

NEWS RELEASE

Nevada Department of Veterans Services
"SERVING NEVADA'S HEROES"



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SERVING NEVADA'S HEROES

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WWII Army Veterans from Boulder City to Posthumously Receive French Legion of Honor Medal in Special Ceremony

The Nevada Department of Veterans Services (NDVS) will host a special ceremony to present two former residents of the Nevada State Veterans Home with the highest award from France.

Former U.S. Army Sergeants Ahrez Karim and Leroy Wagner are both now deceased. But they will posthumously receive the insignia of Chevalier (Knight) of the National Order of the Legion of Honor on Sunday, August 26 at 2:00 p.m. The ceremony will be held at the Nevada State Veterans Home, 100 Veterans Memorial Drive in Boulder City, Nevada.

Both veterans were highly decorated after serving in World War II. Sergeant Ahzez "Jim" Karim was drafted in 1943. He parachuted at night behind German lines in preparation for the June 6th D-Day landings. On D-Day, he went from Private to platoon leader as his teams' Sergeant. Karim was awarded the Silver Star, two Bronze Stars and the WWII Victory Medal.

Sergeant LeRoy Wagner enlisted in the U.S. Army on December 9, 1941, just two days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. During his enlistment, he became a Tech Sergeant with the 45th Infantry Division, known as the "Thunderbirds." He also earned the Combat Infantry Badge, Good Conduct Medal, Bronze Star Medal and a Purple Heart.

The history of the National Order of the Legion Honor dates all the way back to the French Revolution. It was the wish of Napoleon Bonaparte, 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.

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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).

The Honorable Christophe Lemoine, Consul General of France in Los Angeles was extremely helpful in providing assistance in ensuring Karim and Wagner received this posthumous honor.

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