



Department Commander

Kim Kay McCarty Martin

Kim Kay McCarty Martin was born in 1963 in Dickinson, North Dakota, the second eldest of six children. From an early age, she displayed a strong sense of leadership and community involvement. At Dickinson High School, she was active on the Debate Team and in the Student Congress, qualifying for state competition from 1978 to 1982. She also participated in basketball and track, lettering in both sports for three years.

Her commitment to service began while she was still in high school, joining the North Dakota Army National Guard through the delayed entry program. She completed bootcamp at Fort Dix, New Jersey, in June 1981 and later transferred to the Georgia Army National Guard in 1982. Kim Kay served a total of 4 years and 11 months in the Army National Guard, achieving the rank of Specialist 5.

Following her time in the Guard, Kim Kay worked as a manager at Dairy Queen and later ran a deli at Kroger's. In July 1986, she took a significant step by joining the U.S. Navy, attending bootcamp in Orlando, Florida, in November of that year. She completed "A" school for Ocean Systems Technician Maintenance at Naval Station Norfolk, qualifying to service mainframe and PC computers. She then completed "C" school for Target Data Processing and received orders to the Naval Oceanographic Processing Center at Naval Air Station Ford Island in Hawaii. There, she also served as the Command's Safety and Hazardous

Materials Petty Officer and supervised the actuator repair shop.

In 1990, she transferred to Naval Facility Brawdy in the United Kingdom, where she continued her OTM duties, supervised multiple workshops,

and served as the Command's Hazardous Materials Officer. During this tour, she was awarded a Navy Achievement Medal and completed training to become a Religious Program Specialist (RP), later redesignated as RP2.

Her final duty stations included Naval Station Newport, Rhode Island, where she worked at the Chapel of Hope as an RP, and Norfolk Regional Support Group, where she transferred in 1996 due to her son's medical needs. There, she taught RP classes, scheduled shipboard chaplain visits, and organized religious services. In May 1998, after 11 years and 9 months of dedicated service, Kim Kay was medically retired from the Navy.

Throughout her Navy career,



Kim Kay became a single mother to two sons: John, born in 1989, and Thomas, born in 1994. Following her retirement, she returned to North Dakota to be closer to family. She joined The American Legion and became a passionate community volunteer, involving herself in her sons' schools, leading Cub Scout Pack Den 2, and remaining active in veterans' affairs.

In 2003, tragedy struck when her eldest son John was killed in a car crash. Despite the profound loss, Kim Kay found strength in service. In 2009, she moved to Valley City, North Dakota, volunteering at a local nursing home. A year later, she relocated to Great Falls, Montana, and continued her community involvement. She became active in her church, chairing the Fellowship Board, and joined the Community Veterans Task Force Committee.

With 25 years of American Legion membership, Kim Kay has been a cornerstone of Malmstrom Post 341 in Great Falls for the last 15 years. She has served as Post Chaplain, Adjutant, and Commander for three years each. At the Department level, she has held mul-

tiple leadership roles: District 8 Commander (4 years), Montana Women Veterans Coordinator (7 years), North Central Zone Commander (2 years), and Department Vice-Commander (most recently). She is a proud 2018 graduate of the National American Legion College.

Currently, Kim Kay serves as Post 341's Adjutant and Chairs the Youth Committee. She is also District 8's Finance Officer, a counselor for the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State program, and the Department's Temporary Financial Investigator.

Kim Kay is married, and her son Thomas and his wife are both Legionnaires, having served in the Marine Corps and Army respectively—making theirs a true American Legion family.

From her early years in Dickinson to her distinguished military service and her ongoing commitment to veterans and her community, Kim Kay McCarty Martin embodies the American Legion's values. She truly lives by the principle of "an individual obligation to the community, state, and nation."

Immediate Past Commander Simon

As I step away from my role as your Department Commander, I want to express my deepest gratitude to every Legionnaire, Auxiliary member, Son, and Rider who made this past year one of progress, pride, and purpose.

Your unwavering dedication, countless volunteer hours, and passion for service have left a lasting mark not just on me—but on our entire Montana Legion Family. From community outreach to state-level initiatives, we proved once again that when Montana shows up, we lead with heart and strength.

To those just installed—congratulations. I offer you my full support and best wishes as you step into your new leadership roles. You are not alone. You are surrounded by a network of experienced mentors, passionate members, and a tradition that spans generations. Continue to lead with courage and inclusivity.

Together, we've built a strong foundation. Now, we look forward—united and energized. Let's keep the momentum going. Let's grow our family, support our veterans, and continue to show the nation what Montana pride really means.

Thank you all for the honor of serving alongside you.



Department Adjutant Duane Cunningham

Montana Veterans Beware: The Hidden Dangers of “Claim Sharks” – Use Your DSO Free of Charge

As more veterans step forward to file claims following new legislation like the PACT Act, a dangerous trend is growing in Montana and across the nation: the rise of “claim sharks.” These are for-profit companies or individuals who prey on veterans seeking VA disability compensation, often charging outrageous fees and making misleading promises. While they position themselves as “consultants” or “advisors,” their actions often violate federal law—and cheat veterans out of the benefits they earned.

What Are Claim Sharks?

Claim sharks are unaccredited businesses that:

- Charge upfront or back-pay-based fees (sometimes up to 50% of a veteran’s retroactive benefits)
- Lock veterans into predatory contracts
- Offer “guarantees” that no ethical or accredited claims agent would make
- Often lack VA accreditation, making their actions potentially illegal

According to VA.gov, it is illegal for anyone who is not VA-accredited to charge for assisting with an initial claim. Yet, many claim sharks exploit legal loopholes or operate in the shadows—costing veterans millions each year.

Veterans in Montana: You Have a Better Option

The Montana Veterans Affairs Division (MVAD) employs trained

and VA-accredited Veteran Service Officers (VSOs) who provide claim assistance at no cost to the veteran. Their mission is simple: help Montana veterans access every benefit they’ve earned without charging a single penny.

VSOs can assist with:

- VA disability compensation claims
- Pension applications
- Healthcare enrollment
- Appeals and evidence gathering
- Burial and survivor benefits

They are located in nine regional offices statewide and travel to surrounding communities regularly. These officers are not volunteers or part-timers—they’re experienced, credentialed professionals backed by the state and trained by the VA.

Find your local MVAD office here:
<https://dma.mt.gov/mvad>

Dangers of Paying for Help

While veterans may feel tempted to pay for “faster” or “guaranteed” results, paying claim sharks often results in:

- Loss of tens of thousands of dollars in back pay
- Unlawful or poorly filed claims that delay or jeopardize benefits
- Difficulty terminating exploitative contracts once signed

The VA Office of General Counsel maintains a searchable database of all accredited representatives here:

<https://www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp>

If someone offers to help with a claim for a fee, always ask: Are you VA-accredited? If they’re not, walk away and report them.

National Organizations That Can Help—for Free

In addition to Montana’s DSOs, veterans can also get free assistance through these organizations, all of

whom have accredited personnel:

- Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW): <https://www.vfw.org/assistance/va-claims-separation-benefits>
- American Legion: <https://www.legend.org/serviceofficers>
- Disabled American Veterans (DAV): <https://www.dav.org/veterans/>

Final Thoughts

Veterans should never have to pay for access to benefits they earned through service and sacrifice. In Montana, there is absolutely no reason to ever pay for claim assistance—trusted, accredited, and trained advocates are already available.

For More Information

Veterans or family members looking to learn more can visit:

- Montana Veterans Affairs Division (MVAD) – Regional offices & contact info
- VA Office of General Counsel – Accreditation Search
- FTC Consumer Alerts: VA Claim Scams
- Veterans Affairs PACT Act Information



Vice Commander

Irene Dickerson

Irene Dickerson was born on April 21, 1961 in San Antonio, Texas. Her mother died when she was 2 years old and her sister, Cindy was 2 months old. She and her sister went to live with her aunt and uncle. She began her education in Houston before her family relocated to Port O' Connor, Texas, in 1972, where she completed high school in 1979. She went on to earn a Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) from the University of Texas at San Antonio in 1984.

Upon graduation, Irene was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the US Army and completed the Ordnance Officer Basic course at Redstone Arsenal Alabama as an Ammunition Officer. Her first assignment took her overseas to Buren, Germany where she served with the 27th Ordnance Company. She continued her active-duty career at Fort Hood, Texas, after attending the Officer Advanced Course at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. She rose to the rank of Captain before leaving active duty in 1992.

From 1992 to 2001, Irene served in the U.S. Army Reserves, where she was promoted to Major. Following the events of September 11, 2001, she was recalled to active duty, with Army Material Command (AMC). She deployed to Balad, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. Her leadership journey continued stateside at Fort Hood, Texas, where she served from 2005 to 2006, as Deputy to the Commander of the 407th Army Field Support Brigade. She then took command of the 407th Army Field Support Battalion-Bliss, Fort Bliss, Texas, from 2007 to 2010. From there she deployed to Kuwait as the Deputy Brigade Commander for the 402nd Army Field Support Brigade. She was promoted to Colonel in 2009. In 2012, she deployed once more, this time to Afghanistan, where she was the Deputy



Commander for the 401st Army Field Support Brigade, until 2013.

Colonel Dickerson retired from the U.S. Army in October 2013, after 30 years of honorable and distinguished service. She has a Legion of Merit, Afghanistan Campaign Medal w/Campaign star, Bronze Star Medal (3rd award), Meritorious Service Medal (4th award), Army Commendation Medal (6th award), Army Achievement Medal (3rd award), National Defense Service Medal (2nd Award), Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal with Campaign star, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon (3rd award). Armed Forces Reserve Medal w/M device, Nato Medal.

Beyond her military accomplishments, Irene also holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN), a master's in project management and a Doctorate in Business Administration. She is married to Stephen Dickerson, a U.S. Army veteran. She has one son and three grandsons.



Montana American Legion Wraps Up 106th Annual Convention

The 106th Annual American Legion Department of Montana Convention, held June 20–22, brought together dedicated Legionnaires for a weekend of camaraderie, reflection, and meaningful progress. With a focus on strengthening programs, updating governance, and advocating for veterans' issues, this year's resolutions underscored the Department's commitment to growth, recognition, and purpose.

Empowering the American Legion Riders

A major theme of the convention was the continued advancement of the American Legion Riders (ALR) program. Resolutions 25-01 and 25-02, both passed unanimously, establish official department-level awards to honor Riders who exemplify service, leadership, and dedication. These recognitions will not only celebrate individual contributions but also inspire continued excellence across the program.

Building on that momentum, Resolution 25-03 introduced a \$5 department-level dues fee for ALR members. These funds will support the newly created awards, while also contributing to the National Legacy Fund—a cornerstone of the ALR mission to support the children of fallen service members.

Modernizing Governance

The adoption of Resolution 25-04 marked a significant milestone: the formal update and adoption of the Department's revised Constitution and Bylaws. This essential step ensures the guiding documents align with current operations and provide a solid foundation for the organization's future.

Encouraging Participation—With Caution

Resolution 25-05, which proposed a simplified format for submitting resolutions, did not pass. While intended to increase participation by allowing department committees to help refine submissions, some delegates raised concerns about preserving procedural consistency and integrity.

Taking a Stand on National Priorities

Two additional resolutions addressed issues of national importance. Resolution 25-06 urges Congress to establish a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) benchmark for defense spending, reinforcing the Legion's stance on sustained national security.

Resolution 25-07, introduced by the convention committee, encourages the use of opioid settlement funds to support research into breakthrough therapies for treating PTSD, traumatic brain injuries, and opioid use disorder among veterans—a forward-looking measure that reflects the Department's commitment to veteran wellness.

Looking Ahead with Purpose

Every resolution considered at this year's convention reflected the enduring values of the American Legion—service, leadership, and a relentless drive to improve. From internal program development to national advocacy, the Department of Montana continues to lead with purpose.

To all the delegates, officers, committee members, and volunteers who made this convention a success—thank you. Your time, energy, and dedication are shaping the future of our Department and strengthening our legacy of service.



National Executive Committeeman Glen Sharbano

Glen Sharbano was born in Missoula, Montana where he attended Target Range School. He also went to schools in Deer Lodge, Florence, and graduated from Ronan in 1979. During High School and after, he became a sort of Jack of all trades. Working on farms changing irrigation pipes, stacking hay, milking cows, roofing, drywall, Sawmill, mechanic, welder and in the restaurant industry as Chief Cook & bottle washer, baker, and bartender. Glen is a 5th generation Montanan on his father's side and 4th generation on his mother's side. He is a direct descendant of George Van Ness who served in the Continental Army at Valley Forge with General Washington. His family has served in every war since. So, Glen decided to try his luck in the Army. Being told his ASVAB scores were high he took the DLAB (Defense Language Aptitude Battery Test) and scored in the top two percent of the Nation. He enlisted to be a 98G Cryptologic Linguist. During Basic Training he was told he needed to change his MOS. He asked to reclassify as Airborne Infantry and was told there were no openings. His only options were cook or truck driver. Having had enough of cooking he chose the latter and that panned out as he was able to tour most of Germany at the Government's expense.

Glen served in the Army from 1984-1989 with the 1st Armored Division, Furth, Germany as a Tractor Trailer Operator driving over 100,000 accident-free miles hauling tanks, ammo, and other hazardous materials. He was chosen as Bravo Company 4th Support Battalion's Driver of the month. Attended the NCO Academy in Katter Bach, Germany in 1987. He was then stationed from 1989-1991 with the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center, where he was promoted to Corporal and served as Platoon Sergeant in Bravo Company, Support Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Group and as Truck Master for Special Forces Assess-

ment and Selection and Phase 3 training segments at Camp McCall and Camp Rowe, Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

Glen is a Paid Up For Life and 15-year member of The American Legion. A 7-year member of The Sons of The American Legion. A Life Member of the Disabled American Veterans. Commander of the Veterans Honor Guard. A Benefactor Life Member of the National Rifle Association. And is a member of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. He completed the ALEI course in 2014, the LEAD course in 2015, the 54th National Membership Workshop in Indianapolis in 2017, and Basic Training Course in 2017. Glen is also a 2017 Alumni of the 1st ever Department of Montana Legion College, 2017 Alumni of the National American Legion College. Glen was sworn into ANAVICUS at the 103rd National Convention in Milwaukee.

Glen was the District Adjutant and Vice Commander for 2 years and District Commander for 3 years and the District #4 Finance Officer. Glen received 100% District Commander 2 times and the Merv Gunder-son award for Top District Commander 3 consecutive times. In 2019 he was nominated for District Com-mander "Race to the Top" award for Category I. The National Achievement Award for exceeding the previous year's District membership 2018, 2019, 2020. He has been the Oratory Chairman for both the Post #138 and 4th District, as well as Public Relations and Membership Chairman. As Post Commander/Adjutant his Post was 8 years consecutive All-Time-High in membership since 2015-2022. Honor Ribbon 2 times and Post Excellence award 2 times. His Post and Unit were awarded 7 consecutive Legion Family Ribbons for jointly achieving 100% membership. At the De-partment level Glen served on Membership, Creden-tials, Constitution and Internal Affairs, Legislative Committee Chair, Education and Training Committees and was the interim Dean of the Montana Legion College in 2019-2023. And re-appointed as Dean for



NEC continued

2023-2025. In 2021 he was elected as the Department Commander. He is a member of the Department of Montana and the National Past Department Commanders Club. At the 2023 Convention in Lewistown Glen was elected as the Department of Montana Alternate National Executive Committeeman. At the 2025 Department Convention in Helena Glen was elected as the National Executive Committeeman and is also the Chair for Distinguished Guests. At the National level Glen is currently serving on the Americanism Council.

Glen has 4 Sons from 2 previous marriages, 1 is currently serving as Army Combat Medic. He has 8 Grand Children, four girls and four boys. All his children and grandchildren are members of The American Legion, The American Legion Auxiliary and Sons of The American Legion.



Department Historian

Raymond Read

106 Department Conventions in the book. The gathering in our capital city was eventful and rewarding. As the Re-Elected Department Historian, I would like to emphasize the following. A full report is in the 106 Convention Reports Book. During the 2023 Department Convention a resolution was submitted and approved at the Convention for Montana Department for The American Legion, to participate and assist in the celebration of America's 250th Birthday of the Declaration of Independence. The National program is known as the America 250 Semi-quicentennial. The State of Montana established a State Commission, and the Department resolution was our announcement and intent to participate in the events surrounding the Birthday. The Montana Commission can be reached at www.america250mt.org. Since the passage of Montana Department's Resolution, truly little has been said about the Legion's program and in fact there is no current plan on the books. I, as the Department Historian, have begun to research back to the Nation's 200th Birthday and Montana's participation in that program to find out how it was done.

On May 25th the National executive Committee approved and published the following Executive Resolution that now gives clear guidance 250th

Anniversary Action at Department level The Resolves are provided for your planning at Post level with the regard of moving forward with a program of celebration that will culminate on July 4, 2026.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE AMERICAN LEGION May 7-8, 2025. Indianapolis, Indiana Resolution No. 5: Celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the United States Origin: Internal Affairs Commission Submitted by: Internal Affairs Commission – now, therefore, be it RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on May 7-8, 2025, That The American Legion is hereby authorized to work with the U.S. Semi-quicentennial Commission, the congressional caucus, the advisory councils and individual staff to enhance the celebration of America 250; and, (Complete Resolution available on Legion.org) be it further RESOLVED That departments are encouraged to actively participate in their state 250 commissions to enhance state and local efforts to celebrate America 250; and, be it finally RESOLVED That The American Legion, comprised of members whose selfless service to this great nation and its founding principles are criteria for membership, be historically referenced as a civil society leader which ensured that 250 years of a constitutional

republic was justly and successfully celebrated.

American Legion National

For 2025 on, the digital department history contest will be judged in August. Rules for the 2025 contest will be announced by Oct. 13, 2024. Departments may also submit one digital and one hard-copy post history for a best-practice showcase. These will not be judged at the national level contest, but digital submissions will be posted on the Omeka platform, and hard-copy submissions are planned to be displayed at the national convention. Although post-level histories will no longer be judged on the national level, departments are encouraged to conduct their own contests in whatever way they choose.

Americn Legion National History Contest Guidance

In 2025 and beyond, as approved in Resolution No. 20, the national contest for posts will become a showcase.

Department will be able to submit:

- 1 one-year digital Department history for contest
- 1 one-year hard-copy Post history for showcase
- 1 one-year digital Post history for showcase should be submitted digitally no later than Aug. 1, 2025.

Post submissions for the national showcase (digital and hard copy) need to be received by the national library no later than Aug. 8, 2025.





AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS



American Legion Riders of Montana: Recognition, Resources, and the Road Ahead

At the 106th Annual Department Convention in Great Falls, the American Legion Riders (ALR) of Montana roared forward with purpose and unity. Through the adoption of three pivotal resolutions—25-01, 25-02, and 25-03—the department laid a strong foundation for recognizing outstanding service, strengthening member engagement, and ensuring financial sustainability for the future.

Rider Recognition That Matters
Resolution 25-01 established the “Rider Mileage Award”—a new department-level recognition honoring the individual Rider who logs the most miles each membership year, starting in 2026. This award shines a light on dedication to the ALR mission through active participation, visibility in the community, and tireless support of veterans’ causes. The recipient will be honored with a commemorative patch and a plaque to celebrate their contribution to the Riders’ legacy.

Resolution 25-02 introduced the “Legion Rider of the Year Award,” which goes beyond mileage to recognize one Rider each year for

exemplary service, leadership, community engagement, and personal integrity. Nominees must demonstrate commitment to ALR values, involvement in local and national events, patriotic advocacy, and recruitment efforts. The honoree will receive a certificate, commemorative patch, and have their name engraved on a traveling trophy awarded at the Department Convention.

Together, these awards celebrate both the miles ridden and the impact made—motivating members across Montana to engage fully in the ALR mission.

Financial Fuel for the Future

To support these new recognition programs—and provide a consistent funding base for ALR operations—Resolution 25-03 enacted a \$5 annual department-level dues assessment per ALR member, effective July 1, 2026 (membership year 2027). The funds collected will:

- Cover critical expenses like event meals and advertising to boost visibility.
- Be allocated through an annual budget proposed by ALR leadership.
- Be reviewed by the Department Finance Committee and approved by the Department Executive Committee (DEC).
- Be assessed annually to ensure

alignment with program goals and needs.

This modest contribution by members will provide the resources necessary to keep the ALR active, visible, and effective across Montana.

An Auction to Remember

The energy and enthusiasm surrounding the Riders program culminated in a packed and spirited ALR auction on Saturday night. Riders and Legion Family members filled the room for a night of laughter, friendly competition, and heartfelt generosity. From hand-crafted goods to unique memorabilia, the auction raised significant funds that will further support ALR efforts through 2026 and beyond.

More Than a Program—A Movement

With clear direction, sustainable support, and new ways to honor excellence, the American Legion Riders of Montana are more than just a group of motorcycle enthusiasts—they are a growing movement committed to service, patriotism, and action.

The road ahead is wide open. And thanks to the steps taken at this year’s convention, it’s paved with purpose.

Montana Legion Pilsner: A Toast to Service and Success

The Montana Legion Pilsner, brewed in partnership with Big Sky Brewery in Missoula, poured more than just a crisp, refreshing beer—it poured pride, purpose, and support for veterans across the Treasure State. Launched for the 106th Annual Convention of the American Legion Department of Montana, the special-edition brew was a once-in-a-lifetime collector's can featuring a powerful tribute to our veterans.

In total, 105 cases of the Montana Legion Pilsner were sold, marking a successful first run and overwhelming support from Legionnaires and the community alike. With all proceeds going directly to support the American Legion of Montana's programs—including veteran support services, youth scholarships, and patriotic initiatives—each sip made a difference.

Due to the incredible reception, a second edition of the Pilsner is already in the works for the 2026 convention, this time with a commemorative label highlighting World War II. While the original can won't be back, the legacy continues—and the taste remains just as bold.

For posts, bars, or businesses interested in carrying the Montana Legion Pilsner on tap, please send in your point of contact (POC) information. Together, we can raise a glass and continue supporting those who served.

Here's to good beer and even better causes.



Ravalli Post 47

American Legion Ravalli Post 47 (Hamilton) Air Force veteran Colonel Nancy Dezell was awarded the 2024 Montana Governor's Veteran Commendation by Gov. Greg Gianforte on June 17th at the Ravalli Post 47 in Hamilton with close to 80 attendees.

Dezell was honored with a letter of commendation from the governor, celebrating her nearly three decades as an Air Force nurse, as well as her impact on the Hamilton community. She was also given a

Montana state flag, flown over the capitol building in her honor.

“Even after your time in uniform, you kept the flame of service burning,” Gianforte said, reading the letter of commendation to the crowd. He commended her countless hours devoted to her church, grief support ministry, the American Legion, the Red Cross, and many other volunteer support roles including fundraising for the Bitter Root Woman’s Club.

In her speech, Dezell thanked her fellow veterans and community members, saying that it was an honor to serve the country and the Bitterroot Valley.

“As veterans our job is to come back and serve our communities as good examples of selfless service and sacrifice,” Dezell said. “We don’t do it alone. It takes a team of fellow veterans and our supportive community members in order to best serve our community.”



Photo by Lindsey Strickland; (From left to right: Craig Dezell, Nancy Dezell, Governor Greg Gianforte, Susan Gianforte)



Squadron 11 Detachment Historian

Barrett L. Morkeberg

Barrett Morkeberg is the Squadron #11 and the Detachment Historian for the sons of the American Legion Detachment of Montana. Barrett loves playing football, baseball and loves to go fishing. Other than all these things what Barrett loves doing the most is helping the community and veterans. Barrett chose to become the Squadron #11 Historian because of his father that joined the Sons of American Legion and the Legion Riders chapter #11.

Barrett is also a future rider for the chapter #11 and loves riding on the back of his fathers motorcycle to events knowing he is about to make a difference for all the local veterans and the community that he loves to

serve. Barrett's ultimate goal being apart of the SAL is to make a difference. He wants to try and motivate and encourage more younger kids just like himself to join the Sons of American Legion and help make a huge impact.



(Left to Right) Jeanne and her daughter, Laurie McKay, placing red Poppies on crosses on May 23rd at the Post. Volunteers placed 1,195 crosses at Riverview & Grantsdale Cemeteries on Saturday, May 24th. (Photo by Nancy Dezell) Jeanne Doyle (center) receives a patriotic quilt made by Deb Tennant from Post Commander Deb Strickland (left) and Chaplain Nancy Dezell (right) at the Post 47 Annual Awards Ceremony. (Photo by Greg Marose Sr)



Ravalli Post 47

Jeanne Doyle is a 102-yr-old WWII Army Nurse Veteran member of our American Legion Ravalli Post 47 who helped us with Memorial Day crosses this year. She cut the ribbon for the new VA clinic in Hamilton and the Post presented her with a special Patriotic Quilt in April at our Awards Luncheon.





SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION



Montana SAL Detachment Softball Tournament

• September 5-7, 2025

• *Batch Fields – 2101 N Benton Avenue, Helena Montana [here](#)*

Join us for a weekend of competition and camaraderie at the annual Montana SAL Detachment Softball Tournament!

- 16 Teams
- \$400 Entry Fee per Team
- Double Elimination Format
- Concessions, Raffles, and Fun for All Ages!

Homerun Derby – Friday, September 5th

- \$35 per Player
- Big prizes and bragging rights!

• **Proceeds support Montana American Legion Family programs**

Register your team today!

Contact: Detachment of Montana

PO Box 155 Fort Harrison MT 59636
amlegmtsec@gmail.com

Motorcycle Show

Tony Wagner

On June 27th and 28th, Butte Post 1 held a Motorcycle Show, in conjunction with Copper Canyon Harley Davidson Summer Kickoff days. The ALR from several provided volunteer help. While several Post 1 members worked a table for membership, others staffed the condiments table and BBQ. Hamburgers and hotdogs were provided free of charge, although a plastic jug was provided for donations. The amount of donations exceeded the cost of the food. There was also a 50/50, which was won by Janet Wagner, who donated her 50% back to Post 1.

Volunteers, who supported the event all made input as to their favorite motorcycles. There were a total of 24 entries. 1st place was taken by Tim Scrivaler, 2nd place was taken by Dave Schmitz and 3rd place, by Brandy Williams. Everyone was in a great mood and enjoyed both days.

We would like to thank Copper Canyon Harley Davidson for allowing us to use their facilities, for their assistance, and their cooperation. We are looking forward to this being an annual event!







THE AUXILIARY SERVICE STAR



Auxiliary President Leona Somerfeld

What a great honor to be the American Legion Auxiliary Department of MT President for 2025-2026 year. My name is Leona Somerfeld, I have been a member of Mills Paulus Unit 103 since 1997 through the service of my husband David. We have three grown sons and seven grandchildren, all are members of the Legion Family. We farm, ranch and have a trucking business on the prairies off the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Our grandchildren are the sixth generation on this place. My other business is called Crazy Heifer Cakes and Catering, which I have been doing since 1973.

My theme this year is "Montana Treasures Copper, Silver, Gold and Veterans", my Motto is "Back to Basics and Back to our Roots". Sometimes we lose sight of the simpler way of doing things that are tried and true. We also need to have a balance between the old and the new. We had a productive Department Convention in Helena. Our special guest was National President, Trish Ward, from Nebraska, we should all aspire to have that much dedication and enthusiasm for our American Legion mission with membership being a key factor.

Since Fall Conference we have been selling raffle tickets for a 2000 Ford Mustang Convertible to raise funds for our Department. Billiette and Tim Coolidge from Sunburst donated the car. Our National President, drew Rena Oliphant's ticket, she is from Helena. An incentive for units to sell was cash prizes. \$300 went to Border Unit 73, \$200 to Judith Gap Unit 70 and \$100 to Park Unit 23. Congratulations to all for making this fundraiser such a success!

As the 2024-2025 membership chairman, I decided to get the list of all 51 years and over continuous members and make certificates for all 182 members! It was an honor to print, sign and see how many loyal members we have. One of our members, Peggy Block, became a member on 10/1/1942! That is something to strive for.

I look forward to meeting more of our members and working with all of you.

For God and Country,
Leona Somerfeld



2nd Vice President Tricia McKinney

Hello, my name is Tricia McKinney and I am your new second vice president for the American Legion Auxiliary Department of Montana. I am also the secretary of Unit 1, Butte.



As second vice, I will be in charge of community service. My goal is to help the Auxiliary volunteer with different ways and activities that will serve our veterans in each community.

My goal for this year will be to increase our involvement with veterans and veteran activities so that we can surpass last year's volunteer hours.

Feel free to reach out to me with any volunteer ideas that have worked in your area, or with any questions you may have on community service.

I look forward to this year as the second vice president for Department of Montana and seeing all the many ways that we help our veterans in each community.

In Spirit of Service,
Tricia McKinney

McKakes70@gmail.com 406-299-0196



THE AUXILIARY SERVICE STAR



1st Vice President Jackie Gangstad

I want to introduce myself; my name is Jackie, and I will be your new Department first vice president for 25-26. I am a Montana native raised in Fromberg where I met and married Mark in May of 1987, we were stationed in Ft. Hood Tx and Aschaffenburg Germany, from Aschaffenburg Mark was deployed to Saudi Arabia during Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

After Mark's service time, we came back to Montana and moved to Livingston, where we have called home for 34 years, we have one son, he joined the Navy after high school and spent 5 years in the service.

I joined the auxiliary in 2012, and I have enjoyed working with the members with helping veterans.

In my unit I have held the unit presidents' position, and I am currently the secretary / treasurer. I am also the district 7 president.

My goal this year is to work with the closely with the units in being our memberships up.

And working with our Department President Leona and chairman committees. To make this a great year.

I look forward to meeting and hearing from you.



Chaplain Kari Hould

We come with open hands to praise You for your greatness, folded hands to ask for continued blessing and arms that raise to sing of Your mercy and works. Lord, we live in a wonderful world, despite the temptations, the pain, the angry, the hurt and lack of love for our brothers and sisters, we know what You have planned is Your will...not ours and it shall be done. Remind us to remain humble, vigilant, faithful and dedicated to you. Teach us to wrap our arms around those in need, lost, or alone. Use us as an instrument to bring others to you, so that they, too, may feel the warmth of your love and share it with others. Love is not love until you give it away. May this year be one of planting seeds of faith, redemption, forgiveness, charity, and may kindness make our hearts overflow.

God bless America and our military... always. As Department of Montana Chaplain I provide prayers at our State meetings, events and gatherings. I attend the local events, though I have yet been asked to participate or take part in ceremonies, celebrations or prayer events. It is my duty to pray for those I receive requests for sympathy or get well cards got and send cards as needed.



Secretary Leila Seisert

I am delighted to introduce myself as your newly appointed ALA Department of Montana Secretary. My husband Dan and I have been married for 14 wonderful years and are proud parents to Cerenity (22) and Marcus (15). My membership with American Legion Auxiliary Unit 41 spans 14 years, with eligibility earned through my father, John Barnard, who proudly served over 30 years with the Montana Army National Guard.

My professional background encompasses 17 years in the utility industry, where I began with our local distribution electric cooperative. Throughout my tenure there, I wore many hats—from accounts payable and receivable to customer service, billing, materials management, and work orders. I also had the pleasure of serving

as communications director, managing newsletters, website administration, and social media content creation. In 2021, I expanded my expertise by joining MDU as a Senior Operations Assistant, adding natural gas knowledge to complement my electrical industry experience.

This January brought an exciting new chapter when Dan and I purchased Glasgow's local quilt shop. We're having a wonderful time making Oo Shiny Fabrics LLC our own while honoring what makes this special place so beloved in our community. We've thoughtfully expanded beyond traditional fabrics and notions to include crafts and classes. When you're in Glasgow, we'd love to have you stop by—and don't forget to follow our adventures on Facebook!

In my role as your Department Secretary, I eagerly anticipate meeting each of you during my travels this fall. Should you

need assistance before then, please don't hesitate to reach out. You can contact me at 406-263-0321 or via email at ala.mt.sec@gmail.com. Given my full-time work commitments, my office hours are 4:00 PM – 8:00 PM on weeknights. For urgent matters, texting works wonderfully—I'll return your call as promptly as possible.

I would be remiss not to express my heartfelt gratitude to Renee for her exceptional care and unwavering support of our Department over the years. Her positive spirit and commitment to fostering seamless communication between Districts and Units exemplify the very best of American Legion Auxiliary dedication. While we'll certainly miss her leadership as Secretary, I'm honored to step into this role and hope to uphold the high standard of service our members have come to expect and appreciate.



The Legionnaire Insurance Trust

The Legionnaire Insurance Trust is your trusted provider for **Medicare Supplement** and **Medicare Advantage** solutions, offering protection designed for American Legion members.

Medicare Open Enrollment period:

October 14-December 7, 2025

For those turning 65, or already eligible, this is your time to review and enroll.

No Cost to Legionnaires

Veterans protected our Nation - now LegionCare protects them at No Cost, by Department design. Please ensure all eligible members activate their no cost coverage today.





FREE RETREAT FOR FEMALE VETERANS HEALING FROM MST

Moral Injury: Healing Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

1 in 3 female veterans have experienced MST. Moral injury may occur when a person experiences betrayal by a trusted person or a person in a position of authority.

Moral injury isn't PTSD but it is related. Moral injury is an invisible wound of the soul that can result in intense shame, agonizing guilt, grief, depression, substance abuse, relationship struggles, anxiety, and suicide.

SOUND LIKE YOU? YOU ARE NOT ALONE. WE CAN HELP.

Join us for a Female only retreat where you will meet other women who have experienced MST and are working through their own healing.

Retreat Location

Absaroka Mountain Lodge, Cody Wyoming
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