

# The Bulletin

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**MAKE CHECKS OUT TO P.A.L.S.**



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From our Directeur and all members of the Public Relations Committee and our Blue Chevalier crew—we wish all of you the very best this holiday season AND a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!

We end another calendar year of The Bulletin and I honestly hope you found your membership beneficial and worthwhile.

Ten members of my Locale have joined as Blue Chevalier's and I have the pins and cards and look forward to a special presentation at our promenade this December. Please consider joining as a charter member. Take a close look at your P.A.L.S. card—next month we purge the rolls and we do not want to lose you—not for the sake of \$10.00. I have cards for 2022, 2023 and 2024 all ready to go!

Hope you find something of value in this issue to learn from or use in your own newsletters—a pleasure to do every month! **L'Editeur**

### In this issue!!

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**"It does not matter how slow you go  
as long as you do not stop."**

Confucius

### P.A.L.S. since 1984—Past L'Editeurs

George Hartley

Don Collins

Paul Chevalier



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DECEMBER 2021

Bev and I hope everyone had a great Thanksgiving and will have wonderful Christmas.

There is a lot to report this time as we start out a new calendar year.

- PR submittals are coming in fast and furiously. Great work everyone. I have not done my annual search for active media sites yet so they are not included this month. [The PR Report is attached]
- The PR Manual is in the final stages of revision.
- The Blue Chevaliers Charter Year of 2022 is off to a great start and growing every day. Pre-2022 membership is attached. [Member report attached]



I would be remiss if I did not thank the Blue Chevaliers advisors, Mike Wood, Greg Hall, and Frank Campo as well as all of my Sous Directeurs and the Committee Advisor, Pat Beamer for all of their input and help with the Project launch. I did not expect to have the immediate response that we have had, and I thank all of you who have joined the Project even before the start of the Charter Year of 2022.



There has been a bit of confusion about our new address and the address on the letterhead is the correct one. The phone number and email address has not changed.

Yours in service to La Société,

**Bob "OB1" Cearlock**

National Directeur, Public  
Relations

La Societe 40 et 8



**L'Editeur**—The last page has the Blue Chevalier and P.A.L.S. applications. Congratulations to those new charter members. Two new members have joined P.A.L.S. and we have a new PUFL member—special thanks to all! Incorrect, changed, expired, new emails are resulting in many returned Bulletins. Please keep me posted of any changes—Thanks!

As stated, this is the last month for those not renewed for at least up to 2021—check your card please. I've purged the mailing list already—that costs us money. We have no problem with you sharing your Bulletin to obtain us new members—show and tell is great! But to get formal Press Credentials and a card you have to be a member. There should be at least one member in every Locale! All for \$10.00. \$17.00 via mail. •



## **P.A.L.S. Page Two—New Updated/Revised PR Manual Out Soon**

Below is the **new** Table of Contents for the Updated Public Relations Manual soon available on the website. Link here:

[The Forty and Eight - Public Relations](#) (Ctrl-Click)

### **The Forty and Eight Public Relations Manual**

#### **Part A. Introduction**

#### **Part B.**

- I. Strategizing and prioritizing public relations from the Forty and Eight perspective – Overview
- II. Goals and objectives of manual
- III. Strategies – Methods to achieve public relations goals and objectives
- IV. Target media – Whom must the 40 & 8 reach or influence to make the PR program work

#### **Part C.**

##### **I. Tasks and Tools**

- a. Social Media
- b. Press Releases
- c. Publicity Campaign
- d. Media Lists
- e. Public Speaking
- f. “PR Toolbox”
- g. Press Kits

##### **II. Do’s and Don’ts**

#### **Part D. Newsletters**

#### **Part E. Additional ideas and things to do – helping and improving your existing PR program**

#### **Part F. Internal Public Relations**

- I. Using PR to recruit and retain membership
- II. Leadership in public relations

#### **Summary**

#### **Appendix A – Newsletter and Media Awards**

#### **Appendix B – Sample Press Release**

#### **Appendix C – Press Association of La Société – P.A.L.S.**

#### **Appendix D – Blue Chevaliers Project**

#### **Quick PR Tips**

- Build relationships with journalists. ...
- Use social media to your advantage. ...
- Write a good news release. ...
- Use testimonials. ...
- Set measurable and attainable goals. ...
- Know your target audience. ...
- Be a source and resource to others. ...
- Keep an eye on the competition—avoid “Sameness”

## THE CLIPBOARD



### Pfizer explains vaccine effectiveness against Omicron

Pfizer announced recently that three doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine are effective in neutralizing the Omicron variant, but noted that two doses might not be enough to stop the spread of the new variant. The company says it will continue to develop an Omicron-specific vaccine and plans to have it market ready by March. Pfizer emphasized that its findings are preliminary results, and that it will continue to collect more data and evaluate real-world effectiveness of its vaccine against Omicron.

“Although two doses of the vaccine may still offer protection against severe disease caused by the Omicron strain, it’s clear from these preliminary data that protection is improved with a third dose of our vaccine,” said Albert Bourla, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer.”

### Content creation lessons from the Beatles’ ‘Get Back’

**Rough drafts are terrible; make them anyway.**— Even master songwriters like John Lennon and Paul McCartney don’t get it right on the first go. Spend the nearly eight hours required to watch the full “Get Back” documentary and you will watch a painstaking effort to create songs, with the band yelling gibberish, goofing off and generally floundering until landing on the perfect notes.

The simple takeaway for writers and PR pros: You don’t need a perfect idea to get started. Create space for inspiration, to let an idea surprise and delight you.



**Deadlines are helpful.**—Even a group as successful as the Beatles needed a deadline to stay motivated and deliver the goods.

“The best bit of us, always has been and always will be, is when we’re backs-against-the-wall,” says McCartney as the foursome struggle to write and learn the songs for their new album by their deadline—the end of Jan. when Ringo is set to start filming “The Magic Christian.” The band’s need to hit benchmarks are helpful in forcing the guys—who at points can’t stand to be in the same room with each other—to get back into the recording studio and create what will become the “Let It Be” record.

**Without listening, collaboration withers.**— At the heart of the Beatles documentary is the fraying relationships between McCartney, Lennon and especially George Harrison. Harrison often feels excluded by Lennon and McCartney, believing his songs aren’t as appreciated and his playing undervalued. Lennon and McCartney even openly discuss replacing Harrison with a young Eric Clapton.

At the heart of the breakdown between the Beatles are the communication issues—especially where McCartney struggles to give feedback to Harrison that doesn’t condescend or patronize. Harrison, for his part, fails to adequately express why he’s feeling excluded and what steps could be taken to rectify things. For creative teamwork, there’s no **substitute for active listening and careful communication.**

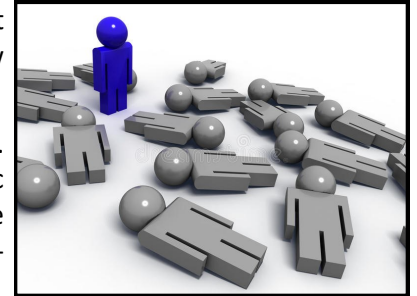
**Fun is an essential element.**—When the Beatles are working well with each other in the documentary, the fun they are having making music together is palpable. Despite interpersonal squabbles, jealousies, financial constraints and disagreements—and a power struggle between McCartney, Lennon and George Harrison—the element of fun is able to reignite the creative spark. Songs start coming together, and they almost can’t help themselves as they start to assemble the album. The takeaway for creatives in other industries: Prioritize joy and having fun.

When your team stops enjoying the work, creativity will disappear with it. • From [www.prdaily](http://www.prdaily)

## PR Editorial — Who will be the last Forty and Eighter?

As December 31st approaches and the deadline for 2022 renewals, it is apparent that we have a way to go to get past that hurdle. My locale still trying to get those last few renewals and my Grand even further to go.

Numbers don't lie and we are losing members and diminishing in numbers every year. Losing 1,800 members to taps in the last couple of years did not help, nor a pandemic and I could throw in a lot of other reasons or perhaps excuses. As Cheminot Nationale I listened in Missouri to a list of Grands and Locales losing their charters for membership.



So, if this decline continues—who could be or will be the last Forty and Eighter? This may be a statement to scoff or laugh at—but please consider it. Locales and Grands go under—where or when does it stop and how are we going to stop it!?

Obviously our last theoretical Forty and Eighter would be in some Locale somewhere, so I'm thinking we have to look at the Locale with Grand support to stop this decline. Sometimes the odds are just against us—the pandemic did not help, ageing leadership, apathy, burn-out, etc. All these things and more put pressure on a Locale attempting to sustain itself. It is fair to say we are still living in uncertain times.

So we've identified a lot of the negative—and there is negativity. Does that mean we forsake the positive—of course not. Look at the Locales and Grands still growing, thriving and working programs. A little analysis won't hurt...

It is fair to say that to thrive and grow you need people. A true statement but not universal—a small dedicated group can do wonders in a community. La Societe has many-many different and unique programs and you need people and even minimum resources to work them. So streamlining might help as well as giving newer motivated members increased responsibility.

It is fair to say that to thrive and grow you need visibility and public awareness.—the community needs to know you exist. Kind of sounds like public relations. Where in your community do veterans exist, shop and visit? You sometimes have to reach out and get your communities and other veterans attention.

I think it is also fair to say to thrive and grow you need resources. Resources can come in the form of people and of course monetary revenue raised or donated. Believe me when I say that the more active you are in programs and your community—funds will come your way. Your members will also feel energized and motivated because your locale is doing something positive—that means renewals and new members attracted to your mission.

Lastly, fair to say that good internal communication is a key to success as well as some short and long term strategic planning. Voyageurs Militaire will not survive on thin ice but only on a solid foundation of dedicated members, community visibility and public awareness as well as resources to support mission and programs—thusly eliminating a future where there is any chance for a last Voyageur Militaire. •

"If you don't fight for what you want, don't cry for what you lose." - Rocky Kahn

"Just because you took longer than others, doesn't mean you failed." - Success Foundation

"I don't know how I am going to win. I just know I'm not going to lose." - Quote from the Vikings

"Defeat is a state of mind; no one is ever defeated until defeat has been accepted as a reality." - Bruce Lee

"Falling down is an accident, staying down is a choice." - Inspirational Quotes

"Be willing to walk alone. Many who started with you won't finish with you." - From Pinterest

**YOU ARE FAR  
TOO SMART  
TO BE THE  
ONLY THING  
STANDING  
IN YOUR WAY**



## Speeches— New Year's Messages of President Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev

Note: The President's message was recorded at 11:50 a.m. on December 23, 1987, in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The General Secretary's message follows the White House press release. They were televised in the United States and the Soviet Union on January 1. *Pres. Reagan's is an excerpt, General Secretary Gorbachev's is in whole*

**Good evening. This is Ronald Reagan, President of the United States. I'm speaking to you, the peoples of the Soviet Union, on the occasion of the New Year.**

I know that in the Soviet Union, as it is all around the world, this is a season of hope and expectation, a time for family to gather, a time for prayer, a time to think about peace. That's true in America, too. At this time of year, Americans travel across the country -- in their cars, by train, or by airplane -- to be together with their families.

This year, the future of the Nation and the world is particularly on our minds. We're thinking of our nation, because in the year ahead, we Americans will choose our next President. Every adult citizen has a role to play in the making of this decision. We will listen to what the candidates say. We will debate their views and our own. And in November we will vote. I'll still be President next January, but soon after that, the man or woman leading our country will be the one the American people pick this coming November.

Last month in Washington, we signed the intermediate nuclear forces treaty, in which we agreed to eliminate an entire class of U.S. and Soviet nuclear weapons. It was a history making step toward reducing the nuclear arms of both sides, but it was just a beginning.

Now in Geneva, Soviet and American representatives are discussing a 50-percent reduction in strategic nuclear weapons. Perhaps we can have a treaty ready to sign by our meeting in spring. The world prays that we will. We on the American side are determined to try. You see, we have a vision of a world safe from the threat of nuclear war, and, indeed, all war. Such a world will have far fewer missiles and other weapons.

Today both America and the Soviet Union have an opportunity to develop a defensive shield against ballistic missiles -- a defensive shield that will threaten no one. For the sake of a safer peace, I am committed to pursuing the possibility that technology offers. Today both America and the Soviet Union have an opportunity to develop a defensive shield against ballistic missiles -- a defensive shield that will threaten no one.



The General Secretary and I also anticipate continuing our talks about other issues of deep concern to our peoples -- for example, the expansion of contact between our peoples and more information flowing across our borders.

Expanding contacts and information will require decisions about life at home that will have an impact on relations abroad.

This is also true in the area of human rights. As you know, we Americans are concerned about human rights, including freedoms of speech, press, worship, and travel. We will never forget that a wise man has said that: "Violence does not live alone and is not capable of living alone. It is necessarily interwoven with falsehood." Silence is a form of falsehood. We will always speak out on behalf of human dignity.

We Americans are also concerned, as I know you are, about senseless conflicts in a number of regions. In some instances, regimes backed by foreign military power are oppressing their own peoples, giving rise to popular resistance and the spread of fighting beyond their borders. Too many mothers, including Soviet mothers, have wept over the graves of their fallen sons. True peace means not only preventing a big war but ending smaller ones, as well.

There is no such thing as inevitability in history. We can choose to make the world safer and freer if we have courage -- but then courage is something neither of our peoples have ever lacked. We have been allies in a terrible war, a war in which the Soviet peoples gave the ages an enduring testament to courage. Let us consecrate this year to showing not courage for war but courage for peace. We owe this to mankind. We owe it to our children and their children and generations to come.

Happy New Year! Thank you, and God bless you. •

*From New Year's Messages of President Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev | Ronald Reagan (reaganlibrary.gov)*

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**Ladies and gentleman, friends, as we celebrate the New Year, I am glad to address the citizens of the United States of America and to convey to you season's greetings and best wishes from all Soviet people.**

The first of January is a day when we take stock of the past year and try to look ahead into the coming year. The past year, 1987, ended with an event which can be regarded as a good omen. In Washington, President Reagan and I signed a treaty on the elimination of intermediate and shorter range missiles. That treaty marks the first step along the path of reducing nuclear arms, and that is its enduring value. But the treaty also has another merit: It has brought our two peoples closer together. We are entering the New Year with a hope for continued progress, progress towards a safer world.

We are ready to continue, fruitfully, the negotiations on reducing strategic arms with a view to signing a treaty to that effect even in the first half of this year. We would like, without delay, to address the problem of cutting back drastically conventional forces and arms in Europe. We are ready for interaction in resolving other problems, including regional ones.

I think it can be said that one of the features of the past year was the growing mutual interest our two peoples took in each other. Contacts between Soviet and American young people, war veterans, scientists, teachers, astronauts, businessmen, and cultural leaders have expanded greatly. Like thousands of strands, those contacts are beginning to weave into what I would call a tangible fabric of trust and growing mutual understanding. It is the duty of Soviet and American political leaders to keep in mind the sentiment of the people in their countries and to reflect their will in political decisions.

The Soviet people are getting down to work in the New Year with an awareness of their great responsibility for the present and for the future. There will be profound changes in our country along the lines of continued perestroika, democratization, and radical economic reform. In the final analysis, all this will let us move on to a broad avenue of accelerated development.

We know that you Americans have quite a few problems, too. In grappling with those problems, however, I feel that both you and we must remember what is truly crucial: Human life is equally priceless, whether in the Soviet Union, the United States, or in any other country. So, let us spare no effort to affirm peace on Earth.

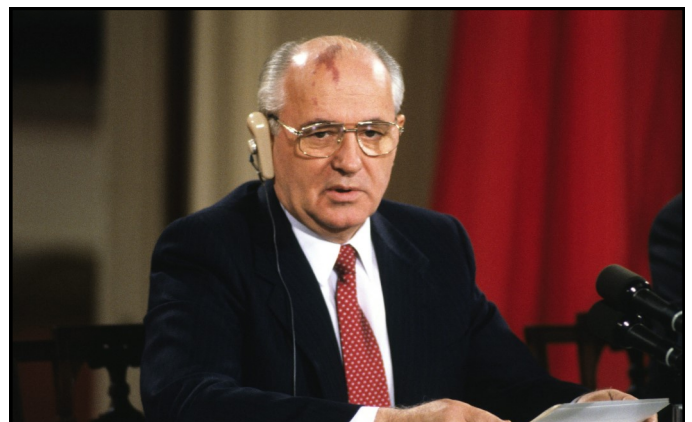
Ladies and gentlemen, during the official departure ceremony in Washington, I said with regret that on that visit I had had little chance to see America. I feel, however, that I did understand what is most important about the American people, and that is their enormous stock of good will. Let me assure you that Soviet people, too, have an equally great stock of good will.

Putting it to full use is the most noble and responsible task of government and political leaders in our two countries. If they could only do that, what is but a dream today would come true: a lasting peace; an end to the arms race; wider ranging trade; cooperation in combating hunger, disease, and environmental problems; and progress in ensuring human rights and resolving other humanitarian issues.

May the coming year of 1988 become an important milestone as we move down that road.

In concluding this New Year address to the people of the United States of America, I wish peace, happiness, and joy to every American family.

A happy New Year to all of you. •





**The Army Is Responsible for Ray-Bans-** U.S. Army Air Corps Lieutenant General John MacCready asked Bausch & Lomb to make glasses for his pilots that would block the rays of the sun and reduce their nausea and headaches, and thus the company Ray-Ban was formed.

**George Washington Chose the Army's Dress Colors**—George Washington chose the Army's service dress colors in 1779. Though the Army has tried many color schemes over the years, in 2010 they went back to Washington's picks.

**The Army Tested Chemical Agents on the United States**—In the 1950s and 1960s, the military used motorized blowers to blow zinc cadmium sulfide into the air over large swaths of the United States as part of Operation LAC (Large Area Coverage). The San Francisco Bay area, Saint Louis, parts of Minnesota, and the coasts of South Carolina and Georgia were all sprayed with the substance. Zinc cadmium sulfide was used because it's a fluorescent, and the military was researching potential dispersion of chemical and biological weapons.

**The Army Has a Special Unit of Skeptics**—Graduates from Fort Leavenworth's University of Foreign Military and Cultural Studies have been trained to play devil's advocates to avoid the pitfalls of groupthink that were happening in the military. Graduates of the program are called Red Teamers.

**A Third of Union Army Soldiers Were Immigrants**—The Union would have had a tough time during the Civil War if it weren't for immigrants, who made up a third of the army, and African-Americans, who were one-tenth of soldiers. In fact, in a quarter of all regiments, the majority was made up of foreigners.

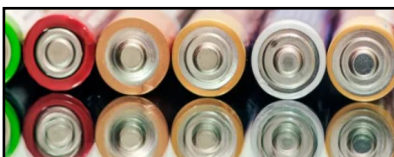
**The Ranger Slogan Was Created During the Normandy Invasion**—"Rangers lead the way" was adopted as the Army Rangers slogan during an exchange on Omaha Beach during the Normandy Invasion. General Norman Cota said to Major Max Schneider, "If you're Rangers, lead the way!"

**Coca-Cola Had Engineers in the Army in WWII**—Coca-Cola president Robert Woodruff said that any servicemen in World War II should be able to get a bottle of Coke for a nickel, anywhere in the world, so Coca-Cola created the Technical Observer program to make it happen. There were 148 Technical Observers, who supervised the shipment and operation of 64 bottling plants. Technical Observers had an Army officer's rank and pay, as well as uniforms with a special patch to identify them. They distributed more than 5 billion bottles of Coke to soldiers.

**The Swastika Was a Sleeve Insignia Until WWII**—The 45th Infantry used a swastika as their sleeve insignia to honor their numerous Native American members, for whom it was a symbol of good luck. After the symbol was co-opted by the Nazis, the Infantry abandoned the symbol and settled on using the Thunderbird as their insignia thereafter.



**An Entire Island of People Lost Their Homes for a Military Base**—The every inhabitant of the island of Diego Garcia, over 1,000 in total, was kicked out by the British government to make room for a U.S. military base to be constructed. The inhabitants were relocated to Mauritius, mostly in slum neighborhoods. Mauritius only accepted the islanders after payment of £650,000.



**It Takes Hundreds of Pounds of Batteries to Power a Short Mission-** For an infantry platoon of 30 men to carry out a 3-day mission, they have to carry 400 pounds of batteries to supply power to all of their equipment. •

*From 30 Crazy Facts about the U.S. Army (bestlifeonline.com)*





# *Spotlight on Public Relations*



## **Spotlight on Newsletters—Content**

*Always refer to our new PR manual as a first resource on doing an effective newsletter.*

The larger the newsletter the more content that can be included—so content may have to be prioritized. Consider these content ideas...

Minutes from promenades and Cheminots.

Calendar of upcoming events.

Use for special announcements.

Copies of flyers for special events.

A specific member or volunteer spotlight. Voyager of the month?

Spotlight or highlight birthdays.

Highlight interaction with community and friends of the locale.

Photo gallery or photo documentation of special events.

Reports on progress of special events or future calendar events.

Share your annual or special reports—highlighting specific milestones or achievements.

Tips and advice—great for new members trying to learn.

Notes or articles or words from leadership—inspiration from leadership is essential.

Call for Volunteers (important!) - If you're like most, you're probably always looking for volunteers. Your newsletter is the perfect place to let people know what you're looking for. Just remember that it's best to provide specific descriptions of the types of work you need done and the time commitment required. More people will respond if they have a clear sense of whether or not this is something they can commit to.

Call for Donations—Lastly, you can always mention your current campaign or ask for donations to a specific fund/program. Make sure your call to action is specific and remember not to include this in your newsletter too often — you don't want to deter your members from opening your newsletters in the future. At the end of the day, your newsletter is not part of your fundraising plan, its primary purpose is to keep your community engaged and interested in what you're doing. Perfect example is nurses training.

Tell specific stories of the people you are helping—Examples, nursing scholarships, Flag for First Graders, etc.

This list gives you some ideas about what to include in your newsletters. The most important takeaway is that your audience wants to read stories about how their involvement is helping to advance your mission. •



# POSTER OF THE MONTH



**"We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year's Day."**

**— Edith Lovejoy Pierce**

## Motivation of the Month—The Silent Ranks

The Silent Ranks—I wear no uniforms, no blues or army greens. But I am in the military in the ranks rarely seen. I have no rank upon my shoulders. Salutes I do not give. But the military world is the place where I live. I'm not in the chain of command, orders I do not get. But my husband is the one who does, this I cannot forget. I'm not the ones who fires the weapon, who puts my life on the line. But my job is just as tough. I'm the one that's left behind. My husband is a patriot, a brave and prideful man and the call to serve his country, not all can understand. Behind the lines I see the things needed to keep this country free. My husband makes the sacrifice, but so do our kids and me. I love the man I married. Soldiering is his life. But I stand among the silent ranks known as the Military Wife . •



CHECKS MUST BE MADE PAYABLE TO THE "40/8 BLUE CHEVALIERS"

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP TO THE BLUE CHEVALIERS		INITIAL MEMBERSHIP		
NAME:		40ET8 MEMBER	LA FEMMES MEMBER	NON MEMBER SUPPORTER
ADDRESS:	STREET:	CITY:	ST:	ZIP:
PHONE:	EMAIL:			

MAIL WITH CHECK MADE PAYABLE TO THE "40/8 BLUE CHEVALIERS" FOR **\$15.00** TO:  
**40/8 Blue Chevaliers**  
**c/o Robert Cearlock,**  
**7 Lawnwood Dr.**  
**Jackson, TN, 38305**



**Time to renew for 2022 (that rhymes!) !!!**



## P.A.L.S. APPLICATION—RENEWAL or NEW MEMBER

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ New Member ☐ Renewal ☐

Email \_\_\_\_\_ **PUFL \$100.00** ☐

Voiture Locale \_\_\_\_\_

Dues: Mail only \$17.00 ☐

Mail and Digital \$17.00 ☐

Digital only \$10.00 ☐

**PUFL down payment (minimum \$25)** ☐

**Checks made out to P.A.L.S.**

**Remit to:**

Renslar R. Keagle

8714 Marble Drive

El Paso, TX 79904-1710

rennykeagle@gmail.com





## More World War I History—The Battle of Verdun

At 7:12 a.m. on the morning of February 21, 1916, a shot from a German Krupp 38-centimeter long-barreled gun—one of over 1,200 such weapons set to bombard French forces along a 20-kilometer front stretching across the Meuse River—strikes a cathedral in Verdun, France, beginning the Battle of Verdun, which would stretch on for 10 months and become the longest conflict of World War I.

By the beginning of 1916, the war in France, from the Swiss border to the English Channel, had settled into the long slog of trench warfare. Despite the hard conditions in the trenches, Erich von Falkenhayn, chief of staff of the German army, believed that the key to winning the war lay not in confronting Russia in the east but in defeating the French in a major battle on the Western Front.

In December 1915, Falkenhayn convinced the kaiser, over the objections of other military leaders such as Paul von Hindenburg, that in combination with unrestricted submarine warfare at sea, a major French loss in battle would push the British—whom Falkenhayn saw as the most potent of the Allies—out of the war.

**The Germans designed Verdun to be a battle of attrition.** Rather than outmaneuvering them or breaking through their lines, Falkenhayn planned to lure the French into a trap that would force them to throw troops into a battle of attrition where the conditions favored the Germans.

The Germans selected Verdun as their target not only because it was nestled in a salient, or bulge, in the Western Front, but also because it was steeped in political history. Verdun was an ancient city that had been among the last to fall during France's humiliating defeat in 1870-71's Franco-Prussian War, and it had since been built into one of the most heavily fortified strongholds along the border with Germany.

**The attack caught the French by surprise.** Germany's preparations for the Battle of Verdun involved one of World War I's largest buildups of men and equipment. Using rugged terrain and a huge air presence to screen their movements, Falkenhayn's men spent seven weeks constructing new railway lines, assembling heavy concrete bunkers to house troops, and stockpiling more than 1,200 artillery pieces. A staggering 2.5 million shells were shipped to the front using 1,300 munitions trains. Despite the massive engineering project going on right under their noses, the French were largely unprepared for a German attack.

**The French kept up defense of Verdun thanks to a 'Sacred' Road.** Due to a lack of secure railways and constant enemy bombardments, the French were forced to rely on a lone, 20-foot-wide road to supply their stand at Verdun. Upon taking command of French forces in late-February 1916, General Philippe Pétain took steps to keep the lifeline open. Troops were put to work laying gravel and making repairs to the roadway, and a fleet of 3,000 military and civilian trucks was marshaled to serve as transport vehicles.



**The battle included devastating uses of artillery.** Of the 800,000 casualties at Verdun, an estimated 70 percent were caused by artillery. The Germans launched two million shells during their opening bombardment—more than in any engagement in history to that point—and the two sides eventually fired between 40 and 60 million shells over the next 10 months.

Rumbles from the barrages were heard as far as 100 miles away, and soldiers described certain hills as being so heavily bombed that they gushed fire like volcanoes. Those lucky enough to survive were often left with severe shell shock from the constant drumroll of falling bombs.



**Verdun's unidentified dead are housed in a battlefield ossuary.** Despite the Germans' plan to "bleed France white," the Battle of Verdun resulted in roughly equal casualties for both sides. The German death toll was 143,000 (out of 337,000 total casualties) while the French lost 162,440 (out of 377,231). Since artillery blasts buried many of the fallen or rendered their remains unidentifiable, most of the recovered bodies have since been placed in the Douaumont Ossuary, a sobering memorial that contains the mixed bones of at least 130,000 French and German soldiers. •