Department of Montana Selects 2019-2020 Leadership

Department Commander Jeff Nelson served with the 172nd Light Arctic Infantry Brigade at Fort Richardson Alaska from October 1973 to May 1976. He was part of a combat support company that specialized in Redeye air defense missiles. Jeff attains the rank of Sergeant at the time of his discharge. It was in Anchorage Alaska that Jeff joined Spenard Post #1 of The American Legion while still on active duty.

After being discharged Jeff moved back to his home state of Wisconsin and pursued an associate degree in livestock management from Blackhawk Technical Institute. He then joined a local Legion Post at Barneveld, Wisconsin and maintained his membership there until moving to Montana in 1985.

Jeff is a 43-year member of The American Legion and has held all Post positions at his home Post, Polson Hardwick #112, including Post Commander twice. He has been District #4 Commander, Western Zone Commander, Department Sargent at Arms and Department Vice Commander. He has traveled to many of the leadership workshops when they were held throughout the northwest region of the United States. Jeff chaired the Department Oratorical Committee for three years, the Department Finance Committee for three years, and served as a member of the Americanism Committee at National for four years. He has been serving on the board of directors for the Mission Valley Mariners Legion Baseball team since its beginning in 1989. He has been a part of the Montana American Legion delegation at the National Conventions seven times.

Jeff’s community involvement includes being past Grand Knight of the Polson Knights of Columbus, Chairman of the Friends of the NRA banquet and fundraiser for three years, the Veterans Honor Guard, and volunteering with the 4-H Shooting Sports for several years as an instructor.

He started his own business in 1990 and has been running Nelson Dairy Service since then. The business supplies and sells dairy equipment to dairy farmers in three states.

Jeff is married to Christine Nelson and they reside in Polson. They have four children and seven grandchildren.
With the Convention just getting over, it is time to start lining up and reviewing the programs for next year. Before I get into programs, I want to take a moment to let our last years' commander know that I will never fill into his size 15 triple EEE shoes that he left me to wear. Richard Kline put his heart and soul into more than anyone that I can remember. He put his heart and soul into our organization and deserves the honor of a job well done. The Department Convention was a little bit of everything you would expect of a convention. There were training sessions, history displays, boat ride, parade, the National Commander, special guests, Tribal drummers, and so much more. If you attended you know what I am talking about, for those of you who didn’t attend, there is always next year in Billings. I think everyone will agree that the time visiting with old friends and making new friends is a part of a convention that resonates the longest in our memory banks. I want to thank everyone that attended this year’s convention and made it a success. Now getting back to programs, it is never too early to start looking over the guidelines of these programs and deciding which works with your Post. Develop a plan of action and write it down. It has almost always and deciding which works with your Post. Develop a plan of action and write it down. It has almost always

From the Desk of the Adjutant

The 2019 Convention has come to a close and with it the start of a new year with new officers and new opportunities to contribute to the success of our Posts, Districts and the Department. I hope to see all return at the Convention in Billings June 26-28, 2020. Congratulations to the newly elected officers of the Department, whether they be at the Post, District or Department level they will have a busy year before them and they will need every member support as they begin their duties of doing the American Legion's business and representing our members. To the outgoing officers I would like to thank you for your service and dedication to The American Legion. I know it isn't easy at all times to carry out the duty you swore to uphold but I trust that you know you did the best you could and you had a positive effect on all you encountered during your tour of duty. At the convention I was asked to stay on for one more year, I agreed, and the Preconvention Executive Committee approved the revocation of my retirement until April 1, 2021. The application period for Department Adjutant has been extended to September 1, 2020. The first District Meeting is District 11 Billings, September 14 and we hope to have our new National Commander join us also, at the District 11 meeting we will have the leading candidate for National Commander for 2020-21 Paul Dillard from Texas in attendance. I hope to see many of you at the District Meetings and if you have never attended one, let this year be a first for you. Remember any member may attend; the District Meetings are not just for officers.
The VA MISSION Act of 2018 Empowers Veterans and Enhances Care Options

Veterans’ access to health care is expanding under a new law effective June 6, 2019. The goal is to provide better care, customer service and communication.

One part of the Veteran Affairs Mission Act of 2018 creates a Community Care Network (CCN) that will give veterans access to civilian providers and services if the VA cannot meet their healthcare needs. The VA is currently working to award contracts with Third Party Administrators (TPAs, civilian facilitators) all across the country (or joining the VA network) to establish CCN nationwide so that veterans can use their VA coverage.

Under the new law, the CNN replaces the Veterans Choice Program. Veterans still must first go through the VA system to schedule medical appointments and receive approvals for medical services. What is changing is the procedure to access civilian care facilities if initial and ongoing VA care is not available or reasonably accessible.

Veteran Community Care:

General Information

When a veteran calls the VA for a medical appointment, a VA staff member schedules an appointment with aVA provider. If the staff member determines that VA provider is too far away or does not have appointments within a certain time frame, the VA staff member assists the veteran with scheduling the medical appointment or the veteran schedules the appointment with a CCN provider within the VA network.

A veteran may have a copayment for the appointment and the provider will also send a claim to the VA for payment. Generally, the VA will pay the Medicare rate, but there are several proposed exceptions to this rate that may apply, to be established through a contract or agreement.

A new benefit will provide eligible veterans with access to non-emergency care for certain conditions in the VA network of community providers. Once the VA has determined that the medical condition fits the criteria, the veteran can go to any urgent care or walk-in care provider in the VA network without prior authorization from VA. There may be copayments associated with this bene-fit depending on a veteran’s assigned priority group and the number of times the benefit is used.

Some of the criteria used to determine if a Montana veteran is eligible include:

* Veteran was eligible under the distance criteria under the Veteran Choice Program on the day before the VA MISSION Act was enacted into law (June 6, 2018), lives in one of the five states with the lowest veteran population (MT included) or continues to meet the distance criteria, received care between June 6, 2017, and June 6, 2018, and requires care before June 6, 2020.

* The veteran meets specific access standards for average drive time or appointment wait-times. Important: access standards are not yet final.

Average drive time to a specific VA medical facility:

- 30-minute average drive time for primary care, mental health care, and noninstitutional extended care services (including adult day health care).
- 60-minute average drive time for specialty care.

Appointment wait time at a specific VA medical facility:

- 20 days for primary care, mental health care, and non-institutional extended care services, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with their VA health care provider.
- 28 days for specialty care from the date of request, unless the Veteran agrees to a later date in consultation with their VA health care provider.

The veteran and the referring clinician agree that it is in the Veteran’s best medical interest to be referred to a community provider.

The veteran needs care from a VA medical service provider that VA determines is not giving care that complies with VA’s quality standards.

Community care generally must be authorized in advance by VA before a veteran can receive care from a community provider. The VA has proposed an exception to this when a veteran receives emergency care from an in-network entity or provider and VA is notified within 72 hours, if certain additional conditions are met. The requirement for care to be authorized in advance by VA does not apply to the urgent care/walk-in care benefit that VA is establishing.

The process for receiving prescription medication does NOT change. As part of an authorized visit with a community provider, veterans will be able to get a short-term, urgent prescription medication in their community. The provider must call the VA to arrange for long-term medication prescriptions to be filled by VA.

Travel benefits eligibility will NOT change. Beneficiary travel is paid the same way the care is provided at a VA medical facility or through a community provider.

Generally, VA will pay Medicare rates, but there are several proposed exceptions to this rate that may apply, to be established through a contract or agreement.

To learn more about the Mission Act visit: https://www.va.gov/oci/missionAct/index.asp

For general Mission Act health care inquiries, contact VA311 (1-844-469-2311).

To read the entire Mission Act go to: https://www.congress.gov/115/bills/s2372/BILLS-115s2372enr.pdf

Post Everlasting

Apr/May/June 2019

- CHRISTENSEN, JENS, 4/26/2019 – Korea – US Army – 3-year member of Post 65, Ennis, Interred with Military Honors
- DONALD, JOHN, 10/20/2018 – Korea – US Navy – 63-year member of Post 23, Livingston, Interred with Military Honors
- JOINER, TOM E., 4/12/2019 – Vietnam – US Army – 5-year member of Post 89, Sheridan, Interred with Military Honors
- PETERSCHICK, JEROME B., unknown – Korea – US Army – 1-year member of Post 97, Libby, Interred with Military Honors
2019 Convention Annual Awards
Polson, Montana

2019 Chaplains Conference in Polson

KAREN KOEHL, DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN

Many thanks to the Auxiliary/Post Directors who attended the 2019 Chaplains Conference in Polson: you made the event a SUCCESS! Thanks also, to Past Department Chaplain Ed Sperry, for inspiration to hold the event. While much information was covered, here are some specifics:

Although time was very tight, we covered a lot of ground. After introductions all around, we had an in-depth discussion of the fact Christianity is not the only religion practiced by members of our Legion Family. We discussed at length how to minister to those outside our own faith. Many first among the many pertinent contributions made that day to the discussions, Rev. Paul Armstrong, District 5 Chaplain, shared that the U.S. Military now recognizes over 120 faiths! Ideas and hands-on resources were shared. VA policies regarding proselytizing were also discussed.

We then dug into the unique opportunities chaplains have to assist veterans and their families seeking VA benefits. That led us into the many different cemetery benefits available. Many were surprised to learn that not only is there a memorial marker available (including the kit to permanently mount it to a civilian headstone) there is also the option to instead request a footstone for the grave of a beloved veteran who has a civilian headstone. Additionally, families of deceased veterans can request a condolence certificate from the President of the United States with the option to order additional copies for children or siblings of the veteran.

The Four Chaplains Ceremony was discussed, with the offer by the Department Chaplain to e-mail a ceremony script to any Legion Family chaplain who wishes to hold one. (karenkoehl1@gmail.com) Preferably, arrangements to hold a Four Chaplains Ceremony are made at least a couple months in advance of February 3rd to guarantee good participation and attendance. A printed program was also distributed as an example.

A BIG 1000 CLUB

Would you like six opportunities to win $400, one to win $500 and one to win $1,800? Join the Big K (1000) Club and be one of the 1000 members eligible to win. Membership is just $25 a year and is open to all Legion, Auxiliary and SAL members over 18 years of age.

This is a fundraiser for Posts, Units, Squadrions, Districts and Department. Proceeds are used to strengthen and increase programs such as Outreach Program, Government Survey Scholarship, Baseball and American Legion Boys State, as well as membership programs.

If you are interested in joining contact your Post Adjutant or Department Headquarters. Membership closes December 31, 2019 with the first of 6 monthly drawings for $400 beginning January 2020, $500 on the Legion Birthday and $1,800 at Department Convention.

Would you like to hold one? (karenkoehl1@gmail.com) We will send you a ceremony script to any Legion Family chaplain with the offer by the Department Chaplain to e-mail copies for children or siblings of the veteran.

Additionally, QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Suicide Prevention Training (2 hrs.) will be scheduled prior to the Fall Conference in Helena. This training has been implemented in Northwest Montana and used successfully to save veteran lives. Please contact me at the e-mail above for more information. No fee, just travel to/from Helena on your own. ANY member of the Legion Family will be welcome to take this training! Or, contact me at (406) 465-0035 if you don’t have e-mail.

Again, many thanks to all the Legion Family chaplains who encouraged and inspired us with your attendance and participation in this year’s Department Chaplains Conference. I hope God’s will be May you all be well again at the 2020 Chaplains Conference!
Dept. Service Officer
Timothy R Ingraham
Department Service Officer

Secretary Wilkie recommended that the Dept. of Justice not challenge the court case Procopio vs. Wilkie. The DOJ followed Wilkie’s lead and now Procopio is the “Law of the Land.”

House Resolution 299, the ‘Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019’ was signed into law June 25, 2019 by President Trump. This Act extends Agent Orange disability compensation to personnel who served off-shore of the Republic of Vietnam between January 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975 within twelve nautical miles off the Coast of Vietnam and Cambodia which must be validated by ship/deck logs. The act also includes redefined compensation eligibility dates for Korean War veterans that served in the DMZ to September 1, 1967 through August 31, 1971 and benefits for children of certain Thailand service veterans born with Spina Bifida. Two more presumptive clauses will be added to the Agent Orange list and Congress is asking for a 90-day extension for the following; bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, hypertension, and Parkinson’s like condition. The Veterans Benefits Administration will be given more guidance on deceased Veterans and Surviving Spouses benefits soon.

In conclusion, please stay in touch with your Service Organizations or your friendly Veteran Service Officers in your area for more up to date information.

Listed below are the MVAD/AL offices throughout the state:
Belgrade …………………….. (406) 388-4601
Billings ……………………… (406) 248-8579
Butte ………………………….. (406) 533-0910
Great Falls …………………….. (406) 452-2265
Havre ………………………….. (406) 265-4225
Helena ……………………….. (406) 495-2080/2081/2082
Kalispell ………………………. (406) 755-3795
Lewistown ……………………. (406) 538-3174
Miles City …………………….. (406) 232-1203
Missoula ……………………… (406) 542-2501

Thank you for your service to our great Country!

Post 5 Flag Day Ceremony Weather Challenged at Eastern Montana State Veterans Cemetery

Submitted by Carol Prahl, Publicity and Flag Chairman

On Flag Day, June 14th, Custer Post 5, the Marine Corps League and community volunteers raised the 55 large flags at the Eastern Montana State Veterans Cemetery in Miles City. Unfortunately, Post 5 was going to do our yearly flag retirement ceremony on that same day at 6:30pm. Due to extreme wind we canceled the ceremony and rapidly took the 55 large flags down. Fortunately only one pole was bent over by the extreme wind. The poles consist of three sections and thankfully, only the bottom section of that one broke. Next year, in my Miles City Star article, I’ll be sure to mention, besides severe weather, that extreme wind also cancels the ceremony!

Center of the photo shows the damaged pole supported by a nearby tree.

Pearl Harbor Memorial Highway

Pearl Harbor Memorial Highway established by the Montana Legislature on April 25, 2019 located by the National Cemetery at Laurel, Montana. (see Signing page 18)

For the past 8 years Post 341 Malmstrom has entered the Mt. Falls 4th of July Parade, decorating and having a BBQ the day before the Parade.

Great Falls Post 341 Participates in Fourth of July Parade

Townsend Post 42 Retires Flags with a Little Help from Brownies

Submitted by Sharon Doig, Post Historian

This year’s Post 42 Flag Retirement ceremony was done at Memorial Park in Townsend with two Brownies from Troop 3205.

Pictured are: Bill Garwood, Bob Lund, Roland Heaton assisted by Shannon and Kay.

Pearl Harbor Memorial Highway

Park City Post 100 pays tribute on Memorial Day at Park City Cemetery

Guest Speaker Col Russ Donsell

Turner Post 109 Conducts Memorial Day Services at Local Cemeteries

Max & Kirsti Cederber, Post 109 Members

Turner Post 109 conducted Memorial Day services at Silverbow, Wing and Turner Cemeteries on the Big Flat.

Post 5 Sergeant at Arms Mark Ahner, and volunteer Karen Murray attaching a flag to a pole.

Photo by Casey Jones

Turner Post 109 Members

Koreanne King (youngest serving military person from our community) and Ted Olczewski (one of our older veterans), proudly serving and having served their country.

Color Guard includes Koreanne King, Ted Olczewski, Dan Liese and Amy Egbert.
## Department of Montana Membership Goal Roster 2020

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<th>District</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Approx</th>
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<th>Total 2020</th>
<th>Total 2019</th>
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<td>3.30%</td>
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<td>DILLON</td>
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<td>151</td>
<td>18.38%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21.03%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
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</table>

**TOTAL** | | | | 575 | 13 | 535 | 2.26% | 1 | 2.26% | 0.00% |

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## District Standings - 2019 Final

**District** | **Percentage** | **Commander**
--- | --- | ---
1 | 106.15% | Glen Sharbono
2 | 102.61% | Greg Marose
3 | 96.71% | Jim Howe
4 | 99.59% | Pat Sweeney
5 | 96.10% | Richard Hackett
6 | 92.60% | Gil Floyd
7 | 91.75% | Vincent Schmoeckle
8 | 89.72% | Kim Kay McCarty Martin
9 | 87.65% | Joe Yeoman
10 | 87.23% | Randy Flammmon
11 | 85.96% | David Ollat

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## SONS of the American Legion

**July 10, 2019**

**Squadron** | **Goal 2020** | **To Date**
--- | --- | ---
GREAT FALLS | 414 | 258
PONY | 160 | 143
BILLINGS | 103 | 104
ENNIS | 216 | 213
LEWISTON | 115 | 115
MISSOULA | 227 | 186
LEWISTON | 115 | 94
GREAT FALLS | 309 | 278
BILLINGS | 105 | 105

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**The New Montana License Plate Available at the DMV.**

For more information please contact: info@veteranxoromnument.org

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**The American Legion needs you!**

- **Billings**
- **Ennis**
- **Great Falls**
- **Helena**
- **Missoula**
- **Butte**
- **Kalispell**
- **Kalispell**
- **Butte**
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- **Missoula**
- **Kalispell**
- **Kalispell**
- **Great Falls**
- **Helena**
- **Kalispell**
We all know the story of “The Good Samaritan” who stops to assist an injured man alongside the road. The phrase, “Good Samaritan,” took on a life of its own when it entered the English language referring to a charitable or helpful person. According to Merriam Webster: “a person who helps other people, especially strangers, when they have trouble.”

All fifty United States have laws protecting “good samaritans” — those who stop to help another in need. The legal definition is “one who voluntarily renders aid to another in distress although under no duty to do so.”

There are many ways we Legion Family members can be “Good Samartians.” Getting first aid and CPR training and donating blood are high on the list of ways we give. Donating hard-earned cash to the National Emergency Fund (NEF) is another, very important way we can “help other people, especially strangers, when they have trouble.”

With all the disasters last year, (floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, etc.) culminating in the horrific losses of American Life Insurance. (The loss of life, property, etc.) we can “help” or “mend” or “rebuild.”

The sooner, the better! Thank you. May you be well.

100% FINANCING AVAILABLE FOR VETERANS!

THE VETERANS ADMINISTRATION LOAN PROGRAM

is a program that allows you the flexibility of obtaining the best possible rate in the market at any given time, and to ensure you have the lowest monthly payment possible, based on your credit and income profile.

Thank you for your service! Here are some things you can look forward to:

• No money down purchase financing

• Up-front mortgage insurance, Veterans with VA related disability are exempt

• No monthly mortgage insurance

• Jumbo VA loan amounts available

• Lending in all 50 states

• Montana Conforming VA loan limit now $484,350 plus the VA funding fee.

• Minimum credit requirements apply

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A funding fee is required on VA loans. Programs, rates, terms, and conditions are subject to change at any time. All approvals are subject to underwriting guidelines. Wintrust Mortgage is a division of Barrington Bank & Trust Company, N.A., a Wintrust Community Bank, NMLS #449042 ©2019 Wintrust Mortgage.

We had our last Women’s Forum in Missoula on the 8th of May where we had six guest speakers talk with us about holistic approaches to better our overall health. Ladies from Quilts of Valor were present to give Elsie Rieger (WWII) and Joan Ordmann (Korean) handmade patriotic quilts. Heather McDonald from Lolo has started a clothing line specifically for women vets and was able to show us samples. We were supposed to have another Forum in Billings on the 11th of June, but I ended up cancelling it because only four women were going to attend, and it would not have been cost effective to do so. In the four years we have had Women Recognition Luncheons/ Forums, we have had wonderful volunteers and those attending had a great time. Through the years we were able to locate and honor 14 WWII Women Veterans in Montana. Each of these courageous and pioneering women were presented their WWII Service Medal. We were also able to recognize some of our Korean and Vietnam women veterans. We have had the support of the majority of our Department Officers, some of the Districts and Posts including Auxiliary Units but sad to say, there had also been opposition to what we were trying to accomplish. We wanted to share with women veterans in MT the vision and service community of The American Legion, let them know what VA resources they could access and their entitlements as veterans and build a support network among ourselves here in MT where we can share ideas, opportunities, and programs. I have fallen short of these goals but will keep forging forward. If anyone has ideas or needs/wants information please e-mail me at IDIDinNDI@hotmail.com or contact me at 701-260-2833...Have a great summer!
Fatality Marker Program Changes

By Jim Kelly, Highway Fatality Marker Program Co-Chair | July 16, 2019

GUIDE TO STANDARDIZED MARKER HARDWARE

(Changes or Points of Emphasis in Specifications are in Bold Print)

Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has a written policy for designing roadways that incorporates wide clear zones, and breakaway sign and support structures in new construction and reconstruction. Montana Department of The American Legion operates the Fatality Marker Program under these established policies.

Readers are cautioned that roadways safety policy, criteria, and technology is a rapidly changing field of study. Changes in the roadways safe field are on-going and subject to change. This article reflects several on-going changes to be followed.

GENERAL

The white markers, together with the upright supporting posts, are to be furnished by the local American Legion Posts and installed by them. American Legion Posts may make the markers themselves. There should be no decorating or writing of any kind on the markers. It is recommended any decorations attached to the highway fatality markers be removed during regular maintenance.

A small American Legion emblem, small label, etching or “dog tag” may be placed on the back of the marker to let people know who erected it. It shall be the duty of the Legion Post most closely situated to the scene of the crash to furnish the marker and see that it is properly placed, and maintained as long as it is in that Post’s area of responsibility.

Marker Specifications:
1. They should be made of 1/8 or 3/16-inch-thick band steel or aluminum
2. The recommended width of the metal is four inches (4”).
3. The crossbar should be twelve inches (12”) across and the upright portion of the marker should be sixteen inches (16”) inches. If less than 4” wide metal is used the dimensions of the marker may be reduced accordingly to a minimum of 9” x 12”
4. The markers should be seam welded to prevent rusting but may be riveted or bolted together.
5. Front and back of markers are to be painted with bright white exterior metal paint. They shall NOT be constructed of or painted with reflective material.

Fatality Markers currently in place are “Grandfathered” and do not need to be removed or corrected to conform to these standards.

Support Specifications:
1. Supporting upright post shall be steel “U” delineator post rated at 1.12 ppf (minimum) to 2.0 ppf (maximum), six foot in length.
2. Supporting post should be pounded into the ground a minimum of 18”. NOTE: Be aware of underground utilities – look for underground pipe or cable markers in all directions. Montana one-call (800-424-5555) should be contacted a week before installation to confirm absence of utility conflicts.
3. Top of supporting post and markers should not exceed 54” above the ground. NOTE: MDT recommends using 6” posts as it will provide a uniform mounting height of 54” and a uniform depth of 18”.
4. Supporting posts mounted in concrete require a breakaway joint.
5. Supporting posts are to be painted bright red with exterior metal paint. They shall NOT be constructed of or painted with reflective material.

Installation:
1. Fatality Markers shall be placed in the right-of-way in the direction of travel prior to accident (i.e. westbound travel = westbound right-of-way, northbound travel = northbound right-of-way)
2. Fatality Markers shall be placed perpendicular (not parallel) to the highway. (Note position of Marker attached to “U” shaped post.)
3. Fatality Markers shall not present a vertical or horizontal obstacle for pedestrians along bike or pedestrian pathways.
4. Fatality Markers shall be outside of CLEAR ZONE
   a. State & local highways (6’ behind a guardrail or 30’ from edge of roadway)
   b. Four lane roadways (6’ behind a guardrail or 50’ from edge of roadway)
   c. OR Outside edge of “MOW” areas (whichever is greater)
5. Only one support post per fatality location is allowed. In the event of multiple fatalities at same accident scene, multiple markers may be used on a single post
6. DO NOT install markers in median and DO NOT attach marker to guard rail support.

Post 47 hosts Eagle Scout Court of Honor

On March 2, 2019, Adjutant Gregory A. Marose, Sr., Ravalli Post 47, awarded The Legion Good Citizenship Award to Scout Andrew Evan Mosawt and Scout James Michael D’Amato for their outstanding work on the rank of Eagle Scout. Both scouts started along their Eagle Scout Trail on June 5, 2012 joining Scout Troop 160 sponsored by Ravalli American Legion Post 47. Both passed their Eagle Scout Board of Review on January 9, 2019. Andrew and James each presented Mentor Pins to Scoutmaster Greg Raymond and to their mothers.

Fatality Markers Program Changes

Twin Bridges American Legion Post 31 Essay Contest Winners Announced

On May 13th, Twin Bridges Post 31 awarded many students for their participation in this year’s Constitutional Essay and Government Survey contests. The high school awards were presented in front of the ice cream. Ayden Anderson and Nora Humbert in second and Nora Humbert third; Jered Lujan was submitted by Helena Post 2 and David was submitted by Helena Post 2.

Twin Bridges American Legion Post 31Essay Contest Winners Announced

For this year’s contests each student was required to “Write an essay discussing the importance of the President of the United States having the power to nominate Judges of the Supreme Court, with the advice and consent of the Senate, and that Congress may by Law vest the appointment of such Officers” (Article II, Section 2, Paragraph 2). Only one high school student submitted an essay so Trista Redfield was announced the winner and awarded a certificate and $50. After the Senior Government Surveys were scored Anna Kaiser came out on top with Ayden Anderson in second and Nora Humbert third; Emilly LaYacona won 1st, Allie Dale 2nd, and Emma Konen in 3rd. Eighth grade essay winners were Zeke Redfield in 1st, McKenzie Stack 2nd, and Wiley Stockett in 3rd. The survey contest results were as follows: 7th grade: Ayla Janzen 1st, Allie Dale 2nd, and Kyle Pancost in 3rd and 8th grade Reid Johnson 1st, Zeke Redfield 2nd, and Callie Kazer 3rd. The 1st place winners’ submissions were sent on to Department competitions to compete for further prizes. Emily LaYacona won 2nd place at the Department competition for her Constitutional Essay and was awarded an additional $250 scholarship.

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Post 47 hosts Eagle Scout Court of Honor

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Bozeman Post 14 Memorial Day Activities

Community Parade & Breakfast

The American Legion Post 14 1933 Chevy Hack Bus followed the Gold Star Families riding in their four deuce and a halfs. Driver Sherm Veltkamp (Post 14 F.O.), shotgun was Len Albright (CMMD Post 14), behind Sherm sat Terry Kemp (Dept. Aux. President), and in the rear was father and son Sailors Paul Robitaille.

Post 14 Honor Guard firing 3-round volley at Memorial Day Service Monday, May 27th at Sunset Memorial Hill Cemetery at 11am. Randy Kemp was the caller for our Honor Guard made of four Post 14 members and three Marine Corp League members and Post 14 member Melissa Smith played taps. Services included, Chaplain, Singer, Bug piper, and a special Gold Star Family tribute. Local media and about 300 community Patriots were in attendance.

Libby Post 97 Rededication of Lady Remembrance WWI Monument

On May 26, 2019 Post 97 rededicated a refurbished “Lady Remembrance”, a WWI statue erected by the Post on May 30, 1922. The memorial statue commemorated the loss of five boys from Libby whom died in service to their country. Among them were Private Austin Reedy, KIA, namesake of Post 97 and the first Libby boy killed in WWI. Also on the list was Sergeant Harper Erdman, KIA, namesake of VFW Post 1548 in Libby.

The service was led by Mayor Brent Teske, Post 97 Commander Larry King and Post 1548 Commander Rod Beal. They were assisted by Post 97 and Post 1548 Honor Guards and the Ladies Auxiliaries from both Posts.

A special thanks to Idaho Granite Works for cleaning, refurbishing and resetting the monument, Riley Concrete, Flathead Electric and the City of Libby workers for completing the project. A very special thanks to the Lincoln County Monuments Committee for soliciting funds, coordinating the project and paying the bills.

Ceremony at Sunset Gardens

Beginning at 10 AM on May 23, 2019, 2,472 flags were placed on all Veteran’s head stones in Sunset Hills Cemetery. Fifth and Sixth graders from Longfellow Elementary School helped place flags after their “Veteran’s Salute” program in the school at 9 AM. Members of the Marine Corp League, VVA, Veterans Court volunteers, and Post 14 all assisted. Post 14 Historian, Dallas Thompson (who generates the maps that make it easy to locate all Veterans in each section) along with Post Sgt. at Arms, Steve Holland, and Len Albright organized the volunteer groups for a smooth operation. Notice the Vietnam Memorial Wall in the background with the three flags. Post 14 retrieved the flags Tuesday, May 28.

Making progress on new Veterans Cemetery in Bozeman

On May 26, 2019, (listed l-r) Len Albright, Katy Mozingo (VA Executive Assistant from DC), Carl Bartman (Post 87), Randy Reeves (VA Wash, DC), Ed Saunders (US Dept. of VET Affairs-ACCM), Kelly Aekerman (past Dept. SO) not shown, met at Post 14 Legion Hall to discuss and answer questions regarding construction of the new Veterans Cemetery located at Sunset Hills Cemetery.

Members from other Posts in our District, VFW, VVA, and MSU Veteran Services were also in attendance.

Post 14 at new cemetery site

Discussions regarding access and expansion at the site of the new Veterans Cemetery located at Sunset Hills Cemetery in Bozeman (l-r) Hank Adams (Post 30), Len Albright (Post 14), Randy Reeves (VA Under Secretary for Memorials), Chuck Renevier (VVA 788), Jim Korth (SO Post 14), and George Morales (VVA 788). May 29, 2019 from 11 AM to 12:30 PM.
A hearty THANK YOU to Polson Post 112 Legion Family for a wonderful Department Convention in late June. The activities were as varied and exciting as the uncontrollable weather. Approximately 200 guests descended upon KwaTaqNuk Resort for the festivities, activities and comradery of the weekend. A tremendous effort by Post 112 Family members to make the 100th Department Convention a terrific success starting off with Legion College Wednesday, BBQ dinner cruise, Auxiliary banquet, Children and Youth luncheon, Main Street Parade, Joint Legion Banquet with musicians and culminating in the final induction of new officers on Sunday. Thank you for the Hospitality room which was enjoyed by many over the few days and an informative historical display throughout the halls. These photos capture just a snapshot of the events’ gaiety. A well-deserved round of applause for your success!

See everyone in Billings next year.
**President**

Hello, everyone! Hope you all had a safe trip home from Convention. Thanks, so much for all the hard work everyone did to make it a successful convention. Chris and Jeff, your hospitality and all your hard work was very much appreciated!

Thank you again for putting your trust in me to be your new Department President. I will do my best to make this a great year. As I know you, I am going to need everyone’s help making it so. Coming and participating in the meetings and training is a great start. The more you come, the more information and knowledge you will gain, and the more you will make new friends and renew friendships of those you have met before.

I am looking forward to National Convention in Indianapolis and learning new information to bring back to all of you. Hope to see so many of you at Fall Convention in Helena on October 24 – 27th at Jorgenson’s Inn. Taking care of the business of our veterans and our members.

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**Secretary**

Conventions continue to amaze me. Both for what I learn and what I see. So much work goes into the preparation that convention committees get really caught up in the details of the process rather than the content of the delivery. I have a greatest admiration and a new respect for any convention planning committee. Thank you especially to Jeff and Christine Nelson for their hard work in Polson. Thank you to all who made the trip here, it was an amazing weekend.

Those of you who attended hopefully got home with bags of valuable information as well as your membership material. That big brown envelope has everything you’ll need at the unit level for a successful 2019 – 2020 membership year.

Unit membership goals haven’t been released because they’re not ready at the national level for our Department yet. We should have them set for Montana and delivered by the start of the Fall District meetings. And yes, I do intend to be at yours. This will be my last year of traveling as your Department Secretary, so I intend to give it everything I’ve got, one more time.

My retirement date is July 31, 2020. If you’d be interested in this position, I’d be happy to visit with you at any time.

Join me in thanking Terry Kemp for leading us into our 100th year. She truly stood by her theme, “Above and Beyond.” And likewise, join me in welcoming President Sue Davidson to the podium. She brings leadership from her military background and hopefully opens another opportunity to unite the Legion Family as a veteran herself.

We’re off to National Convention so hope you’re busily planning your District meeting. I gave the information to the District Presidents at convention so they can get it out to the unit members. How fast our schedules fill.

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**Membership**

Our Department Convention was a great time and I was so happy to see so many of you there. While we were wrapping up on Saturday a young lady came by and asked about our display. She had just gotten out of the Air Force and was looking for some support for herself and daugther. Polson will soon have a new “dual” member from our conversation and the Post will be able to provide some emergency fund assistance. The kitchen staff also asked about who can join. Our enthusiasm was enough to generate another new member. I would have missed this opportunity if a member hadn’t pointed it out to me. When we work together it can be amazing!

Kudos to Mechelle Holmes and Harlowlton Unit 15 for their outstanding recruiting efforts. And, 20 Units achieved their 100% goal or higher. Membership as always is in the forefront and for most of our Units increasing their size is a concern. I think you will be relieved when you learn of new lower goals at fall convention. Those members who can only send an annual check are still worth having and they appreciate receiving the paper and magazine.

Junior possibilities are sometimes forgotten too but are our future leaders. We can start encouraging and educating them now about all the good the Auxiliary does on a regular basis. You can mention to people you meet that, National and Department (State) portions of the membership fee is waived the first year for women Legionnaires who also join the Auxiliary. Units can choose to waive their Unit fee as well for that first year.

I’m reminding myself to wear those Legion family shirts hanging in the back of the closet not just to meetings also in my daily shopping trips. Here’s wishing you all an enjoyable summer and that you stay in touch with your Legion family.

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**Deceased Members**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Unit City</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Butte</td>
<td>Shirley Rand</td>
<td>Auxiliary Dir.</td>
<td>January 1, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Great Falls</td>
<td>Diana Reilly</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>January 1, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Livingston</td>
<td>Alices Samson</td>
<td>1st Vice Pres.</td>
<td>January 1, 2019</td>
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<td>White Sulphur Springs</td>
<td>A. Pallas</td>
<td>Membership Sec.</td>
<td>January 1, 2019</td>
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<td>Evelyn L. Cox</td>
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<td>36</td>
<td>Valier</td>
<td>Donita Johnson</td>
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<td>Forsyth</td>
<td>Miss. Carol A. Grinnichorshon</td>
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<td>Townsend</td>
<td>Eleanor Holling</td>
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<td>Chinook</td>
<td>Freda L. Bryson</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>Big Sandy</td>
<td>Shirley Rand</td>
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<td>Augusta</td>
<td>Audrey VanDePet</td>
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<td>Sweetgrass</td>
<td>Eva Campanion</td>
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<td>Culbertson</td>
<td>Louise Cooper</td>
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<td>Ruth M. Bascetta</td>
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<td>Laurel</td>
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<td>126</td>
<td>Charlo</td>
<td>Donna S. Nordyke</td>
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**In His Care...**

**Diana Reilly**

Our beloved Diana Reilly went home to be with Ruddy at 1:50 in the morning of the 4th of July. Diana joined the ALA in 1984 and was part of the Great Falls Unit 3. She was our Department President for the year 1995-1996, her motto, “This is my Country, Stars of the West.” She stepped down to lead once more in the 2014-2015 year, her motto then; “Living the Life of Reilly - In the Spirit and Tradition.” At the time of publishing, there are no memories of Diana Reilly available. She was a member of the Butte Silver Bow Unit 1. She always had a quick wit and smiles and prayers for everyone.

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**In His Care...**

**Shirley Rand**

Shirley loved The American Legion Auxiliary and worked hard at every task that she was assigned. She was a member of The American Legion Auxiliary Girls State staff for many years and loved to be with the delegates. She was a member of the Butte Silver Bow Unit 1. She always had a quick wit and smiles and prayers for everyone.

Shirley attended grade school, high school and business school in Butte and was employed by Westinghouse upon completion of business school. In 1942 she was one for 34 youths that were issued a Butte Victory Garden. She married Ray Rand on August 9, 1952, raised two children and lived in Butte all their married lives.
Montana Legionnaire — August – October 2019

Department Raffle Winners

- $500 Prize... Jere Skaalure - Billings
- $500 Prize... Jo Ann Piazzola - Butte

Thanks to all who participated. Our Department budget depends on at least one big fundraiser every year. We’ll be back again soon with the next one!

Unit 23 Livingston

Submitted by Carol Woodley

The American Legion Park 23 Post & Auxiliary Unit has spent several years gathering the names of anyone from Park County that has served our country and placing crosses at Sacajawea Park for Memorial Day weekend. This year they displayed about 600 but ran out of space for the 800 the Unit had made.

Display of crosses at Sacajawea Park in Livingston, MT

District 9 parade participants

Cassie Johnson, Auxiliary District 1 President and Dept. Secretary, Jamie DeBates

Ron DeBates Modeling Surprise Bag

2018-2019 Dept. Officers at Polson Convention

All Units of The Dept MT ALA

Junior Auxiliary Members enjoying the parade in downtown Polson

Jamie & Ron DeBates

District 9
Veterans have opportunity to grow with USDA and farming resources

In 2018, USDA’s Farm Service Agency provided $64.5 million in direct and guaranteed farm operating loans to Veterans—and Veterans have preference. USDA’s Veteran website serves as a one-stop navigator for Veterans looking to learn more and support the critical mission of preparedness and defense of America’s food and agriculture sectors.

Veteran farmers and ranchers receive certain preferences under most USDA farm credit and conservation programs. They are eligible for increased cost share assistance, additional financial incentives, and funding preferences for engaging in conservation efforts.

For Veterans living in rural America, USDA has additional resources to strengthen and empower skilled Veteran leaders to support the communities they know and love.

USDA’s Rural Development has more than 40 loan, grant, and technical assistance programs including support to:

• Purchase and develop land and facilities
• Purchase equipment and supplies
• Refinance for job expansion
• Finance for energy efficiency improvements

Veterans in urban areas also have resources available. Whether its backyard rooftop farming or cutting-edge technologies in intensive indoor hydroponic or aquaculture farms, USDA can help urban Veterans explore opportunities in agriculture.

USDA’s Urban Agriculture Toolkit is a great place to start.

USDA ensures that Veterans looking to return home or start a new career on a farm or in a rural community have the tools and opportunities needed for success. Resources are available in every aspect of the agricultural industry, including Entrepreneurship, Education and Employment.

USDA’s Veteran website serves as a one-stop navigator for Veterans looking to learn more and support the critical mission of preparedness and defense of America’s food and agriculture sectors.

Visit the following website for more information https://www.blogs.va.gov/Vantage/61200/usda-sets-farming-agriculture

Twin Bridges Post 31 100-Year Celebration Poster Contest Winner Announced

SUBMITTED BY DOUG MARTIN

American Legion Dan Brockman Post 31 of Twin Bridges will reach its 100-year centennial anniversary on August 2nd of this year. As part of the upcoming celebration, the Post has been conducting a banner contest with local high school student artists. After careful consideration and thorough judging, Brooke Mehlhoff was announced as the winner.

This beautiful banner consists of The American Legion Emblem in the center flanked on both sides by fluttering American Flags. Below there are stocks of barley and 13 arrows and a streaming banner that reads, “Happy 100th Anniversary Post 31.”

This very patriotic piece of artwork will be displayed at Post 31’s upcoming celebration and will then be retired to the Twin Bridges Museum in the Veterans rooms upstairs. There has also been a request that the banner be displayed at The American Legion of Montana Department Convention being held in Polson in June. On May 14th Brooke was awarded with a Certificate of Participation and a check for $100. Thank you, Brooke, for all your participation and a check was awarded with a Certificate of Participation and a check for $100. Thank you, Brooke, for all your hard work; your talents will be enjoyed by many for years to come.

Editor’s Note: Brooke was also elected as the 2019 Girls State Lt Governor as well. Congrats, Brooke!

Museum Curator Linda Huth and keynote speaker Commander Jen Dalrymple.

Twin Bridges School Shop Receives Veterans Award

The Twin Bridges High School Welding Class received a $50 gift certificate to The Shack restaurant on 13 May 2019, for their work in making Highway Fatality Markers. The Highway Fatality Markers are part of a statewide safety program that is meant to bring awareness to traffic fatalities on Montana highways.

The Veterans of Twin rely on these young students to accomplish this solemn task and they always rise to the challenge. The Veterans are very thankful and proud of what these students have accomplished and wish to express our heartfelt thanks for your work.

Butte Post 1 Celebrates Birthday & New Location

SUBMITTED BY ROGER KNOELL, ADJUTANT

Post 1 celebrated The American Legion and Silver Bow Post 1’s 100th Birthday on 13 April. The Post also had a grand opening of their new Post building. About 300 people attended the event including representatives from Senator Tester’s and Senator Daines’ office. Congressman Gianforte was also present. The key speaker was Butte’s Chief Executive Dave Palmer (a Veteran). Also present were six Post 1 past commanders.
A Fantasy Trip
BY DEAN GILBERT, POST 23 HISTORIAN
MARCH 6 – 20, 2019
As with all fantasies, it starts with something bad happening. In my case, my son Judson had a heart attack. He had scheduled a trip to Washington D.C. with a son that visited with the Senators of Wyoming as a school project. I was enlisted to accompany my grandson in his stead. The appointments had been made and schedule established. I flew from Bozeman to Washington D.C. to meet with my grandson, Addison Gilbert, a high school senior and an Air Force ROTC student from Cheyenne Wyoming.

The meeting with the Wyoming Senator Michael Enzi and Senator John Barrasso was a school project regarding a letter written by Addison, and the Senators in turn invited him to come to speak with them at their D.C. Capitol Senate office. Our meeting was at 9:30 a.m. at Senator Enzi’s office.

The Senators’ Aide took us to their conference room to conduct business. Their interest with my grandson went beyond his immediate concerns to the future expectation of Addiction. His graduation from South High School in Cheyenne will be June 1, 2019, whereupon he will report for active duty with the Marine Corps on July 1 with boot camp in San Diego, California. I think Addison has the ability of achieving his potential and the Wyoming Senators did as well. They encouraged him to consider a career with Marine Aviation with expectations of space research.

After the meeting, Senator Enzi arranged for one of his Aides to go with us on a tour of the Senate, House of Representatives and the Capitol of the United States. We bypassed some of the general public routes and took the underground shuttle as that is a lot of walking and stairs. The next event on our agenda was to locate the offices of our Montana Senators. We did not have an appointment so we checked for their office locations, walked the corridors to their offices, opened the door and entered. An Aide informed us that Senator Jon Tester was in a meeting with the VFW from around the USA and as soon as the hearing was over, he would come out and speak with us. We waited and sat down and watched the hearings on a monitor in Tester’s office. The camera picked up the veteran’s participating in the hearing with their hands raised. I was also wearing my Legion cap so I fit right in with the moment and proceedings. I was able to make comments to those in the office about experiences I had observed. The hearing was an opportunity to assist in the mindsets of drugs, finding work and living places, and other matters particular to the military. It was a lengthy hearing. Addison and I left to find Senator Daines’ office. Steve Daines was also facing a finance hearing and would be wrapping up in the next half hour and we could again watch the monitor. That sounded great so an Aide took us down to a subcommittee meeting room to observe and wait. In time Senator Daines completed the hearing and we could hear the gavel hit. A couple minutes later the Senator came through the door and straight over to where Addison and I waited. We visited about the naming of the B-47 Ridge and the Monument that is coming in Paradise Valley, and the wind energy plans at Hunters Hot Springs. I wanted to speak of the lack of cell phone service in the Shields River and Paradise Valley but didn’t have time. Senator Daines visited with Addison about his projects and future with the Marine Corps and future following graduation. Senator Daines’ father had a career with the Marines. Others were waiting for the Senators time, so we went back to Tester’s office to observe and wait. Shortly thereafter Senator Tester came through the door and straight over to where we waited. His schedule was crowded so we introduced ourselves and visited for a moment. Walking the corridors, in offices, and on the street, people were shaking my hand and saying “Thank you for your service to the country”. Also, one lady left her group came over to where I was standing and said, “Thank you for helping sponsor Boys State, Girls State and the Oratory program. They are very good programs”. Evidently she had kids that had participated. I still had my American Legion cap and coat on so she asked me to thank all the Legion members for sponsoring these programs.

Top of the Capital Dome Replica

Three Forks Legionnaire One of Several Montanans Featured in Unique Veteran History and Art Project

BY AUGUST LUL, MEMBER OF BOZEMAN POST 14

Originally from Pony, Ray Lau was a longtime member of the Pony Legion and a veteran of WWII. In July 2017, Lau was interviewed for a new veteran history project. Lau’s story, from his account of the Battle of Okinawa, is one of over 110 veteran stories presented in Full Mag: Veteran Stories Illustrated, Vol. 2. The team of veterans, authors, and historians worked on the project and obtained obituaries that may otherwise be lost and to honor veterans through art. They interviewed veterans and present their stories in the graphic novel style. The project will illustrate in the style popularized in serialized strips such as Steve Canyon. These stories are then compiled into the graphic novel and military history magazine created by Full Magazine Publishing and printed in Great Falls.

At one point in his story, presented as a full-page written profile, followed by a six-page black and white art treatment. Lau tells readers “I think we visited every island out there in the Pacific.” He goes on to recount his many nights “on the guns” defending against attacks by Japanese aircraft. An active member of the Three Forks community, Lau was always there to lend a helping hand to neighbors and in the community. Upon his return from the USS Tazewell during WWII.

Our next priority was to find Montana House of Representative’s office and Representative Greg Gianforte. Again, you walk in the door, introduce yourself to the Aide, state that you wish to speak with the Montana Representative. Rep. Gianforte came out immediately. We discussed the B-47 Ridge project and the forthcoming monument on the Ridge in Paradise Valley near Chico Hot Springs. His Aide was Bryan Wells’ granddaughter but she was not there as her term had ended. Greg Gianforte also spoke with my grandson Addison on his school achievements and future. Then before we left he invited Addison and me to come back at 9pm and meet outside the Capitol to tour the Capitol, Senate and Congress. Rep. Gianforte graciously took us into the areas that were closed earlier because of senate activities and onto Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi’s office where we could look down Pennsylvania Avenue at night. We were able to sit in some of the hearing chairs, sit in the balcony and look down at the layout of the House.
National Vietnam War Veterans Day March 29

National Vietnam War Veterans Day is observed every year on March 29 and is a way to thank and honor our nation’s Vietnam veterans and their families for their service and sacrifice. There are five objectives with Vietnam Commemoration being the main theme and the other four being:

- Highlight the service of our Armed Forces and various support organizations during the war
- Pay tribute to wartime contributions at home by American citizens
- Highlight technology, science and medical advances made during the war
- Recognize contributions by our Allies

Who does Vietnam War Commemoration Honor?

U.S. Armed Forces personnel with active duty service between November 1, 1955 to May 17, 1975 regardless of location of service which includes:

- 2,700,000 who served in-country, in-theater or were stationed elsewhere during those 20 years.

Origins of National Vietnam War Veterans Day Commemoration

- 2007: Congress incorporated language in H.R. 4986 authorizing a program commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War
- 2008: H.R. 4986 was signed into law on January 28, 2008
- 2017: The Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017 established The National Vietnam War Veterans Day to be celebrate each year on March 29
- 2025: The National Vietnam War Recognition Act of 2017 to ensure the sacrifices of the 9 million heroes who served during this difficult chapter of our country’s history are remembered for generations to come.

President Proclamation Regarding Vietnam Veterans Day Commemoration

On March 29th, National Vietnam War Veterans Day, Custer Post 5, Miles City, conducted a ceremony honoring the VA CLC Vietnam veterans. Emcee is Carol Prahl, Post 5. Post 5 Commander Bob Prahl addressed the VA CLC audience, in Miles City, about Eastern Montana Zone Commander Clancee Collins on the right. Emcee is Carol Prahl, Post 5. Post 5 Commander Bob Prahl seated on the right.

Submitte D by raymonD reaD, Dept. hiStorian

Submitte D by elmer palmer, memberShip Chair poSt 135

Submitte D by CAROL PRahl, meMBer

On March 29th, National Vietnam War Veterans Day, Custer Post 5, Miles City, conducted a ceremony honoring the VA CLC Vietnam veterans.

Submitte D by RANDY KEmp

The American Legion Gallatin Post 14 attended Montana State University Army ROTC Commissioning Ceremony at 16:30 hours on 4 May 2019 where nine new second lieutenants were commissioned. Pictured are Post 14 Commander Len Albright and Adjutant Randy Kemp presenting a membership card to August Green from Belt Montana making him officially a member of Post 14. Post 14 presented membership cards and their first year membership in the American Legion as a graduation gift to all nine new lieutenants to commemorate their accomplishment and hopefully inspire them to become life-long members of The American Legion.

Submitte D by douG maRTIN

On 23 May 2019, Post 31 Twin Bridges awarded two 8th grade students with the Legion School Awards Medal. Ruby Waller and Reid Johnson were honored as the 2018/2019 class leaders, voted by their classmates. This award recognizes them for their possession of those high qualities of Courage, Honor, Leadership, Patriotism, Scholarship and Service. Each student was awarded the Certificate of Appreciation, a medal and a $25 gift certificate to the Shack. The Veterans of Post 31 wish to congratulate them for outstanding achievement and class leadership.

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WHEREAS, in 1947 the people of France and Italy were still struggling to recover from the devastation of World War II, and, after seeing this firsthand, noted columnist and journalist Drew Pearson spearheaded a fundraising campaign to provide them with food, clothing, and other necessities; and

WHEREAS, Americans contributed generously to this purely grassroots effort, filling train cars with an estimated $40 million in relief supplies and sending the American Friendship Train of 1947 to France; and

WHEREAS, touched by this response to their needs, the French people answered with a program of their own, the French Merci Train of 1949, the idea originating with Andre Picard, a veteran and railroad employee, who suggested that a boxcar be filled with gifts from every part of the France and sent to the United States as a gesture of gratitude; and

WHEREAS, it soon became obvious that a single boxcar, known as a “40 et 8” because it could hold 40 men or 8 horses and was the type of boxcar used to transport thousands of American GIs during both World Wars, would not be enough for the tens of thousands of gratitude gifts from French citizens; and

WHEREAS, the French War Veterans’ Association assumed control of the project and filled 49 of the boxcars, one for each state then in the Union, and one boxcar to be shared by the District of Columbia and the territory of Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, in all, 52,000 gifts weighing 250 tons were collected during 1948, and the 49 Merci Cars were then shipped aboard the freighter Magellan; and

WHEREAS, the ship, “MERCII AMERICA” adorning its sides, received a royal welcome in New York Harbor on February 3, 1949; and

WHEREAS, on February 16, 1949, Montana’s Merci Car was presented to Governor Robert Bonner, representing the people of Montana, by Paul Lenier, a royal welcome in New York Harbor on February 3, 1949; and

WHEREAS, after the ceremony and ultimate distribution of the boxcar’s contents to Montana’s various counties as well as to the Montana Historical Society Library, Montana’s Merci Car sat uncruisely in the Northern Pacific Railway yards for nearly 10 years largely forgotten and rusting away; and

WHEREAS, Montana’s La Societe des Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux (the Society of Forty Men and Eight Horses, also known as the 40 & 8 Society, and which was established in 1921, became the advocate for Montana’s Merci Car in the early 1950s; and

WHEREAS, in the mid-1950s, the 40 & 8 Society’s leadership approached Governor J. Hugo Aronson and asked to have Montana’s Merci Car donated to the state’s 40 & 8 Society and displayed in the State Capitol area as a tribute to the veterans and people of Montana; and

WHEREAS, in 1957 a verbal contract was struck with Governor Aronson turning the boxcar over to the 40& 8 Society and the car was to be set behind the Veterans and Pioneers building in a park for all to see; and

WHEREAS, before Montana’s Merci Car was placed in a much smaller area behind the Veterans and Pioneers building that in 1976 was redesignated as the Veterans’ Plaza and flags and symbols of the Lewis and Clark expeditions were added to the site; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, Montana’s Merci Car was moved to its present site at the Montana Military Museum and is now a premier exhibit at the museum’s outdoors Veterans’ Plaza; and

WHEREAS, Montana’s Merci Car continues to be a resolute symbol of the patriotism, dedication, and sacrifice of many Montana veterans of World War I and World War II and has withstood the ultimate test of surviving and being relevant to our memory.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

That the 66th Montana Legislature commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the presentation on February 16, 1949, of Montana’s Merci Car from the people of France to Governor Robert Bonner in front of a joint session of Montana’s legislative assembly representing the people of France to the Veterans; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that Montana’s Merci Car be recognized as a grand salute from the people of France to thank the people of Montana for their efforts in providing relief supplies carried by the American Friendship Train of 1947 and as an expression of gratitude to Monteans for their spirit of generosity and the people of France in World War I and World War II from the chains of tyranny and with whom we still stand today in recognition of our common bonds of freedom and liberty.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State send a copy of this resolution to the Montana Military Museum.

A Joint Resolution of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the State of Montana Commemorating the 70th Anniversary of Montana’s Receipt in 1949 of Gratitude Gifts from the People of France Delivered in a Boxcar Known as The 40 & 8 Montana Merci Car.

A Joint Resolution of The Senate and The House of Representatives of The State of Montana Commemorating The Founding of The American Legion and Recognizing The Many Contributions of The Montana Department of The American Legion In Our State.

WHEREAS, on Veterans’ Day, 2018, at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the world commemorated the 100th anniversary of the armistice ending the fighting in World War I; and

WHEREAS, World War I veterans registering concern over the care of those returning from the battlefields delineated plans for the development of a veterans’ association, resulting in the Paris Caucus held on March 15, 1919, and the birth of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, the Paris Caucus resulted in a declaration of basic tenets that ultimately became the preamble of the constitution for The American Legion, which declares that The American Legion is “a patriotic organization dedicated to serve God and country”; and

WHEREAS, as a primary catalyst for the Paris Caucus, Lt. Col. Theodore Roosevelt Jr. became known as the father of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, we also acknowledge that if there was one Montanian in attendance at the Paris Caucus, Walter L. Verge of Choteau; and

WHEREAS, a call by local Montana veterans’ association leaders to hold a state organizational meeting resulted in the convening of the Helena Caucus on March 4, 1919, with delegates from across the state; and

WHEREAS, the Helena Caucus urged that the governor appoint a Veterans’ Welfare Commission to be headquartered in Helena, which is now known as the state Board of Veterans’ Affairs, and

WHEREAS, on March 4, 1919, with delegates from across the state, the Montana State Convention was held on March 15, 1919, and the birth of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, the Paris Caucus resulted in a declaration of basic tenets that ultimately became the preamble of the constitution for The American Legion and that communities across the state chosen to name their local post for the first annual state convention of the World War Veteran’s Division, which was held on June 30 and July 1, 1919; and

WHEREAS, convention business based on the four pillars of supporting veterans, Americanism, national defense, and children and youth included choosing to rename the World War Veterans of Montana to The American Legion of Montana; and

WHEREAS, the Montana Department of The American Legion has for the past 100 years been a positive force in communities throughout the state by promoting citizenship among our youth and continuing to serve veterans and their families.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

That the years 2019 and 2020 be recognized as the Centennial of The Montana Department of The American Legion and that communities across Montana were encouraged to recognize and celebrate the service and many contributions of the more than 12,000 members of The American Legion in Montana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State send a copy of this resolution to the headquarters of The American Legion, Department of Montana, for distribution to American Legion Posts throughout the state.
Congressman Gianforte recognizes a great team effort between EANGMT (Enlisted Assoc. of the Nat’l Guard of MT) and The American Legion

Photo by Charlie Denison
Congressman Greg Gianforte, right, presents American Legion Post 16 Commander Don Bost with a Montana Congressional Veteran Commendation for his service to “country and community” at the Legion Thursday morning. Many local veterans attended the commemoration.

“Don has doubled the membership by following veterans home,” said Gianforte. Bost thanked those in attendance for the nomination.

“I know who you are. You kept asking me questions and asking me for newspaper articles… it’s not like it was a big secret,” he said.

Legion representative Dave McClure – one of those who led the charge for Bost’s recognition thanked Bost for his dedication to “freedom, country, community and family.”

“You’ve always had a desire to make a positive difference,” McClure said.

Following the commemoration, American Legion member and fellow Vietnam vet Bob Barber said Bost’s recognition was “well deserved.”

American Legion Department of Montana Celebrates Bill Signings

HB 285 Representative Ricci’s bill to Establish the Pearl Harbor Memorial Highway by the National Cemetery at Laurel, Montana. (see photo on page 5)

HB 422 Representative Buttry. Increase Amount Available for Montana Veteran Home Loans

Steve Daines
United States Senator for Montana

President Trump Signs Senator Tester’s Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act into Law

Senator’s bipartisan bill expands care and benefits to veterans exposed to toxic substances in the line of duty.

“Today’s victory was hard fought and hard won by brave servicemembers who returned home only to be denied the benefits and care they earned,” Senator said. “This bill is long overdue for so many veterans and their families in Montana and across the country, living with the effects of exposure to Agent Orange. We are finally delivering on our government’s commitment to the Blue Water Navy veterans who sacrificed so much to keep us safe and free.”

Tester’s bill is supported by The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Vietnam Veterans of America, Military Officers Association of America, Fleet Reserve Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, Paralyzed Veterans of America, AMVETS, and Military Order of the Purple Heart.
Go Ahead – Relax...

Let the Legionnaire Insurance Trust Program handle ALL your insurance needs.

Don’t waste your time shopping for insurance – the best deals are right here. Thanks to the group buying power of millions of Legionsmen like you, we have negotiated with leading insurance companies to bring you the best rates and coverage. Get the insurance you need at a price you can afford. Even if you are over age 65, you can protect yourself and your family from today’s soaring platinum costs and increasing risks. It’s easy. Just choose what you need from the Legionnaire Insurance Trust full range of plans designed by your Department and tailored to the needs of Legionsmen and their families.

The Legionnaire Insurance Trust Program

Fill in your name, address, phone number and date of birth. Then check off the plans that interest you, and we will do the rest.

Please send me complete details about the Legionnaire Insurance Trust Program.

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone

Date of Birth

Submit

#  Resolution Name Submitted by Pass Fail
19-01 Acclimated Membership Years in The American Legion (4 years) District 8 x
19-02 Uniformity in the Wearing of Legion Uniforms District 8 x
19-03 Conrave Driver for National Vice Commander District 5 x
19-04 Legionnaires Need a Winter Uniform Cap District 5 x
19-05 Social Media Membership Potential District 5 x
19-06 "The Legion Family" is complete (Received & Recorded) District 5 x
19-07 Provide Names of Legionnaires From Past Poster District 5 x
19-08 Members Without Forwarding Address District 5 x
19-09 Change Award for Top District Recruiters Finance x
19-10 Change Award for Best Newsletter Finance x
19-11 Montana Dept. American Legion 2nd Century Post (Honorary (Pulled by Author)) Superior Performance Trophy Membership x
19-12 Name Change of the District Membership Award to Mervin "Merv" G. Gunderson Award Membership x

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Please send me complete details about the Legionnaire Insurance Trust Program.

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone

Date of Birth

Submit
Montana Legionnaires…
Visit the Montana Military Museum
At historic Fort Harrison
Just west of Helena
Fort William Henry Harrison Museum
Foundation & Montana Military Museum
For more information write to:
ATTN: Museum Director/Curator
PO Box 125
Fort Harrison, Montana 59636-0125
myfun51@msn.com • 406-324-3550

Liberty County American Legion Post #88
Welcome to our Post Meeting
Every 1st Wednesday at 7 p.m.
Liberty Co. Community
& Senior Center
618 East Adams
Chester, Montana

Sons Of The American Legion
Detachment of Montana
For More Information About Membership Call:
(406) 324-3989 or (406) 324-3990
or write to P.O. Box 6875
Helena, MT 59604

American Legion
Post #3
Meets the 3rd Monday at 7 PM
September thru May at the Elks Lodge
500 1st Ave South
Great Falls MT
(406) 453-8222

American Legion
Post #2
3095 Villard Ave.
Helena, MT
Open at 10 a.m.
7 Days a Week
Legion Meets 2nd Thursday
SAL Meets 3rd Thursday

Welcome To American Legion Club 30
We invite all veterans to stop in and support YOUR club.

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Gallatin Post #14
Striving for Legiontown USA
225 East Main Street
Bozeman, MT 59715
Open daily
Monday through Friday 11 a.m. to 2 a.m.
Saturday 10 a.m. to 2 a.m.
Sunday 10 a.m. to Midnight
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Veterans
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