

Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Library Collections

This is a PDF of a folder from our textual collections.

Collection: Blackwell, Morton: Files
Folder Title: Pershing Hall, Paris
Box: 45

To see more digitized collections visit:

<https://reaganlibrary.gov/archives/digital-library>

To see all Ronald Reagan Presidential Library inventories visit:

<https://reaganlibrary.gov/document-collection>

Contact a reference archivist at: reagan.library@nara.gov

Citation Guidelines: <https://reaganlibrary.gov/citing>

National Archives Catalogue: <https://catalog.archives.gov/>



PROPERTY REVIEW BOARD

17th & PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.


WASHINGTON, D.C. 20500

November 30, 1982

file

MEMORANDUM FOR THOMAS TRACY
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR ADMINISTRATION

STUART SCHIFFER
DEPUTY ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL,
CIVIL DIVISION

FROM: BRUCE SELFON 
SUBJECT: Future of Pershing Hall, Paris

The purpose of this memorandum is to recap our meeting today on the future of Pershing Hall, Paris. The Property Review Board staff will serve as the central clearing house for the coordination of Executive Branch activities on the future of Pershing Hall. We have agreed that a suitable memorial to General Pershing must be maintained in Paris. It appears that, at this point, a number of questions exist about the status of the current tenants of Pershing Hall. Therefore, it was agreed that, as a first step, the Department of State will undertake a thorough survey of the property. This survey will include the identification and legal status (leasehold or otherwise) of the existing occupants of the property as well as a physical examination of the premises and the use to which they are being put as a memorial to General Pershing. The State Department indicated that this report would be completed by January 15 and, after review by the Department of Justice, forwarded to me.

The Department of Justice will continue its legal review of the responsibilities and obligations of the United States government as the title holder of the premises. One course of action that may be pursued is the disposal of the existing property and relocation of a memorial to General Pershing elsewhere in Paris using the proceeds from the disposal. If the existing building is retained, it may be that some current uses are incompatible with Federal management. Therefore, as a precaution, the Justice Department will begin to prepare the necessary legal background material for the possible termination of the tenancy of some or all of the present occupants of Pershing Hall. Justice will also develop any necessary legislative proposal if the memorial to General Pershing is relocated.

The State Department will assume management of the property once the premises have been made vacant or satisfactory arrangements have been made with any remaining tenants.

The State Department representatives stated that their responsibilities would be of an interim nature, pending the eventual transfer or disposal of Pershing Hall. If it appears that the disposal of Pershing Hall will not be the course of action, it was stated that it would be inappropriate for State to function as a permanent property manager.

For our part, we will, with the assistance of Morton Blackwell, handle liaison with the various Veterans' organizations in discussions on the future of Pershing Hall. We will also seek to reach an understanding with the Hill on the future of Pershing Hall and the use of proceeds from any disposal of the building. In addition, we will urge the American Legion, as the former manager of the property, to provide what written records they can to the Justice Department to assist in clearing up the present situation.

I greatly appreciate your cooperative attitude toward the resolution of the situation. Once the State Department survey has been completed, I think we will need to meet again and assess the next steps based on the facts before us.

Please let me know if you have any comments on our respective responsibilities, as outlined in this memo.

cc: Edwin Harper
Morton Blackwell ✓



From the desk of

Major General J. Milnor Roberts, AUS (Ret.)

Executive Director

12/1/82

Morton --

This material just arrived from Paris regarding
Pershing Hall.


J. Milnor Roberts

RESERVE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES

1 Constitution Avenue, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002 • 202/479-2200

Memo
from the desk of

COOPER T. HOLT

November 30, 1982

The enclosed letter to Ed Meese
is forwarded for your information.

Cooper

VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS OF THE UNITED STATES



F4I copies

10.

November 29, 1982

Bruce
Selgon +
Jim Jenkins
12/2/82

C
Edwin Meese, III, Counselor
to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

O
Dear Ed:

I have been advised that a meeting was recently held in which you were involved where the suggestion was made that Pershing Hall in Paris, France be sold.

P
As you may be aware, Pershing Hall is located on Rue Pierre Charron and because of its history and location should really be retained as a focal point for American activities in Paris. In view thereof, the Veterans of Foreign Wars fully supports H.R. 6997, introduced by the Honorable G. V. (Sonny) Montgomery to transfer control of Pershing Hall to the Pershing Hall Memorial Building Foundation.

In view of the interest of a number of highly influential Americans in Paris and the pending legislation, your views with respect to Pershing Hall would be greatly appreciated.

Y
With best wishes and kind regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

COOPER T. HOLT
Executive Director

CTH/ket

RESERVE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF EUROPE

PARIS CHAPTER

MAJ GEN J. Milnor ROBERTS, Jr.
AUS - RET
Executive Director
Reserve Officers Association
One Constitution Avenue, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

Paris, 26 November 1982

Dear Major General Roberts,

I must say that I was slightly non-plussed by our recent telephone conversation, and not prepared for what you related. I had the feeling that after the Embassy, who after all are pretty well placed to judge what is going on here, had concurred in the Foundation idea, that things were in fairly good shape. Actually the idea originated with the Embassy, which in a sense negates these accusations.

However, I should stress one thing, and that is that everyone tends to confuse Pershing Hall with the Legion Post who occupy some of the space, and whose fortunes vary with their various administrations.

The rest of the building contains a host of community organizations, as I pointed out in my initial letter.

Richmond, who is a mental case, has always had an axe to grind with the Post, he used to hang out in the lobby, buttonholing people as they came in and filling the air with his imagined complaints. He was barred from the premises numerous times, and finally expelled. I am not too sure what he does for a living, but I would be ready to bet that he has never filed a tax return, American or French, over the last twenty years.

Why he should be listened to rather than the rest of us passes all comprehension.

But back to the building, it was created as a "Memorial Hall" not a static monument, and has always had this function, and there are memorabilia all over the place, however it is a living memorial, which was what was intended by the founders.

The operating committee has run it for numerous years, at no cost to the Government, and we are prepared to continue to do so. As to the one "commercial tenant", Paris Match, who use the top floors for their archives, as a proper board of trustees we asked both the National organization of the American Legion and the French fiscal authorities to permit this tenancy, and I enclose evidence thereof. You will note that correspondence is addressed to John R. WOOD, who was the then U.S. Consul, and my predecessor as chairman of the committee, he is available in Florida if needed.

As to "creaming" any of the profits, the accounting is simple, it consists of rental contributions that come in and go out in expenses for upkeep, maintenance, taxes, salaries and utilities, and eventually capital repairs.

We were audited by the GAO in 1962 and came out like a rose, and more recently by the IRS, we furnished the latter with our accounts and have heard nothing since.

Frankly, I think that once more there is confusion with the Post, and Richmond in his dementia is after them.

The Post has had tax problems with the French, which I solved, by obtaining forgiveness for the past, and financial problems with suppliers, which our Secretary-Treasurer Spurgeon C. BOYD, by getting a concessionnaire in to run their restaurant and bar, has solved. Neither of us did this as officers of the Post, but because we could not tolerate such a situation within the building.

Colonel Boyd called Washington yesterday and spoke to the Legion Legislative office, and then to the Legion Judge Advocate in Indianapolis.

Unless these people are fibbing, which is possible, the Washington office seems to say that they themselves have no objection to the Foundation.

The Judge Advocate was perhaps less clear, and apparently said that he was hoping for a determination from the Federal Government within a week as to the destiny of the building.

Where Mr. Meese's office and Louis Richmond fit into this, I cannot guess.

But I would reiterate that what we hope for is a divorce from the Legion, and that seemed to be their desire, too, with the building primarily dedicated to veterans, while they last, and to the community.

I am going to contact the USO in Washington, who have as much space as the Post has in the building, and more importantly, Mrs. Meese, who is a member of their Board of Governors, to see what we can do there.

For what it is worth, I shall get together a background on Louis Richmond and forward it to you.

I am genuinely sorry that this incident, which I have difficulty in gaging, took place, and at a loss to understand why this man gets such an audience.

We much appreciate your patience and help in this matter,

Sincerely,


RUSSELL M. PORTER

EXHIBIT I

This is a copy of a letter written to John R. WOOD, US Consul and member of the operating committee of Pershing Hall from a French attorney obviously charged with handling the Paris-Match affair.

In essence it says:

Dear Sir,

I am pleased to have just received your letter. According to the desire which you have expressed, I am eager to direct your attention to the following points:

1) Could the American Legion, having only the right to occupy the building which belongs to the US Government - after the information furnished in your letter - dispose of space in the building to a third party without authorization by the US Government?

(As he understands, the decision made by Mr. Woods and associates is that:)

Everything depends upon the statutes of the National American Legion and American legislation.

2) It seems to me that it would be wise to seek also, authorization from the French tax authorities. The building is not sheltered from taxation, although it is owned by a foreign government, because it is not used by the American Embassy for governmental purposes.

In the following paragraphs, Paris-Match accepts responsibility to recognize the status of the building as non-profit and to respect the premises by isolating their personal taxes.

In lieu of a formal contract, a Gentlemen's Agreement was made between Paris-Match and the committee.

• LÉON CRUTIANS

DOCTEUR EN DROIT

AVOCAT A LA COUR D'APPEL DE PARIS

18, RUE DE MAUBEUGE - PARIS 8^e

TÉL : TRUDAINE 24-76

Paris, le 9 Mai 1956

aff:A.C. C/MATCH-

Monsieur John R. WOOD
Consul des Etats-Unis
Avenue Gabriel
- P A R I S -

Monsieur le Consul,

J'ai l'honneur de vous accuser réception de votre lettre, que je reçois à l'instant.

Selon le désir par Vous exprimé, je m'empresse d'attirer votre attention sur les points suivants :

1°- Les ANCIENS COMBATTANTS AMERICAINS n'ayant qu'un droit d'occupation sur l'immeuble appartenant au Gouvernement des Etats-Unis - d'après les renseignements fournis par votre lettre - peuvent-ils disposer du dit immeuble en faveur d'un tiers, sans y être autorisés par le dit Gouvernement ?

Tout dépend des statuts de l'Association des Anciens Combattants et de la législation Américaine.

2°- Il me semble qu'il serait prudent, si tel est également votre avis, de soumettre préalablement ce cas au Quai d'Orsay, afin d'être expressément autorisés à mettre le dit local, à la disposition de Paris-Match.

L'acquisition d'un immeuble par un pays Etranger ne crée pas ipso facto, au profit de cet immeuble, l'immunité Diplomatique, celle-ci n'existera que lorsque l'immeuble sera affecté au service de l'Ambassade de l'Etat.

Bien que Paris-Match reconnaisse l'exterritorialité de l'immeuble et renonce à se faire prévaloir des lois Françaises; il serait à craindre qu'en cas de contestation éventuelle, les actes se référant à cet immeuble soient considérés, non pas comme revêtant le caractère d'actes de puissance publique, mais comme de simples actes

de gestion, se trouvant soumis à l'application des lois et appréciation des Tribunaux Français.

3°- De toute façon, il serait prudent d'exiger de Paris-Match, qu'il prenne à sa charge tous impôts présents et futurs, ainsi que toutes taxes municipales, ou autres, incombant normalement aux Propriétaires de l'immeuble, ou à l'Association des Anciens Combattants, occupante du dit immeuble.

Je suis certain que Paris-Match, obtiendrait facilement l'autorisation du Quai d'Orsay, et accepterait de supporter les impôts à la charge du Propriétaire.

J'espère que vous arriverez facilement à applanir ces difficultés, quoiqu'il en soit, je reste toujours à votre disposition.

Et vous prie de croire, Monsieur le Consul, à l'expression de mes sentiments distingués et bien dévoués.

Paul Duru

EXHIBIT II

This is a copy of a telegram received by LeRoy SHAW then Secretary of the committee from Sedley PECK of the American Legion National. It was found in our files on Paris-Match and dated 4.5 1956.

LT SHAW AMERICAN LEGION
42 RUE PIERRECHARRON PARIS =

MP

8184
86

RÉPONDRE
STERN UNION
PPELEZ
ut 60-74

LE PORT EST GRATUIT. Le facteur doit délivrer un récépissé à souche
lorsqu'il est chargé de recouvrer une taxe.

TÉLÉGRAMME : **Via WESTERN UNION** **TERN UNION**

IN 12 INDIANAPOLIS IND 22 3 43AP

GREGG APPROVES RENTAL PROPOSAL ALSO SIXTY THOUSAND DOLLAR
RESOLUTION ADOPTED BEST WISHES = SEDLEY PECK +

EXHIBIT III

This is a copy of a letter addressed to LeRoy A. SHAW then Secretary of the committee containing the statement from the French tax authorities that any taxes imposed upon Paris-Match as a commercial entity will not effect the non-profit status of Pershing Hall. More precisely, no tax imposed on Paris-Match will be directed to the operating committee.

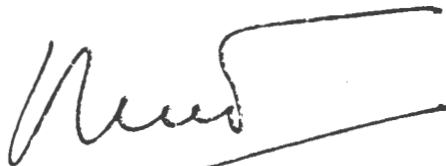
Paris, le 20 JUILLET 56

LE DIRECTEUR GÉNÉRAL
DES IMPÔTS

Monsieur,

Pour répondre au désir que vous avez exprimé dans votre lettre du 14 mai 1956, j'ai l'honneur de vous confirmer que les facilités consenties à l'hebdomadaire PARIS-MARCHÉ, en mettant à sa disposition à titre provisoire des locaux nus aux 4e et 5e étages de l'immeuble que l'American Légion occupe 49, rue Pierre Charron à PARIS et qui appartient au Gouvernement des Etats-Unis, ne sont susceptibles de donner lieu à l'établissement d'aucun impôt direct au nom de votre organisation.

Je vous prie d'agréer, Monsieur, l'assurance de ma considération très distinguée.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Rue', is written above a long, slightly curved horizontal line that spans across the lower right portion of the page.

Monsieur LE ROY A. SHAW
THE AMERICAN LEGION
49, rue Pierre Charron,
PARIS.



Reserve Officers Association of the United States



National Headquarters • MINUTE MAN MEMORIAL BUILDING
1 CONSTITUTION AVENUE, N.E., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20002
TELEPHONE 202/479-2200

ARMY ★ NAVY ★ AIR FORCE ★ MARINE CORPS ★ COAST GUARD ★ PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE ★ NOAA

24 November 1982

The Honorable Edwin Meese, III
Counsellor to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Re: Pershing Hall Memorial Building,
Paris, France

Dear Mr. Meese:

I understand that disposition of the Pershing Hall Memorial Building was discussed with you at a recent meeting, and I want you to know that we have a very profound interest in the subject. Also, I believe that some information which may have been given to you at that meeting was erroneous.

For example, the French publication, Paris-Match, rents the top floor of the subject building but only as a storage area for their photo library. The balance of the building is indeed a memorial to General Pershing and other participants in World War I, and the building is properly identified at the entrance. Rents received from Paris-Match are properly recorded and reported to Congress as provided in the Public Law.

The building is extensively used by the following organizations: Reserve Officers Association, American Overseas Memorial Day Association, French Veterans Organizations, American Wives of Europeans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Common Cause, The American College in Paris, The University of Maryland, Schiller University, The Military Order of Foreign Wars, The American Club of Paris, The American Women's Group, Association of American Residents Overseas, Council on International Student Exchange (CIEE), Euronews, and The Military Order of Foreign Wars.

If the property is sold, this very useful building will no longer be available to Americans in Paris and the proceeds will not properly be paid into the U. S. Treasury but would have to be used to erect another memorial to General Pershing which would deprive all of these veterans organizations and others of the use of a fine building which presently accomplishes both objectives.

I strongly urge the Administration to delay any decision on disposition of Pershing Hall until all the facts are known, and these facts could be ascertained at a public hearing before the Veterans Committee of the House of Representatives and/or the Senate.

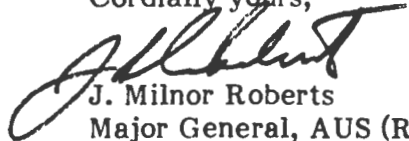
The Honorable Edwin Meese, III

24 November 1982

Page 2

I would be glad to discuss this matter further with you at your convenience and show you photographs of this building which document the memorial aspects of it and show that the great majority of the space is in fact being used for the purpose intended.

Cordially yours,



J. Milnor Roberts
Major General, AUS (Ret.)
Executive Director

JMR/gw

✓ bcc: Mr. Morton Blackwell

PERSHING HALL

② Moose Briefing

2 pages.

American Legion.

Pershing Hall in Paris.

next Friday - Return.

Oct 4 - meeting.

Flo Randolph 2235

6-7H.



MYLIO S. KRAJA

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
THE AMERICAN LEGION
WASHINGTON OFFICE

1 202 861 2711
1608 K STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20006

C. Del.
for Phyllis. from R. Thompson.
544-0553.

8 June 1982

MEMORANDUM THRU: Mr. William Cronin

TO: Mr. Barry Frankel

FROM: Bernard Duval

SUBJECT: Ownership of Pershing Hall, No. 49, rue Pierre Charron, Paris, France

1. The United States Government is the owner of Pershing Hall. Copies of the documents of title were recorded in the registration office of the Seine (1st office) on August 10, 1936, Vol. 1222, n. 22 and 1236.
2. The Government's grantor was the "American Legion Building Paris, Incorporated," which had acquired the property on June 25, 1928.
3. On June 5, 1936, the American Legion Building Paris, Inc., by deed, transferred the title to the United States Government, which was not represented when the deed was drawn. A "suspensive condition" in that deed was that the sale would become definitive when it will have been accepted by the U. S. Government.
4. On August 3, 1936, Mr. Henry Hollis accepted the property on behalf of the United States Government, as evidenced by a document drawn by the Notaire.
5. Mr. Henry Hollis had been appointed Special Assistant of the Attorney General for the purpose of approving the form of conveyancing instruments and of accepting the property.
6. By separate instrument, also of record, Solicitor General Stanley Reed, Acting on behalf of the Attorney General, certified his authority and power to accept this property on behalf of the United States.
7. There is no record to my knowledge of any further Federal involvement with this property beyond acceptance of title:
 - a. Neither the General Services Administration nor the Department of Justice carries this property on its inventory for management or administrative purposes. (Source: Mr. William Kollins, Land Acq. Section, Land and Natural Resources Division in phone call 6/8/82.)
 - b. The State Department has no record of the property. (Source: Mr. John Scholl, Foreign Building Operations, Area Officer for Europe, 235-9500.)

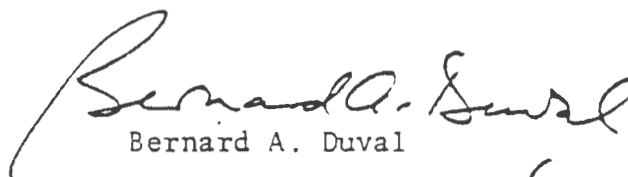
DAEN-REA-C

8 June 1982

SUBJECT: Ownership of Pershing Hall, No. 49, rue Pierre Charron, Paris,
France

c. The Treasury Department, which administers the fund provided in Public Law No. 171, approved June 28, 1935, 74th Congress, 1st Session, has no other involvement with the property. (Source: Mr. Ron Levey, Main Treasury, 566-2327.)

8. In a conversation with Mr. Burt Davis, Judge Advocate of the American Legion, on June 4, 1982, I learned that the American Legion has no agreement with the United States Government for the operation and maintenance of Pershing Hall. There is, however, an operating agreement between the "National" American Legion and the American Legion Department, Post 1, in Paris, which will terminate on July 5, 1982. The National American Legion intends not to renew the operating agreement.


Bernard A. Duval

(272-0491)

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
THE AMERICAN LEGION - INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA
MAY 5-6, 1982

RESOLUTION #23

COMMITTEE: INTERNAL AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: Pershing Hall, Paris, France

WHEREAS, By virtue of Public Law No. 171 of the 74th Congress, approved June 28, 1935, The American Legion is clothed with certain responsibilities with respect to the maintenance and perpetuation of Pershing Hall, a Memorial Building located in Paris, France, legal title to which is vested in the Government of the United States; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion believes that the high order of patriotic reverence due our great leader of World War I. General John J. Pershing, can best be perpetuated through the acceptance by our National Government of the responsibility for maintaining and perpetuating Pershing Hall; and

WHEREAS, There is presently extant an Operating Agreement known as the "Pershing Hall Operating Agreement" which was executed on 9 May 1960 by and between The American Legion as the party of the First Part, and the Department of France, The American Legion, and Paris Post No. 1, Department of France, The American Legion, as Parties of the Second Part, which The American Legion is desirous of terminating in order to relieve itself of the responsibility referred to in the paragraph next preceding; Now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 5-6, 1982, That the National Commander be and he is hereby authorized and directed to terminate the Pershing Hall Operating Agreement, all as provided for under Article V of the said Operating Agreement which contains the following language:

"Either of the parties hereto may terminate this Agreement without cause upon sixty (60) days written notice given to the other party by Registered Mail at the last and usual mailing address and said Agreement may be terminated by either party for cause at any time during the period of this Agreement," and be it further,

RESOLVED, That the National Commander be and he is hereby authorized and directed to contact the proper branch and agency of the Government of the United States for the purpose of negotiating and effectuating an appropriate and orderly transfer to, and the assumption by, the Government of the United States the responsibility to maintain and perpetuate Pershing Hall.



EMBASSY
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Office of Foreign Buildings
Regional Office
American Embassy

Paris, March 24, 1965

Official Informal
Unclassified

2387

1 FR

Dear Tom:

Reference is made to your letter of March 17, 1965, requesting us to check with the registry office in Paris concerning the title to the Pershing Hall property located at 49 rue Pierre Charron, Paris, 8e.

We are pleased to report that in checking with the Bureau des Hypothèques, we have verified that the actual title document is registered here in Paris. After viewing the title document in the registry office we have written a letter today requesting that photostatic copies be made of all the pertinent documents so that these may be transmitted to the Department within the next two weeks. Meanwhile, and for your information are notes taken from the title document:

- a) The building was purchased on the 25th of June 1928 by the "American Legion Building Paris Incorporated: for the sum of Francs-3,500,000.
- b) The plot has an area of 540 square meters (5,810 square feet) improved by a mansion.
- c) On the 5th of June 1936, the "American Legion Building Paris Incorporated" transferred the title to the United States Government which was not represented when the deed was drawn.
- d) The deed was executed by François Ernest Drake, Commandeur de la Légion d'Honneur and Clyde I. Drake, both residing 49 rue Pierre Charron in the premises.

François Ernest Drake was President and Clyde I. Drake was secretary of a company called "American Legion Building Paris Incorporated" with head office at Wilmington, Delaware, established according to the laws of the State of Delaware with offices in Paris, 49 rue Pierre Charron.

FOREIGN BUILDINGS OPERATION

MAR 29 1965

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

e) The latest/

Mr. Thomas F. Flaherty,

Area Officer for EUR, Foreign Buildings Operations,

Department of State, Washington, D.C.

- e) The latest title deed is registered in Volume 1222/22 on the 10th of August 1936 at the Paris registry office. ✓
- f) In the deed it is stated that the building had been sold to the Government of the United States (not present).

On the 3rd of August 1936, the Notaire, Maitre Revel, drew another document stating that Mr. Henry F. Hollis, 39 Avenue George V, Paris, 8e., Lawyer, having all the powers to act in the name of the Attorney General of the United States and has the qualifications to accept the deed for the account of the Government, took title.

For your information, Maitre Revel at Rue des Pyramides, Paris, 1er., was the Notaire (lawyer) who acted both in 1928 and 1936 as mentioned in a) and e) above.

In accordance with French law, the original and only signed title document remains with the Notaire. The Notaire, in this case, Maitre Revel, in turn issued the necessary amount of certified copies.

Therefore, the photostatic copies of the title deed and the related documents for 49 rue Pierre Charron which will be made by the registry office will carry their official seal certifying the authenticity of the title. If the certified copy which does not have the signatures on it is not satisfactory from the Department's legal point of view, then we will try to obtain photostatic copies of the signed original from the Notaire. We have already tried this approach with the Notaire and have been informed that, in view of the time lapse, some research of their files will be necessary, if we have to have it. However, if, upon perusing the certified copy from the registry office you still find that a certified copy of the Notaire's signed original is required, we are reasonably sure that we can obtain one, giving sufficient time to do so.

With best personal regards,

Sincerely yours,

LEE

Lee A. Riordan
Regional Foreign Buildings Officer

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 2, 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR FLO RANDOLF

FROM: MARK LOVEDAY

SUBJECT: Pershing Hall, Paris

Title

Title to this Building rests with the United States Government:

June 25, 1928 Purchased by American Legion Building
Paris Inc.

August 10, 1935 Transferred to United States Government
by deed.

Although the Government was unrepresented when the deed was drawn, the document contained a "suspensive condition" that would make the transfer definitive on its acceptance by the Government. The property was accepted by Mr. Henry Hollis (Special Assistant of the Attorney General) on behalf of the Government prior to registration of the deed. The property is held in trust for the American Legion.

Federal Involvement

1. Neither the GSA nor the Dept. of Justice have records of this property on their inventory for management or administrative purposes.
2. The State Dept. has no record of Pershing Hall.
3. The Treasury, although involved in the purchase, has no other involvement with the property.

American Legion Involvement

On June 28, 1935 Congress gave the American Legion certain responsibilities to maintain the building. In 1939 and 1958 operating agreements were signed between the American Legion , the American Legion Department of France and its Paris Post No. 1.

Pershing Hall / Cont.

The latter agreement ended on July 5, 1982.

In May the American Legion Convention in Indianapolis voted to terminate the agreement for operating the Hall. They are now attempting to transfer the responsibility for maintenance of Pershing Hall to the Federal authorities.

cc. Elizabeth H. Dole
Morton C. Blackwell

Who has title? -

+

— groups bought building in Paris in 1927

— 1928 - American Legion Convention held there -

— a lot of public commitments to buy that ~~which~~ -

→ purchased by American Veterans in Paris -

Fund from

↑

Stars & Stripes and also money

— 1935 - Congress. act allowed money to purchase -

— Treasury owns

Mr. Boyd } Commander of local Am. Legion in Paris and Post #1 } manager in Paris

Treasury owns building in Paris - for ~~the~~ American Legion

* 200,000 a year ~~paying~~

→ only 7,300 income from balance of money

Complaints that Pershing
Hall is being used
for immoral purposes -
Cheating on food, etc.

Cull Local

Am. Legion -

→ agreement

~~Legal Committee~~ Adviser -

Legal Sam Borgiller

- will get papers → 298-9115 -

Indianapolis Mr. Bert Davis

317-635-8411

Judge Advocate of Am. Legion.

From Bud Davis:

(1) - American Legion Corp. -
"Amer"

→ previous -

→ American Legion
Building Paris, Inc.
→ prior owners -

(2) operating agreement
in 1939 -

and 1958 -

→ [] between National
+
Am. Legion Department

Pool 1

→ The Expiration date of agreement
is July 5,

The American Legion



OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL COMMANDER

★ WASHINGTON OFFICE ★ 1608 "K" STREET, N. W. ★ WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006 ★

September 10, 1982

Mr. Edwin Meese, III
Counselor to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Meese:

I respectfully request the opportunity to meet with you for thirty minutes on a very pressing problem to The American Legion. My election as National Commander in late August gives me vast responsibilities which I must address. The issue I wish to discuss with you is the Pershing Hall in Paris, France. It is important that I brief you on our position on this matter and, further, that I report to my National Executive Committee on October 13th. I hope that it will be possible to meet with you. Any of the following dates are open for me to be at your office:

September 27, 28, 29
October 4, 5, 6

I will be accompanied by our National Adjutant Robert W. Spanogle and Executive Director Mylio S. Kraja, both of whom you have met with on previous occasions on other matters. Mr. Kraja will be available to your secretary for the arrangements. Our telephone number in Washington, D.C. is 861-2711.

Sincerely yours,

Al Keller Jr.

AL KELLER, JR.
National Commander

*to Morton —
As we discussed.
meese of free
should contact
you.*

Al

JES



PROPERTY REVIEW BOARD


17th & PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W.

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20500

November 29, 1982

Nov 30
10am
American
Legion

MEMORANDUM FOR MORTON BLACKWELL

FROM: BRUCE SELFON 
SUBJECT: Pershing Hall - Paris

I appreciate your offer of assistance as the public liaison on the future of Pershing Hall. As we have discussed, I intend to explore with the Federal agencies a plan to dispose of the existing office building. Then, we would apply the proceeds to build or develop a fitting memorial to General Pershing in Paris. Since I do not have any experience in Veterans Affairs, it will be very helpful to have your help in coordinating the proposal for a new memorial.

On Tuesday at 10:00 in my office (Room 497), the senior State Department and Justice Department representatives will meet to discuss our plan. Attending will be Assistant Secretary of State Tracy and Deputy Assistant Attorney General Schiffer. If you are able, I hope you will attend.

cc: Edwin L. Harper



Telegram

WFA104(1252)(1-011700A026) PD 01/26/83 1251

1983 JAN 26 PM 1:02

ICS IPMWGWC WSH

06181 01-26 1230P EST

ICS IPMWF06

4-016459 026 01/26/83

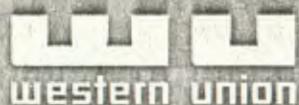
ICS IPMTZZ CSP

2028612715 TDMT WASHINGTON DC 182 01-26 1213P EST

PMS JOSHUA MUSS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PROPERTY REVIEW BOARD OLD
EXECUTIVE OFFICE BLDG RPT DLY MGM, DLR ASAP RUSH, DLR
ROOM 497

WASHINGTON DC 20503

THIS WILL SERVE TO ADVISE YOU THAT THE AMERICAN LEGION WILL NOT
ATTEND THE MEETING YOU HAVE SCHEDULED FOR THIS AFTERNOON CONCERNING
PERSHING HALL THE ISSUE IS CLEAR THE US GOVERNMENT HAS TITLE TO
PERSHING HALL THE AMERICAN LEGION HAS REQUESTED THAT IT BE ABSOLVED
BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT FROM FURTHER RESPONSIBILITY OF MAINTAINING AND



Telegram

PERPETUATING THE BUILDING. NO CONGRESSIONAL ACTION IS REQUIRED TO ACCOMPLISH THIS ACT THIS ENTIRE MATTER WAS CALLED TO THE ATTENTION OF MR MEESE IN WRITING ON OCT 4 1982, AT WHICH TIME WE FURNISHED TO HIM A COMPLETE HISTORY OF THE PERSHING HALL MATTER, AND ALSO FURNISHED TO HIM DOCUMENTS WHICH RELATED TO OUR FUTILE AND FRUSTRATING EFFORTS TO HAVE THE U.S. GOVERNMENT ASSUME ITS RESPONSIBILITY FOR PERSHING HALL.. TO DATE, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A RESPONSE TO OUR LETTER OF OCT 4 1982

IT IS NOW REQUESTED IN THE STRONGEST TERMS, THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT STOP PROCRASTINATING AND ASSUME ITS DUTY BY ISSUING A LETTER TO THE AMERICAN LEGION, RELIEVING US OF THE FURTHER RESPONSIBILITY OF MAINTAINING AND OPERATING PERSHING HALL.

ROBERT W SPANOGLE NATIONAL ADJUTANT

W.U. 1201-SF (R6-89)

Telegram



AMERICAN LEGION
1608 K ST NORTHWEST
WASHINGTON DC 20006

1218 EST
NNNN

file
PERSHING HALL IN PARIS

draft for Becky Dunlop 2/3/83

About a year ago, the American Legion determined that they want to withdraw from management of Pershing Hall in Paris. The building was built pursuant to U.S. statute as a memorial to General Pershing in the 1930's. It is a large building which serves the American community in Paris in a variety of ways. Many U.S. groups use the group for their Paris meetings.

The American Legion national office became embroiled in controversies with their Paris Post 1, which uses Pershing Hall as its headquarters. Rather than cope with their rebellious Post 1 and thereby become involved in alleged scandals involving misuse of the building, the national American Legion hoped to get the U.S. government, which owns title to the building, to assume all responsibility for the building.

Top leaders of the Legion met with Ed Meese, who promised to conduct an investigation. The State Department reported that the building is well kept by the ad hoc group which now operates it in defiance of the national Legion office. An illegal slot machine is in operation and there are allegations of other misuse. State prefers that the building not be sold but should continue to serve U.S. groups in Paris.

The Justice Department says that the statute which authorized the building and put the American Legion in charge must be changed before any U.S. agency could take permanent charge of the building.

U.S.

The/Property Review Board, chaired by Ed Harper, has ~~offered~~ obtained offers from the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Reserve Officers Association, both of which make regular use of Pershing Hall facilities. These two groups are willing to ~~designate~~ participate in a new foundation which would operate Pershing Hall. The American Legion has not expressed a similar willingness. The Legion position is that they do not want to talk further with us on this subject until the government assumes full responsibility for the building. ~~This~~ Justice Department says the government cannot ~~simply~~ do this and that a statutory change is needed.

At present, the Justice Department, the State Department, ~~and~~ the Property Review Board, the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Reserve Officers Association are agreed ~~that~~ on this solution: by statute, the Battlefield Monuments ^{Pershing Hall} Commission will be given ownership of/~~the building~~ and the building will be operated by a new foundation, ~~controlled~~ controlled by the VFW, the ROA, and ~~other~~ other interested groups including the American Legion if they are willing.

The Property Review Board has charge of the matter ~~with~~ for the Administration. Morton Blackwell of Office of Public Liaison is our liaison to veterans groups.