guard operational-level headquarters located at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. The 29th Division joined with the 1st Division to assault Omaha Beach on D-Day, June 6, 1944. The 116th Infantry landed in the first wave at 0630 hours on the western half of the beach and met unexpectedly fierce resistance from German troops entrenched on the coastal bluffs. Despite heavy losses, the 116th penetrated the enemy defenses and established a tenuous beachhead by nightfall. The 115th Infantry landed at about 11 AM, and the 175th the next morning.





Overall, this was a great trip even though I could not attend the actual 6 June ceremonies. The streets were blocked off and you could only enter with a specific pass. The ceremonies were relegated to invited guests only. They were expecting 35 Heads of State which included the United States President.

### **DATE TO REMEMBER:**

**Saturday, 27 July 2024** – Grand Summer Wreck. Heilbronn, Germany.

## **THE MEMBER WHO NEVER CAME BACK**

It amuses me to think that your group spends so much time looking for new members when I was there all the time.

Do you remember me? I'm the person you asked to join.

I paid my dues and was asked to be a loyal and faithful member.

I'm the person who came to every meeting, but nobody paid any attention to me. I tried to be friendly, but everyone seemed to have their own friends to talk and sit with.

I sat with different people several times but they did not pay much attention to me.

I hoped somebody would ask me to join one of the committees or do something, but no one did.

Finally, because of illness I missed a meeting. When I came again no one asked me where I had been.

I guess it did not matter much whether I came or not.

Next time I decided to stay home and watch a good TV show.

When I came back again no one asked where I was the month before.

You might say I'm a good person, fun loving and religious.

You know what else I am?

**I'm THE MEMBER WHO NEVER CAME BACK.**