



**PRESENTATION CEREMONY**  
**FOR THE**  
**FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR MEDAL**  
**TO**  
**WORLD WAR II VETERANS**

***TECHNICAL SERGEANT EARL R. LISTON – U.S. ARMY***

***CORPORAL GEORGE W. MCGEE. - U.S. ARMY***

***PRIVATE FIRST CLASS MARSHALL W. BAIRD, U.S. ARMY***

***PRIVATE FIRST CLASS HARPER COLEMAN, U.S. ARMY***

***PRIVATE FIRST CLASS ROBERT KIRBY, U.S. ARMY***

***PRIVATE FIRST CLASS ROBERT WALLING, U.S. ARMY***

***PRIVATE FIRST CLASS MAXWELL WARNER, U.S. ARMY***

**VALENCIA LIBRARY**  
**TUCSON, ARIZONA**  
**NOVEMBER 6, 2013 –10:00AM**

## **HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL ORDER OF THE LEGION OF HONOR**

*During the French Revolution all the orders of the kingdom were abolished. It was the wish of Napoleon, the First Consul, to create a reward to commend civilians and soldiers regardless of their stature in life. In 1802, a **Légion d'Honneur**, (Legion of Honor) was established as the first modern order of merit. The **Légion** was open to individuals of all ranks and professions. The order is France's highest award and is conferred upon men and women, either French citizens or foreign nationals, for outstanding achievements in military or civilian life.*

*The President of France is the Grand Master of the Order and appoints all other members of the Order — by convention, on the advice of the Government. Its principal officers are the Chancellor and Secretary-General. The order has five classes: Grand-Croix (Grand Cross); Grand Officier (Grand Officer); Commandeur (Commander); Officier (Officer); and Chevalier (Knight).*

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### **La Marseillaise**

Allons enfants de la Patrie  
Le jour de gloire est arrivé !  
Contre nous de la tyrannie  
L'étendard sanglant est levé (Bis)  
Entendez-vous dans nos campagnes  
Mugir ces féroces soldats?  
Ils viennent jusque dans vos bras.  
Égorger vos fils, vos compagnes!

*Aux armes citoyens  
Formez vos bataillons  
Marchons, marchons  
Qu'un sang impur  
Abreuve nos sillons*



**PRESENTATION PROGRAM**  
**Large Meeting Room**  
**Valencia Library**

*Welcome*

*Roger G. Brooks, Col, USAF (Ret)*  
*Master of Ceremonies*

*Presentation of Colors*

*Davis-Monthan AFB Honor Guard*

*The French National Anthem*

*The U.S. National Anthem*

*Pledge of Allegiance*

*Colonel Brooks*

*Posting of Colors*

*Davis-Monthan AFB Honor Guard*

*Invocation*

*David Powell, Chaplain*  
*VBOB So AZ Chapter 53*

*Introduction of Special Guests*

*Colonel Brooks*

*Presentation of Awards*

*Mr. Gerrit M. Steenblik*  
*Honorary Consul of France in Arizona*

*Other Presentations*

*Reflections*

*By the Honorees*

*Closing & Acknowledgements*

*Colonel Brooks*

*Photographs followed by reception*

*Reception*

*Until 12:30*



**Technical Sergeant Earl R Liston** was born on a farm in Mitchell, SD October 9, 1923. In 1938, along with his family, he moved to Pecatonica, IL where he attended high school and met his future wife (Harriet) of 54 years. He entered the Army at Camp Grant in Rockford, IL in March 1943. Basic training followed at Ft. Jackson, SC with additional training at Ft. Riley, Kansas. He was part of a 149 man reconnaissance troop attached to the 106th Infantry Division. The troop sailed to England in November 1944 where they prepared for what was to become the Battle of the Bulge. They crossed the English Channel and made a beach landing a little north of Le Havre, France. From there

it was on to St. Vith and then to the front line at Grosslangenfeld, Germany. During the Battle of the Bulge the troop was attacked by the 3rd company of the 164th Grenadier Regiment of the 62nd Volksgrenadier. They fought valiantly for three days before running out of ammunition. Of the 149 men, only 17 (including Earl) were not killed or captured. He continued to fight and move around with the 3rd Armored Division. Amongst his many decorations he received campaign ribbons for Northern France, Ardennes, and the Rhineland, and the European-African-Middle-Eastern campaigns and three bronze stars. Tech Sergeant Liston returned to the U.S. in January 1946 and was discharged at Camp Grant, Rockford, IL. With his wife and three sons he moved to Lanark, IL and worked in the dairy industry pioneering the artificial insemination of dairy cattle until moving to Tucson, AZ in 1972.



**Corporal George W. Mcgee** was born in Bridgeport, NE on April 11, 1925 and raised in Colby, KS. He was drafted into the Army upon graduation from high school in 1943. After he was discharged from the Army he attended trade schools and college. He was employed in the Atomic Uranium Gaseous Defusion Plant in Oak Ridge, TN and later at The Martin Marietta Titan Missile Facility in Denver, CO. He then spent 25 years as a Quality Procurement Component Engineer for IBM where he retired in 1988. In 1948 George married Juanita Puckett and they had three wonderful children. Juanita passed away in 2002. They celebrated 53 years of a great marriage. He entered the Army in August 1943 and spent the next three years in the 109th Evacuation Hospital, which was attached to General George Patton's Third Army.

He landed at Utah Beach on June 20, 1944 and from there through France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany and ending the European tour in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. He received five battle stars and campaigns including Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Central Europe and Ardennes-Alsace (Battle of the Bulge). The 109th also received The Meritorious Unit Award for treating 25,000 casualties with a death rate of less than half of one percent. George is the president of Southern Arizona Chapter 53 of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. He now has three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren and he currently resides in Tucson, AZ



**Private First Class Marshall W. Baird** was born in El Paso, TX in April, 1923. He lived there until he was about five when his family moved to New Mexico. He grew up in New Mexico mainly around Alamogordo and vicinity graduating from high school in Reserve, NM. His main two jobs in that period was a stint in the C.C.C.s and another on a fire look-out tower for the U.S. Forest Service. Right after that he went to Camp Wolters, TX for basic infantry training and then on to the parachute school in Ft. Benning, GA and riggers school (never packed another chute). His MOS was rifleman but also was a runner and bazooka-man. The next step was overseas to the 517th Parachute Regimental Combat Team and after a few weeks action in the Rome-Arno sector, the outfit was pulled back to train for the Southern France invasion. The invasion happened on the 15th of August 1944 where he jumped inland north of Marseilles and of the main seaborne invasion. The outfit was on the line for 94 consecutive days and fought all the way to the Italian border through the Maritime Alps. Except for a couple of passes to Nice, France he didn't miss any of those days. From there he went to northern France, Soissons to be exact, to prepare for shipment to the Pacific theater. Before that happened, the Germans broke out in the Ardennes which was known as the Battle of Bulge. Of course the 517th PRCT was called in right away to stop that process getting there on the 21st of December, 1944. Marshall was eventually evacuated with a bad case of frostbite to a hospital in England. By the time he got back to the outfit, the war in the European Theater of Operations was over, so he joined the 82nd Airborne Division which went to Berlin as occupation forces. He had five campaigns (Rome, Arno Southern France, Rhineland, Ardennes, and Central Europe). His awards include the Combat Infantry Badge, Parachute Wings (one star), Presidential Unit Citation, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and the Good Conduct Medal. After arriving home on the 3rd of January, 1946 he took a well earned rest. His work until retirement included ranching, truck driving, labor foreman, manager of estate for an English Countess (near Oracle). After retirement he worked as a Fire Department Dispatcher, President of the Oracle Community Center, Secretary/Treasurer of the Southern Arizona Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association (18 years). He married Rita Romer and they had a son and daughter, Maggie and Bill, with three granddaughters, and four great-grandsons. Rita passed away May 2012. Marshall still lives by himself in Oracle, AZ.



**Private First Class Harper Coleman** was born in Newburg, PA in 1922. He was raised in the area and graduated from Shippensburg High School in 1941. He was drafted into the Army in September of 1942 and completed basic training in Camp Atterbury, IN with Company M, 331st Regiment, 83rd Infantry Division. After basic training he was assigned to Company H, 8th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division. He arrived in Liverpool, England on January 20, 1944 on the HMS Franconia. While in England he took part in amphibious training during the Slapton Sands incident, where German U boats attacked three landing crafts and over 700 soldiers were lost. He landed on Utah Beach on D-Day in the first wave led by Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. Afterwards he took part in the fighting in the Hedgerow country in the fall on Cherbourg, St. Low, and the allied entry into Paris. His unit then moved on to fight in the Hurtgen Forest and the Battle of the Bulge. He returned to the United States in June of 1945 receiving a Certificate of Disability Discharge from the Camp Butner Convalescent Hospital, NC in Sept. 1945. His significant decorations include: Bronze Star, European African Middle Eastern Theater ribbon with four Bronze Battle Stars, the Combat Infantry Badge, and various other campaign medals. After the war, Harper embarked on a 35-year career with the Department of Defense, working in PA, MI, and AZ. He now resides in Tucson, AZ with his wife of 67 years, Kathryn. He has three children, seven grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. Harper volunteered for the Boy Scouts of America where he was awarded the Silver Beaver Award and the Tucson Police Department where he received a distinguished service award. At age 91 he continues to volunteer at the Tucson Veteran's Administration Hospital assisting with patient transport.



**Private First Class Robert Kirby** was born in Stowe Township, PA on February 27, 1921. He was the second born into a family of ten boys and one girl. After high school Bob worked in a small chemistry lab in the ceramics industry. On June 15, 1942 he was drafted into the army at the age of twenty-one. After a few weeks in an induction center he was sent to the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion in Marfa, TX. After training he became a Mortar Gunner for the 4.2 inch mortar. After an additional year of training the battalion went to England, arriving in August, 1943. A lot of amphibious training ensued until June 5th, 1944. The battalion set sail for Omaha Beach for an early morning assault. Their section was designated "Easy Green," which turned out to be quite a misnomer. They participated in five major battles in Northern Europe: Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes, and Central Europe. Through all this the battalion fired over 250,000 rounds of high explosives and white phosphorous. While in England, Bob met and married an English girl, and the marriage lasted forty-six joyful years, until Peggy died of breast cancer. They raised four wonderful children, and Bob has seven grandchildren. He remarried and he and his charming wife have been together for eighteen years. After the war Bob took advantage of the G.I. Bill. He went to college and eventually earned a PhD in chemistry. He spent his career as a professor of chemistry at City University of New York, Queens College. Thirty years ago Bob retired and moved to Tucson, AZ where he has enjoyed hiking, senior baseball, and most recently golf.



**Private First Class Robert Walling** was born in Lockport, IL on April 24, 1921. He grew up in this area and graduated from Lockport High School class of 1939. Robert was drafted into the Army September 12, 1942. He was sent to Camp Bowie, TX and became part of the 745th Tank Battalion. After receiving training there, he was sent to England on the Queen Elizabeth on August 19th, 1943 where he continued training at Camp Ogbourne, St. George, near Swindon, Wiltshire, England. The outfit was then attached to the 1st Division (known as The Big Red One) for the invasion of France. During his eleven months of combat he was delivering gasoline and ammunition to the tanks. He went in on Omaha Beach, through northern France, Belgium, Germany, including Battle of Mons, Siegfried Line, Aachen, Hurtgen Forest, Ardennes, Roer River, The Rhine, Remagin Bridgehead, Ruhr and Hanz Pockets and Chev, Czechoslovakia, completing five campaigns. After spending almost a month guarding and processing some 80,000 German prisoners at the camp near Chev, the Battalion moved on June 7th to the ancient town of Rothenburg on the Tauber, where varied duties of military occupation were undertaken. He did occupation work in Chev, Czechoslovakia, until his outfit was sent home in October of 1945 and was deactivated at Camp Atterbury, IN. Bob was awarded the Bronze Star and Good Conduct Medal and the Service Company of the 745th was awarded the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque. Bob married Isabel Eckels and they had four children. Bob worked for Union Oil for 19 years in Joliet, IL then moved to Tucson and worked for the City of Tucson until his retirement in 1983. Bob and his wife Mary live in Tucson and have six children, 19 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren almost all of whom also live in Tucson, AZ.



**Private First Class Maxwell Warner** was born in New York in July 1916. Max's parents, Hinda and Paul, emigrated from Europe in the early 1900's. In New York they raised a family of five children, Max being the only son. After finishing high school Max attended St. John's University graduating with a degree in Pharmacy. Max married the love of his life, Anne, in November of 1940. Their son David was born two years later and was one year old when Max was drafted into the Army. Max was deployed to England in the 356th Division, 137th Regiment and later was assigned to Northern France by General George Patton. Max served as an Army Combat Medic during his tour landing on Omaha Beach in 1944, after which he was sent to The Ardennes, Rhineland and Central Europe Campaigns. There he attended the wounded in The Battle of the Bulge. Max was decorated with the European-African-Middle Eastern medal and was honorably discharged from the Army on July 30, 1945. After the war Max returned to New York where his wife and young son were waiting for him. In 1945 Max and family moved to Tucson, Arizona where they would have two more children. After moving to Tucson, Max worked at Martin Drug Store until he was able to purchase his own "Catalina Drug Store." Max has three children, one grandchild and one great-grandchild. Max still resides in Tucson with his two children that were born there. He enjoys fishing and sharing his stories with others.

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### ***IN FLANDERS FIELDS***

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

*We are the Dead. Short days ago  
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow.  
Loved, and were loved, and now we lie  
In Flanders fields.*

*Take up our quarrel with the foe;  
To you from failing hands we throw  
The torch, be yours to hold it high.  
If ye break faith with us who die  
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow  
In Flanders fields.*

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This famous WW1 poem was written by Canadian military doctor John McRae during the battle of Ypres, Belgium in 1915.