



DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Richard Ellwein

The first event of my term was special; I was invited as a Legionnaire Scouter to attend the 2013 Boy Scouts of America National Jamboree at the new location at Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia from July 11th to the 18th. I and other Legionnaire Scouters manned a booth at the Jamboree. The first special guest at the Jamboree was National Commander Jim Koutz.

I attended the Membership workshop from August 1st thru the 4th in Indianapolis, IN. including a session covering various topics involving membership. I presented the Department membership plan and received the Department membership goal for the 2013-2014 year.

During the American Legion State 'A' Baseball tournament on August 5th in Helena it was my honor to throw the ceremonial first pitch before the championship game and present awards following the game.

On August 9th at the HAFRC at Fort Harrison I attended a VA Mental Health Summit meeting.

I manned a table at a Job Fair at Lewis and Clark fairgrounds on August 16th. I met numerous recently discharged veterans and explained the American Legion programs. I signed up 5 new members.

My wife and I attended the 2013 National Convention in Houston, Texas from August 23rd-29th. As a delegate I attended the National Security subcommittee Law and Order meeting. I attended a Digital workshop. Prior to the convention, I attended the Sons of The American Legion convention as a delegate.

October 12th -16th, I attended the Commander/Adjutant conference in Indianapolis, IN. where we received information from the National staff and comments from the National Commander.

My wife and I attended in the Royal Canadian Legion Saskatchewan Command Convention in North Battleford, SK. In October, I participated in a Cenotaph service and opening ceremonies.

While conducting the Fall Conference meetings, a number of resolutions were passed.

At the banquet we heard from Western National Vice Commander, Doug Woodell from Colorado.

I participated in two Wreaths across America programs. The first program was on December 9th at the State Capitol Rotunda where I placed the wreath during the ceremony. The second program was on December 14th at Fort Harrison chapel. I placed a wreath representing the US Navy.

On January 7th I attended the 143rd MP Co. departure ceremony at the Belgrade Regional Center.

On January 9th Gary White and I attended a Four Chaplain service in Great Falls sponsored by Post # 341.

The first Spring District meeting was held on March 8th in Dillon. The Zone/Department Oratory contest was on March 9th at RTI center at Fort Harrison. The number of contestants was down for this contest. There were only two contestants competing at the Department level. The winner was Jackson Smith from Missoula.

The Spring District meetings continued on March 15th and 16th with District # 8 and District # 3. I attended all the Spring District meetings. National Commander, Daniel Dellinger made his official visit to Montana from March 28th-March 31st. After greeting him at the Gallatin Airport on the 28th, I escorted the National Commander and his aide throughout his stay. Bozeman Post #14 hosted a banquet for the National Commander. The National Commander visited the District # 9 Spring meeting in Harlowton on the 29th and the District # 7 Spring meeting in Big Timber on the 30th. On the 31st tour visits were held at Vet's center on MSU campus, the MSU ROTC facility, VA medical clinic in Bozeman and the Bozeman Pioneer museum. A stop was made at the Belgrade Post # 30 post home prior to dinner in Manhattan hosted by Manhattan Post # 87. It turned out to be a great weekend with the National Commander. While on the trip to the District # 10 meeting I visited the State Veterans Cemetery in Miles City. While on the trip to District # 1, I visited the memorial in Big Sandy, memorial in Harlem, Bear Paw battleground and Fort Assiniboine.

Gary White and I attended the dedication program at the new VA Billings Clinic on April 11th. It's a beautiful facility.

On May 9th I carried the Department flag in a parade which was held before the Honoring Veterans program at Fort Harrison.

DEPARTMENT VICE-COMMANDER

Roger Hancock

Prior to the end of the Department Fall Conference I presented my intentions to run for Department Commander and continued to focus on my main job as Department Vice Commander, Membership. I am proud to say due to the hard work of the Post Adjutants and Officers, District Commanders, membership teams and Zone Commanders we have met every target up to the 95 percent date. As of the submission of this article there are 2 Districts over goal with a few more that are capable of making goal. I regret to say we will not make 100 percent goal and I take that responsibility on myself. Anything short of 100 percent is my failure

to the Commander and the Department. On a positive note thanks to those who made a serious effort to recruit the minimum one member. Thank You.

After Fall Conference I was invited to speak at Post 91's Veterans Day dinner. It was well attended and it was an honor to be asked to speak that day. It was also refreshing to see some new members present attending a Post function. To all the Posts that take the time and work to put on a function to honor veterans and their sacrifice, I thank you.

I attended all the spring District meetings in March, but due to prior commitments and work I had to miss the April meetings. I was impressed on how well the meetings were run by the District Commanders. It is a testament to the District Commanders using the "Officers Guide for Zone Commanders and District Commanders." For those who didn't use the book, please consider it for your next meeting. I did not see any meetings poorly attended, but there is always room for improvement. District Commanders please insure that you contact your Post Commanders and Adjutants by phone 45 days out and then follow it up with an official letter soon afterwards. This assures clear communication amongst all parties, the opportunity to ask questions prior to the meeting date and the show of support as applicable.

Now back to Membership! I promised a steak dinner to any District Commander and Zone Commander who achieved over 100 percent goal. So far I am committed to two dinners. My congratulations to the Commanders of District 3 and 10. Unfortunately no Zone Commanders are qualified for a steak dinner yet.

ZONE COMMANDER – SOUTH CENTRAL

Dale Webb

Since Fall Conference, I have spent time at several different projects. During November I attended three schools Veterans Day programs (Belfry, Bridger, and was the main speaker at Park City).

Each school invited the veterans from the community and gave a program for them. These Veterans really enjoyed the salute the kids gave them as veterans. I enjoyed working with all three schools and the people involved with putting these programs together.

I helped the Carbon County Boys and Girls Club collect the Toys for Tots donations and distribute them throughout the County. It was a great success and a very well done program, thanks to the Marine Corps and the Boys and Girls Club.

In January I was unable to do very much but tried to work membership and see if my District Commanders needed any help. This continued through February and parts of March.

In March I went to Park City and helped that post give a presentation on Flag Etiquette to the kindergarten through 4th grade classes. It was a very enjoyable time.

I attended the District Meetings for 7, 9 and 11 and talked about membership and learned a lot of information from the state and enjoyed meeting the National Commander while he attended two of our District meetings.

During this month, Post #119 has asked me to come and swear-in their newly elected officers. This is a great honor.

On Memorial Day Post #84 Belfry will conduct Services at Belfry, MT and Clark, WY.

Squadron #84 of Belfry will help with these ceremonies. Those that can, will then travel to Laurel to witness the passing of the guard, from The Yellowstone County Cemetery to becoming a National Cemetery.

As Zone Commander I have been asked to be the speaker at Hysham for their Memorial Day Service. I will enjoy talking about our veterans on this day.

ZONE COMMANDER – WESTERN

John Pellegrini

As Western zone Commander, I attended the Spring District Meetings of Districts #4, #5 and #6. Membership in the Zone is doing very well. At the time of this report, the Zone stands at just under 96%, which is second place in the Department. District #4 needs 79 more members to reach 100%, District #5 needs 72 more members for 100% and District #6 needs 47. I hope at the Department Convention I can add to my report that we have all made our goal.

While attending District Meetings, I observed that, while the District Commander does a good job of conducting the meeting, there seems to be a lack of communication between the District Commander and the host Post Commander. I think it would be a good idea for the District Commander to have a lengthy conversation with the host Post Commander about the do's and don'ts of how a District Meeting is to be presented well in advance of the meeting. The District Commander has a manual on what procedures are, but most Post Commanders don't. When an excellent meeting is conducted all participants walk away satisfied. Let's work on that

ZONE COMMANDER – NORTH CENTRAL

Hall Rice

I attended all three District meetings this spring. They were held in Great Falls, Valier and Chinook. I spoke about membership and different ways to recruit new members, with Facebook being my top recruiting tool. I then thanked the members for letting me be their Zone Commander for the past two years. It has been a very rewarding experience and I highly recommend it to others who want to step up.

ZONE COMMANDER – EASTERN

Pete Olson

The Eastern Zone Commander's accomplishments to date are:

1. Attended the Districts ONE and TEN Spring meetings.
2. Attended Post 81 meeting and discussed membership.
3. Met with U. S. Senators Tester and Walsh regarding Veterans issues.

4. Communicated with the Commanders for District ONE and TEN regarding membership.
5. Met with Art Widhalm and Steve Page Project Coordinators for the Northeastern Montana Veterans Memorial to be located in the town of Fort Peck.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN (N.E.C.)

Merv Gunderson

My first year as NEC has been very busy. There have been many challenges and successes. The national organization has been very busy with legislative and VA issues. During my term I have been privileged to be involved with many of those issues. At the national level I received an appointment to Commander Dellinger's Resolutions Sub Committee. This is one of the top appointments for the Commander and demands that I attend the Washington Conference, the Spring Conference in Indianapolis, and the National Convention.

Since my last report in October there were several important events that I participated in. In November I worked with Jim Fiedler, National Membership and Post Activities, to rejuvenate White Sulphur Springs post. We were successful and I have attended several monthly meetings for the post including a social and orientation on November 11th. District 7 Commander ,Ken McMillon, and I went to White Sulphur Springs to swear in the new post Commander, Adjutant and officers.

At the state level I have attended several veteran events, funerals, and the Spring district meetings.

The following spring meetings were attended by me:

District 6 in Dillon on March 8, 2014

District 8 in Great Falls on March 15, 2014

District 3 in Valier on March 16, 2014

District 9 in Harlowton on March 29, 2014

District 7 in Big Timber on March 30, 2014

District 11 in Park City on April 5, 2014

District 10 in Miles City on April 6, 2014

District 1 in Glasgow on April 26, 2014

District 2 in Chinook on April 27, 2014

I attended the Department High School Oratory final that was held March 9, 2014 in Helena. It was an excellent event with contestants from two zones participating. Our department winner did not go past the first round in Indianapolis.

On March 28, 2014 the National Commander, Dan Dellinger, and his aide landed in Bozeman. Department staff, officers and I met and escorted him to his lodging. Post 14 in

Bozeman arranged a dinner for the commander. The dinner was well done and the Commander received the "Silver Spur" award from Post 14. Commander Dellinger attended the District 9 meeting in Harlowton and the District 7 meeting in Big Timber. Commander Dellinger also stopped by the Livingston post, Belgrade post and Manhattan post for visits. We had an extra day with Commander Dellinger so he was given the opportunity to tour the Pioneer museum in Bozeman, the Bozeman CBOC, Montana State University ROTC programs, student veterans attending MSU and several veteran memorials in the Bozeman area. He also visited the headwaters of the Missouri river and the Legion property in Logan.

I attended the Washington, DC conference from March 2, 2014 to March 26, 2014. During the conference I had the opportunity to meet with Senator Jon Tester, Senator John Walsh and Representative Steve Daines. All three were receptive to veteran issues that were raised. In particular, we talked about the loss of the COLA, increase in Tri Care costs, VA staffing, recruitment of more doctors, the necessity of adequate VA clinics, and VA travel to areas of Montana where mobile clinics could serve veterans. Department of Defense funding, active duty transitioning and job creation was also a priority that we discussed.

On April 21, 2014 I was asked to speak on a panel in Bozeman concerning Senior citizen and older veteran issues. Senator Walsh along with many of the areas senior citizen advocates attended the symposium. There were many good points raised at this event.

May 4, 2014 I traveled to Indianapolis for the Spring meeting of The American Legion. The NEC passed a resolution that requested the resignation of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs. This is only the second time in the history of the NEC that a Cabinet official has been asked to be removed from office.

ALTERNATE NATIONAL COMMITTEEMAN (N.E.C.)

Dave McClean

As the Alternate N.E.C., I attended the National Convention in Houston as an alternate delegate. In this Department Officer role, I had no specific duties to perform. I did function as a member of the Department Executive Committee and attended the Department Fall Conference.

I also serve as the National Vice Chairman for Montana on the National Legislative Council performing all duties required by that position. I worked along with Merv Gunderson and Roger Hagan as the contact persons for our elected Senators and representative in Washington, D.C. on issues of importance for Veterans. I have continued to work on our Department to have a National Commander from the Department of Montana.

PAST DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

James Carlisle

This has been a relaxing year with very little travel. I've spent time reading the delinquent membership lists prepared by Elmer Palmer. The constant membership updates

from the department have been most appreciated and I hope the district membership chairmen made some use of them. Our Post had only one delinquent member and this individual did not have a valid address.

My main involvement in the American Legion has primarily been at the Post Level. Our post has been tasked to provide honors at funerals in Culbertson, Poplar, Plentywood, McCabe, etc. I've attended all of the Post meetings this year with a couple of exceptions due to other commitments. We continue to provide functions for Veterans' Day, Memorial Day, the American Legion Birthday party, and post flags in Culbertson for each of the national holidays. In addition the post finances the applicants for Boy's State, provide support for a Cub Scout troop and 4-H Shooting Sports program. Our Post continues to grow because of the efforts of Dave Dean, Pete Olson, and Harry McCormack. These individuals have strived mightily to bring in Afghanistan and Iraq veterans to our post and have moved them into the Adjutant and Finance Officer positions this year. Our post presently continues to exceed goal again this year.

In June our children and their families are traveling to Culbertson to visit Evelyn and myself. Because of this conflict, I will not be in attendance at the June American Legion Convention. Hopefully the Department will excuse my absence so that I can enjoy an opportunity to see my grandchildren.

I truly appreciate the dedication of all the Department and post officers who continually strive for excellence.

HISTORIAN

Art Ellison

Every day is a historical day for the American Legion of Montana. The information and pictures you send to Montana Legionnaire provide me with information for the history needed for volume 3 of the history of Montana. There has been a great deal of demand for volume 1 of the history of the Department of Montana. Department secretary, Olivia Tooley has scanned volume 1 and it will be available on the Montana website in the near future. Thanks Olivia!

As I traveled around to all of the spring district meetings, I showed copies of scrapbooks I made for Department Commanders. These were intended to give posts and districts ideas for their own scrapbooks. I noticed many Legionnaire and Auxiliary members looking through the books, which was encouraging to me.

I encouraged Post Historians to contact families of past Post Adjutants for past post records. Records have been found in attics, sheds or basements since the inception of their post. Some Historians are so overwhelmed by the amount of records they found, I suggested they contact their local Historical Society, high schools or colleges for students to help in sorting and cataloging the information. This will be so important in the upcoming 100th anniversary of the American Legion, in 2019. Now is the time to start planning your celebration for the 100th anniversary of the American Legion.

The articles and photographs I submit to the Montana Legionnaire cover past and present post activities and Legion members. I attempted to make things interesting and varied. The feedback I received for the most part, was positive, but of course did not please everyone,

which is expected. I enjoy their input and will try to include things they want. I have spent time at the State Historical Society, going through department history books to provide answers to questions asked by the posts. I am amazed at the information I find at the State Historical Society regarding the American Legion of Montana.

In my travels throughout the department, I have seen many Veterans Memorials, but not all of them. Past Department Historian, Ray Read and I are working on volume 3 of the department history. I would like to include a special section on all the veterans' memorials throughout the state. Would you please help and send a photograph and when and who were involved in your local veterans' memorial. This is an important part of the legacy to our veterans'.

I would like to thank the members of the American Legion of Montana for electing me as your Department Historian for the past three years. It has been an enlightening and interesting experience for me. I am running again for the office of Department Historian and would appreciate your support in reelecting me to this position.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT

Gary White

The year started with the National Convention in Houston, TX where I performed the duties of delegation secretary and coordinated with all Montana delegates to ensure their stay was hassle free. I had no committee assignment due to the number of attendees. Upon return from National Convention I attended all Fall District meetings with the exception of Districts 8 and 9, which I missed due to the death of my mother.

I planned and executed LEAD training & Fall Conference in Helena Oct 25 - 27. In December I started working American Legion Boy's State with Mike Hedegaard, the Director and John Louk the Committee Chairman. All Spring District Meetings were attended. It was obvious at most meetings that the District Commanders had not read the materials given to them prior to the District Meetings as very few were run in accordance with the District Meetings guidelines in the material provided them.

Other day to day accomplishments included assisting the Publications Chairman in publishing six issues of the Montana Legionnaire, attending Montana Veterans Affairs Division meetings, maintaining contact with the Montana National Guard Funeral Honors Program and the Yellow Ribbon Program. I managed the budget and finances of the Department, the Sons of the American Legion Detachment, American Legion Baseball, American Legion Boys State, Coordinated Children & Youth, HQ Post #105 and the Department's National Convention Fund. I would like to thank the Department Finance Officer Mike Susag and the Finance Chairman Merv Gunderson for their assistance with our finances. Additionally in conjunction with various Posts I planned and conducted 3 Yellow Ribbon demobilization briefings for returning Montana National Guard Units and individual soldiers. I would like to thank all the Legionnaires and Posts who assisted in these vital briefings. I also conducted a presentation on the American Legion to the US Army Reserves during their December drill. I conducted five reconnect visits with units of the Army Reserve and National Guard. I assisted in processing 12 TFA requests.

I helped in revitalization and training at Glendive Post #28 and Cut Bank Post #40. I also visited White Sculpture Springs Post #25 with the NEC to help in their revitalization efforts.

For the first time in ten years with the assistance of our VAVS Fort Harrison Coordinator Bill White the Department completed VAVS reconciliation with the Fort Harrison VA Volunteer Services. We have many Legionnaires giving of their time to assist fellow veterans at the VA Hospital and Community Based Outreach Clinics (CBOC); however we could be doing a much better job in assisting the clinics.

I coordinated and administered the Department Rifle Raffle and Big K programs.

With the assistance of the NEC I coordinated and prepared National Commander Dan Dellinger's visit to Montana. I wish to express my thanks to the Posts and Districts that participated in these visits and went out of their way to show them their generous hospitality.

I attended Remembrance Day ceremonies in Alberta, Canada, briefed the Pachyderm Club of Helena on the American Legion. I attended the Four Chaplains ceremony conducted by Post #341, National Spring Meetings, District 6 and Department Oratory, VA dedication Ceremonies in Billings, POW / MIA Highway dedication ceremony, Memorial Day ceremonies at Fort Harrison State Veterans Cemetery, Corvallis and Missoula; and the Wreaths Across America ceremony at the Capitol and at Fort Harrison. I would like to thank all the Legion Family members who attended these ceremonies and the many others across the state; it is very gratifying to see the many members "showing our colors" at these events.

To the Zone and District Commanders and to the Post Adjutants I thank you for your dedication and co-operation; I hope we can continue to work together for the good of the American Legion.

CHAPLAIN

Ron Moccasin

My report contains attendance at the fall Department convention at Lewistown in October, 2013, attendance at the District 1 conference at the VFW hall in Glasgow, Mt. This about concludes my report.

SERVICE OFFICER

Kelly Ackerman

As the AL DSO, I attended the following events:

- February 23-26, Washington Conference
- March 31, National Commanders visit to MSU Bozeman, and Bozeman VA Clinic tour.

All Spring District meetings were attended by MVAD VSO's according to area of jurisdiction, with the exception of District 4, 5 and 6 meetings.

During the Fall District meetings, they discussed all VA benefits including VA Healthcare,

Disability Compensation, Pension, Aid & Attendance, Pension Poaching, new Driver's License program, and recent changes relating to Disability Claims Processing Programs.

PARLIAMENTARIAN

Jim Grosset

After being reappointed as the Parliamentarian, I went to the National Convention in Houston, Texas. Then in the fall, I attended the Fall Conference in Helena. I had the opportunity to visit Dillon for District #6 meeting, but did not make the Department Oratory in Helena, due to work commitments. Next was the District #8 meeting in Great Falls and my own District #3 in Valier. The next week I was in Missoula for District #5 and then off to Kalispell for District #4. The next week I went to Bozeman for the National Commanders Dinner and then to the District #9 meeting in Harlowton. The next day we were in Big Timber for District #7. I missed the next weekend of meetings due to personal reasons. In late April, I was off to Glasgow and Malta for the District #2 and #3 meetings.

It is my belief that every District and Post has a Parliamentarian as per Article XI Section 1 of the Constitution. It will aide in having a smooth running meeting.

FINANCE OFFICER

Mike Susag

As of April 25, 2014, Department is at 95.9% on membership goal which leaves us \$5393.24 short of our budget estimate of \$132600.00. With two months left in our budget year, we should be able to make 100%.

Legionnaire Insurance Trust (LIT) income is down some from past years, but USAA Insurance is new this year and is offsetting the difference. The Rifle raffle is down from previous years and the Big K is up.

All in all, our income is above our budget estimate and everyone is staying within, or under their budget expenses. When Gary and I last reconciled the checking account in April, there were still outstanding checks from February. Please cash your checks so we can start the New Year off right.

It has been a pleasure to serve as Department Finance Officer this last year. Going to the department office in Helena two or three times a month to sign checks and work with Gary to reconcile the accounts. I live in Townsend which is only about 80 miles round trip to department headquarters so I can come when needed. This would be a lot harder job to do if I would have lived in say Culbertson. I say this because the steering committee has recommended combining the Finance Officer and Finance Committee Chairmen positions and because the Finance Committee is a representation of Zones I think this travel might influence who would be chairmen.

Thank you, Commander Dick and everyone for a fun year.

JUDGE ADVOCATE

Jim Shockley

1. Legion Baseball is quiet.
2. Former Commander Jim Carlisle told me during his watch that the disciplinary procedures of the Department needed to be revised. He was right, and I should have followed his recommendation last year. I believe that the membership should be consulted at the June Convention for suggestions related to the revision and that I should work on revising Article II of the Department's By-Laws.
3. It was brought to my attention that a District has taken the position that the District Constitution was superior, or not restrained, by either the Department's or the National's Constitutions. The District is wrong. If the District's Constitution conflicts with either the Department or the National's Constitution the District's Constitution is of no effect.
4. There was an instance where a District was making a special levy on its membership to support a good cause. This is not lawful and cannot be done. However, the District may have fund raisers to support causes which it believes need its help, and members may voluntarily contribute to the cause.
5. There was some unpleasantness at the April meeting of one of the Districts in the Department that has not been resolved.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

Karen Semple

Fifty five dollars in fines was collected at the 2013 Department Fall Conference – money that went from the Department directly to the National Emergency Fund. Since the conference, three articles shedding light on some American Legion traditions have been written and submitted for publication in the Legionnaire. In an effort to educate newer members on the rationale of having the fine system in place, one article directly addressed the tradition of collecting fines at Department meetings. The Sgt-At-Arms had the privilege of working at the Zone and Department Oratorical Contests in March. When the District 6 Sgt-At-Arms was unable to attend the District 6 Spring Meeting in Dillon, the Sgt-At-Arms was honored to serve in his stead during the meeting.

DISTRICT COMMANDERS

DISTRICT 1 - COMMANDER

Michelle Harada

Report Not Submitted.

DISTRICT 2 – COMMANDER

Lowell Long

This year is over and it is time to reflect on the year. Membership was a big issue this year for me. As I write this report, I find that as a district we either did real well or real poor. We have five posts at 100% or higher and four posts well below goal. I had high hopes at the beginning of my term that we could be a 100% district but that seems to not be the case. I want to take a few minutes to thank the following posts for their hard work in membership by reaching their goal. Turner Post 109 was the first post in District 2 to reach goal. Malta Post 57, Saco Post 79, Chinook Post 48, and Fort Belknap Post 110 all achieved goal or higher. Post 57 in Malta has 109.88% as of this writing. I would like to commend the Post Commanders and Adjutants of these posts for caring about their members and striving to get the renewals turned in.

I was able to attend several functions this year as the District 2 Commander. I participated in a Veterans Day programs in Harlem and Turner, a Montana Wounded Warriors Project presentation in Havre, as well as post meetings at several posts. I presided over two District meetings, one in Havre in the fall and one in Chinook in the spring. The spring meeting was attended by seven of the 9 posts in the district with Saco and Chester not in attendance.

At the end of this convention, I will no longer be the Commander of District 2. While it has been a privilege to serve the district for the third time as their Commander, I stepped down to run for the position of North Central Zone Commander. I am looking forward to working with the new commander, Jon Monteaux and wish for him a very successful year as commander of this district. I would like to encourage every post in the district to work hard to achieve their goal for membership for the next year. We are a great district and with a little work, we can be even

DISTRICT 3 - COMMANDER

Dean Young

My activities this winter have been mostly spent on membership goals.

We had our spring District meeting at Post #36, in Valier, Montana, on the 16th of March. It was a good meeting with members of all "8" Posts in the district! We had our election; our new District Commander is Patrick Becker. We are looking for good times with him.

One of the high spots in the year is always the annual Wild Game Stew at the Border Post in Sweetgrass.

I want to thank all of the Posts in District #3 for helping, in all of the different areas in the past two years. I know it's the Posts that do the work.

I hope to see you all at the 2014 Department Convention in June, in Bozeman, Montana.

DISTRICT 4 - COMMANDER

Ron Hawkinson

Fall meeting was held in Eureka, spring meeting was held in Kalispell. Post visits are not yet complete but will be before the Department meeting in Bozeman. Winter night time travel weather was not the best this year. We elected a new District Vice Commander at the fall meeting; Keith Sibbert from Post 137 Kalispell has now filled this position. Both meetings went well and were highly productive, in my opinion. Membership still is our priority as some posts are still not at goal. We revitalized Post 72 in Columbia Falls with a new Commander and all new Post officers. They now lead the district with almost 120 percent of goal. "Way to go Michael Shepard!", new Post Commander. Last year Paradise Post 129 was burned and total a loss of their building was the result. Demolition has been completed and the site is prepared for the new building. Hopefully an ongoing litigation will be resolved and the post will regain their previous status as a productive Legion Post. Eureka Post 74 Adjutant passed away and the district pitched in and made a contribution to help the widow with expenses. They are still without an Adjutant and their percent of goal reflects this. When Post visits are made our priority is membership and how to attain it thru programs visible to the public. The White Cross Fatality marker program is one of many to do this. Publicity by posts in their local community is the way to get the word out on the good things being done.

DISTRICT 5 - COMMANDER

Gerald Christensen

Of the 16 posts that comprise district five, six have achieved 100% of their membership goal. The district as of May 8th is at 96.34% of its ascribed membership goal. I am confident that more posts within the district will achieve 100% of goal in the immediate future.

Hellgate Post 27 in Missoula hosted a gun show in February as a fund making and recruiting venture. Unfortunately the weather did not cooperate, as it was held during one of the worst snow storms of the year. The post has planned a spring gun show on June 14-16 at their post headquarters on Ronan St., in Missoula.

The oratorical contest winner for District 5 was Jackson Smith, a senior at Sentinel high school. In February he went to compete at department and won the state oratorical contest and was Montana's representative at the national oratorical contest in Indiana.

Frenchtown Post 124, is enhancing their veterans memorial at Frenchtown Pond State Park. We have ordered a granite slab to be placed back of the existing flagpole where veterans of the Frenchtown, Huson, and Alberton areas can have their names, branch, and dates of service inscribed. We hope to erect this granite slab we refer to as "The Wall of Honor" sometime in July.

District 5 has received approval from the Mayor of Missoula to conduct its Patriots Day plus 2 parades to honor all area veterans and first responders. The parade will occur on Saturday, September 13 with the National Guard, Army Reserve, ROTC, fire and police departments taking part. The parade will host as many area veterans as possible, WWII, Korea,

Vietnam, Desert Storm, and War on Terror vets will take part. There will be floats, antique military vehicles, high school marching bands, etc, etc. Missoula has not had a veteran's parade in 25 years; this one will be a spectacular event to honor veterans and first responders. It will bring credit to the American Legion and assist in recruiting younger veterans from the War on Terror.

District 5 is having a web site created that will list all the posts within the district and the contact information of post officers to contact for membership. It will have information on local post activities and who to contact as well. The site will also aide in recruiting younger more tech savvy veterans.

District 5 is involved with the United Veterans Council and the Missoula Veterans Center in supporting new programs for existing and returning veterans. "Montana Joining Community Forces" replaces the former "Yellow Ribbon" program in providing assistance to veterans with VA, medical, employment, and community service agencies who assist veterans. There will be a "Heroes at Home" BBQ held at Fort Missoula on the afternoon of May 31 to kick off this program. District 5 will be involved.

There will be many district 5 activities on Memorial Day. Posts in Stevensville, St. Regis, Hamilton, Arlee, Drummond, and Missoula are having services to honor veterans. From the annual parade that post 94 hosts in Corvallis, to the ten different ceremonies in Missoula, starting with a wreath toss into the Clark Fork River at 10:00 a.m., commencing at the Rose Memorial Park at 3:15 p.m. Veterans from all wars involving the United States will be honored.

DISTRICT 6 - COMMANDER

John Kougioulis

After Fall Conference; myself, and/or my adjutant, and vice commander visited the following Posts: Post 115 Butte, Post 31 Twin Bridges, Post 2 Helena, Post 24 Whitehall, Post 46 Boulder, Post 42 Broadwater. All but two District 6 posts were visited so far this year. Post 89 Sheridan does not have meetings again until September. I did speak with Commander Chris Mumme this past April. They will have a meeting in Sept. 2014. Most of the posts are doing a great job, some need to work more on membership. Dillon & Wisdom Posts are working on plans to form a merge.

I have learned a lot about being District Commander this past year. My Vice commander, Tim Gavin and my Adjutant, my wife Karon have helped me, accomplish these visits.

We had a great turn out for the District 6 Oratorical Contest held in Townsend this year! Four Posts had contestants, Post 115 Butte, Post 2 Helena, Post 31 Twin Bridges, and Post 46 Boulder. Post 46 of Boulder's contestant, Kerri Huso, won the District 6 contest. All of the students did a great job. Thanks to all that made the contest a success. And especially to Sharon Doig of Townsend Post 42 for being the Master of Ceremonies for the Event!

Dillon Post 20 was the host for the Spring 2014 District 6 meeting. Thank you to Commander, Tom Straugh for organizing and having a successful meeting and lunch.

I want to thank all the posts who stepped up to assist Tim Gavin, District 6 Vice

Commander, with adding increases in membership for the coming 2015 membership drive.

Post 42, Broadwater, Commander Tim Gavin, Vice Commander Sharon Doig, Adjutant, Karon Kougioulis, and John Kougioulis District 6 Commander, attended the dinner hosted by Post 14 of Bozeman, in honor of the National Commander Dan Dellinger, who was visiting Montana. His passion is membership, one of the main reasons for increasing the numbers, is to lobby for the veterans in Washington.

Thank you to all my officers and Chair persons of District 6 and hope we can work together to improve our district for next year!

DISTRICT 7 - COMMANDER

Ken McMillon

- 1) Since last year's Department Convention, I have participated in 2 more Flag education Classes here in the Gallatin Valley.
- 2) June 14 was Flag day and we held a Flag Destruction Ceremony in Belgrade.
- 3) I continue to work as the contact with our Cub Scout Pack #3648 in Belgrade. I attend meetings with the different Dens during each month.
- 4) I often go by the Belgrade Senior Center and present different holiday programs with them. Major Holidays are big on their list and want my continued assistance to them.
- 5) We marched in the Belgrade Fall Festival in September with 5 of our members as Color Guard.
- 6) Through the year, I have re-visited most of my posts and continue to do so.
- 7) Our Color Guard was at the first home opener for the Legion Ball Team, Belgrade Bandits.
- 8) I was in attendance for the Veteran's Day ceremony at the Belgrade High School where Senior Chief Bill Payton was honored by all the students in a "Standing Ovation". It made us sad when we lost Senior Chief last November, just 2 days before Thanksgiving.
- 9) In April, I presented medals to the Air Force ROTC awards ceremony
- 10) In May, I participated in the White Cross Maintenance day with Big Sky Post 99.
- 11) Presented a power point show for the Belgrade Senior center on Armed Forces day.
- 12) Participated in the Memorial Day flag ceremony in Gardner.
- 13) Participated in the Memorial Day flag ceremony in White Sulphur Springs.
- 14) On 14 June, Post 30 held a Flag Destruction ceremony in Belgrade. I was a part of it.
- 15) Participated in the Western States Romp for the A.L Riders.
- 16) On 7 June, participated in the Military "Stand Down" that was held in Bozeman.

DISTRICT 8 - COMMANDER

Mike Mehegan

I have had the privilege of attending all but two (2) Posts in the District which I still plan on attending, provided there is no further conflict of schedules. Each and every Post is doing great things for their fellow veterans and community. I will list just a few but there are many more. Post #80 is building a veterans memorial in their Park. Post #3 Great Falls puts up the flags for all the patriotic holidays. Post #341 Malmstrom visits a local nursing home every month and talks to veterans and any resident that wants to participate. Post #26 Fort Benton had many of their leaders resign for various reasons, and the VFW building where they held their meeting lost its charter. They not only found a new home and leadership, but with the help of their members, Jim Fiedler and Hal Rice the Post is revitalized and has 11 more members than last year. The list goes on and on.

I would like to thank all the Posts for the hard work they do in retaining members and recruiting new members and I would especially like to give a big thanks to the following Posts that exceeded their goal: 1. Post #26 Fort Benton 101.49% which exceeded last year's total by 11 members. 2. Post #51 Augusta 102.04% which exceeded their year-end goal by 1 member. 3. Post #102 Geraldine 147.27% which exceeds last year's total by 8 members. 4. Post #341 Malmstrom 110.71% which exceeds last year's total by 9 members.

I have kept in contact with all the Posts through e-mail, snail mail or phone calls on all pertinent matters from Department. I have also sent our Post the listing of Post #105 members and delinquent members provided by Elmer Palmer. As District chairman of the Oratorical contest, I have kept all Posts informed of the importance and benefits of the Oratorical contest.

Our District Meeting was a huge success!!! Another Post that was supposed to host the meeting had to drop out due to a major conflict. Malmstrom Post #341 gladly took over the responsibility and had to overcome many obstacles to host the meeting. Post #341 did an outstanding job of notifying everyone, providing an excellent facility and an excellent meal. We gained valuable information from Department speakers, our Zone Commander and others plus a fine presentation on what the Children's Miracle Network does.

All in all, I would like to thank everyone on every level for the support that they gave me. I couldn't have done it without you.

DISTRICT 9 - COMMANDER

Demorise Allen

Due to job and time constraints, Brad Marking of Roundup has resigned as Commander and our current Vice Commander is unable to step up! I took it upon myself to make many phone calls and talked to or left messages with all Post Commanders and a couple of past District Commanders. I could not find a warm body anywhere!

On Sept. 30th I was appointed District Commander and had a District Meeting fast approaching. Invitations went out, Winifred assured me they would host and be ready.

Our District Meeting was welcomed by very nice weather. The morning session was very enjoyable and we were honored with the presence of Department Vice Commander, Roger Hancock; Zone Commander, Dale Webb; Debbie Hancock stepping in for Gary White, Sue Foster of Lewistown stepping in for Kelly Ackerman, Department Service Officer; and Jeff Holmes, Department Oratorical chairman . All reports were interesting and informative.

The Winifred Auxiliary put on an excellent banquet. Very tasty!! Vice Commander Roger Hancock, our guest speaker gave a very good speech.

Our meeting went well (short and sweet) with 16 post members (6 posts) present. We had some good involvement and voted to adjust our goals, donate \$150 to the Big Sky Honor Flight and renew our Big K membership. Harlowton Post #15 accepted the challenge to host our Spring Meeting. The highlight of our meeting was when Roger Hancock was fined for messing up the Preamble.

I hope to help make some improvements with membership, make visitations to all posts and complete the Winnett and Lavina paperwork for Post termination and get members transferred. Hopefully finding a Commander and Vice Commander by spring.

Well, things seemed to come together after the Fall Conference to a degree. I have had close contact with all of the Posts; reminding all of the chances of all reaching 100% after goals were set with that possibility in mind. We have 6 Posts at goal and two more should make it. Stanford might not make it but will work hard on it. Of course Winnett and Lavina will be terminated, so need to get the members they have transferred. I am close to getting rifles shipped or transferred.

I have only made four personal visits to Post meetings. I worked back and forth with Tom Philip the Adj. from Winifred and Gary and we got their membership showing properly. Hopefully Lavina and Winnett will be completed by Convention.

Our Spring Meeting was very nice with National Commander Dan Dellinger as our guest. Wheatland Post & Unit did a great job. They have such a nice facility. The Harlowton boys found us a NEW DISTRICT COMMANDER! Larry Dobb of the Harlowton Post, retired from the Forest Service, moved to Gt. Falls but still active. He will do a great Job.

Am sure we will be a 100% District. It was an Honor to step back in as District Commander. I really enjoy but just wish I had more time! THANK YOU!

DISTRICT 10 - COMMANDER

Richard Nielson

Report Not Submitted.

DISTRICT 11 - COMMANDER

George Blackard

During my first year as District 11 Commander I was fortunate to be involved with many projects and events and had the opportunity to work with some incredible people. Some projects

were small and some were quite large but all had a positive impact on people locally, across our great state and even nationally.

During my tenure as District Commander, I had the distinct honor of serving on the Big Sky Honor Flight Committee and was able to attend many fundraising events, banquets and BBQs in uniform as Commander of District 11 American Legion of Montana. There were far too many of these events throughout the year to list separately. I was blessed to go on all four Big Sky Honor Flights to Washington D.C. during that time and had the distinct honor of sounding TAPS at the WWII Memorial, which is only allowed for Honor Flights. On those four flights alone, we took approximately three hundred and twenty-five of our Montana WWII veterans to see the memorial built in their honor. During the last two years the Big Sky Honor Flight took seven hundred and fifty-five deserving veterans to Washington D.C. on nine flights with the final flight returning on May 12th, 2014.

In July of 2013 here in Montana, I hosted a fellow Legion College classmate, Jim Lish of Post 213 in Falls of Rough, Kentucky, and a delegation from American Legion Department of Kentucky and national author Gordon Ewell, for several events in our state to raise awareness about Post Traumatic Stress and Traumatic Brain Injury. In the span of just over one week, we did three public speaking events, one private dinner meeting with the local chapter of Blue Star Mothers, three book signing events, one membership drive, two television news segments, three radio shows including the state wide Voices of Montana hosted by Post 117 member Aaron Flint of Billings and participated in the annual Blue Star Mothers fundraising golf tournament. Lodging for the delegation came from two sources including the Northern Hotel in Billings and Luke & Lisa Walker of Post 4 in Billings who graciously invited our guests into their home for several days. Gallatin Post 14 even hosted the delegation for a book signing event at their post in Bozeman. This sequence of events would lead to a major fundraising campaign to assist the families of sick and wounded military personnel.

One of the toughest things we as veterans have to do is attend the funerals of our friends and fellow Legionnaires. This year was no different than most and I had the honor of serving as bugler with the Honor Guard from VFW Post 6774 for several funerals in the Billings area including the combined funeral of two indigent veterans, Mr. Raymond Madison and Mr. Edwin Hamilton, at the Yellowstone County Veteran's Cemetery. Of the funerals I attended, one funeral sticks out the most, that being for Post 4 member and friend Scott Stewart who died after a motorcycle collision with a deer in July of 2013.

In August I attended Montana Fair Veterans Appreciation Day. I was able to participate in the opening ceremony for the day during which Post 117 member and combat wounded Navy SEAL, Bo Reichenbach, was the keynote speaker. During the day I participated in soliciting donations for the BoFund to help build an ADA compliant custom home for Bo. That evening, before the rodeo, I spoke to the crowd from the rodeo arena about our military service members and veterans.

During the year I walked in two parades soliciting donations for charity including the Laurel 4th of July Parade and the Burn The Point Parade in Billings.

In the Fall I attended American Legion Dept. of Montana Fall Conference in Helena where I had the opportunity to meet with Congressman Steve Daines. I spoke to the Congressman about a VA policy that had only recently begun to be enforced and how that policy affected veterans wishing to be buried at the Yellowstone County Veteran's Cemetery.

The policy stated that only a veteran themselves or their next of kin could order a Government Issue grave marker for a veteran. That policy completely ignored indigent, homeless, and abandoned veterans or those who outlived all of their family making it impossible for them to receive the grave marker they had earned. I wrote a letter as a follow up to my conversation with the Congressman and two days later that letter was entered into the Congressional Record in Washington D.C at a hearing called by Congressman Daines with representatives from the VA to address the issue. That day the Congressman received a commitment from the VA to expedite the shipment of four grave markers that had previously been denied by the VA for indigent veterans who had died with no next of kin. That VA policy is now being changed.

I had the pleasure of conducting my first Fall district meeting hosted by Belfry Post 84. The meeting was well attended considering it was held across the state line in Wyoming and I thank our department officers for being there.

Working together with a local pastor, we co-organized the 12th annual Billings Celebration of Life 9/11 ceremony held on the courthouse lawn in Billings. I was the emcee as well as a speaker and the theme for the event was "Service to Others". It was well attended by local dignitaries and the public.

Veteran's Day 2013 was a very busy and memorable day. I led the planning and organization of the Yellowstone County Veteran's Day Celebration in Billings held at Metra Park. I had the honor of having my friend, national author and wounded warrior Mr. Gordon Ewell spend the day with me. Gordon and I did three morning radio shows that day including a live broadcast from the annual Perkin's Restaurant Veteran's Day breakfast on the Morning Coffee Show as well as the Living Large Larry Show and Voices of Montana. On each of the shows we discussed the obstacles that are faced by our newest generation of veterans as well as PTSD and TBI and promoted that day's ceremony. It was a distinct pleasure to introduce Gordon as the keynote speaker at our event and share the stage with such an incredible person. To wrap up our day Gordon and I accompanied by Commander Chris Enget of Post 117 did a school visit to Alkali Creek School and spoke to three fourth grade classes about Americanism and what it means to be a veteran.

During the big game hunting season and the bird hunting season I helped to organize and participated in several hunting trips for Montana Veterans Outdoors whose mission it is to get veterans out into the field for exercise and recreational therapy. It was an honor to accompany several of our Montana veterans on those hunts.

January 31st, 2014 was the culmination of a five month fundraising event that began with the visit to Montana by our comrades from Kentucky the previous July. After their visit in July and upon hearing of the lack of a Fisher house and distinct need for a housing facility at Fort Knox, a Montana committee was organized consisting of members of the local business community and members of Post 117 with the purpose of raising \$100,000 for the Warrior Transition Battalion at Fort Knox, Kentucky. I served on that fundraising committee as the District 11 Commander and attended dozens of fundraising events and solicited corporate donations for five months leading up to the final event, a banquet held on January 31st. Our distinguished guests for the event were Area B Commander Jim Lish, Dept. Boys State Chairman Peter Trzop and Dept. Membership Chairman Anthony Noe all of American Legion Department of Kentucky as well as Major Mark Wilson from Fort Knox and fellow Legionnaire Gordon Ewell. The purpose of the fundraising was to build a multi-tenant temporary housing

facility where family members of those soldiers at the Warrior Transition Battalion at Fort Knox could stay, free of charge, to be near their sick or wounded loved one and to assist in the recovery process. This joint project by members of the Department of Kentucky and members of the Department of Montana served military personnel from all across our country. In the end we raised \$150,000 for the cause which we delivered to Fort Knox, Kentucky on May 3rd, 2014.

In February I organized a working party of veterans and civilians and installed a new floor in a mobile home for a single mother of three children. The project really improved living conditions for the family and helped to strengthen the image of the American Legion in the Billings community.

Also in February I was asked by Congressman Steve Daines' office to sit on a committee to name the newly expanded VA clinic in Billings.

I attended and served as a judge for the District 11 Oratorical Contest Held in Billings this year but was unable to attend the Department event. I would like to commend Zone Commander Dale Web for his enthusiasm for the oratorical contest and the American Legion as a whole. He is a good Legionnaire and I am proud to work with him any time the opportunity arises.

During the month of March I organized and executed a fundraiser to raise money for District 11 and to finance a project for the mother of a deceased comrade, Paul Gardner. The project consisted of creating three shadow boxes to hold his casket flag and many of his military awards and decorations and other military memorabilia. The district gained \$800 in their savings account and the mother received something she will treasure the rest of her life.

Our District 11 Spring Meeting was held in Park City and hosted by Park City Post 100. This meeting was very well attended and our guest was Department Commander Dick Ellwein.

In April I had the pleasure of attending the Billings American Legion Baseball Hall of Fame induction banquet. The Billings American Legion Baseball program is exceptionally run and would be a shining example for any program but for the lack of actual support from an American Legion post.

In early May I was honored to be the keynote speaker at the annual Cabela's Armed Forces & Hometown Heroes event and later in the month was the keynote speaker at the Memorial Day Ceremony in Park City. I also participated in the Memorial Day ceremony at the Yellowstone County Veteran's Cemetery. At that ceremony, possession of the cemetery was turned over to the Veteran's Administration and it was designated a National Cemetery.

During my time as District 11 Commander I also served as Commander of the Yellowstone County United Veterans Council, was a Committee member of the Big Sky Honor Flight, sat on the Yellowstone County Veterans Cemetery Board and was vice president of the Paul Gardner Veteran's Pain Relief Foundation. There were many other events, functions and fundraisers that I had the privilege to be a part of while serving as District 11 Commander and as a representative of the American Legion. I was proud to wear my American Legion uniform to each of those functions and meetings throughout the year and I am honored to continue to serve our city, state, and nation with you, my fellow Legionnaires.

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE CHAIRS

AMERICANISM

Joyce Babcock

Since Department Convention I have attended the National Convention and all the sessions there. I also attended 2 of the early “work-training” meetings. Again they were stressing upgrading our computer skills and the advantages of doing as much of our American Legion paperwork on line as possible. Much of the information was regarding the benefits of a Post WEB site.

As a part of Americanism I reminded the members of Posts and Districts that we really need to get out the vote and help others get to polls if they need rides. This is one of those election years where so much National change in our Government is needed. Also sent a reminder for when filling out your Consolidated Post Report, the last portion of Americanism is the little check marks for “Get out the Vote”, 4th of July program, Legion Birthday, Flag Day, Chapel of Four Chaplains, Veterans Day etc”. During late April and early May I sent emails and then postcards to Posts urging completion of Consolidated Post Report by May 15th deadline.

Not exactly Americanism but as I traveled all around our State, whenever I saw a white fatality marker in need of a good paint touchup I stopped and repainted the red post and white marker. Of course there were some areas where I could not safely park very close and I skipped those, also if traffic was especially heavy it didn’t seem feasible to be parked on shoulder and spraying markers so some are still in need of care in all areas.

There have been several requests for information on various Americanism programs and I was able to supply the needed information and sometimes mail or email the needed forms or instructions. In March 2014, I administered the Education test to local seniors. Unfortunately, the government education in the two schools tested seemed to be lacking as the scores were dismal and no names were sent in to Chairman Bell. There were thirty-two seniors who took part this year for Post 111.

In Spring I attended District 10 and 11 meetings and met with both The American Legion and the Auxiliary. I have articles in The Legionnaire and The Service Star with suggestions on getting into your local school early. The best time to get your programs included in the curriculum is during the mid to late summer months while instructors are making their years plan. This is especially needed for the large schools.

I have continued to work with any Post, Unit or District of either The American Legion or Auxiliary who needs assistance with filing the yearly 990N or completing and filing the papers needed to regain “non-profit” status due to lack of proper filing. If in doubt - FILE. This is so much easier than the process of 19 pages of forms, a \$400.00 fine and continued struggle to regain your non-profit status. Some Districts may receive a notice that they must file a 990 EZ for at least two previous years. I have those forms and instructions if you need assistance with them.

BASEBALL

George Haegele

2013 Was a good year for Montana/Alberta American Legion Baseball. We had excellent competition at all of our post season tournaments.

We had 47 teams participating, 9 AA, 32A, and 6 B. This means we had over 750 young men participating for 5 to 7 months of the year. Teams participating came from Montana 39, Idaho 1, Alberta Canada 6, and British Columbia Canada 1.

Billings Royals repeated as Class AA Champion. Missoula Mavs were the runners up. The Royals advanced to the Northwest Regional Tournament at Eugene, Oregon where they defeated eventual 3rd place Wyoming. They then lost to Washington and Hawaii.

Laurel Dodgers won the Class A Championship. Belgrade Bandits were runners up. The Dodgers advanced to the Northwest Class A Regional Tournament in Wheatland, Wyoming where they defeated Utah #2 and Alaska. They then lost to Oregon and Utah #2.

The American Legion World Series in Shelby, North Carolina was again a huge success. Paid attendance was a record again with over 103,000 tickets sold. New Jersey won and California was runner up. Hawaii of our Northwest Region was third.

2013 was my 17th year serving on the National Tournament Staff. This year I was honored to serve on the World Series Staff as the Assistant Field Manager.

Our 2013 Individual Award Winners are:

- Class A Coach of the Year, Brent Sukut Laurel Dodgers
- Class AA Coach of the Year, Cameron Rittinger Medicine Hat Moose Monarchs
- Class A Most Valuable Player, Dakota Cortez Laurel Dodgers
- Class AA Most Valuable Player Chance Ackerman Billings Royals
- Class A \$1,000.00 Scholarship, Quinn Harlan Mission Valley Mariners
- Class AA \$1,000.00 Scholarship, Nate Lamberty Bozeman Bucks.

Our coaches and administrators continue to do an excellent job assisting our players get financial aid at Colleges and Universities across to country. We have averaged 100 to 125 players receiving aid from work study to full rides at Community Colleges, Junior Colleges, and NAIA and NCAA Universities around the country.

Thanks again to my Vice-Chairmen Duwanye Scott and Garry Parry, District Chairmen Jim Monteith, Ron Edwards, Ural Wayne Raymond, and Pete Moe for their invaluable help and support. A special thanks to the Officers of the Department of Montana American Legion for their support of the Baseball Committee. Without your support we could not achieve the success we enjoy in American Legion Baseball.

It has been another enjoyable and rewarding year as your Department Baseball General Chairman.

BOY SCOUTS

Elmer Palmer

When the appointed Boy Scout Chairman resigned mid-term, I was asked to fill the remainder of his term, since I had a history of involvement in the Boy Scout program. I accepted the position mid-March, and had little time to complete the program properly.

I was able to get little word out about the Eagle Scout of the Year competition; however I did receive one application from Danny Quinones, an Eagle Scout from Helena. He is qualified because his troop is sponsored by American Legion Post 2, Helena, and his step-father is a member of that Post.

Danny met all the requirements for the Eagle Scout of the Year award, and, thus his application was forwarded to Department as our candidate for Eagle Scout of the Year.

I did receive three applications for The American Legion of Montana Post Scouting Award, posts that sponsor Scouting units. The competition was close, but the final winner was Ravalli Post 47, Hamilton. There were less than fifteen points separating the three posts. I received no applications for The American Legion of Montana Post Scouting Award, posts not sponsoring Scouting units.

I would like to point out that the applications I received for the Post Award were far from complete. I know that there were points available to at least one of the runners up that would have made them the winner, if they had taken time to dig out all the information.

On a side note, I have spoken with the Executive Board of the Montana Council, Boy Scouts of America, and made arrangements for a Point of Contact for the Boy Scout Chairman to get information on our awards on the Montana Council website and access to the Publicity Chairman for any events that would help spotlight our Scouting involvement.

BOYS STATE

John Louk

Report Not Submitted.

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Randy Kemp

This has been a very busy and challenging year as Children and Youth Chairman for the Department. I have tried to carry on in my predecessor's fine performance. I hope that I have served the Department well. I also hope that the posts who have contacted me were made to feel welcome and appreciated. I know that I tried to help all whom I came in contact with.

I was unable to attend the annual national Children and Youth Conference in 2013. I received a report that in the past year, the American Legion Financial Assistance Program provided \$847,158 in grants to veteran's family.

I was asked to be on the Shodair Children's Partner Advisory Council to help with the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals campaigns (CMNH) and while I felt honored, I was unable to make this happen. I know the Department was heavily involved with the fundraiser.

During the past year, I have received 13 Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA's) requests, of which 11 were approved and checks were issued. The two TFA's not approved, were denied at my level based on the veteran not qualifying under the guidelines of the program.

I found the National Headquarters very easy to work with and also very helpful when questions came up. I do feel that with our rural setting and our outlying posts, time is critical. I urge posts to respond quickly with requests and call the chairman with any questions, or to request assistance. Our motto, "Veterans Helping Veterans" is what this program is about.

As the year closes, I want to say a special thank you to the all of those Legionnaires and Legion family members in this great Department of Montana for your support. I am proud of our Department and what we do to help our veterans and their families.

I have requested my removal from this Chairmanship position. I feel that while I did my best, I am just too busy with all of the other things I do, to give proper attention to this very important position. I will keep myself available to assist my replacement. Thank you for the opportunity provided me over the past year.

CONSTITUTION & INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Jim Grosset

Since my last report of 2013, I have been working with the Steering Committee on trying to save money for the Department. At the Convention in Lewistown, the report was tabled as it had to be sent to all Posts and approved later.

I went to the National Convention in Houston, Texas. Then in the fall, I attended the Fall Conference in Helena. I had the opportunity to go to Dillon for District #6 meeting, but did not make the Department Oratory in Helena, due to work commitments. Next was the District #8 meeting in Great Falls and my own in District #3 in Valier. The next week I was in Missoula for District #5 and then off to Kalispell for District #4. The next week I went to Bozeman for the National Commanders Dinner and then to the District #9 meeting in Bozeman. The next day we were in Big Timber for District #7. I missed the next weekend of meetings due to personal reasons. In late April, I was off to Glasgow and Malta for the District #2 and #3 meetings.

CONVENTION 2015

Jed Damson

The American Legion Post #11 will be hosting the American Legion Department Convention June 2015 in Havre, Montana.

District #2 is helping us with the Convention planning. It will be similar to the last one held here in Havre.

The Chamber is looking forward to us having our Convention as well as the hotels and HRDC.

We will have a table set up with information about Havre sites to see. We will not put them in packets for we know a lot of information gets thrown and we can return what isn't used.

We will hold our meetings at HRDC since it worked out well for us the last time. We will have another new Motel added to our list of motels.

Marilyn is the Chairman for the Auxiliary so we are working together again to make this another successful convention for everyone.

The Auxiliaries are doing: registration, food and beverages for the breaks out at HRDC and decorations.

The Legion Post #11 and District #2 are working on the booklet and setting up of the meeting rooms. We will be working with the Commander and President for the meals as time draws closer. We will have more details to share at Fall Conference.

CONVENTION 2016

Randy Kemp

1. The Grand Tree has been notified that the American Legion Department of Montana will again be in Bozeman for the "2016" Convention and tentative plans have been made to roll over the room requirements for the convention. Rooms will be blocked out at a later time when the convention time gets closer. An after action review will be conducted upon completion of Convention 2014 and all possible problems will be addressed to preclude these same problem from causing problems at Convention 2016.
2. The Chamber of Commerce has been notified that the convention will once again be in Bozeman and again will have them prepare "Welcome Packets" as the time gets closer. The American Legion Gallatin Post 14 has become a member of the Chamber of Commerce. This gives the Post more access to local advertising
3. Establish the following committees:
 - a. Booklet
 - b. Decorating
 - c. Registration
 - d. Transportation
 - e. Food and Beverage
4. Establish deadlines for attaining planning goals.

More information to follow as it becomes available for the planning of the convention and report the progress of the committees.

CONVENTION 2017

TBD

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

Sam Pappas

We had the privilege of hosting National Commander, Dan Dellinger, March 28-30, 2014. He attended District 9 (Harlowton) and District 7 (Big Timber) meetings. We will be having our department meeting in Bozeman 25-29 June 2014. We will host Past National Commander (2007-2008) Martin Conaster as our main speaker. Also in attendance, from the Royal Canadian Legion from Alberta Command-NWT, will be immediate Past President, Darrel Jones, the Provincial President from Saskatchewan Command, M.C. (Dick) Wells, and Donna Gosselin, Provincial Director. We are looking forward to meeting our distinguished guests and giving them a hardy welcome.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Fred Bell

I would like to ask that if you have any input as to lesson subject matter that would be of assistance to you or your Post that you would contact the Montana American Legion Education/Training Chairman and notify us of your wishes.

Moving on to the results of the contests that we use to further the constitutional knowledge of our youth, I'd like to thank the following Educational/Training Committee members for their work on reading and grading the essays for the seventh/eighth, and high school students. They are Mr. Gerry Christensen, Ms. Peggy Ellison, and Mr. Ted Hall and MT Dept. Commander Dick Ellwein (who acted as a tie breaker for the essays).

The Department Essay Winners are:

Seventh and eighth grade Constitutional Essay Contest Results:

\$400 First Place – Grace Stayer,
Hellgate Elementary School
"The Right to Own Semi-Automatic Weapons"
Post 68 sponsor

\$250 Second Place – Hali Kapperud,
North Star School

"Importance of Freedom of Speech and Press"
Post 88 sponsor

\$150 Third Place – No Contestant

High School Constitutional Essay Contest Results:

\$400 First Place – Kaesi Bird,
Fort Benton Middle/High School, Fort Benton, MT
"Should the U.S. Constitution be interpreted as Protecting the Right to Privacy?"
Post 26, sponsor

\$250 Second Place – Hailey Kellum,
Roundup High School
"Duties of an American Citizen"
Post 18, sponsor

\$150 Third Place – Clay Stephens,
Twin Bridges High School
"The Necessity of the Freedom of Speech"
Post 31, sponsor

Our largest outreach to students again this year was in the **Americanism and Government Survey**. *Many thanks to Mr. Ed Huff, history teacher, for making up the questions and answers again this year. We had returns from seven different high schools with an unknown total of students participating.*

The Department Senior Survey Winners are:

\$400 First Place – Dylan Welsh,
Turner High School,
Post 109 Big Flat, Turner sponsor

\$250 Second Place – Aidan Wade,
Capital High School,
Post 2 Lewis & Clark, Helena sponsor

\$150 Third Place – Casey McInerney,
Shields Valley High School,
Post 30 Floyd W. Magnuson, Belgrade sponsor

Again, I would like to remind you, that this year (2014) the instructions, questions, and answers (only for your grading) for the **7th & 8th Grade-School Essay, the High-School Essay, and the Senior (12th Grade) Americanism and Government Survey** will be included in each post's packet that you will receive at the Department Convention in Bozeman. It is imperative that this information is given to the post's representative who will be handling each contest. **There will be no other notification provided.** It is up to each post to follow the instructions and deadlines to ensure that your students have a fair opportunity to compete for the prize money. You need to start in the schools early in September, before they have set up their curriculum for the year! Go see history, government, English, and even speech teachers and get them to "buy into the program." They have to be "sold" on it to use it!
May 15, 2014

ENDOWMENT FUND

Art Ellison

I would like to begin my report by saying that the report of the Steering Committee by Elmer Palmer to the Department Executive Committee at the 2013 Fall Executive meeting was deliberately misleading. In his report Elmer stated the Endowment Committee never had any meetings. I had been alerted to this by a committee member who was contacted by Elmer. He told Elmer we communicated by phone or in person. True there were no formal meetings, but the committee members were kept informed, asked for input and or approval of any ideas by electronic means. Secondly Elmer Palmer said that it was necessary that the Endowment fund come under the IRS 501(3)c non-profit designation insinuating the committee was making no effort to do this. Committee reports submitted to the Executive Committee and department conventions approved by the committee members included the efforts by the committee to do exactly this. For five years the committee tried working with the Department Judge Advocates and attorneys (pro bono) to get this done but it didn't happen. I reported to the committee the National Organization now has an American Legion Charities foundation for posts and departments having difficulty becoming an IRS 501(3)c. During the 2013 Fall District meetings and 2014 Spring District meetings, I promoted the department join this fund. I had planned on submitting a resolution at the Department convention for this purpose but I am being relieved from the committee by the incoming leading commander candidate if he is elected. I will not do this and have the new chairman stuck with something he may not want.

The Endowment fund Committee presently comes under the Executive Committee. Steering Committee promoted the endowment fund be placed under the Finance Committee. This would be a disastrous move. Organizations wishing to give grants will not do so if they are not a separate entity program. Also the fund should be set up as a separate trust fund. The Chairman of the Finance Committee is automatically a member of the Endowment Fund Committee who can report to the Finance committee which should suffice.

I attempted to rebut the statements made by Elmer Palmer after his report at the 2013 Fall Executive meeting about his false statements and other innuendos but was not allowed to. A resolution was passed at the 2013 Fall Executive meeting that provides for the proper handling of reports which should correct this problem.

The Endowment Fund has grown slowly and contains more than \$25,000. The Committee goal is a minimum of \$500,000.

I have prepared how to write grants by studying books from Montana State University on non-profit organization grants and on the internet so once we achieve 501(3)c status I could start looking for big money.

I would like to thank those past department commanders for allowing me the privilege of being your chairman of this committee. It is a very important and complex committee and has taken many hours of research and a great deal of my personal finances and no cost to the department to accomplish the goals set out by the Executive Committee.

I wish the new chairman well and I am sure he will complete what I have started.

FLAG ALLIANCE

Linda Cousineau

Brief summary of last year report on Senate Joint Resolution 17 (S.J. Res 17) - a Joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States authorizing Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States. On 06/13/2013 read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. At the time of this report there were zero cosponsors from the state of Montana.

The latest report from Congress, H.J. Res 47, on 06/14/2013 was referred to the Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice up for consideration by the House Judiciary.

There are now 29 cosponsors up 7 from last year and one of them from Montana. Rep Steve Daines (R), as of 09/10/2013.

Open Congress has been asking their users to vote on the Flag resolution so far 55% are for the support of the bill.

If you see a worn out flag assist the person in getting a new one. Let's keep our flags flying free without wear and tears.

FINANCE CHAIRMAN

Merv Gunderson

I would like to thank and acknowledge the members of the committee for their diligence and commitment to the Legion this financial year. The entire committee worked to create a finance budget that met the needs of the various committees, officers, and staff while frugally protecting the financial assets of the Department. Jeff Nelson, Michelle Harada, Jed Damson, Elmer Palmer and Finance Officer Mike Susag have done an excellent job with their positions on the committee. Without their assistance the finance committee would not have been as successful. It is important that the Finance committee acknowledge Department Adjutant, Gary

White, for his stewardship of department finances.

Since the state convention in Lewistown, I have had the opportunity to review the finances of the department on a monthly basis by comparing vouchers and deposit receipts to computer entries. All finances have been accounted for, our annual audit has been completed and the IRS form 990 has been filed by the Department. All Department finances have been reviewed and are in order.

We had a fairly good membership year. We made our 95% goal and are hoping to make the 98% goal. However, it appears at this writing we will fall short. Many of our posts and members continue to seek out new members and work on renewals. Your finance committee is very grateful for that effort. Our budget experienced approximately a \$7,295 shortfall because of the shortage of membership. Membership is by far our greatest revenue source. Our revenue for the 2013 - 2014 year has followed most of the projections we made. Our expenses for committees and individuals have held fairly constant.

The Ways and Means committee requested reinstatement of the Big K again this year. That fundraiser was felt to be extremely important because the funds generated are distributed to Posts, Districts, Auxiliary, and SAL. Unfortunately the cost of the fundraiser is totally born by department. In the 2009-2010 year our profit had dropped to \$460.00. This year the department will make a profit of \$2,300. I will continue recommending that we receive a commitment from the executive committee to promote the Big K. Each post has to be involved for this to generate greater finances for the Department of Montana.

It appears that with the rifle raffle, we will not meet our budgeted target of \$9,050. Raffle tickets may still generate some additional revenue by convention time. The Finance Committee wishes to thank all members who took the time to sell the raffle tickets. Their efforts are immensely appreciated.

The committee continues to review our investments. Our investments with D. A. Davidson Company are paying off. We have investments in Mutual Funds, CD's and a Money Market account. The finances are invested as safely as possible with the intention of gaining the greatest interest rate. We have reinvested some of our funds in accounts that have a little more risk. As we renew we are able to realize a more current interest rate. We are able to mitigate most investment losses to prevent any large hit because of a volatile economy. Mutual funds always follow the market trend but they are usually fairly safe in the longer term. Our mutual fund investments are in more conservative funds so they will not increase as rapidly, nor will they lose ground as rapidly. Those investments are designed for longer term return and will respond with the economy. Due to volatility of the market, we will continually monitor the Mutual Fund account. The committee is receiving updates from D.A. Davidson on the funds we have invested. This year we realized a \$9,000.00 gain over our budget projection from our D.A. Davidson investments and earned interest.

There have been only a few budget increase requests from committees, officers, or staff. The overages were due to special one-time needs. Most of the budgets are within their limits.

The Legionnaire Insurance Trust (LIT) continues to be a dependable source of income. Thank you to all the Montana Legion members who participate in the program by purchasing various policies. This year we received \$15,175. This is \$1,925 less than we budgeted. There were several reasons for the decrease. The LIT had let us know the amount would probably decrease slightly due to decreased revenues by the insurance company. We need to continue

promoting the LIT to our posts and members. Without the LIT funding source dues would have to increase or budgets would have to severely drop.

Your Finance Committee made a decision to associate with USAA insurance. We knew the LIT would probably drop so this was a way to mitigate that loss. We received a total of \$11,000 from USAA. \$5,000 was a one-time gift for signing with USAA. We made up all our shortfalls with the USAA infusion of funds.

There are other requests for increases in program allowances and scholarships. Your finance committee is empathetic to the desires of department officers and all committee chairmen. However, without hard dollars it is not likely we can afford to approve many of their requests.

Address Labels continues to be a mainstay of income for the Department. It is our third largest income source. We realized only a 6.96% return but we should be able to increase our income to over \$3,000.00. This is because we signed on to the national program for labels.

"On-line renewals" is an area your finance committee continues to work on. We saw an increase in the PUFL program this year. The problem is some adjutants are unable to verify that people have paid their PUFL dues because they are not using MyLegion.org. The adjutant must send them notices each month letting the post know which members have renewed on-line. The adjutant must also send notices of credits that the post has. In several cases the credit may be \$.50 and cost of mailing the letter is \$.48. It is imperative that Department and District officers work with their respective posts to get them the ability of on-line usage.

The Steering Committee is the final area I would like to bring to your attention. The Steering Committee worked with some members of the Finance Committee to determine costs or savings of the Steering Committee's recommendation. There were many issues that came up during the discussions. The bottom line is the membership must make the finale determination of the Department's direction. A major part of that determination will center around how the Department's finances are allocated. We have a finite income with the majority coming from membership. The Department is at a point where we must make changes to reduce costs or increase income. The Steering Committee is addressing reduction in costs with their recommendations. If we do not reduce expenses the Department will have to pursue a dues increase. We have always done our best to hold dues down and do not want to see dues increased. However, the reality is; increase income or reduce expenses.

The Finance committee is responsible to ensure that our finances are balanced. We do the best job possible to maintain the integrity of our investments in order to derive an income source from interest. The committee will continue to monitor the Department's investments to maximize our revenue stream. Overall, the Department is in good shape. However, the committee should continue to be conservative with our resources and monitor all requests for expenditures. It is every member's responsibility to help. Our biggest downfall is membership renewal. The committee would appreciate everyone's concerted effort to increase the renewal rate. As always, asking a veteran to join and acquiring new members is extremely important. Between the DMS members national is releasing for us to acquire, department holding post members and the "stay alive" referrals posts that work membership should be able to flourish.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the department of Montana again this year. Your committee will have some personnel changes this year I am hopeful they will continue to serve you and uphold the best interests of the Department.

HEROES TO HOMETOWN COORDINATOR

VACANT

HIGHWAY FATALITY MARKER

Lee Heser

Department Commander, Commanders and Legionnaires, I am happy and proud to report that the American Legion White Marker Fatality Safety Program continues to grow and is alive and well. I travel our state extensively and see first-hand the progress and improvements we have made in this most worthwhile safety program. Yes, we still have a few areas of our highway that are not being served by this life saving program. However, this past year four more Posts called to say they were going to commit to and begin this program. My thanks to them! I'm sure they will get more of their members involved and will feel the rewards of their service. It is an easy program to participate in and gets considerable publicity. A great big thanks and salute to all Posts who have done a wonderful job painting and repairing their white markers. You have brought credit to the American Legion and yourselves through this one-of-a-kind program here in Montana.

A few states have tried to copy this program with limited success. We have great volunteers who have pride and respect in being a part of this far-reaching program. I continue to get inquiries from our sister states. Our American Legion website has been very helpful in sharing information and allowing those who desire to contact me. Most of my requests come as emails to me, and I forward them to the Commanders having responsibility for that geographical area. The *American Legion of Montana Post Leadership and Planning Manual* covers the White Marker Safety Program very well and provides detailed information needed to answer most questions. Please read it or go on line to our website.

This is my last year as your Chairman. Through your untiring efforts, you have made this a great program which has provided the American Legion with much positive publicity. Thank you all for your outstanding support. Please keep up the good work and continue to support your new Chairman. Happy trails and drive safely!

HOMELESS VETERAN COORDINATOR

Ray Read

The Montana Department's participation in the American Legion's Homeless Veterans Program is now 6 years old years old. The concern for homeless veterans reaches back to our beginnings in 1919. As the appointed Homeless Veterans Coordinator, I respectfully submit the following report of the record to date.

Facts: Of the 102,246 recorded by the VA as being in Montana, 77,658 are indicated as

wartime veterans. Breakdown by era is: Gulf War- 29,732; Vietnam- 35,044; Korea-10,498; WW II-4,784. Peacetime veterans number 22,188. The ratio of gender is Female veterans 9.044 and Male veterans 93,202. Comment: It is estimated that based on averaging 2.5 members per veterans household that the total veterans population including family members is over to 255,000 or over 1/4 of the total current population of Montana. Source VA.Gov

National Statistics indicate that up to 16.0% of Montana's populations of veterans are considered to be at risk or homeless. The definition of homeless as defined by United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is, "Without and abode or home, living with family or relative because they cannot afford or qualify for a home residence, or living in a institutional setting because they cannot qualify or are financially unable to rent or own a home."

In the latest Montana Homeless Survey for 2014 of the 1809 respondents 34% or 255 indicated they had served in the military. Homelessness of Montana veterans is estimated to be 3.4% based on the Survey results. More information is forthcoming from the MT CoC Coalition (See enclosure). The trend is that homelessness among veterans is reducing slightly but has been a consistent statistic in the overall homeless population.

Recommendations for 2014-2015:

1. That the Montana Department of the American Legion continue to support the Homeless Veterans strategy in coordination with the National Economics Division of The American Legion, the Veterans Administration of Montana, the Montana Department of Health and Human Services and the many local service organizations who dedicate resources to reduce and ultimately eliminate homelessness in Montana.

2. That the Department of Montana of the American Legion adopt the strategy of establishing homeless Veterans coordinators at Post, District, Zone levels to interface with the Department on issues and offer solutions of Veterans homelessness. In lieu of such dedicated resources this responsibility by default falls to the post, district, and zone commander.

3. That the Department of Montana of the American Legion support the various Homeless Veterans Stand downs scheduled throughout Montana for the current year.

Noted: Veterans Stand Downs have been conducted in the past in Pablo, Anaconda, Plains, Kalispell, Bozeman, Missoula, Browning, Helena, Poplar, Hamilton, Great Falls, and Libby, Montana. In total, it is estimated that nearly 9,000 veterans and veteran families participated in activities at these sites. Also many hundreds of volunteer hours were accrued by veterans serving veterans in their time of need.

See Attachment #DCBR14-01

INSURANCE DIRECTOR

Gary White

As of March 14, 2014 - \$242,227.00 in premiums were paid in the Department of Montana for Long Term Care, HIP, AUX HIP and Cancer, Cancer Disability, AD & D and Life Insurance; an increase of \$2,429.00 since 2013. Last year we had an increase as well, so we

are moving in a positive direction. Allocations paid to the Department were \$15,787.00 an decrease of \$10,596.00, this is after last year's increase of \$5,650.00. We received a promotional bonus of \$1,414, an increase of \$6.00, this after last year's increase of \$20.00. Our large decrease in revenue from last year is due to 2 major factors – the largest being this was not a special allocation year (every 3 years, last was the special allocation year) and the effect the Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare) had on the insurance market.

This year our projection of income for 2014 was \$17,100.00, we missed that projection by \$1,909.00 With the aging of our membership we continue to lose insured members at a higher rate of new policies being written. We must rectify this by informing our members of the many insurance opportunities LIT offers. There is a myriad of promotional information available for the Post to use, please contact me if you require any information. Our job is not to be insurance salesmen, but to inform our members of the insurance benefits. Please remind your members of the Accidental Death & Dismemberment benefit periodically so they can take advantage of this program. The information LIT gathers from these sign ups is the number one source of policies written. Of the 10,782 members on April 4, 2013 only 3,697 were enrolled in the free Accidental Death & Dismemberment program, 34.28% of our membership. This is an increase of 193 members, or a 1.91% increase from last year, we are still a long way from 100%. Signing up for the free AD & D is our best way of ensuring the LIT markets to the right age group. Please continue to emphasize members renew their AD & D. If a member is in doubt about being registered they can call LIT or go online to check their status, every year we have family members of deceased members attempt to file a claim only to find their loved was not registered. The renewal will be good until 2016. We have got to ensure our members are registered for this benefit, especially our new members, and remember any member acquired through DMS has never been given a registration opportunity for the free AD & D.

Over the years the insurance program has been a “cash cow” for the Department, however unless we get more members interested in the LIT programs it will continue to decrease in allocations paid. The LIT recognizes that they must continue to offer good reasonably priced products and introduce new products to interest our new younger members.

Our best selling policies continue to be the Hospitalization and Cancer policies. This year the Auxiliary participated in marketing the Cancer program to their members, as a result they received an allocation of \$606.00, an increase of \$62.00.

Since 1967, when our Department joined with the Legionnaire Insurance Trust the Department has received \$594.948.00.

The LIT will be offering the following new products soon:

- Medicare Advantage
- Critical Illness
- Short Term Nursing Care
- Extended Auto Warranty
- Roadside Assistance
- Prepaid Legal

Check out www.theLIT.com for further information on these products.

This year the Department has received an additional source of revenue from USAA products being sold to our members. We had nothing to base our budget on and had not signed up for USAA Revenue sharing until after our budget was set, therefore our budgeted amount was \$0.00, but we received a total of \$11,000. Part of this was a signing bonus, so we cannot expect this amount in the future, however the amount received well offset our budget shortfall of \$1909.00 from the LIT programs.

LEGISLATIVE

Duane Carlton

Since this is the off-year for our Montana Legislature, there wasn't much to work. I discussed several issues including a state income tax exemption for Montana's military retired veterans with southern Montana legislators. This issue has not been very well received by them, due to the perceived state tax implications. It is an issue that needs much more detailed study by not only the law makers, but also the veterans who would be positively impacted. Last session's efforts were fairly well executed, but we once again fell short. An issue that is receiving decent support is the dedication of a Veteran's Memorial Highway. I believe that the next session will deal with this bill successfully. That's all I have for this year's report.

MEMBERSHIP

Elmer Palmer

This year as the Membership Chairman, I talked with the District and Zone Commanders at the Indoctrination and Training session. I tried to get them involved with the Membership Program and get buy-in on the process and goals.

I made contact with the District Membership Chairman, where they existed, and CC'ed the District and Zone Commanders at least three times each month. I ran rosters of available members for all areas of the state three times during the year. I sorted and divided the Headquarters Post Paid Members by District and then by community and emailed them to the respective Districts, encouraging transfer to the Local Posts. I attempted to work Membership in any area of the state that I happened to be in. I offered the District Commanders my services for training and recruiting. When the National Commander requested it, I separated the expired list provided by National Headquarters and sent copies to each of the District Commanders.

The fruits of these labors were that the Department of Montana reached every target, on time, except the 100% goal. We did a fine job, up till the last charge.

One of the problems that I encountered was a lack of communication. Often I would request a read receipt from the addressee on the email. Most time I wouldn't even receive one. Only three of the District Commanders would reply to my emails, only two let me know what they did with the information.

If we are to be successful in our membership efforts, the District Commanders and District Membership Chairmen need to buy in fully to the program, and work with the

Commander, Vice Commander and Membership Chairman to get the posts to goal. The Commanders need to keep the Membership Chairman aware of their needs and request help or guidance.

The Department of Montana will finish in the top ten Departments in membership this year. Is that success? It could be. But I would rather see us in the very small percentage that finishes at 100% of goal.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Randall A. Brown

At the Department Fall Conference that was held in Helena during the month of October 2013, I made my written and oral report. I also provided information pertaining to the "Firefighter of the Year" and the "Law Enforcement Officer of the Year" programs to several Legionnaires in attendance. In January the Montana "Firefighter of the Year" that was selected was the American Legion Post 123 candidate James Vannice of the Laurel Fire Department. The Montana "Law Enforcement Officer of the Year" selected was the American Legion Post 2 candidate Sheriff Leo C. Dutton of Lewis and Clark County.

Information concerning the United State's intelligence programs, pertaining to sensitive information and monitoring our friendly allies' telephone conversations, has caused considerable problems with our European leaders and other governments. Edward Snowden, an American traitor and former contractor with the National Security Agency, revealed many of our intelligence secrets to the world news outlets and defected from the United States to Russia. Recently, The Air Force has uncovered a cheating scandal involving missile launch officers at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Montana. All 92 officers implicated have been decertified and suspended during this investigation. Some of these officers have already been fired as this investigation continues and more may lose their jobs. Missile launch officers from other sites in North Dakota and Wyoming are also being investigated. The Air Force has 450 inter-continental ballistic missiles which are a large part of this country's national security interests. Officers responsible for these missiles must be high caliber, dependable and maintain integrity of the highest standards. A breach of these standards places our national security interests at great risk.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban and al-Qaida continue their resistance with military action, suicide attacks and the use of improvised explosive devices. Recently, some of these terrorists have infiltrated the Afghanistan Security Forces and have killed several of our NATO advisors, (mostly US Forces). As a result, many of these advisors have suspended training operations with their Afghanistan counter parts. Currently, NATO Troop levels are being reduced and more areas of the country are being turned over to the Afghanistan Army for their control. Current plans are ending the NATO combat role and making a transition to a, training, advise and assist role. Additionally, plans are being made to withdraw the troops from Afghanistan if a security pact cannot be reached.

North Korea continues to be a national security concern because of its nuclear program and the fact that this country has launched various military strikes against South Korea many

times over the past years. Currently, this country is making threats that it is ready to launch nuclear weapons on the U.S. and its allies. This situation is a serious threat and must be kept in check.

In Pakistan increased military action against government forces and prominent leaders has forced the Pakistan Army to step up the fight against Taliban militants with increasing degrees of success. Military missions that cross from Afghanistan into Pakistan are causing some potentially dangerous political ramifications with that country as the Taliban use parts of Pakistan as a sanctuary. The situation between Pakistan and India over Kashmir remains a national security concern because of both countries' nuclear capabilities.

Yemen is a training area for terrorists and the U.S. has increased counterterrorism aid to this Arab nation to support Yemen's campaign against al-Qaida. Citizens in this country are currently involved with the pro-reform protests that are spreading throughout North Africa and Middle East countries.

Protesters forced longtime Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to resign, and a new government took control of the country of Egypt electing Mohammed Morsi as President. It appears that the new regime has been working toward an Islamic form of government which has caused many demonstrations throughout Egypt. The Egyptian Guard toppled Mohammed Morsi on July 3rd and replaced him with an interim president. The Muslim Brotherhood called for an uprising and shootings have taken many lives during protests. The interim government has declared the Muslim Brotherhood to be a terrorist organization that has escalated the situation. This situation is causing serious problems for all Egyptians and for this entire region.

In Syria, demonstrators against the current government have been attacked and many killed by government forces. Many of these demonstrators are believed to be al-Qaida linked fighters. Unfortunately, many innocent civilians have also been killed or forced to leave their homes. Many countries have expressed their desire to have the current leader to step down, however, at this time this has not happened. The United States has closed its embassy in Syria and recalled its ambassador. Syria has launched missiles into neighboring Turkey and evidence points to chemical weapons being used against protesters and innocent citizens which is a major concern. The United States has now deployed Patriot Missile Batteries along Turkish border and has deployed Navy units near Syria. These units are designed to counter attack any further missile launches from Syria and have the capabilities to launch cruise missiles. Russia has entered into this situation and has proposed a scenario that would destroy Syria's chemical weapons which Syria has agreed to. The United States welcomes this initiative and is holding out hope that military action will not be needed. Also, there is not much support for military involvement in Syria by the American public and our allies.

Because of Iran's nuclear program, which western nations believe is enriching uranium for weapons purposes, the US recently imposed sanctions targeting Iran's ability to sell oil on the world market. Canada has closed its embassy and brought their ambassador home. They have also sent Iran's diplomats back to Iran. Other nations have pledged to buy less oil from this country. Israel considers a nuclear-armed Iran to be a threat because of its missile capabilities, support for anti-Israel militants and frequent references by its president to destroy Israel. The US is concerned that Israel might be preparing to attack Iran over its nuclear program.

China has military strength and capabilities that cannot be ignored. Recently, China has constructed and deployed its first Navy Aircraft Carrier. Current relations with China are good

and it is hoped that this will not change.

The situation between the Palestinians and the Israelis is always a national security concern. Currently, the Fatah group controls the West Bank and the Hamas group has seized control of the Gaza Strip, therefore, splitting the two parties. Israel and other western nations are supporting the Fatah Group, but do not recognize or support the Hamas Group. The Hamas Group continues to defy an uneasy cease-fire truce currently in place which could trigger a strong Israeli military response.

The recent takeover of Crimea by Russia from the Ukraine has caused major concerns from other nations including the United States. Because of this action, sanctions have been placed on Russia by several countries and NATO is beginning to get involved with this situation. Pro-Russian insurgents have seized Ukrainian armored vehicles and several government buildings in eastern Ukraine, a hotbed of unrest against Ukraine's interim government. There is much concern that Russia may continue aggression and invade Ukraine. This situation is serious and is an undesirable situation.

Illegal immigrants entering this country from Canada, and mostly from the Mexican border, continue to be a national security concern. A large percentage of these illegals actually enter the United States on a VISA, however, never return to their country. Many of these illegal immigrants siphon off welfare funds, become involved in criminal activity, and receive humanitarian aid that is designed for legal residents of this country. The Canadian border has many areas across the United States where it is relatively easy to cross without being detected. When illegal Mexican immigrants are apprehended, there is little or no punishment involved, and they are returned to Mexico. Often times, they are back across the border within days of deportation. This is a serious problem.

Our country has been in a recession. Currently, the economy has improved, and the strength of the US dollar is rising. Unemployment rates have decreased and the job market has improved. The country is faced with huge debts and high oil prices. The majority of employment opportunities are within the service industry. The higher-paying manufacturing jobs continue to be eliminated or exported out of the country. It has become more and more difficult to even buy products that are made in America. The current administration is drastically reducing our military forces and military capabilities which will have the affect of unemployment problems and impact our national security interests. Mandatory Federal spending cuts have taken place, which are having huge impacts on national security issues, and at the same time this administration is giving millions of dollars away in aid to other countries. Almost daily, waste fraud and abuse issues are surfacing at all levels of government. This is all part of the debt problems that this nation is experiencing. Current policies need to be re-examined and it is evident that changes are needed.

In summary, there are many national security concerns that affect this country. The United States must be very careful about possibly intervening in pro-reform events taking place in the Middle East and African nations, and to re-examine our foreign aid policies. Our US intelligence programs must be re-evaluated and changes appear to be needed. The things that our nation needs to make top priorities are the total support of the Armed Forces and it's needs, continue reducing the effects of budget deficits, encourage US manufacturing in our country, to reduce the current oil prices, reduce our dependence on foreign oil and we need to secure our borders with Mexico and Canada.

ORATORICAL

Jeff Holmes

First off, I would like to congratulate and thank Jackson Smith of Missoula for representing Montana at the National Oratorical Contest. You made us proud, and we are glad that you decided to further your leadership education through the American Legion Oratorical Program. I would also like to thank Hellgate Post #27 for sponsoring the contest as part of their post objectives. I would also like to thank the South Central and Western Zones for hosting a zone contest.

Speaking of the zone contest, I would encourage all the membership to vote in favor of eliminating the zone contest resolution later this weekend. Instead all students will be lumped into a common pool. This will create a more uniform and competitive environment for all students and will allow us to pick the very best candidate as the department winner. It is a very forward thinking resolution, and I encourage the membership to vote in favor of this.

We realize that last year's date presented some problems for some students and zones and I apologize for that. **This year's contest will be held in Great Falls on Sunday February 8th.** The date was chosen because it is prior to all high school basketball tournaments which caused a great number of conflicts, and is after the Super Bowl. The National Oratorical Contest will be held in Indianapolis on 10-12 April 2015.

Lastly, I would like thank Larry Hanson for doing an awesome job of lining up the facilities, and all the judges and their paperwork; and to Lowell Long for conducting most of the briefings and for all of his expert advice. I owe all of the success of this past year's department contest to these two individuals. Thanks again.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS & PUBLICATIONS

Keith Sibbert

As reported at the Department Fall Conference the Public Relations and Publications Committee began the year by starting two new programs - Opt-Out and Readership Drawing. The aim of these initiatives were to reduce mailing costs of the Montana Legionnaire by allowing readers the opportunity to receive email notifications for the online edition of the paper and to see what the actual readership of the paper might be. Unfortunately neither of these programs netted the results hoped for. There were fewer than 20 recipients who selected to opt-out of the print edition and only approximately 6 different individuals who submitted entries for the readership drawing most multiple times.

The Committee conducted the annual newsletter contest. There were very few entries for this contest as well. The following is the number of Posts to submit by category:

<u>Category</u>	<u>Number of Posts</u>
Small Post	1

Medium Post 6
Large Post 3

By District:

<u>District</u>	<u>Number of Posts</u>
1	0
2	0
3	0
4	2
5	3
6	2
7	1
8	1
9	0
10	0
11	1

We would like to encourage each District and Zone Commander to urge the Posts to establish a periodic newsletter if they don't already have one and to submit it to the committee via email or snail mail for inclusion in the contest. The Department currently has 133 Posts and only 10 were submitted for consideration. Less than 10% of our Posts seem staggeringly low. Please promote this program. Committee members will try to get to the District meetings this fall for those Districts we were unable to visit this past year.

With regard to scoring for this year's contest, the Large Post Contest was scored by one member of the committee whose Post did not have an entry in this category.

This year's Post packets include the new Membership and Public Relations Guide and a brochure explaining the National American Legion Press Association (NALPA). The first publication dovetails our public relations efforts with our membership concerns. Please encourage the Posts to read this material and implement both a membership plan and public relations plan for the coming year and beyond.

The committee would like to thank Commander Ellwein for the opportunity to serve this great organization and the support of many in the Department. It is our hope the coming year will bring further opportunities to increase public awareness of The American Legion and the great work we do.

WEBMASTER

Kevin Kent

For the second year in a row we are the only Department to do American Legion Boys State registration online. In addition, we are also the first Department to do Girls State registration online which we completed this year for the first time. During the upcoming 2014 – 2015 year I plan to implement an interactive map showing locations of the Highway Fatality

Markers across the state with the people's names and dates of the accidents.

The numbers for the hits on the website have stayed steady with the most popular areas being "Daily Membership Report", "Oratorical" and "American Legion Boys State" receiving the most hits. Many new links on the "Resources" tab have been added in the last year with information on educational benefits and financial assistance for Veterans.

Also I would like to thank all the members who e-mail with ideas and information but most importantly would like to remind everyone to please e-mail pictures or links to videos from your local Post events. When I do receive them they are usually from the same handful of Posts and I would like to make our "Pictures" section to include a lot more Posts. Overall I'm very happy with the attention our website receives and I only see that attention expanding.

SON OF THE AMERICAN LEGION (S.A.L.) ADVISOR

John Pellegrini

As of this report, membership in the Detachment is doing well up to a point. We have slipped from 1st place in the Nation to 3rd because we have slacked off on renewals. I can't understand why some Post Commanders and Post Officers do not realize what an important part of the American Legion Family the Sons are. When it comes to influence in Congress, membership in the SAL is just as much a persuasive factor as our membership in the American Legion. How many Posts have potential dual members that have not joined the SAL because they think one membership is enough? Ten dollars a year cannot be that much of an obstacle. We have one more month to make goal for the Detachment. Let's see if we can do it.

I am attending the Spring SAL, NEC Conference in Indianapolis and will be placing the name of our Detachment Adjutant, Dick Ellwein, for nomination to the position of National Chaplain for the Sons of the American Legion. I hope to have a report on this by the Department Convention.

SHOOTING SPORTS

Ray Read

The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program is a gun safety education and marksmanship program that provides the basic elements of safety, education, enjoyment, and competition. **The program utilizes the .177 caliber air rifle, both males and females can participate, through American Legion Post, Auxiliary Unit, or S.A.L. squadron sponsorship.** It is a three-part program that combines the Basic Marksmanship Course, Qualification Awards, and Air Rifle Competition.

The Basic Marksmanship Course is a comprehensive package for the beginning shooter with little or no marksmanship experience. Gun safety and marksmanship fundamentals are taught through a balanced mix of short lecture and discussion followed by hands-on activities. The cornerstone of the Basic Marksmanship Course is the SHOOTER'S GUIDE TO POSITION AIR RIFLE, now in its third edition. The guide provides a thorough explanation of the essential fundamentals need for success as an entry-level competitive

shooter.

Another highlight of The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program is our annual JUNIOR POSITION AIR RIFLE TOURNAMENT. The tournament begins with postal matches to determinate state and/or regional champions. The next stage is a Qualification Round (also a postal match) to determine the shooters who will earn an expense paid trips to compete in the National Championship. The 24th National Championship is a shoulder-to-shoulder match to bell be held July 29-August 3, 2014 at the USA Shooting range facilities, at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

As you are getting started we would strongly recommend that you focus your efforts on the sporter category. It does not take a lot of money to get started in the sporter category; the junior athletes do not need any sort of sophisticated shooting clothing like the precision category does.

If you have not already done so we would recommend taking a look at the Civilian Marksmanship Program's WebPages at www.odcmp.com/Services/Programs/3P.htm. Look at the National Standard 3-Position Rules at <http://www.odcmp.com/3P/Rules.pdf>. This will give you a very good background on what is allowed in terms of sporter category rifles, clothing, and additional equipment.

With regards to sporter category rifles, those that have been successful in our National Championship tournament have fired the Daisy 753/853 pneumatic rifle, the Daisy M888 CO2 rifle or the Daisy XS-40 Valiant compressed air rifle. More information about these and other rifles can be obtained from the [Daisy WebPages daisy.ifware.com/cgi-bin/daisy2/products_avanti.html](http://www.daisy.ifware.com/cgi-bin/daisy2/products_avanti.html). The CMP has an excellent extended payment program to purchase either the 853 or the M888 rifles. More information can be found at [www.odcmp.com/Services/Programs/Sporter Air Rifle.htm](http://www.odcmp.com/Services/Programs/Sporter_Air_Rifle.htm).

It is up to you, your finances, and the number of junior athletes you will have as to how many rifles you would want to consider buying. Most teams will have 3 or 4 athletes training on one rifle. Of course this will mean re-adjusting the sights for each of the athletes but this is good training. As you progress and find that you have two or three athletes that are better than the others you may want to consider letting them fire only their particular rifle.

If you continue with the program and have some athletes who are interested in continuing in 3-Position competitive shooting, that would be the time to consider moving them into the precision category. We can provide you with more information if you would like.

See attachment DCBR14-02

STEERING COMMITTEE

Elmer Palmer

The Steering Committee continued to meet via electronic means after the completion of the Department of Montana Fall Conference.

The majority, almost a unanimous, opinion was the items that the committee brought forth in it its previous report were worthy of presentation to the Convention. The decision was

made to break those items into individual items and present them in the form of resolutions. This is being carried out, and those items will come to the convention in this form.

Since many of these items require a change to the constitution, the committee spent several hours in the constitution, and found it to be in extreme disarray. It lists committees that we do not have, and sets rules and actions for committees that are not listed as standing committees. Changes that were approved at earlier times were not made to the current document.

The committee made a recommendation to the Department Commander at the fall conference that the Constitution and Internal Affairs Committee be tasked with revising the constitution. It recommended that the form of a new constitution be guided by the National Constitution, containing only those things pertinent to the constitution, and rules documents be developed for the Convention, the Operation of the Department Executive Committee and The Appointment of Committees. A resolution for this action is being presented by the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee would like to thank Commanders Carlisle and Ellwein for their trust in the committee.

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

Kelly Ackerman

VETERANS ECONOMICS

Byron Erickson

Due to Reserve and Guard deployments the war in Iraq and Afghanistan has created about 3,000 new veterans in Montana. Many of our returning veterans will seek training and new jobs. Others are returning home from active duty enlistments.

When a veteran returns home they will have two basic needs, a means of income, and health care. Montana has made remarkable progress in providing health care clinics and services to veterans.

Unemployment

The most current Unemployment Rates for Montana compared to the nation are listed below.

Unemployment Rates* – February 2014

National Unemployment 6.7%

Montana Unemployment 5.1%

By county the least unemployment rate was in Fallon County at 1.9%. Lincoln County weighed in at 16.5%.

Job Assistance

Reservation veterans return home to up to 70% unemployment rates and the economic and social challenges of reservation life. **Not one of the seven reservations has a resident DVOP (Disabled Veteran Outreach Program) specialist.** We need to insure proper DVOP staffing services to all veterans who live on reservation lands. The sacrifices and contributions of our Native Americans are appreciated.

Because Montana is a “frontier” state Montana is allocated less money than ever because of a formula adopted by the U.S. Department of Labor, and approved by congress, that does not consider **service delivery area**. It only considers the unemployment rate and number of veterans, of working age, that live in the state. Also, the DVOP/LVER program has suffered financially as it has been flat funded for a number of years. Costs go up and services dramatically drop.

It is hard to believe that the greatest tool we have to help stabilize returning war-time veterans is not properly funded in Montana or other rural states.

It is true that Senator Tester has a plan for changing the formula to increase rural DVOP presence. It was voted down twice and needs to be reintroduced. I have reintroduced charts and graphs below from a few years ago to demonstrate the vast chasm between the JVSG (Jobs for Veteran State Grant) for DVOP/LVER assistance in comparison to other states.

Note: Why is it important to have DVOP trained Job Service workers? 1. They are veterans 2. They are specifically trained through NVTI (National Veterans Training Institute) to give optimum services to veterans. 3. They are the best trained and serve only the veteran.

Stand Downs

Stand Downs are valuable in Montana. They are funded by private donations (Bozeman and other areas). The VA funds are about half of the DOL/VETS funds but recent focus on grant management has made the DOL/VETS grant unattractive to rural Montana event organizers. The grant, as currently managed for our DOL/VETS region is designed for very large Stand Downs and are not rural-user friendly. I recommend not applying for the money.

Health Care

There have been new VA Clinics started up in Montana to help veterans who need care many miles away from Fort Harrison. All of the clinics and the substance abuse ward at Ft. Harrison are helpful to Montana veterans. DAV transportation is a blessing to many.

The recent revelations of veterans not receiving timely care and dying while waiting for services demonstrates due diligence is sorely needed to protect our veterans. **Outcome actions by those in charge of VA Healthcare belie their lip service.**

Resolves

This segment is not hot air or a joke. The American Legion could spearhead an effort with other service organizations, and the government agencies that are underfunded, to assist veterans in the poorest of the poor and highest unemployment areas. It is called “connecting the dots.”

Job and other resource assistance can be provided.

1. Do not rely solely on the government. The Congress does not have what it takes to give adequate funding to our rural veterans. Veterans die and are struggling because of the lack of adequate assistance.
2. Connecting resources from numerous organizations through veteran job fairs, and consistent veteran job and training counseling works.
3. It is possible to put together retired DVOP and LVER staff, and others, to help assist veterans in needy areas obtain jobs and training.. They still care and are veterans themselves.
4. It is possible to identify and work with businesses that have good paying jobs that are willing to hire and train veterans. Obviously, there is more work to be done.
5. Do not let our Congressional representatives off the hook. Always ask for them to do the right thing for the veteran. The veteran who needs a job, training, or economic assistance will always be with us even when the guns are silent.

See Attachment #DCBR14-03

VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – BILLINGS

Dale Webb

During the fall and spring I have attended all meetings of the VAVS division by phone conference. During these conferences, I have learned a great deal about the problems the VA is facing and what our volunteers can do to help.

I have tried to recruit several people to work as volunteers at the newly opened addition to the Billings CBOC. I am also trying to raise money from businesses around town to furnish coffee, creamer and sugar for the CBOC.

I have tried to stay in contact with Bill White the VAVS Coordinator, but sorry to say I have not enjoyed his input as much as I would like. This is due to some personal and health problems during the winter.

I attended the opening of the Billings CBOC addition and listened to all the speakers. They seem enthused, but my personal opinion is that they aren't getting the whole truth. They haven't filled as many positions as they have led the Senators and Congressman to believe. But I am trying to work with the CBOC leadership and the Fort Harrison leadership to bring this CBOC on line.

VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – Fort Harrison

Bill White

1. Attended 4th quarter meeting for VAVS Fort Harrison.
2. Assisted the Stevensville post, when they brought students down to meet Veterans at the Fort Harrison VA.
3. Used budgeted monies to help in sending out Christmas packages by Vets through Christmas programs sponsored by the American Legion posts throughout the state.
4. Provided American Legion VAVS funds for refreshments for Veterans at Fort Harrison.
5. Provided funds for gas cards for needy veterans at Fort Harrison.
6. Provided telephone cards for Veterans staying at the VA Hospital Fort Harrison.
7. Attended 1st quarter VAVS meeting at VA Fort Harrison
8. Worked with Dale Webb, VAVS Representative, Billings, to ensure that Veterans were taken care of at the Billings CBOC.
9. Assisted Adjutant, Gary White in completing the first Annual Joint Summary of the American Legion since 2000. (See attachment)

See Attachment #DCBR14-04

VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – Miles City

Robert Crowe

The community home clinic (nursing home), here at Miles City V.A. Medical Center continues much as it has for some time. This facility can serve up to 20 residents at any one time. Some residents have been here for quite a while; others are here for only a few days, or a week. There are many activities for them to do. They can go for drives in the country, they can go out to lunch; bible studies, bingo games. An effort is made to keep all of the residents active.

The outpatient clinic seems to be slowing. It appears that many of the services are moving to the Billings area, causing much less traffic in the outpatient area, than there has been in the past.

WAYS & MEANS

Merv Gunderson

I would like to thank committee members Mike Susag, and Pete Fabiani for their assistance. The Ways and Means Committee looked at several options for revenue generation this year. Our Committee would like to encourage anyone with ideas on fundraising to give us their assistance.

We recommended leaving the Big K in place. The Big K is a premier fundraiser that

distributes funds to Posts, Units, Squadrons and Districts; as well as, deriving revenue for the Department. The Ways and Means committee believes it is essential to keep a fundraiser in place that rewards those entities that promote the program. This premier fundraiser needs more promotion from all District Commanders. Posts are still unaware of the additional income they can raise.

The label program has long been a good revenue source for the Department. The Ways and Means committee recommended we continue the label program. We are going to be under the national label program. After this year we will have a better handle on the total revenue we will generate.

The largest fundraiser for the Department has continually been our firearms raffle. The Ways and Means committee recommended we raffle a "Quigley" Sharps rifle for this year. The nice thing about this rifle is it is made in Montana by the Shiloh Arms Company located in Big Timber. In the past we have received complaints that not everyone wants to win a weapon. This year the Finance Committee recommended a second place prize of a Vespa motor scooter. However, when we were unable to find a Vespa at a reasonable price, that would work for our fundraiser. We made the decision to offer a top line LED television. The screen size is 60". It is a prize well worth winning. The third and fourth place prizes will be cash of \$300 and \$200 respectfully.

The Ways and Means committee recommended that tickets for the rifle raffle be distributed on a request basis. It has proven to be very costly when we send books of tickets to Posts that do not sell or promote the fundraiser. Additional cost for printing tickets creates a problem. Especially, when hundreds of unsold tickets are returned to the Department Adjutant at convention. This year the committee recommended the tickets have sequential numbers and placed in books of 15 tickets. The price per ticket is \$10.00 or three for \$20.00. In an effort to ensure those selling tickets get a portion of the income, the entity selling the tickets is allowed to retain \$10.00 from each book for their fundraising efforts. The net gain for the Department is a minimum of \$90.00 to a maximum of \$140.00 per book. As of this report we have generated \$6,343,82. That is \$2,706.18 less than budgeted. However, we should make that up at convention.

WOMEN'S VETERANS COORDINATOR

Ruth Cheney

Having been the Women Veteran's Coordinator for several years now, I would like to claim at least some success in encouraging women veterans to join the American Legion, and in convincing male veterans to welcome them. However, if success has been achieved in even a small way, it's not obvious. If anything, I saw fewer women veterans participating in District meetings in 2014. And I continue to hear the same discouraging stories across the state from women veterans who found it difficult to get male veterans to "allow" them to join their local Post, women who did not feel welcome in their Posts and women who were not asked to participate in Post activities. I know from personal experience this past year that the same quiet mistreatment and disrespect toward women Legionnaires continues in any number of small, yet substantial, ways. Last year, at the District meetings I focused on explaining to male veterans

the reasons women veterans would not join the American Legion. “Why join the Legion and put up with more of the same” was explained. The talk then focused on the reasons women veterans need to join the organization, and from there, the ways male Legionnaires can make women veterans feel welcome in their Posts. “Women do not want to be treated special or different. We want to be treated like any other veteran.” That apparently fell on deaf ears. So this year the focus was on how the addition of women to the organization augments the power of the voice of the American Legion when speaking to Congress regarding veteran’s benefits, the many ways in which women have contributed to our national defense throughout our nation’s wars, and why women should be fully accepted into, and be respected members of the American Legion. As I stand in front of Legionnaires in 11 Districts, I can quickly and easily pick out those who are openly hostile to the message, and there are usually at least a few. It is an enigma to me how in 2014 women veterans can be facing such a struggle to be accepted and respected members of the largest veterans organization in the world. But the struggle exists and is present at all three levels of the American Legion. At the National level, there is much to be done to lead by example in making the organization inclusive and welcoming to women veterans and their families. And at the Post and District levels, where the mission of caring for local veterans and providing Americanism programs for local youth can only benefit from the addition of women to the Post, keeping women out seems to be an unspoken goal.

So, the question is, how do we get past this bias against women veterans? One of the best ways is to capitalize on acceptance of women veterans by those Legionnaires who are fully supportive of us. I have enjoyed the opportunity to meet a number of supporters of women veterans at District meetings and know there are many in Montana Legion Posts I haven’t yet met. We need supportive male Legionnaires to step forward and establish a welcoming and supportive climate within their Posts and Districts while making it clear that anything less than that will not be tolerated. And women veterans, when able, need to reciprocate by being active participants in helping their Posts accomplish local missions. Working together, each gender enhances the contributions of the other and the American Legion becomes a more effective organization, one that ALL veterans will want to join, knowing they will be welcomed as Legionnaires. And every veteran who joins be they male or female, adds to the power of the voice of the American Legion at the national legislative level. The greater the number, the more powerful the voice of the American Legion in securing and protecting veterans benefits. We owe to those currently serving the assurance that the American Legion is working hard to obtain and protect the benefits they will need when they separate from the service. And we also owe those currently serving the assurance that each and every one of them will be welcomed into the American Legion, each as an equal to the other.