

Special Honor for G. Virgil Myers

Our good friend, tireless supporter and a Director of the Descendants of 80th Division Veterans, has been honored by the French Government for his merits and accomplishments. A decree signed by the President of the French Republic on May 11, 2008, named **G. Virgil Myers** a “Chevalier” of the Legion of Honor. Chevalier means “knight” in French. He was first notified of this honor in a letter from the Ambassador of France to the United States, Pierre Vimont, in June.

The Legion of Honor, created by Napoleon in 1802, acknowledges exceptional services rendered to France by persons of great merit. Mr. Myers was recognized as a sign of France’s gratitude and appreciation for his personal contribution to the United States’ decisive role in the liberation of France during WW II. In the years since the end of that conflict, he has also been very active in commemorative activities in France and Luxembourg. The Legion of Honor is the highest medal given by the French Government to anyone for any reason. The distinction is divided into four grades -- Knight; Officer; Commander; Grand Officer.

On November 25th, the presentation of the medal was made to Mr. Myers, along with fifteen other U.S. heroes, in ceremonies at the East Lake Woodlands Country Club in Oldsmar, Florida. Presiding was Philippe Vinogradoff, Consul General of France, assigned to the Miami Embassy.

In his letter to the honorees, Consul General Vinogradoff stated, “The freedom we enjoy today, we owe to the courage, dedication and sacrifices of these young American men, so many of whom sleep forever in the French land they liberated. France cannot, and will not forget them. Their memory will live forever in the heart of the French people. On this day, November 25th, 2008, I am deeply honored to have the privilege to bestow, in the name of the President of the French Republic, the Legion of Honor on these American heroes.”

The medal for the French Legion of Honor is a five double-cornered star enameled in white, joined with branches of laurel and oak. In the center of the star, a medallion represents: on the front, the symbol of the Republic with the inscription “Republique Francaise”; on the reverse, a flag and banner intertwining one another with the circular inscription, “Honneur et Patrie - 29 Floreal an X”. The ribbon has always been in red moire silk.

Among Americans honored by this award are Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, astronomer Simon Newcomb; sculptor Augustus Saint Gaudens, painter John Singer Sargent, and recently, Patricia Harriman, U. S. Ambassador to France.

Mr. Myers served in the 80th Division, Company G, 317th Infantry. He currently sits on the Executive Council of the 80th Division Veterans Association as a Trustee. He is extremely proud and honored to have been cited for this award, and as he commented, he is “walking tall cotton”.

The Descendants organization is also proud to recognize our good friend and to send hearty congratulations on his distinctive service and award.