



Dates to Remember

9 Jan - Legion Bowling League



18 Jan - Gen Membership Meeting



20 Jan - Bagger for a Day



26 Jan - Post NL01 Party



15 Feb - Gen Membership Meeting



15 - 17 March - Centennial, Paris



Season's Greetings Legionnaires of Post NL01!

I wish to start by thanking all of you for a fantastic year! From the time you allowed me to be your Commander, we Have hit the ground running! In minimum time we attained Our Private Organization status, secured a bank account, post Office box, and increase funds through successful fundraising.



We've also participated in numerous remembrance events and Ceremonies like; The Wereth 11, B-17 Joker, B-17 Picklepuus, B17 42-3195, Linnich, Patton Monument, Face of Margraten, Memorial and Veterans Day ceremonies at GK, Kerkrade, Henri-Chapelle, Oud Beijerland, and Margraten. We supported the Retiree Appreciation Day, EXPO 2018, GK New Year/New You, 4th of July Festival, MWR Concert, and Trunk or Treat. Over the year we have built a solid reputation within the community.

We have also ran a vigorous membership effort that has put us well over 100% of our goal and we have maintained our #1 position in the entire Department of France! Within the Department of France we have doubled our footprint, won major awards for Adjutant, Commander, and Post of the Year! Organized and hosted another successful Department Executive Committee Meeting!

This year also brought many opportunities to connect with other organizations like the Stichting Verenigde Adoptanten Amerikaanse Oorlogsgraven (SVAAO), Faces of Margraten Group, The American Europe Friendship Association, GOC Parkstad, Music4Vets, Peace Light Organization, BSA, and Liberty Jump Team.

We just completed another incredible trip to Bastogne for NUTS 74! I will be covering all the great events we had the honor in participating in this issue.

As I look into the New Year I see a lot of wonderful events and opportunities ahead! 2nd Vice Harvey Briggs has been organizing a wonderful Post party on the evening of the 26th of January! This Post funded event will be an annual affair were we can all get together, eat, drink, and enjoy each other's company! So mark your calendar! We also have the American Legion Centennial event in Paris, March 15-17th. I'm putting together some options that we can all discuss during our next couple of meetings.

Without a doubt this is the best time to be in The American Legion! Not only are we 100 year old but were in the best possible location to participate in all the WWII 75th Commemoration Ceremonies this New Year will bring!

So once again, thank you all for the incredible year and thank you for allowing me to be your Commander.

As always remember these three things:

This is Your Membership Your Way

You will always have a Voice and a Vote

If you care enough about something, you'll do something about it



*Commander
Ray Perez*



*Adjutant
Rick Ojeda*



*1st Vice
Jim Brotherton*



*2nd Vice
Harvey Briggs III*



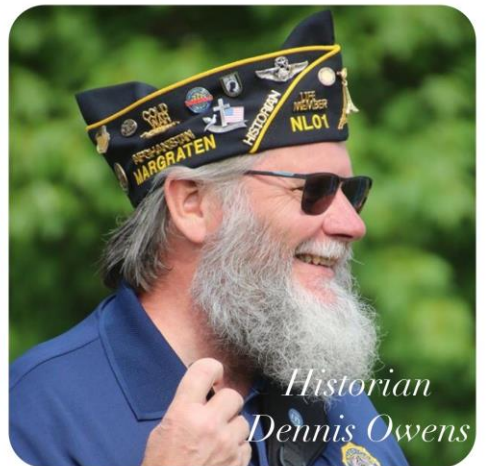
*Sgt-at-Arms
Mark Chernek*



*Finance Officer
Dale Snyder*



*Service Officer
Ron Macauley*



*Historian
Dennis Owens*



American Legion
"Margraten" Post
NL01
@PostNL01



BASTOGNE NUTS74 WEEKEND

Commander Ray

It's been nearly 74 years since General McAuliffe's famous "NUTS! Response to German Gen. Heinrich Freiherr von Lüttwitz threat of total annihilation of the US troops in and near Bastogne. The Battle of the Bulge may have only lasted two months, but the conditions were some of the worst of the war and the battle accounted for some of the heaviest American losses. Every year in December, the Bastogne Memorial March takes place to pay tribute to the thousands of soldiers that fought and gave the ultimate sacrifice.

This Bastogne Weekend took place over the 14th and 16th of December. This is our Posts 2nd NUTS Weekend and I wanted it to be one that everyone who participated in would remember for years to come. We were fortunate enough to get the same lodging as we enjoyed last year! Along with 17 Legionnaires and family members we were able to host two dinners with WWII Veterans; Vince Speranza, Bob Izumi, George Merz, George Mullins, and Ken Butler. We also shared an evening with film maker Stacey Hayashi, Veteran supporters Wanda & Butch Stump, and Peter & Linda Plank. The group also included Bob Izumi's lovely wife, members of the Liberty Jump Team, and other veteran caregivers.



Top Left: Gen McAuliffe **Top Middle:** Dale and Ray enjoying some Airborne Beer **Top Right:** Lita & 1st Evenings Dinner
Bottom Left: First group arrives at Post HQ **Middle:** Mark Cherek on guitar!
Bottom Right: Melissa, Dale, Kiara, Marc, Ashley, and Troy enjoying a great evening!

BASTOGNE NUTS74 WEEKEND cont.



Left: Phil & George Merz
Middle: Ray & Vince Speranza
Right: Ray & George with our Post patch!



Left: Incredible Dinner Spread!
Middle: Wonderful Evening
Right: Mark and Dale having a great time!



The next morning many from our group went on to the March, while others made their way to the 101st Airborne Museum to enjoy some great food from Post BE02 BBQ, visit with Friends, and attend Vince Speranza's book signing.



Left: Ray with some reenactors
Right: Dale & Lita meeting Helen Patton

L: James and Melissa enjoying Helen's famous Chili

M: Gen Patton's display with many iconic items on show

R: Post BE02 served up warm BBQ to the masses!



L: Dale & Ray with Helen

R: Wax figures of Heroes of Bastogne: Vincent J. Speranza and Robert Izumi

BASTOGNE NUTS74 WEEKEND cont.

In the afternoon, our Post had the honor of laying a wreath at the General George S. Patton Monument. The monument stands at the Merceny square in Bastogne. Commander Ray Perez had the honor.



TL: Commanders BE02 Joseph Schram and NL01 Raymond Perez Jr. TR: Ray Laying the Wreath
M: Helen Patton and the Veterans getting ready to march down to the monument
BL: Bob Izumi paying his respects to Gen. Patton BR: The wreaths were very lovely

BASTOGNE WEEKEND NUTS74 - BOB IZUMI



There have been many books written and movies made about the men who fought in WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. We have had the pleasure of meeting and talking to heroes of each of those wars. But, we never had the pleasure of meeting a man who served in all three!

That's right, Bob Izumi is a Three-time war veteran who fought during the Battle of the Bulge, executed rescue missions in Korea, and received South Vietnamese Armed Forces Honor Medal for the rescue of a downed American pilot.

Bob's military/civilian service spans 60 years and includes service in the US Army, Army Air Corps, USAF, and USMC.

Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor Dec 41, the Izumi family was taken from their home and placed in a Japanese internment camp. Many of the family's valuable items were lost, never to be recovered. This included the loss of the family home.

Even though Bob and his family were essentially prisoners in their own country, Bob still wanted to serve his country. In fact, all four of his brothers served in WWII.

Bob joined the Army in June 1944 and was sent to Reims, France as part of the 442nd. He was then transferred to the 101st in Sept and found himself in Bastogne in December 1944.

Some very interesting facts about Bob: He was a classmate of Marilyn Monroe, worked with Neil Armstrong, stood as special guard for Gen Dwight "Ike" Eisenhower, and Gen George S. Patton, received the Congressional Gold Medal from President Obama, has his own Comic Book written by film writer Stacey Hayashi, and is immortalized in wax at the 101st Airborne Museum in Bastogne.

It was such a complete honor to spend the evening with this True American Hero! Bob at 94, took the time to talk to all of us, making the evening even more special. Sgt-At-Arms Mark Chernek and Legionnaire Mike Hanson played a few songs for veterans and Bob has asked Mark to put one of his poems to music! Bob presented both Commander Ray Perez and Sgt-At-Arms Mark Chernek his challenge coin and poker chip. We will treasure them! [Video Clip.](#)

Bobs Poem: **Hero**

I met a hero today, I met a hero today, he was dressed in a grand suit, He's no super power, he and others like him saved this planet, that history wrote. A hero who left civilian life and put it on hold And went off to fight for freedom and not for gold, I met a hero today, he did not stand straight or walk very fast, but once he could run from dawn to dusk, with a rifle and his pack or an injured comrade on his back, or he would finish his task, I met a hero today, his eyes not so strong and his mind nimble, I met a hero today, once at 100 yards, he could hit his target, no bigger than a thimble, hero who has many names and they are hero's in my mind and heart. These men all of uniform, gave you and I freedom, as all true hero's do, in far too many cases, they fought for you and me.



BASTOGNE NUTS74 VINCENT SPERANZA

Photos by [Eddy Bertels](#)

Vincent J. Speranza, 93 was a Heavy Machine Gunner, Company H, 3rd Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division during the Battle of the Bulge.

Our Post had the honor of hosting Vince for dinner the evening before his book signing at the [101st Airborne Museum](#). Of course we in the Post know about Vince and his exploits during WWII. I wanted to use the few hours we had together to talk about things he probably doesn't

normally talk about. As a life time member of the American Legion, Vince was able to share his views on where the American Legion is now and what he thinks needs to change, going forward. We also talked about our wives. Vince was married to the love of his life, Iva for 70 years. She passed away in March 2017. He really liked talking about Iva but it got hard after a while. I have to say it was quite the evening to remember. It looked like everyone had a nice relaxing evening with good conversation, food, drink, and music! I hope we get the opportunity to do it again. Oh, I learned that Speranza in Italian means Hope. Sounds about right!



Vince kicked off his book signing with the best introduction I've ever heard. It's over 35 minutes but it really is a must watch. I recorded and posted it up on our FB page and the video was shared over 300 times and reached over 43,000 people! Check out his book [NUTS!: 101st Airborne Division Machine Gunner at Bastogne](#)

Click Image for Video

BASTOGNE NUTS74 cont.



It was an incredible weekend in Bastogne and I look forward to our Posts 3rd trip for NUTS75! We already have a wonderful place booked for our stay (clue pic below.) I think those who participate are in for an amazing experience.



Hurtgen Forest Battlefield Tour

By Service Officer Ron Macauley


Anyone who has ever taken a historian-led WWII battlefield tour understands how powerfully insightful it is to actually walk the grounds where the armies collided. That exact experience was afforded to some of our American Legion Post members and their guests as they participated in an eye-opening guided tour of the Hurtgen Forest battlefield this past November. The Post members not only transported themselves physically but figuratively to the hallowed battlefield grounds of the Hurtgen Forest as the guide vividly described the battle raging around them. They not only received an inspiring interpretation of the battle and the struggles of the 28th Infantry Division along the Kall trail, but also had the opportunity to visit the only museum dedicated to the Battle: The "Museum Hürtgenwald 1944 und im Frieden". The museum graphically captures and displays through photos, documents and military artifacts the unfortunate stories of the battle and its sad consequences.



The tour affected many post members who know that our Country's history and freedom has been nourished with the blood of Soldiers soaked into this very battlefield. Therefore, fittingly to honor these brave Soldiers, the Post concluded the tour by visiting a bronze memorial plaque on a weathered grey granite stone honoring and marking the spot where one of these brave Soldiers, PFC Robert Cahow, was found after having been MIA for 56 years. His family placed the plaque there alongside a road and just into the forest lies the exact spot that he was found, marked with a pile of stones placed by visitors. The Post recited a few poems, paused for a moment of silence, and added to the makeshift memorial of stones by adding a beautiful handcrafted American Legion Margraten Post memorial stone from the Margraten Cemetery made by Sgt-At-Arms Mark Cherek.

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American Battle Monuments Commission 
@abmcpage



Post NL01 Legionnaire Spotlight

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



JON CRUZ

I am so proud to have new brothers and sisters to stand with to honor our American traditions, heritage and overall mission to give back to veterans. I've been serving in the military for seven years now and believe that the feeling of brotherhood and being a part of something bigger can never be compared to. Being a member in the American Legion is so important to me because I truly believe in their mission to give-back. I am honored to be a part of such a legendary organization of leaders that truly take care of our heroes in need. I am so excited to see the positive changes and lives we are going to impact together.

As a young kid, I remember watching my favorite movie, "Black Hawk Down", and being inspired by the sense of brotherhood it glorified. Helping people in need may be the less action-packed part of movies, but to me, it's what's important. My name is Jon Cruz, I'm 26 years young, and I am originally from Chino, California.

In 2011, I enlisted into the United States Air Force within the Security Forces career field. I've been overseas for seven years and counting and absolutely love it! The travel, the different cultures, and working with our international partners has truly been a rewarding experience.

Throughout my time in the military, I have seen too many friends and family attempt or lost to suicide. I've witnessed low morale spread like cancer and seen how an environment of negativity can bring down the best of people. Morale, also known as esprit de corps, is the mental and emotional condition of an individual or group. Low morale, depression, and suicide are huge issues we face in the military today – and if left untreated, can severely affect any organization. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs currently reports that an average of 20 veterans commit suicide every day. Within that average, includes active-duty service members, National Guard members and reserve members.

Food for thought. We would never go into battle alone, so why are some people still battling suicide alone? People often think that they are going through life's challenges alone and that no one can help them, but in reality, there will always be someone that has your six. People often just need a support system or community to help them through life's challenges. Alone we can do so little, but together, we can do so much.

With this thought, I decided to create a positive community through my clothing brand, exclusive to military, law enforcement members, and their supporters. My objective: to promote positive morale, comradery, patriotism, and ultimately, prevent suicide. With the help of several mentors, partners, and my bro Tom from Ranger Up, Morale Check Apparel was born. Morale Check Apparel is a give-back organization, we financially support organizations that aid the men and women of our Armed Forces and first responders.



Monthly Membership Meeting and Post Oratorical Contest



Saturday 8 Dec, was Margraten Post NL01 Monthly Meeting and 2nd Annual Oratorical Contest.

Top: 1st Vice and Membership Chairman Jim Brotherton presented, Service Officer Ron, Sgt-at-Arms Mark, and Commander Ray with the Team 100 Pin! The Post is doing a great job on the membership front and it's thanks to everyone in the Post! We're currently #1 in the Department at over 135 percent!



Our Post Oratorical Champion was Ms. Sydney Macauley. Sydney was presented the winners certificate, Patrick Henry Medal, and \$300 cash prize! We look forward to supporting her at the Department Contest in February.



Legionnaire, Mike Hanson represented NL01 during the Annual Santa Run at Zutendaal, BE. Finance Officer Dale Snyder was on hand to cheer Mike on and eat BBQ! 🍷🍔



Medical Update: Our incredible Finance officer Dale Snyder is recovering very well from his busted hip and compound fracture of the Ulna in November. [#LegionStrong](#) [#1stCav](#)

THE AMERICAN LEGION – WHO WE ARE

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

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

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



Nation’s oldest living veteran Richard Overton dies in Austin, TX at the age of 112.

PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

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

Basic Training

Learn about The American Legion in this self-paced online course



Basic Training Graduate

Congratulations Raymond!

You have passed the course 1 time.
Your last graduation date was 10/08/2017.

Print your certificate: [B&W](#) | [COLOR](#)

Order your cap/lapel pin [here](#).

Where you left off

[Resume](#)



History & Organization



Veterans Affairs & Rehab



National Security



Americanism



Children & Youth



Course Conclusion



Final Exam

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

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

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

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

This Basic Training package is an outstanding gateway of knowledge into the nation's largest veteran's service organization and an opportunity not to be missed.

After taking the course it opens your eyes to what we really can accomplish and do, I never really knew how much the Legion was involved in.. Should have joined years ago! ~ Post NL01 Sgt-at-Arms Mark Chernek





Words from Service Officer Ron

We consider ourselves quite lucky to have Ron Macauley as our SO. As you read in our last newsletter, Ron's civilian job carries many of the responsibilities and tasks asked of a Legion Post Service Officer. Part of Ron's job entails keeping veterans' informed of their benefits and any change in policy that could affect those benefits. ~ Commander Ray

Great link to answer many of your VA disability questions:



Geilenkirchen NATO AB Airman & Family Readiness Center

NEW YEAR

New You!

Info & Job Fair

Friday Jan 11

10am–1pm

MPR (Bldg. 298)

**Breakout sessions
will be announced,
SOON!**

Questions? Comm: +49-(0)2451-63-7293, DSN: 458-6015, 470abs.dp2@us.af.mil

START THE NEW YEAR RIGHT!

Start working toward your New Year's resolutions today! This Information, Education, and Employment Fair is a great way to learn about resources, opportunities, and activities in our community, so you can make the most of your time here.



 **Veterans
Crisis Line**
1-800-273-8255 PRESS 1

OR CHAT ONLINE AT <http://www.veteranscrisisline.net/gochat/>



Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) Important Information and Contacts

- ✓ FEDVIP has expanded to include certain TRICARE-eligible beneficiaries
- ✓ The TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP) ends December 31, 2018
- ✓ FEDVIP dental and/or vision coverage will be effective on January 1, 2019
- ✓ **The Federal Benefits Open Season runs from November 12 to December 10, 2018 (ET)**

For questions related to plan details, waiting periods, in-progress treatment, or to make sure your dentist or optical specialist participates in FEDVIP, you can contact one of the dental or vision carriers below.

Choose among ten FEDVIP dental carriers:

Aetna Dental*	1-877-459-6604	GEHA*	1-877-434-2336
Delta Dental*	1-855-410-3255	Humana*	1-877-692-2468
Dominion Dental*	1-855-836-6337	MetLife*	1-888-865-6854
EmblemHealth*	1-800-624-2414	Triple-S Salud*	1-800-716-6081
FEP BlueDental*	1-855-504-2583	United Concordia Dental*	1-877-394-8224

You and your eligible family members are eligible for vision coverage, if enrolled in a TRICARE health plan.

Choose among four FEDVIP vision carriers:

Aetna Vision*	1-877-459-6604	United Healthcare Vision*	1-866-249-1999
FEP BlueVision*	1-888-550-2583	Vision Service Plan (VSP) Vision Care*	1-800-807-0764

Online resources are available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

- ✓ Visit tricare.benefeds.com prior to open season to review plans and rates in your specific region, verify eligibility, and read other important information as you prepare for enrollment.
- ✓ During open season, beginning on November 12, you can compare plans and rates, view and download carrier brochures, and enroll in FEDVIP dental and/or vision coverage at BENEFEDS.com. Featuring 24/7 access across computers, cell phones, and tablets, BENEFEDS.com provides online tools and education to help you select the right coverage for you and your family.

In addition to online resources, the BENEFEDS team is available to help with any enrollment questions. You may call our Customer Service Center at **1-877-888-FEDS** (1-877-888-3337) TTY 1-877-889-5680, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. (ET). If you are calling from outside the United States, dial your country code, followed by 1-571-730-5942. **Note: Our representatives cannot recommend a plan nor discuss benefits or dental and vision providers.**

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has oversight of FEDVIP and BENEFEDS. BENEFEDS.com is the approved site for FEDVIP enrollment. BENEFEDS is administered by Long Term Care Partners, LLC, an OPM contractor.



Congratulations to 2nd Vice Harvey Briggs and Historian Dennis Owens for their recent completion of DSO Phase II Training. Harvey is now an Assistant Department Service Officer!!



WE WANT YOU!
TO JOIN AMERICAN LEGION POST NL01
MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

18 JANUARY @ USAG SCHINNEN BLDG 3 @ 1700L

www.facebook.com/PostNL01

Margraten.Post.NL01@gmail.com

www.instagram.com/margraten.post.nl01/





Faces of Margraten Initiative

Almost two-thirds of all soldiers now have a face! Ever since Sebastiaan Vonk and the Faces of Margraten (FOM) Group allowed our Post to actively participate in and help with the setup and recollection efforts of FOM last May, we have been actively looking for the remaining faces of our fallen heroes. We will post on this page all the faces we have found as part of this effort. If you are interested in joining the effort, please contact us at Margraten.Post.NL01@gmail.com

We would like to thank Michael Kriznar (nephew), Albert Kriznar (Brother 95), and Nancy Kriznar Zamprelli (Albert's daughter) for all the help in getting Franks Photo.



1st Lieutenant Charles N. Todd



Sergeant Ray Beachler



TSgt. John Mancina



TFC FRANK KRIZNAR

