

**Board of Chosen Freeholders**

County of Hunterdon
71 Main Street, Building #1
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Flemington, NJ 08822-2900

MEDIA RELEASE**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****DATE: February 12, 2020****Contact: Susan J. Soloway, Freeholder Deputy Director**Susan.soloway@co.hunterdon.nj.us

Raritan Township WWII Veteran Receives Highest French Honor

Joined by his family and a large crowd of fellow Veterans and officials at the Hunterdon County Historic Courthouse on Tuesday, Hunterdon County Veteran John Paller was presented with France's highest award, the National Order of the Legion of Honor, for his service in combat during World War II.

In presenting the medal to Mr. Paller, France's Consul General in New York, Ms. Anne-Claire Legendre, stated, "This prestigious distinction is an expression of the deep gratitude that the French people have for the Americans who contributed to the liberation of France in World War II. We will never forget the bravery of American heroes such as John Paller."

Mr. Paller of Raritan Township, a veteran of 35 combat air missions with the 491st Bombardment Group during 1944 -45, recounted the names of each of his crew members that flew on the B-24 Liberator missions during the war, saying, "my crewmates deserve the credit and recognition for doing our job. They were good friends and great men."

Hunterdon County Freeholder Board Deputy Director and Veterans' Liaison Susan J. Soloway and Freeholder John E. Lanza presented Mr. Paller with a Proclamation from the Freeholder Board that noted, "John Paller is a member of special group of Americans that Tom Brokaw correctly referred to as "The Greatest Generation," that were willing to give selflessly of themselves and pay the ultimate sacrifice, if necessary, to liberate the world from occupation and uphold freedom for future generations."

Mr. Paller was also honored by the State Senate and Assembly with a Legislative Proclamation, presented by Assemblyman Andrew Zwicker, and a Proclamation from the Raritan Township Committee, presented by Mayor Jeff Kuhl.

Mr. Paller said, "This is a day I will never forget."

Mr. Paller's wife, son, daughter, son-in law, and granddaughter were in attendance. Hunterdon County Sheriff Fred W. Brown, and Surrogate Susan Hoffman also attended the ceremony.



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Ms. Legendre, a diplomat who represents France in the New York metropolitan area, was presented with tokens of appreciation from the Freeholders and Frenchtown.

Freeholder Soloway thanked the Consul General for traveling to Hunterdon County for the presentation, "We hope that you may have noticed on your way here that Hunterdon County is an agricultural county. We have over 100,000 farmland acres and 1600 farms.

And one of our farms, the Bobolink Farm, has produced a cheese that received the Silver Medal at the 2018 Farmstead Cheese Awards in Lyon, France. I think it is quite an achievement for a cheese produced in the United States, right here in Hunterdon County, to be recognized in France."

The Freeholder presented Ms. Legendre with "a pound of the award winning, 100% grass-fed, Amram cheese, made only a few miles from here by Bobolink Farm owners Jonathan & Nina White, in honor of your visit to Hunterdon County."

Frenchtown Mayor Bradley Myhre presented Ms. Legendre with a photo of the signing of Frenchtown's "Easel of Love," a mural created in support of the victims of the terrorist attack on Nice, France, on July 14, Bastille Day, in 2016.

The Frenchtown Business and Professional (FBPA), created the mural, under the direction of Eric Fiorito, at its annual Bastille Day celebration that same day.

"We are honored today to have this opportunity to let your nation know of our support," Mayor Myhre stated.

Ms. Legendre was most appreciative of the gesture.