



DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER Roger Hancock

I attended Remembrance Day, November 11th, at Crows Nest Pass, Alberta. I was honored to give a speech honoring their fallen and then participated in three wreath laying ceremonies at Coleman, Blairmore, and Bellevue. The events were successful in building a positive relationship between the Royal Canadian Legion and the American Legion.

December was a sad month. Dale Webb the South Central Zone Commander passed away due to an automobile accident. Dale's funeral on the 14th in Belfry was not only a sad occasion but a celebration of his life. I was proud to witness a sea of American Legion caps in the audience during the service. The Sons of The American Legion were also present in strong numbers.

In February I had the honor to listen to some of our top youth competing in the American Legion Oratorical Contest in Great Falls. This program challenges our youth and brings out the best in them. After the Oratorical Contest I attended the District 8 Four Chaplains service. I was impressed with the presentation and the inclusion of the Air Force Chaplains. I learned a little more about the Four Chaplains.

March 31st, I attended three events. The first was at the HAFRC, Ft. Harrison, by participating in a Town Hall meeting with the Honorable Bob McDonald, Veterans Affairs Secretary. Also in attendance was Senator Tester. I was allowed to question the VA Secretary about issues important to American Legion members in Montana. After the meeting I attended the Military Appreciation Day ceremony at the State Capital where I was honored to interact with some World War II and Korean War veterans. What really made my day was seeing all the Blue Caps in attendance and participating in the ceremony. Then I traveled to Carroll College for an ANAVICUS Scholarship presentation to a deserving student.

I made all the Spring District meetings with all being well attended. The first meeting, March 14th, was a dual gathering of District 3 and 8 at Fairfield. That evening in Helena, I was privileged to speak at the Post 2 American Legion Birthday celebration. Sunday saw me in Whitehall for the District 6 meeting. The next weekend I visited District 7 in Bozeman and District 11 in Custer. April 11th found me in Wolf Point for District 1's meeting. Sunday I was in Glendive for District 10's meeting where by far the best dessert was offered during my travels. April 18th and 19th I was in Whitefish and Missoula for the District 4 and 5 meetings. April 20th I attended the pre-convention meeting in Havre. Saturday and Sunday I was in Malta and Lewistown for District 2 and 9 meetings which completed the Spring District meetings.

The travel weather was great and the country side even better. I would like to thank all who attended and especially those who made the meetings happen.

The Judge Advocate and I attended a Post meeting to help them in their nomination and election process. Our presence ensured an orderly and professional conclusion to a hotly contested election.

DEPARTMENT VICE-COMMANDER

Jim Grosset

It was a pleasure to visit my home District at the combined District Meetings of District #3 and #8 in Fairfield. The wind sure blew outside, but inside the meetings was good. The general consensus was that it will happen again.

The next visit to the District meetings was to Whitefish and District #4. I have not been to Whitefish before and love the town. The next day was to Missoula and District #5. Once again a great meeting, I always love to go to this District as they have great meetings.

All winter I had many discussions with our membership chairman over Skype. I am hoping that we will do more Skype meetings in the future, as it cuts down on the cost of travel and we could use it when doing training.

In June I am planning to attend the Royal Canadian Legion Alberta/Northwest Territories Convention in Lethbridge. These comrades always treat us so good, and since it is in my backyard, it will be extra special.

I am looking forward to seeing all my old and new friends at the Convention in Havre. It has been a good year and hope that 2015-16 will be our best year ever.

ZONE COMMANDER – SOUTH CENTRAL

Demorise Allen

On December 20th, I bid farewell and saluted a fine Marine, Legionnaire, Belfry Bat and friend. Dale Webb passed away December 12th due to a vehicle accident. Dale was our Zone Commander at the time and headed to be our Department Vice Commander and ultimately our Department Commander. He had great goals to accomplish. We will all miss him. I liked what Steven Webb wrote in a poem for Dale. "MY SPIRIT IS ALL OF YOU"

Our Department Commander asked if I would step in to finish out Dale's term. I was honored! Thank You

I talked with and got permission from the District Commanders to send out letters. On February 15th I sent a letter to each and every Post Commander and Adjutants in all three Districts in my Zone. I congratulated all on the good work with membership, especially Don Bost of Lewistown, who has basically single handily helped District 9 become a 100% District. I let everyone know if help was needed, just ask!

Fran' sheep were keeping us pretty busy and the cows were really coming well so we were unable to take in the Oratorical contest.

We did arrange things and made sure we attended both District 7 and District 11 Meetings the 21st and 22nd of March. Our hosts, Post and Unit 14 in Bozeman gave us a very nice welcome. Seeing their new Post and Club was nice. We had a very good pulled pork meal at our banquet. Ken McMillon did a nice job running their District Meeting and business was taken care of.

We made Custer on Sunday and Post and Unit 111 also gave us a very nice welcome. We were treated to an excellent shepherd's pie and a special desert for our banquet. The meal was catered by the FFA kids. GREAT JOB!!! George Blackard did a nice job with their meeting and rolling business along. "FOR THE GOOD OF THE AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY" George reminded us of the last words in our Preamble "to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness". Think about it in all we do!

As always, Department presentations in the morning sessions were very enjoyable and educational. Roger Hancock's speech mirroring the Gettysburg address was very informative.

Next, we attended the District 9 Spring Meeting, April 26th in Lewistown. The Fergus Post and Unit 16 did an excellent job. Our banquet was very nice. Larry Dobb did an excellent job running our meeting. The attendance at all District Meetings was quite good.

Congratulations to our District Commanders elected for next year. They are Duane Carlton District 7, Larry Dobb District 9 and Richard Klose for District 11.

Looking forward to a great Department Convention in Havre!!!

Hoping many of our Legion Family will be attending!!!

THANK YOU HAVRE FOR STEPPING UP!

ZONE COMMANDER – WESTERN

John Pellegrini

Membership for the Western Zone is not going as well as last year and it seems that is because of renewals. We have to work on getting those members who never come to meetings to be more faithful in sending in their dues. It usually takes a personal contact, so that's what we have to do. I received the new 2016 goals from Department and tried to distribute them fairly. The new goals are as follows: District #4: 1091; District #5: 1564; District #6: 2050.

I attended the Spring meeting of District #6 in Whitehall in March and was very pleased with the turn out. Post #24 did a great job with a well conducted meeting and a great lunch. The new 2016 goals for the District were dispatched among the Posts. Regretfully, I was unable to attend the District #4 and District #5 meetings due to personal conflict and I apologize to Commanders Ron Hawkinson and Gerry Christenson once again.

I am filing this report in early April because I will be out of the State until May 22, 2015; I will be filing an additional report at Convention, if needed.

Please work on renewals, thank you.

ZONE COMMANDER – NORTH CENTRAL

Lowell Long

A year has passed since I was elected to the position of Zone Commander for the North Central Zone and the time has flown by. I have attended the district meetings for my three districts both in the fall and spring. To me, it was exciting to be able to meet with Legionnaires from across this zone and to connect with them as they try to carry out their programs.

In the fall, I attended the district meetings in Dutton (District 8), Conrad (District 3), and Big Sandy (District 2). It was an honor to meet the National Commander at the Fall District meetings in Dutton and Conrad. It is always good to hear firsthand the goals the commander has for his term in office. In the

spring, I attended and ran the joint meeting for Districts 3 and 8 in Fairfield. This was something new we tried and the attendance was good for the meeting. I then attended the District 2 meeting in Malta.

I had the honor to go to Malta in September to be part of the Blue Star presentation and placement in the park. The Community of Malta did a great job putting this on.

I was asked to carry the American Flag in the homecoming parade in Harlem on October 3rd. It was great passing the Elementary school and seeing all the students standing with their hand over their heart while our flag passed by. Being a teacher at that school and working with the staff, we are teaching our students about respecting our flag.

I was asked to take part in the Veteran's Day program at the Harlem Elementary School where the children honored several veterans from the area. I worked with one of the sixth grade classes as they gave a demonstration on folding the flag and told what each fold meant. After they completed the ceremony, I presented the flag to one of the veterans in attendance. This was the second year that I was able to do that honor. I also attended the Veteran's Day dinner at Post 109 in Turner. It is always great to go up there and participate in their program. We also listened to the students that attended American Legion Boys State, Auxiliary Girls State, and essay contest winners. It is always great to hear how much these events impact the lives of these young people.

I joined many Legionnaires from across the state to honor Dale Webb in his passing this winter. It was a sad time for me as we laid to rest a fellow Marine and a very good friend.

I have with my post, participated in several funeral honors for veterans in the Chinook area. Two of the veterans were members of Blaine Post 48 and had been very active when they were younger. They will be missed by all in the post.

I attended the Department Oratorical Contest as a committee member and as the North Central Zone Commander. The students that came and presented were very good and I enjoyed listening to their presentations.

I also participated in the Four Chaplains Service in Great Falls. I would like to commend the members of District 8 who put this on. I would encourage any member who hasn't participated in the past to try for the next year as it was a very informative event.

I have been working with the District Commanders on membership and working with the numbers that we are being given to try to attain the goals we need for our 100th anniversary. I will continue to work with them as we strive for one of the best years for our Zone. As of this writing, District 3 is in pretty good shape while District 2 and District 8 are not doing as well. We are hoping that our final numbers look better by convention time.

I worked with the convention committee in planning the Department Convention for this summer. I attended several meetings while we worked to get everything together for this event. I attended the department meeting going over the facilities in preparation for this convention.

Thank you for your support as we work toward making the American Legion better in North Central Montana. Thank you for supporting me as I work for you as your Zone Commander. I am looking forward to an even better year in 2016 as I complete my second year as your Zone Commander. It has been an honor to serve this zone this year.

ZONE COMMANDER – EASTERN

Sylvia Beals

Completing the June Convention I helped our District Commander Richard Neilsen by delivering some of our District Post packets to Terry, Circle, Sidney, Fairview, Glendive, Miles City, and Forsyth. We got the rest out to him in Colstrip and eventually we had to mail the one to Ekalaka for him. I attended District 1 in Opheim which was well attended and the District 10 meeting in Sidney with only 6 in attendance. I ended the fall attending the Conference in Helena the last weekend in October.

I took part in the Veterans Day celebration in Forsyth which had a great turn out despite the very cold day.

I have made two Post visits to Colstrip and Baker since our Fall Conference and spoke to David Dean our District 1 Commander several times concerning membership and the Spring District meeting held in Wolf Point.

Bob and I attended both Spring District meetings for Districts 1 and 10. I notice that National keeps increasing our membership goals as they want to reach 3 million members by 2019 for the Great Celebration, so ask that everyone please do your best to help in this endeavor; a renewal is just as great as getting a new membership. I so enjoy visiting with everyone as I feel Legionnaires and Veterans are great people and we all seem to have the same values in life.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN (N.E.C.)

Merv Gunderson

My 2nd 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 Helm'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: On November 9, 2014 I was the guest speaker for the Masonic Lodge in Pony, MT. The event was in honor of Veterans Day. The Pony VFW along with several other veterans attended.

On November 11, 2014 Adjutant White, Alt NEC Driver and Commander Hancock and I attended the Remembrance Day observance in Canada. We visited the towns of Coleman, Blairmore and Bellevue in Alberta. Our attendance was greatly appreciated by the veterans and citizens of those Branches.

November 13, 2014 I attended a VA "Town Hall" meeting in Billings. Senator Jon Tester was seeking input from veterans on VA issues. The meeting was well attended and the audience brought up several issues.

On November 20, 2014 Adjutant White and I attended the funeral of Barbra Musgrove in White Sulphur Springs. Barb was a long time member of The American Legion and a great veteran advocate. Her funeral was well attended.

On December 10, 2014 Adjutant White, Alt NEC Driver, Service Officer Ackerman, Membership Chairman Palmer and I traveled to Post Falls, ID to attend a VA "Town Hall" meeting. Post 97 service officer Larry Strokeland joined us for the meeting. This meeting was set up so Washington, Idaho and Montana could have input on the operation of the VA hospital in Spokane. American Legion National VA&R staff met with the Hospital Director in Spokane and the veterans along with hospital staff in Post

Falls. As a result of the visit, the hospital director was transferred and an acting director named to run the facility.

From Jan 7 to Jan 10, 2014 I traveled to Billings for the District 11 membership revitalization. Several members from Billings along with Michelle Steinmetz (National Membership and Post Activities) and Gary White were there. George Blackard, District 11 Commander, organized the event. It was extremely successful. Not only were we able to increase membership substantially, we were able to get veterans immediate assistance from the VET center and MVAD service officers.

I attended the Department High School Oratory final that was held February 8, 2015 in Great Falls. 5 of the 11 Districts were represented. It was an excellent event with contestants from two zones participating. Our department winner did not go past the first round in Indianapolis.

February 12, 2015 I attended a veteran cemetery meeting in Bozeman to explore the possibility of establishing a SW Regional Veteran's cemetery. Bozeman city officials, the SW Veterans Alliance and MVAD director, Joe Foster, attended the meeting.

February 21 to February 24, 2015, I attended the Washington conference with Roger Hagen, Legislative chairman, and Mike Shepard, Legislative liaison to Ryan Zinke. We visited our Congressional members, Senator Jon Tester, Senator Steve Daines and Representative Ryan Zinke. During our visit we raised several concerns about the VA and discussed veteran benefits.

With sequestration looming over the head of the military we are putting our National Defense in a very perilous position. There are several nations who have taken an aggressive posture. Our military forces and equipment are dwindling. This is not the time to save money on the back of the military and our veterans. Our readiness training has been virtually eliminated. Research and Development of weapons and equipment has been cut back to unprecedented levels. Our generals fear that sending military personnel into harm's way will cost us greater casualties.

Now is not the time to cut the military. Now is the time the military needs to be well equipped and ready to face enemies on all fronts.

I attended the following Spring meetings:

North Central Zone in Fairfield on March 14, 2015

District 6 in Whitehall on March 15, 2015

District 7 in Bozeman on March 21, 2015

District 11 in Custer on March 22, 2015

District 7 in Big Timber on March 30, 2015

District 11 in Park City on April 5, 2015

District 1 in Wolf Point on April 12, 2015

District 4 in Kalispell on April 18, 2015

District 5 in Missoula on April 27, 2015

District 2 in Malta on April 25, 2015

District 9 in Lewistown on April 26, 2015

During the Legislative session I traveled to the state capital to testify on several veteran bills. Although the legislators professed to be in favor of veterans several bills did not make it out of committee. However, we were able to get most of the bills to the floor and passed.

May 3 through May 7, 2015 the Spring meeting of The American Legion was held in Indianapolis. There were several items of interest that came up during the NEC meeting. First, there was a resolution to

utilize money from the Legacy Fund to provide scholarship enhancement for service members who were using the post 9-11 GI Bill. The majority of the money raised for the Legacy scholarship was done by Legion Riders. The money was to be used for scholarships for the surviving offspring of veterans killed in action. That resolution was sent back to the Children and Youth committee for revision.

Another Resolution of interest to all of us requested a dues increase. The documents showing the need for the increase were well prepared and did show The American Legion is operating at a loss due to the decline in membership. That resolution passed with several dissenting members. The dues increase of \$5.00 per year will take place January 20, 2016 so it is very important to get the next dues renewal in early. If you are contemplating Paid Up For Life membership, this may be a good year for that to happen.

ALTERNATE NATIONAL COMMITTEEMAN (N.E.C.)

David Driver

After the Department Fall Conference I attended a VA Town Hall Meeting on 10 December held by the Departments of Washington, Idaho and Montana in Post Falls, Idaho. Post 143 of Post Falls hosted the Town Hall Meeting which was well attended. I attended all 11 District Spring Meetings.

PAST DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Dick Ellwein

I attended part of the SAL National Convention which was held before the American Legion Convention.

I was the delegation chairman at the 2014 National Convention held in Charlotte, NC.

I attended various meetings and events at the convention. The Department of Montana received awards for the following: for reaching or exceeding 100% membership, 100% reporting of Consolidated Post Reports and for reaching or exceeding the National Commander's NEF challenge. The National Emergency Fund was the National Commander's project for 2013-2014.

On September 28, 2014 I attended the Western Zone meeting held at Frenchtown High School. I attended the Spring District # 6 meeting in Whitehall.

HISTORIAN

Art Ellison

I have been forced to slow down on my historian activities since fall Conference due to financial problems. In plain language I just can't afford it any longer.

I have decided that rather than putting a boring article in the Legionnaire as I have been, I have begun to look for interesting stories of our members and include them in the Montana Legionnaire. There are so many interesting stories that our members have to tell and I have enjoyed very much listening to what they have to say. This is a verbal history of our members and if it is not written down it did not happen. This goes for our districts and posts also. I am pleased that there is a great increase in the number of articles and photos that posts are submitting. I hope it is due partly because of my constant reminder to keep a history book. Some posts who have told me they are working on scrapbooks or narratives of the past year. I am looking forward to seeing them at the department convention in Havre.

I will be attending the Royal Canadian Legion Biannual Convention in Lethbridge, Alberta the first part of June and in the fall Saskatchewan Convention as part of the Montana Delegation. I will also be at the Department Convention in Havre in June. Just look for the guy hiding behind a camera.

I will also be going to the National historian meeting in October to help judge the many post and department history books that are submitted. I do believe that there will be a great submission for the national contest.

In ending my report I would like to thank members who attended the 2014 department convention for trusting me to continue on as their department historian.

I would also like to thank you for maintaining a history of the Department of Montana.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT Gary White

The year started with the National Convention in Charlotte, NC where I performed the duties of delegation secretary and coordinated with all Montana delegates to ensure there stay was hassle free. I attended the Constitutional & Internal Affairs Committee meetings. Upon return from National Convention I attended all Fall District meetings.

In November I attended Remembrance Day ceremonies with the Royal Canadian Legion in Bellevue, Blairmore and Coleman, Alberta with the Department Commander and the NEC and Alt NEC. 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 with the exception of Districts 4 & 5.

In January the 64th Legislature convened. With the assistance of the Legislative Chairman Tim Gavin, NEC Merv Gunderson we were able to cover all hearings which we were asked to testify at and many others where we weren't asked. We had 15 Bills that we testified on in hearings before the House and Senate. The only legislation that the American Legion proposed through our District meetings never made it out of the drafting process.

Other day to day accomplishments included assisting the Publications Chairman in publishing four 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 attended 3 VSO VA Directors meetings and 2 VAVS meetings at Fort Harrison VA... 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 Eddy White and the Finance Chairman Jeff Nelson for their assistance with our finances. Additionally in conjunction with various Posts I planned and conducted 2 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 assisted in processing 6 TFA requests.

In April I completed VAVS reconciliation with the Fort Harrison VA Volunteer Services. Our volunteer hours were down and our monetary donations were up. We have many Legionnaires giving of their time to assist fellow veterans at the VA Hospital and Community Based Outreach Clinics (CBOC) and with Funeral Honors who could be counted, but were not because they are not registered with the VA as volunteers. We need to endeavor to assist the clinics. Also in April the Secretary of the Veterans Administration visited Fort Harrison VA, and with Senator Tester conducted a discussion panel which I was very disappointed in, with both the way the panel was conducted and the information presented by the panel and the poor attendance of veterans.

I coordinated and administered the Department Rifle Raffle and the Cash Calendar with the Ways & Means Chairman Bill Applegate. Once again I administrated the Big K programs

With the assistance of the NEC and Alt NEC I coordinated and prepared National Commander Mike Helm's visit to Montana. The highlight of his trip was the funeral in Augusta of repatriated remains of a World War II veteran. I wish to express my thanks to the Posts and Districts that participated in these visits and went out of their way to show the National Commander their generous hospitality.

I attended the VA Town Hall meetings in Spokane, WA, Billings, Helena and Missoula, these town halls were very informative, but in most cases poorly attended; however the American Legion was most definitely the predominant VSO at all the town halls. I attended the Four Chaplains ceremony conducted by District 8, the National Spring Meetings in Indianapolis, District 6 and Department Oratory contests, Memorial Day ceremonies at Fort Harrison State Veterans Cemetery and the Wreaths Across America ceremony at the Capitol. 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.

While at the spring meetings at National Headquarters in May the major item of concern was the vote to increase the National per capita by \$5.00, which passed. The dues increase will become effective January of 2016, in most Posts this will require a Post dues increase and the completion of a new Post Data form to let National know the new dues amount. As of this writing we do not know if the Department will also raise Department per capita, this of course will be determined at the Department Convention.

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

CHAPLAIN
Ronn Moccasin
(not submitted)

SERVICE OFFICER
Kelly Ackerman

Since the Fall Conference, I attended a Town Hall event on December 10, 2014 in Post Falls, Idaho to discuss issues with the Spokane VA Hospital.

Due to back surgery in January 2015, I was unable to attend Spring District Meetings, DSO School, and the Washington Conference in March 2015. Stena Bushnell, a Veteran Service Officer from Billings attended DSO School in my absence. Veteran Service Officers Dan Arnold and Janine Mahn also attended DSO School in Washington, DC.

All Spring District meetings were attended by MVAD/AL VSO's according to area of jurisdiction with the exception of the District 6 meeting.

During the District meetings, they discussed all VA benefits including VA Healthcare, Disability Compensation, and Pension. There was an emphasis placed on the importance of registering with Myhealthvet and eBenefits. They discussed ongoing scheduling problems within the VA Healthcare system, and covered the new Choice Act, which will be covered in the VA&R Report.

PARLIAMENTARIAN

Duane Carlton

As the Parliamentarian, I am not required to attend the District/Zone meetings. However, I did attend the District 6 meeting in Whitehall and the District 7 meeting in Bozeman in March. I've spent most of my Parliamentarian time reviewing the Department Constitution and Bylaws, per the guidance of Department Commander Roger Hancock. His intent is to align our Constitution and Bylaws to be more in line with the National document, and to eliminate unnecessary verbiage which does not accomplish what we need to do as a Department. This is a work in progress, and will continue through to the 2015 Department Convention.

FINANCE OFFICER

Eddy White

Since July 2014, I have conducted at least monthly meetings with the Department Adjutant to review the books, balances and outstanding liabilities. On occasion, we have met more than once a month to conduct business such as check signature needs.

The reports before you are as of May 16th. Based on this, there are several key items not balanced out until after the end of June 2015, the end of our fiscal year. However, I will say that our financial health is good and that overall we had a minor increase in Net Assets of 1.35%. It is always good to remain in the black albeit a small one.

In the balance sheets provided with this report, take note that we have two sets of numbers that reflect an inconsistency due to a timing issue in reporting of our Income and Expenses. The two sets are Membership Dues income and the National Dues expense for this period. The total Income increase was due to the Membership Dues of \$248,580.77 a difference of \$121,440.92 from last period's \$127,139.85 and an increase of expenses for National Dues of \$123,334.12 from last period's \$0.00.

As for our budget this year, the most significant numbers are the Total Income and Expenses. Both numbers are good. Total Income is just \$25,903 short of making our budget of \$355,345.00. We are \$100,023.36 under budget for Total Expenses. That is a significant amount and it will change once we close the books for 2015.

We are still seeing dozens of distributed checks outstanding as far back as January this year. As I mentioned at the 2014 Fall Conference, this is not good for the person or post receiving these funds if they go without being cashed and it is a liability to the Department. I am asking those that receive funds from the Department to promptly cash these checks. If you have lost a check, please be sure to contact the Department Adjutant about it so it can be handled appropriately.

See appended

JUDGE ADVOCATE

Jim Shockley

The following are comments on the four significant events that my position required since my last report.

1. St. Regis (Post 13):

I thought that I had resolved the dispute in Post 13 last year in regard to the purchase of a lot upon which the Post might build a new building. The purchase price was nominal, and the seller was a member of the Post. I had acknowledged that I am not familiar with Robert's Rules of Order, but was in regard to something similar, Mason's Rules. At the meeting that I had with perhaps a dozen members of the Post in St. Regis, I said that it was my opinion that the purchase of the building lot was not

something that could be reversed by a Rules violation. There are more than one reason for my opinion, but suffice it to say the idea that a Rules violation could reverse the land sale of some months before was wrong.

To be more precise, the allegations were that some violations of the Rules were made at the time that the purchase was approved at a Post meeting. No objection had been made at the time, even though some of the persons now objecting had been present. However, I did say that I would check the Rules to confirm my opinion even though I saw no legal reason that a violation of Robert's Rules could possibly nullify the sale of real estate pursuant to a contract between the Post and the seller. I have spent a little time with Robert's Rules and my opinion is not changed. I should not have said that I would check the Rules, it confused the issue.

2. Missoula (Post 27):

There were some problems at the Post caused by a misunderstanding of the By-Laws of the Department and the Post. The Post could not hold an election in April, but only have a meeting in April that took nominations for the election in May. Unfortunately the Department required that the names of the new officers be with the Adjutant no later than 1 May in order that the names and relevant information could be published in the next Department telephone book. The Post took nominations in April and held elections on 7 May 2015.

The officers of the Post had customarily taken office in August or September. However, the Department required their posting before the Annual Convention in June. That will take place this year and in subsequent years. The nomination meeting in April and the election in May were attended by the Department Commander and me.

There are some problems with the books of the Post and they will be resolved in the near future. A Certified Public Account (retired) has volunteered to help. The problems appear to be just errors, nothing more.

4. Clinton (Post 83)

The Post was ordered to pay a fine by the Montana Department of Revenue for not filing returns. While the Post was filing with the federal government, they did not understand that it was necessary to do so with the State. I contacted the State, who were very helpful and understanding. Our volunteer Certified Public Accountant (retired) met with the Post Commander and resolved the problem by filing the necessary papers. The Post was not fined.

5. New Constitution and By-Laws

I made some recommendations in regard to changes to the Department Constitution and By-Laws. My recommendations only relate to what I believe are my duties as Judge Advocate, and likely trouble areas, such as those that relate to money and auditing.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS Karen Semple

Attended the Fall Conference held at Fort Harrison and had the privilege of NOT collecting as many fines during the proceedings as usual. Greatly appreciated the effort put forth by those participating to exercise good manners and observe American Legion etiquette. On Veterans Day, I represented the Department of Montana by participating in a Library of Congress Veterans History Project at Carroll College. Veteran memoir excerpts were dramatically read by volunteers – including participation by four American Legion members. I submitted Sgt-AT-Arms articles to the Legionnaire that were published. On

May 1, I represented the Department of Montana by marching in a parade from the Naval Reserve Center gate at Fort Harrison, carrying the Department flag, to the annual Veterans Honoring ceremony held on the parade ground at the VA Hospital. Those veterans who passed from our midst since the last ceremony were honored by Native American tribal representatives with song, poetry and a reading of the names of all departed veterans submitted along including the names of all departed American Legion members. Silence was observed. Although all veteran service organizations (VSO) were invited, The American Legion was the only VSO represented. Posts are encouraged to bring your flag and send representatives to participate in this very meaningful annual event. Both before and after the parade, I staffed an American Legion table at the VA hospital during an open house that was held.

DISTRICT COMMANDERS
DISTRICT 1 - COMMANDER
David Dean

Post 81 helped sponsor Cameron Lambert get his Eagle Scout Patch. There were 30 plus people that came out to help square away the Veterans head stones.

District 1 got a check for \$300.00 from Clark Lake, Michigan to be used for Boy's State. The check was in honor of Mr. Bolstad from Plentywood, Montana.

We are in the process of repainting the Highway Fatality Markers in the area.

District 1 had a good turnout for District meeting that was held in Wolf Point maybe we can get more members to attend the fall meeting that will be held in Poplar.

I had the Honor of helping out with Military Funerals. The Wounded Warrior's at Poplar gave Post 81 a star quilt in honor of Mr. Daniels of Poplar.

I paid for breakfast for 11 Guard Members during their Guard Drill weekend in the hope that maybe that will break some ice and we can get new members for the 2015-2016 membership drive.

District 1 needs to work on membership, there were post's that were short a very few members to make goal.

DISTRICT 2 – COMMANDER
Jon Monteaux
(not submitted)

DISTRICT 3 - COMMANDER
Patrick Becker

After the State Convention I delivered Post packets to the various Posts. Met either Commanders or Adjutants in the process some of them new to their jobs. Fall meeting was in Galata where a joint meeting was discussed. At the Fall Conference I and District 8 Commander Michael Mehegan agreed to try it out in Fairfield.

Recruiting was a constant theme at my local Post; I personally made contact with people and drafted a newspaper article for the local paper with no response from either source.

Our Spring meeting was held in Fairfield jointly between Districts 3 and 8, it worked but it was a learning process, separate rooms for the different Districts is a must, four rooms at a minimum with one large enough for the joint session.

We lost Post 69 Galata Commander Ben Alexander who died January 8 at his home in Gilford; services were held in Galata on January 19, 2015.

DISTRICT 4 - COMMANDER
Ron Hawkinson
(not submitted)

DISTRICT 5 - COMMANDER
Gerald Christensen

District five has been fortunate to have a volunteer from the Ray Welch Post 13 in St. Regis, who has taken it on himself to refurbish the standing fatality markers in District Five and others Districts. Mr. Jim Kelly has already sanded and painted over 200 markers in district 5 and part of district 4 from Missoula to the Idaho border. Not only has he refurbished the fatality markers but he has mapped their existing location and placed new markers that were needed.

District 5 conducted elections at its April meeting. Missoula post 27 past commander Bill Applegate, member of the Department Ways and Means Committee will be the new district 5 Commander. Larry Hanson of Lolo post 135 will become first vice and Greg Marose of Hamilton post 47 was elected second vice.

On May 30th district 5 members will be out in force for the second annual "Heroes to Home event which will be held at Fort Missoula along with the VFW and other veterans.

Service provider's district 5 will have a table with information to assist returning "War on Terror" veterans and perform American Legion recruiting activities.

In April District 5 participated along with other non profits at the Missoula Mall in distributing information and recruiting activities for area veterans.

This year District 5 will send over 15 delegates to American Legion Boys State from the high schools in the Missoula area. We are expecting the number to be even higher as delegates from Ravalli and Mineral counties will be attending as well.

Post 27 of Missoula hosted the spring conference at its post on Ronan St, In Missoula on April 19th. Over 70 people from throughout the district and the department attended. Ms. Brenda Desmond, Standing Master of the Missoula Veterans Court conducted a presentation on the Missoula Veterans Court and how it assists area veterans who come before the court for law violations. The objective is to assist veterans and return them to productive citizen status preventing incarceration.

District 5 will be involved in various Memorial Day activities throughout the District along with the United Veterans Council. The district will be represented at the annual parade in Corvallis, with the Korean War vintage jeep the commander and adjutant of Frenchtown post 124 restored.

District 5 hopes to continue the Patriots Day parade in Missoula again this year. Last year the district put on the first such parade held in Missoula for 25 years honoring area veterans and first responders and commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War.

DISTRICT 6 - COMMANDER
John Kougioulis

All the District 6 Posts were visited this year. They were also called several times. Some of the posts moved by "leaps & bounds" with membership. The rest did the best they could and I'm pleased with their hard work. Most of the posts have very successful programs. I enjoyed visiting different posts, they all made me feel welcome and I'm sure the next District 6 Commander will feel welcome also.

I watched the Legionnaires in action, I noticed an older veteran having difficulty at a dinner before a meeting, {in Dillon Post 20,} I went over to offer assistance as he was choking, then the other members kicked into action and successfully did the Heimlich maneuver and cleared him of food lodged in his throat, someone had called 911 & the veteran was OK by the time the EMS personnel got there. They followed up by taking him home after the meeting {he insisted on staying} and again the next day. They watch out for each other!

All the Posts received their Oratorical packets, and some posts sent contestants to the District 6 contest held in Townsend. Gavin Sison from Butte High won the District 6 contest. My adjutant and I went on to the State Contest held in Great Falls to see him win there also. Thanks to Posts 1, 115, 2 & 31 & 46 for sponsoring students.

Our Spring District 6 meeting was hosted by Whitehall post 24. They provided a great meeting place & meal. We were able to accomplish a lot during the meeting. The election of new District 6 officers was done @ this meeting. Congratulations to Lori Perkio who will be the next district 6 Commander. Tim Gavin will be her Vice Commander. The next Spring meeting will be hosted by Townsend Post 42. The Fall District 6 meeting will be held in Missoula as was last year in conjunction with the other Western Districts.

I was pleased to be able to get all the paper work into Department Adjutant; Gary White for the merger of Post 20 Dillon and Post 90 Wisdom, this has taken 2 years and many phone calls and extra trips to Wisdom. Then shortly after, the long- time Commander of Post 90 Wisdom, John Nelson, passed away. I had worked closely with his daughter Jackie who was caring for John, and became very close to them. His daughters had helped John with the Legion membership and other post duties for several years as he did not have an adjutant. My wife and I went to Wisdom to his funeral and met his family and other Legionnaires. We were asked to stand with the Honor Guard there. John Nelson had served his Country and Community faithfully many years.

I want to thank all my officers and Chairmen/Chairwomen for all their support these past 2 years. Also all the District 6 Posts, I hope you all continue your successes in your programs. May God Bless you all

DISTRICT 7 - COMMANDER

Ken McMillon

1. Since last year's Fall Conference, I have participated in 4 more Flag Education classes here in the Gallatin Valley.
2. I continue as the contact for our Cub Scout Pack #3648 in Belgrade. I attended meeting with different Dens during each month. I just attended their Blue and Gold Banquet where Cub Scouts were advanced to the next level. Part of this banquet was inductions into the Order of the Arrow. There were 7 scouts that took part in this ceremony.
3. I often go to the Belgrade Senior Center and present different programs with them. Major holidays are big on their list and ask for my continued assistance to them. I just recently took part in the Armed Forces Day in May, presenting a power point show.
4. Through the year I have re-visited many of my Posts and continue to do so.
5. Our Color Guard was at the first home opener for the American Legion ball team the Belgrade Bandits. Since then we have taken part in the Color Guard for the Bandits multiple times.
6. In April, we presented medals and awards at the Air Force ROTC awards ceremony.
7. I participated in the Memorial Day Ceremony in Bozeman.
8. I participated in the Memorial Day Ceremony in White Sulphur Springs.
9. I participated in a Color Guard for a Navy man that passed away at the Belgrade Senior Center.

10. In April, I attended the Vietnam 50th Anniversary in Bozeman.
11. Held District 7 meeting in March

DISTRICT 8 - COMMANDER
Mike Mehegan

I have had the privilege of visiting 10 of the 11 post in District #8. The one (I) haven't visited is due to conflict of schedule. All the Posts greeted me with great hospitality and I learn something new at each and every Post. This year has had a lot of ups and downs but I believe we are heading in the right direction. Two (2) Posts have surpassed their goal this year: Post 341 Malmstrom with 105.04% of goal and Post #102 Geraldine with 124.64% of goal.

Post #80 Fairfield hosted the combined district meeting of District #3 & #8 on Saturday, March 24, 2015 at their civic center and did an excellent job. A host of obstacles where overcome with two (2) Districts meeting in the same building along with the Auxiliaries. In the future we will need to have individual dedicated spaces for the districts to meet and this can probably only be done in the Fall as there is too much District business going on in the Spring. The Fall meeting of District #3 & #8 will be in Cut Bank.

I had the distinct privilege of installing the newly elected officer of Post #3 Great Falls. I believe it is a ritual all Posts should participate fully as it instills in your officers the sense of responsibility to their office and the American Legion.

On June 5th cremations of six (6) unclaimed veterans at Croxford Funeral Home in Great Falls were taken to Ft. Harrison Veteran's Cemetery in Helena for burial with full military honors. After a brief memorial service at Croxford an escorted Funeral procession will take the cremations to Ft. Harrison. The procession will include 300-400 members of the patriot guard on motor cycles plus veterans groups, the military, law enforcement, fire department and several other groups. The American Legion will escort the six (6) cremations with a folded American flag.

DISTRICT 9 - COMMANDER
Larry Dobb

I have made additional post visitations to several of the nine posts in the District since my report at the Fall Conference in Helena. There are three posts that do not have regular monthly meetings, so I have not been able to visit them. I have talked to the Post Commander and/or his Adjutant for all the posts, and have actually met the Commander of two of the posts I have not been able to visit. I am able to contact seven of the posts via email as either the commander or adjutant or sometimes both have email. This is a great help in forwarding the latest membership status or other electronic correspondence received from Department. This may change for better or worse depending on recently completed post elections. The remaining posts still receive information by regular mail.

The District has done extremely well in membership, passing the 100% of goal on 2 January 2015. District 9 is still the only District to make goal as of May 9th. This is largely the result of Fergus Post 16 in Lewistown which has achieved an astonishing 135.34% of goal. They have reached 360 members, which is 94 over their goal. They are now the third largest Post in the Department. This is largely due to the efforts of their newly elected Post Commander (former 1st Vice Commander) Don Bost, who has signed up the majority of the new members. Two other District Posts have made goal, Winifred Post 120 at 113.79% and Roundup Post 18 at 100%. The other six posts are all within 1-5 members of goal. On 14

April 2015, I was informed that District 9 had come in 3rd in the nation in the Commanders' Annual Race to the Top Competition in Category 1 (small Districts). I have since received a letter of congratulations from National Headquarters and a check. The letter states that there will be ribbons for the District and Post(s) colors to follow.

Our Spring District Meeting was held at Fergus Post #16 in Lewistown on April 26, 2015. The attendance was far better than either the spring or fall meetings in 2014. Not only were numbers up, but we had six of the nine posts represented (Harlowton - 6, Lewistown-10 {plus their SAL Squadron Commander}, Roundup-0, Stanford- 0, Denton- 0, Judith Gap - 1, Hobson - 4, Roy - 1, Winifred - 4). Fergus Post #16 did an excellent job of hosting the District Meeting. I was reelected as District Commander and Sandy Youngbauer of Judith Basin Post 76 in Hobson was elected Vice Commander. The 2015 Fall Meeting will be a Zone Meeting.

A few highlights were: (1) **Veterans Day Activities** On 11 Nov, along with other members of Post 15, I participated in having lunch with the school kids at the Hillcrest Elementary School and later attended the Post's Veterans Day Dinner where the guest speaker was LTC, US Army (Ret) Richard Indreland of Martinsdale, MT who served two tours in Vietnam. The following day I along with many other veterans, attended the Kiwanis Club meeting and lunch honoring veterans. It was well attended with a nice presentation by Karina Dale, a young female Navy Veteran of our more recent conflicts. (2) I attended the **Annual Hunters/Wild Game Feed at Judith Gap Post #70** on 22 Nov. This is one of their major fundraisers and was well attended by people from the area. It was nice to see many of their American Legion members that I had met during my post visitation in a less formal setting. (3) I attended **Wheatland Post #15s Annual Turkey Shoot** on 7 Dec. The Post's largest fundraiser of the year, it was well attended by many people from the area. In addition to actual shooting for turkeys on the Post's indoor range (with .22s), there was bingo and other games and an overall good time. (4) I attended the **Department Oratorical Competition** in Great Falls on 8 Feb, and had the privilege of being an official timer. Five of the eleven districts had contestants. A sixth was unable to attend due to illness. This was an outstanding experience. This is a great opportunity for small posts and districts to get exposure. You only need one student of high school age. The contestant from District 9 (Zach Wright contestant from Post 15) came in fourth and added a significant amount to his college fund. (5) Following the Department Oratorical Competition in Great Falls, many of us attended the **Four Chaplains Memorial Service** sponsored by District 8. In addition to the American Legion, the Marine Corps League provided the Color Guard and there were two Air Force Chaplains from Malmstrom AFB and other civilian religious leaders. (6) On 12 Feb, I was invited by a local veteran to attend the **dedication of the new Veterans Center at the University Of Great Falls**. The UGF has an active Student Veteran Association and the dedication was well attended by various dignitaries from Malmstrom AFB, the Air National Guard and the community. In his address, UGF President Eugene McAllister stated that 1 in every 13 students at UGF are veterans. (7) On 8 Apr, while conducting a post visitation to Lewistown Post #16, accompanied by Zone Commander Demorise Allen, I also got to attend the **SAL Squadron #16 meeting**, which was well attended and they were busy planning some great community service projects at the local Veterans Park. (8) Although they have not yet happened due to the suspense date for this report, I am planning on participating in Harlowton Post #15's annual end of the school year flag retirement ceremony at Hillcrest Elementary and in the Memorial Day services at the Harlowton Cemetery as a member of the post Honor Guard.

Both the SAL Squadrons in the District, Squadron #15 in Harlowton and Squadron #16 in Lewistown achieved goal with the Lewistown Squadron achieving 134 members (104.69% of goal).

I have enjoyed my first year as a District Commander. I feel more confident going into my second year as I have been through most situations at least once. I look forward to getting around to all the posts and meeting more of the membership, especially the key people face to face.

DISTRICT 10 - COMMANDER Bob Beals

I assumed this position at the Fall Conference with the appointment from prior District Commander Richard Nielsen as District Vice Commander, which was then followed by his resignation due to work and family health issues.

The first item of business was to acquire the Ekalaka packet from the Department Convention and get it mailed to Ekalaka so they could start distributing their cards to paid members and get transmittals turned in to Headquarters.

Following the Department Convention in Bozeman Sylvia and I delivered Convention packets to Miles City, Circle, Sidney, Fairview, Glendive, Terry, and Forsyth. During this time we took the opportunity to visit with many of the Post Commanders.

We made a Post visit to Baker for a Veterans Day dinner where we hoped to also meet with Ekalaka; however a fast moving ice/snow storm forced us to leave before the banquet. I was able to visit with Bakers Commander Shelia Bondell briefly and pass on the information from Fall Conference.

In January we visited Colstrip; I was extremely pleased to learn of their projects including attempting to form a Sons of the American Legion Squadron. I have been in communication with Glendive's Commander, Jonathan Westenskow a number of times to set up a Post visitation and to work on setting up the District meeting they would be hosting. We emailed a final step by step program for hosting a District meeting and shared it with the Auxiliary President Esther Helmila in Miles City. I also mailed the call notification for the meeting to all the Posts with a list of duties of the District Commander. I have also mailed each Post a list of expired members hoping for personal contacts to be made as requested in the attached letter.

I have been unable to attend any of Post 32 meetings as Adjutant William Dolatta informed me that the Post only meets when necessary.

DISTRICT 11 - COMMANDER George Blackard

As I begin to write this last report as District 11 Commander I think to myself that the last two years really have flown by. Two years seems like a long time when you say it but all you have to do to make it go by quickly, is give yourself a goal to accomplish before the two years has passed and the time will just disappear.

Unfortunately I did not meet my membership goals for either year but I did accomplish one goal and that was to be in front of as many people and organizations as I possibly could, in uniform, spreading awareness of the American Legion and the challenges faced by our nation's veterans. I attended everything from benefit banquets to service organization meetings to schools to funerals. I was blessed with several opportunities to appear in the media in the Billings Gazette and other Montana newspapers and was a guest on several occasions on Voices of Montana, Morning Coffee, The Livin' Large Larry Show and even one nationally broadcast radio program.

I attended the 2014 American Legion National Convention in Charlotte, NC which was my first National Convention. I did not go as a delegate for Montana because I was not sure I was going to be able to make the trip but that gave me an opportunity to see how the convention operates without having any obligations though I did sit in on a couple of meetings. I really enjoyed seeing my fellow 2012 NALC Classmates and sharing ideas and the successes and failures we all experienced.

Post 117 held their 1st Annual Warrior Run in Billings in August 2014. Despite the weather it was a great experience and I was lucky to share it and run the 5K portion of the race with my entire family. Afterward I was asked to present the winner's medals and trophies.

On September 11th I served as the master of ceremonies for the Community Celebration of Life and 9/11 Remembrance ceremony held in Billings.

On Veteran's Day I did a radio program on KYVA with Scott Fredericks, visited two retirement communities giving Veteran's Day speeches and presenting American Legion certificates to all of the veterans in attendance, and did a school visit speaking to three fourth grade classes.

I was able to represent the American Legion while serving as the master of ceremonies at a benefit for a young Billings soldier who was diagnosed with cancer. The event was covered by the local television media and I was able to do an interview about the event and get recognition for The American Legion. It was great to see Andrew Pearson Post 117 donate nearly \$4,000 to help that young man at the event.

One great turn of events I experienced during the last year was the opportunity to build a relationship with MSU Billings and the Vet's Club and spoke at MSUB on Veteran's Day. I held lunch and learn events three different times at both the MSUB and City College campuses, speaking to veterans about The American Legion, the VA, and benefits and programs available to them.

One very fun MVAD event I organized was the District Revitalization held in January 2015. I partnered with the Vet Center and the MDVA to host a combined open house for them and district revitalization for The American Legion. With help from Gary White, Merv Gunderson, Lori Perkio, and several Post members from Post 117 and Post 119 we were able to meet our three day goal on the first day. In addition, we were able to get veterans to visit the Vet Center and meet with service officers and mental health counselors and the event appeared twice in the Billings Gazette helping to raise awareness of the services offered there to veterans and their families.

VA Secretary McDonald visited Billings in April and I took part in a town hall meeting about concerns with VA Montana and the VA in general. I was able to make a comment at the forum and spoke with the Secretary's staff afterward about policies and procedures related to prescription drugs and home delivery to veterans. There is a lot of waste in that program and there is a way to fix it if the VA is willing to listen.

There are many other things I could list from throwing out the first pitch at a Mustangs baseball game to doing TFA visits with veterans and their families. Some things were fun and some were not but by far the hardest thing I had to do not just this year but in two years of being District Commander was organizing and performing an American Legion funeral service for my dear friend Kenneth George Talkte of Grand Canyon Post 42. He was a wealth of information for me while serving as District Commander and helped to guide me as a Legionnaire in general. We lost a great American and Legionnaire when Ken passed.

I know that my successor Richard Klose will do a fantastic job as District 11 Commander and I wish him all the best and any support that I can give him.

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE CHAIRS

AMERICANISM

Joyce Babcock

For the first issue of The Legionnaire after 2014 Department Convention I had an article which strongly encouraged all Montana Posts to have their Youth Program Chairmen get in contact with the local school officials before the beginning of the 2014/15 school year. By contacting the teachers in the various classrooms before they have completed their year's class course outline there is a much better chance they will find a place to include the programs of The American Legion.

I attended the National American Legion Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina and was in attendance at the National Americanism Committee meeting for the reading and action on the National Americanism Resolutions which took approximately two hours. I also gave my report on the meeting results to the official meeting of the delegates at National Convention.

On September 27th I attended the combined meeting of Districts 7, 9, and 11 for the combined Zone session in the a.m. with District 11's meeting after lunch. The end of October was time for Fall Conference in Helena and there I attended the meetings and heard the reports of those in attendance.

I sent emails to various posts across the state reminding them of deadlines for the Education essays and the Government survey for seniors. I made 200 copies of the Survey and gave them at my local schools, results were not a high enough score to forward to the Department Chairman but when I discussed results with students they agreed they had learned a lot from just taking the survey. The instructors agreed it was a great teaching tool. At the Spring District meetings I was able to attend I reminded those present of various deadlines for youth programs and stressed getting the Consolidated Post Report turned in a timely manner.

In the spring months I distributed over 48 dozen small flags to various Posts for programs with elementary students. As Americanism Chairman I received a donation of ten gross of the small "parade" style flags and will have a supply for other Posts who wish to use them.

BASEBALL

George Haegele

American Legion Baseball continues to be the largest and most recognizable of the American Legion Youth Programs.

In 2014 the Department of Montana had 54 teams and over 850 players participating. Most of these young men play and practice over 8 months of the year.

The Class A District Tournaments were hosted by the Richland County Patriots (Sidney), Fort MacLeod Royals, Gallatin Valley Outlaws (Three Forks), and Kalispell Lakers. Lewistown Redbirds hosted the Class A State Tournament. They were joined by the Laurel Dodgers from the Eastern District, Mission Valley Mariners (Polson) and Glacier Twins (Whitefish) from the West, Vauxhall Spurs and Medicine Hat Knights from the North, and Gallatin Valley Outlaws (Three Forks) and Belgrade Bandits from the South.

The Glacier Twins defeated the Laurel Dodgers 8-4 to win the Class A State Championship. This year was special, as the winner got to go to Alaska for the Northwest Class A Regional Tournament. From all reports, they had a great experience. At the Regional Tournament in Anchorage, Glacier defeated Fairbanks, Alaska 8-4 but then lost to Pocatello, Idaho 14-4. Glacier came back defeating North Medford, Oregon 13-11 but was eliminated by Cody, Wyoming 3-1. Congratulations to Glacier Twins for an outstanding year.

The Class AA State Tournament was held in Lethbridge, Alberta. The Missoula Mavs lost their first game to the Medicine Hat Moose Monarchs 17-12. They then defeated the Great Falls Stallions 14-8, the

Billings Scarlets 5-4, Lethbridge KB Heating-Elks 9-6, and then won the Class AA State Tournament by defeating the Billings Royals 16-0 and finally 3-2 in the Championship Game.

Missoula went on to the Northwest Regional Tournament in Eugene, Oregon. The Mavs defeated Boise, Idaho 5-3 in their first game. They lost to Medford, Oregon 12-7 and then were eliminated by Waipahu, Hawaii 16-12. Hawaii lost their first game of the tournament and then went on to win their next five games, defeating Medford, Oregon in the final 7-4 and 8-6 for the Regional Championship.

Hawaii went on to Shelby, North Carolina for the American Legion World Series where they defeated Columbus, Tennessee 14-1. The next game they defeated Chico, California 8-1. Hawaii lost to Omaha, Nebraska 12-8 and then lost to eventual World Series Champion Brooklawn, New Jersey in the semi-final game 8-7. This was the second time in the last three years that Hawaii has won the Northwest Regional Tournament and participated in the World Series.

I served on the World Series Staff again as the Assistant Field Manager. I cannot thank American Legion Baseball enough for the wonderful experiences I have enjoyed during my 18 years on the National Tournament Staff.

Each year we award a \$1,000.00 scholarship to a deserving Class AA and Class A player. This 2014 Class A winner is Jacob Anderson (Laurel Dodgers). The Class AA winner is Slade Haggen (Missoula Mavericks). Slade also won the Northwest Region Scholarship, which is another \$2,500. Congratulations to these outstanding young men.

The 2014 Class A Most Valuable Player is A. J. Wetsch (Glacier Twins) and the Class AA MVP is Shane Olson (Missoula Mavs).

The Coach of the Year (2014) for Class A is Bob Rupp (Glacier Twins) and for Class AA is Brent Hathaway (Missoula Mavs).

Billings Scarlets pitcher Gage Hinze was selected in the Major League Baseball June Draft and was signed to a seven figure bonus by the Pittsburg Pirates. We had several players receive scholarships to NCAA Division 1 Universities. We, again, had approximately 100 players who received offers of scholarship aid from work study to full scholarships at Community Colleges, Junior Colleges, NAIA and NCAA Colleges and Universities.

My thanks and gratitude for all their time and effort on behalf of American Legion Baseball goes out to Duwy Scott (Vice Chairman Class AA), Gary Parry (Vice Chairman Class A), and our four District Chairmen, Wayne Raymond, Pete Moe, Ron Edwards, and Jim Monteith. Without their support I could not be successful in managing your baseball program. Gary White and the rest of the Department Officers remain solid supporters of American Legion Baseball and without this support we could not achieve our current level of success.

BOY SCOUTS

Dick Ellwein

I attended the National Convention in Charlotte, NC. On September 28, 2014 I attended the Western Zone meeting held at Frenchtown High School. On October 24, 2014 I participated in a National American Legion Boy Scout Chairman Telephone conference. On November 1, 2014 I was an instructor at the BSA Montana Council College of Commissioner Science in Great Falls.

There was only one applicant for the Eagle Scout of the Year. Department winner was David Otto who was sponsored by Belgrade Post # 30. The Department Post Scouting Award had only two posts submit a report. The winner of the Scouting award is Helena Post # 2.

BOYS STATE
John Louk
(not submitted)

CHILDREN & YOUTH
Sharon Doig

I thank Department Commander Roger Hancock for giving me the opportunity as this year's Chair. It has been a big learning curve for me and to step up to a Department level position. It has been a busy year. I thank the Posts that have contacted me and for their patience as I learned the process; I especially than Department Adjutant Gary White for his guidance.

It was a privilege to attend the annual National Children & Youth Conference in September 2014 in Indianapolis. I attended my first Department Convention last June and attended the luncheon for Children & Youth. It was a great experience. I attended the Fall Department meeting in Helena.

During this fiscal year, I have sent seven TFA's or temporary financial assistance requests to National. I approved seven and National approved six as of May 1, 2015. The total amount of \$5,506.20 was distributed to families in Montana and we have served ten children.

Mid-year I sent a newsletter to joint members of Children & Youth. As I look at it now, it was more of a letter than a newsletter. It is important for posts to get the word out. I have contact the local school to let them know there is a program to help veteran families with children living at home as well as the local food pantry and advocate at our county court.

I have also worked with the service officer at the American Legion Post # 23 in Livingston with a veteran who doesn't qualify for a TFA and has been living in a motel and working towards moving into a permanent home. It remains open as of May 1, 2015.

The Department also helped one veteran in state as that veteran needed temporary help, but did not qualify for a TFA. This was done through the Department Adjutant calling board members by phone and email.

I have asked our Department Vice Commander Jim Gossett to be the Department Chair for Children & Youth for American Legion year 2015-2016 as I hope he is our next Department Commander. I look forward to attending the Department Convention in Havre the end of June 2015 and being the MC for the Children & Youth Luncheon.

CONSTITUTION & INTERNAL AFFAIRS
Duane Carlton

The Constitution and Internal Affairs Committee's major task for 2015 is to rewrite the Department of Montana's Constitution and Bylaws. I started this task with a very detailed review of both our document and the National American Legion Charter and Bylaws. Once this was done, I moved various articles within the document to more closely align with the National document. Once this was accomplished, Merv Gunderson, Dave Driver and I conducted another detailed review to ensure that this new document not only reflected the guidance contained in the National Constitution and Bylaws, but also what our Department needs as a governing document. We discussed many points and concessions were made by each of us during the review process. We used a "majority rule" method of dealing with concerns. By March, we all agreed that the document was ready to be forwarded to the Department Adjutant for distribution to each of the Districts. At the same time, our document was forwarded to Department Judge Advocate Jim Shockley for legal review. He passed his comments on to the committee, and we debated his points and took action where needed. At this writing, we are now on "Version 5" of the new document and have received various comments from the field for review. This process will continue through the Department Convention, where we will hopefully approve a new

Constitution and Bylaws for the Department of Montana. I would like to thank Merv and David for their outstanding support, assistance, and sage advice during this mission for our Department.

CONVENTION 2015

Jed Damson

The American Legion Havre Post #11 and District #2 welcomes all of The American Legion family to Havre for the 97th Department Convention June 24 to June 28, 2015.

The meetings will be held at HRDC and the meals will be at the Eagles except for the 40&8 meeting and barbeque which will be held at HRDC.

The Department will be at the Great Northern Inn and the lead training meeting will also be held at the Great Northern Inn. We have several other Motels where others are staying.

There are historical tours that can be enjoyed, Havre beneath the Streets, the Buffalo Jump and Fort Assiniboine, one of the last forts retired. For those who like golf we have Beaver Creek Golf Course.

Even if Havre is considered a small town compared to our larger towns in Montana, you will find the people friendly and ready to help.

The Havre Post and Auxiliary have been working hard to make this an enjoyable convention for our American Legion Family! We look forward to seeing you and thank you for coming and making the convention a success!

CONVENTION 2016

Randy Kemp

The American Legion Gallatin Post 14 will host the Department of Montana Convention in 2016 in Bozeman, Montana beginning on June 23 and finishing on June 27, 2016.

1. The Grand Tree Plus Best Western Motel has been notified that The Department of Montana Convention will return to Bozeman for 2016. Rooms are blocked out for the Convention attendees and rooms necessary for the official business of the Department have been identified. An after action review was conducted with the motel staff and specific problem were addressed. These minor problems will not occur in the 2016 Convention.
2. The Chamber of Commerce has been notified of the Convention and will advertise the Convention on the official web site when time gets closer. They will again provide information for all attendees which will be helpful for those who have never been to Bozeman.
3. Committees are set up for the following area.
 - a. Decorating
 - b. Food and Beverage
 - c. Registration
 - d. Advertising
4. Post 14 hosted Convention 2014 and learned many things needed to conduct Convention 2016 in an excellent manor. Many Convention 2014 attendees provided input to correct any minor glitches that may have occurred. This information was captured and will be put to good use in the 2016 Convention. Post 14 looks forward to serving the Department for Convention 2016.

5. More information will be provided as time dictates. Information was also provided to Convention 2015 for reference and Convention 2016 Chairman is available to answer any questions concerning Convention 2016.

CONVENTION 2017
George Blackard
(not submitted)

DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE COORDINATOR
Karen Semple

Montana Volunteer Organizations Assisting in Disaster (MTVOAD) established the requirement to inventory Montana American Legion post resources (locations and resources at post facilities, trained personnel, etc. that might be available for use by emergency management/incident management during a local disaster or emergency) before application for MTVOAD membership can be submitted. Despite an in-depth presentation on disaster preparedness to District and Zone commanders at Fall Conference, with handouts, only two posts responded. The Post Preparedness Survey will be included in the 2015 Post Packets distributed at Convention in Havre in an effort to get this necessary, vital information – without it, the Department of Montana cannot participate in MTVOAD. I also submitted preparedness articles to the Legionnaire.

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS
Lori Perkio

Upon the resignation of Sam Pappas, Commander, Roger Hancock asked me to fill in as Distinguished Guest Chairman through Department Convention. Our Distinguished Guests for Department Convention in Havre will be Past National Commander, Fang Wong and five Canadian Legionnaires.

EDUCATION & TRAINING
Jeff Holmes

Congratulations to all of the following winners within their respective divisions. I would also like to thank all of the posts for sponsoring these contests as part of their post objectives. There were all great entries and the evaluations and rankings were tough for the judges. It is a great way to promote the constitution and government to our youth.

High School Essay

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 st | Hailey Kellum | Roundup Post # 18 |
| 2 nd | Cullen Noonkester | Fort Benton Post # 26 |
| 3 rd | Tanner Lee | Belfry Post # 84 |

Junior High School Essay

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1 st | Kami Koster | Missoula Post # 68 |
| 2 nd | Gianna Migliaccio | Florence Post #134 |
| 3 rd | Emma Blyton | Stevensville Post # 94 |

Government Survey for Seniors

| | | |
|-----|----------------|------------------------|
| 1st | Paige Phillips | Twin Bridges Post # 31 |
|-----|----------------|------------------------|

2nd
3rd

Lucas Reed
Mykaela Edwards

Turner Post # 109
Helena Post #2

I have also received some feedback that the government survey test had too many questions. I understand the need to be able to complete the test in a one class period timeframe in the local schools. I will always welcome further ideas for improvement. Part of my job is to help make the contest easier for you to administer.

ENDOWMENT FUND Sam Birky

The Montana American Legion Endowment fund was created by resolution at the Montana American Legion annual convention in 2009 for the purpose of establishing a permanent financial legacy forever to provide scholarships to the youth of Montana who participate in the many Americanism and patriotism programs of the American Legion. Administrative funds will not come from the endowment fund.

The youth program scholarships supported by the endowment fund include:

- 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th place winners American Legion of Montana Oratorical Contest.
- The Montana American Legion Boys State and Boys Nation program.
- 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place middle school winners of the Montana American Legion essay contest.
- **1st, 2nd, & 3rd place winners of the Sophomore Constitutional Essay Contest**
- 1st, 2nd & 3rd place winners of the Government Survey contest.
- Montana American Legion Baseball and player of the year scholarship.
- Provide flags for Montana schools.
- Montana American Legion shooting sports 1st, 2nd, & 3rd state competition winners.

It will assist veterans and their families

- Present Blue Star Banners to parents or spouses of those serving in the Armed Forces.
- Assist severely **injured** service members to experience a transition from military to civilian **life**.
- The family support network to support families of deployed and activated military personnel providing assistance that can range from minor household chores and repairs to assuring the family keeps their homes.
- Support children and youth before, during and after deployment.

The Department Finance Committee currently has an endowment account. The Montana Department is a recognized non-profit corporation. It is recommended that the Finance committee take the lead on developing the endowment fund for the Department.

FLAG ALLIANCE Linda Cousineau

Senate Joint Resolution 17 (S.J. Res.17) sponsored by the Senator Orrin Hatch of UT was introduced 13 June 2013, read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. It is 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.113th Congress (2013-2014)

S.J.Res.17 has been pending in committee ever since introduction and has had no action.

House Joint Resolution 47 (H.R. Res 47) sponsored by Rep Spencer Bachus of AL was introduced 22 May 2013, to the House who referred it to the Committee on the Judiciary who then referred it to the subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice. It has remained in this committee since 14 June 2013 with no action.

As of today's date there have been no further actions on these bills.

On the other hand MT Legislature passed HB0211 requiring POW/MIA flag to be flown at certain times and places. See the following attachment for the full details of the act.

REMINDER, as a community effort, consider giving a new flag and 'Thank You for Being a Patriot' certificate to low income senior citizens, veterans and other individuals in the community who have faithfully displayed the American flag but may need financial assistance to continue to do so. The certificate should also include directions on where to take their old flag for proper disposal.

I am honored to have been chosen to be your Flag Alliance Chairman and will continue to keep you updated on status as it develops.

FINANCE CHAIRMAN Jeff Nelson

The budget for the coming year was worked on by the committee and Adjutant earlier this year. As the department is showing good growth in our assets, there was a decision to increase some of the financial needs for some of the committees and their programs.

We are still trying to get the renewal numbers increased over last year, but at this time it is looking like we will be short in attaining our goals and reaching the numbers desired.

The ways and means committee has been selling ads in the cash calendar and is getting almost all the spaces filled. It appears the calendar will become a good fundraiser in the future. This years' gun and jewelry raffle is doing well, there are still some tickets available as of this report.

Our investments with D.A. Davidson continue to show moderate growth. The investments continue to outgrow anything that a bank has to offer. Also our money market certificate with First Security has shown very good growth.

We have received a onetime initial dividend from USAA insurance that was a great shot in the arm. The USAA program gives the department a dividend every time a member signs up and uses one of the insurance products they have to offer.

I have attended our district meetings this past year and have been the treasurer for our district as well. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible at the department convention.

The one thing that I would like to comment on as this year comes to an end is the integrity, commitment, and honesty within our department officers. There is always a sense of "what is best for the American Legion". There may be some disagreements along the way, but in the end, the conversation always ends up with the veterans and the programs we provide for them. I would like to thank all my committee members this past year and look forward to next year.

There will be an addendum to this report during the convention as to some important changes coming down from national and other additional topics that may arise during the convention.

HEROES TO HOMETOWN COORDINATOR

Sam Birky

Operation Comfort Warriors and *Heroes to Hometowns*, The American Legion's two disabled troop support programs, have merged under the **Operation Comfort Warriors (OCW) banner**.

See more at: <http://www.legion.org/operationcomfortwarriors> - troop support programs. The consolidated OCW program will still work to give aid to wounded warriors:

- Electronics
- Sweat suits
- Gift cards
- Exercise equipment

"Heroes to Hometowns" is a transition program for severely injured service members returning home from OEF/OIF. "Heroes to Hometowns" establishes a support network and coordinates resources for those service-members. Last year The American Legion's Heroes to Hometowns Program assisted over 1,100 veterans.

If you are a service-member, veteran, or family member of a service-member or veteran who has been severely injured, please fill out the Heroes to Hometowns assistance request form.

Heroes to Hometowns can provide:

- A Welcome-home celebration
- Temporary Financial Assistance
- Pro-bono financial planning
- Housing assistance
- Home and vehicle adaptation
- Government claims assistance
- Family support

(If you are not severely injured and are in need of general transition assistance or support, you may also fill out the request form or contact your American Legion department service officer (DSO) or your local American Legion post).

Contact Heroes to Hometowns:

Americanism Division

heroestohometowns@legion.org

Office: (317) 630-1255.

HIGHWAY FATALITY MARKER

Hank Adams

I am truly honored to have served as the American Legion Highway Fatality Marker Chairman. It was a tremendous learning experience and I thank our Department Commander, Roger Hancock for the opportunity to serve our state and communities. I would also like to thank my predecessor, Lee Hesper for his council and mentorship. Additionally, I want to thank the districts and posts for their superb efforts in making and maintaining markers in their areas of responsibility.

The Montana Department averages 3 (three) Fatality Marker requests via phone calls or e-mails a month. After working with our Department Adjutant, Gary White, I developed an effective protocol. I worked with the District Commanders and let them assign the mission to the responsible Post within their District. Before I would call the District, I would get the following information:

Name and relationship of requestor
Fatality name
Date of accident
Location of accident (Highway#, Mile Marker#, direction of travel, nearest city)
Single or multiple fatalities
Point of Contact (POC) phone and e-mail
Accident report (if possible)
Do requestors want to be present for the installation?

Discussing the program around the state I have been fortunate to hear a couple of great ideas. One post is powder coating the markers. They have an arrangement with a local company which powder coats the markers (at cost). The markers never require repainting. Another post has an arrangement with a local High School. They produce the markers as a metal shop class project. It might be worthwhile to check around locally to see if an alliance could be made to assist in the manufacturing of markers.

Another issue which Legion members have to deal with is emotional. Family members are emotionally connected to the markers. They consider them as "memorials" to their loved ones. In one multiple fatality accident, family members were setting up huge holiday displays (blow up Santa's/snowmen etc...) at the accident site. Family members stated that the (single) marker was for the other fatality not their (multiple) family members and they wanted a multiple marker to "memorialize" their family members. The Montana DOT requested that the American Legion install a multi-cross marker at the site. This was in violation of the Memorandum of Agreement between the Montana Department and the Montana DOT. This agreement stated that only one fatality marker would be placed at an accident site. The Director of the Montana DOT requested a waiver from the Montana Department in order to prevent potential accidents from the unauthorized family memorials. The Department/District and Post erected the markers executing the mission flawlessly.

In conclusion, this has been a great experience. Family members truly appreciate the efforts of our American Legion Posts supporting this high visibility mission. Keep up the great work!

HOMELESS VETERAN COORDINATOR

Ray Read

The Montana Department's participation in the American Legion's Homeless Veterans Program is now 7 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 annual report of record to date.

Facts: Of the 99,646 recorded by the VA as being in Montana as of 9/30/2014, 75,312 are indicated as wartime veterans. Breakdown by era is: Gulf War- 31,210; Vietnam- 35,105; Korea-7,831; WW II-3,987. Peacetime veterans number 24,334. The ratio of gender is Female veterans 8,445 and Male veterans 91,204. Comment: It is estimated that based on averaging 2.5 members per veterans household that the total veterans population including family members is over 245,000 or nearly 1/4 of the total current population of Montana. Source VA.Gov

National Statistics indicate that up to 16.0% of Montana's veteran's population are considered to be at risk of homeless or are 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 available 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. 2015 will be available in June or July 2015. Update will occur at the 2015 American Legion Fall Conference.

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 commanders.
3. That the Department of Montana of the American Legion supports 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 10,000 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 that should be recorded for the Consolidated Post Report need. --- RKR

Montana Point-in-Time Homeless Survey Data
Prepared by MT CoC Coalition (new Data pending)

| All Homeless | | | | | |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | <u>2010</u> | <u>2011</u> | <u>2012</u> | <u>2013</u> | <u>2014</u> |
| Individuals | 851 | 1023 | 1145 | 1271 | 1217 |
| Families | 239 | 222 | 222 | 207 | 186 |
| # in Families | <u>726</u> | <u>674</u> | <u>697</u> | <u>665</u> | <u>592</u> |
| | 1577 | 1697 | 1842 | 1936 | 1809 |

| - | <u>2014</u> | <u>2013</u> | <u>2012</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Dist 1,2,3 - Eastern MT | 1 | 9 | 3 |
| Dist 4 – Havre | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Dist - Grt Falls | 32 | 25 | 17 |
| Dist 6 - Lewistown | 2 | 3 | 0 |
| Dist 7 – Billings | 32 | 45 | 48 |
| Dist 8 – Helena | 69 | 52 | 65 |
| Dist 9 - Bozeman | 10 | 9 | 8 |
| Dist 10 - Kalispell | 32 | 65 | 71 |
| Dist 11 - Missoula | 50 | 58 | 84 |
| Dist 12 – Butte | <u>27</u> | 46 | 30 |
| | 255 | 312 | 326 |

| Distribution by District | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | <u>2014</u> | <u>2013</u> | <u>2012</u> |
| Glendive | 0% | 3% | 1% |
| Havre | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Great Falls | 13% | 8% | 5% |
| Lewistown | 1% | 1% | 0% |
| Billings | 13% | 14% | 15% |
| Helena | 27% | 17% | 20% |
| Bozeman | 4% | 3% | 2% |
| Kalispell | 13% | 21% | 22% |
| Missoula | 20% | 19% | 26% |
| Butte | 11% | 15% | 9% |

| Veteran & Non Veteran Respondents | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | <u>2010</u> | <u>2011</u> | <u>2012</u> | <u>2013</u> | <u>2014</u> |
| Nonveterans' | 833 | 994 | 1039 | 1166 | 1047 |
| Veteran | | | | | |
| Hmlss | <u>257</u> | <u>251</u> | <u>328</u> | <u>312</u> | <u>356</u> |
| | 1090 | 1245 | 1367 | 1478 | 1403 |

| Veteran-Non Vet Respondents | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | <u>2010</u> | <u>2011</u> | <u>2012</u> | <u>2013</u> | <u>2014</u> |
| NonVeteran | 69% | 75% | 68% | 73% | 66% |
| Veteran | 31% | 25% | 32% | 27% | 34% |

Notes:

1. The district are established by the Coalition and do not mirror the District System of the Montana Department.
2. Point in time survey does not adequately reach to every community but rather population centers indicated. The American Legion posts can correct this by doing community/area survey. Ask for information from the American Legion Homeless Veterans Coordinator.

**INSURANCE DIRECTOR
Gary White**

As of March 13, 2015 - \$233,282.00 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; a decrease of \$8995.00 since 2014. Last year we had an increase. Allocations paid to the Department were \$15,142.00 a decrease of \$645.00; this is after last year's decrease of \$10,596.00. We received a promotional bonus of \$1,347, a decrease of \$67.00, this after last year's increase of \$6.00. Our decrease in revenue from last year is due to 3 factors – dropping membership, the deaths of our most active insurance participants, World War II and Korea veterans and the confusion over National insurance programs and the LIT programs.

This year our projection of income for 2015 was \$17,100.00, we missed that projection by \$611.00. 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. The LIT offers 28 different insurance products, but our most popular products are the cancer and EA+ insurance. 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 10,657 members on April 6, 2015 only 3,960 were enrolled in the free Accidental Death & Dismemberment program, 37.00% of our

membership. This is an increase of 263 members, or a 2.72% increase from last year, we are still a long way from 100%, but are moving in the right direction. 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. **It is very likely that senior Auxiliary and senior Sons of the American Legion members will be allowed to sign up for the free AD & D in September of 2015.**

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, EA+ and Cancer policies. This year the Auxiliary participated in marketing the EA+ and Cancer programs to their members, as a result they received an allocation of \$650.00, an increase of \$46.00.

Since 1967, when our Department joined with the Legionnaire Insurance Trust the Department has received \$611,437.00.

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

This year the Department has received an additional source of revenue from USAA products being sold to our members. Our budget was set for \$800.00, but we received a total of \$5600.00. The amount received well offset our budget shortfall of \$611.00 from the LIT programs.

LEGION RIDER COORDINATOR Roger Knoell

The summer of 2014 was a good one for the American Legion Riders of Montana. We have approximately 50 riders in the state at 12 posts. In some cases we have posts combined together in order to let riders join. In one case a whole district (District #4) has combined.

The American Legion Riders have participated in several parades (Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day and many local parades) throughout the state. Also they have been on many honor guards for funerals and memorials. Altogether the American Legion Riders of Montana have volunteered in excess of 3000 man hours in American Legion projects and community service.

The highlight of our year was the Western Area ROMP (Ride on Military Pride) sponsored and hosted by Livingston during the week of 7 June 2014. We had 100 bikes from all 13 western states. Montana was represented by 15 riders. We had guided rides on Friday and Saturday a banquet on Saturday night and finished the week and ROMP off with training on Sunday.

The constitution and bylaws are a work in progress.

**LEGISLATIVE
Tim Gavin
(not submitted)**

MEMBERSHIP

Elmer Palmer

The membership program continued at a slightly slower pace after the Fall Conference.

Shortly after the Conference, National Commander Helm started sending a monthly report of all the un-renewed members sorted by district and post. These lists were processed and mailed/emailed to the District Commanders for distribution within the districts. Additionally, the members of the headquarters post were sorted by district and city, and sent to the District Commanders as possible candidates for transfer into the local posts. This process was continued until the un-renewed lists were discontinued.

In January an Assistant Director from National Internal Affairs, Membership, Michele Steinmetz, conducted a District Revitalization in District 11 with good results. Revitalization was planned in District 8 utilizing Jim Fiedler, but medical conditions made it impossible for Mr. Fiedler to travel to Montana. In February three members from District 5 traveled to Kalispell to aid in a District Revitalization in that area. Both efforts produced good results. Further, they provided instruction and training for the members of those District Membership Committees.

The Department of Montana achieved target on all intermediate targets up to 85% the 90% target was missed by two members and the remaining two targets were missed by several percentage points. This chairman can see two main causes for the failure to achieve all the targets. He personally has to take part of the blame due to illness in the latter portion of 2014. This illness kept him from corresponding with the District Membership Chairmen and District Commanders in the later months of the year. This caused our membership numbers to reach the early targets, but not the extra that is needed to help overcome the slowdown of membership that occurs in the latter part of the membership year.

Another problem is the lack of an active membership team in a number of districts. Each district has an appointed member of the Membership Committee; whether it is the District Commander or an appointee to attend the Department Membership Committee meetings. These members are used to communicate with the posts, to ensure that they have the tools and information to do the job of recruiting. At the last convention and last conference only half of the districts were represented. These members also need to communicate back to the chairman so he/she knows what is happening in the posts of the department.

With a dues raise being considered at the next National Convention, early membership efforts will be required as the dues change will take place on 1 January, 2016. That will make dues a little harder to collect after that date. Keep this in mind when we start the new dues year.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Randall Brown

At the Department Fall Conference that was held in Helena during the month of October 2014, I made my written and oral report. In January of this year, the Montana "Firefighter of the Year" selected was Troy Maness of East Helena and the Montana "Law Enforcement Officer of the Year" selected was Robert Gilmore from Billings.

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). The NATO

combat role has ended and making a transition to training, advice and assist role has been implemented. Recent negotiations with the Afghanistan President have cleared the way to keep US troops in that country for an extended period.

Since American Forces have been pulled out of Iraq in 2011, the security of this nation has rapidly deteriorated. al-Qaida inspired Sunni militants (known as Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and referred to as ISIS) have seized much of Mosul which includes government buildings, pushing out security forces and capturing military equipment and have taken over a large part of Iraq including Iraq's largest hydroelectric dam which has been retaken by Iraq's military forces. They have advanced on Baghdad and threaten to overthrow the current administration. The Iraqi government has requested assistance from the American government. These same militants are also operating in Syria. The situation is extremely serious and threatens to undermine all of the successes of the NATO and US Forces that were achieved during the Iraq War. President Obama has sent military advisors to Iraq to assist the Iraqi government with this serious situation. Recently, the United States has conducted air strikes against these militants and has airlifted food and water to thousands of people who have fled the violence. In addition, President Obama has made contacts with other nations and is seeking their assistance to help neutralize this ISIS threat. These other nations understand the threat and are also providing support to assist Iraq with this crisis.

President Obama has authorized air strikes into Syria to help combat the ISIS threat and provide military aid to some of the militant organizations that are also fighting ISIS. 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, innocent civilians including school students, 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. The U.S. has been involved with counterterrorism aid to this Arab nation, however, recent events involving Yemen's Shiite rebels (known as Houthis,) overthrowing of the nation's president and his staff have changed the situation. In March, US troops evacuated a southern air base crucial to America's drone strike program. Militants have taken control of the government supposedly in pro-reform movements. The U.S. Embassy has sent many staff members home and is only occupied by a skeleton crew. It is unclear as to how these events will affect our efforts to combat al-Qaida in that country. Saudi Arabia and its allies have been conducting air strikes against the Shiite rebels and Egyptian officials said a ground assault will follow. This situation also has serious

consequences involving other events taking place in this part of the world.

In Syria, demonstrators against the current government have been attacked and many killed by government forces. Many of these demonstrators are also al-Qaida inspired Sunni militants ISIS (known as Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) and are involved in fighting in both Syria and Iraq. Unfortunately, many innocent civilians have also been killed or forced to leave their homes. Earlier, many countries expressed their desire to have the current leader to step down which did not happen. Because of the involvement of the Sunni militants, support for the demonstrators has declined. The United States has closed its embassy in Syria and recalled its ambassador. Syria has launched missiles into neighboring Turkey and evidence points to the fact that chemical weapons may have been 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. There has not been much support for military involvement in Syria by the American public and our allies. However, because of the recent beheadings of American, Japanese and English civilians in Syria, and the death of an American woman, there is now support for the air strikes against the militant organization of ISIS. Because of the burning alive of a Jordan pilot who is Muslim, there is more support of Muslim countries to provide military aid in the fight against ISIS.

Because of Iran's nuclear program, which western nations believe is enriching uranium for weapons purposes, the U.S. recently imposed sanctions which include 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 and support for anti-Israel militants. Iran has made frequent references by its president to destroy Israel. The US is concerned that Israel might be preparing to attack Iran over its nuclear program. The current administrations, and several other countries, have reached an agreement with Iran concerning its nuclear program. The terms of this agreement must be agreed upon by members of congress if it is to pass. At this writing, the details of this agreement are still being debated upon by congress members. This issue has resulted in US relations with Israel deteriorating considerably in the past several weeks. China has military strength and capabilities that cannot be ignored. Recently, China has constructed and deployed its first Navy Aircraft Carrier and has added many new naval ships and submarines to its fleet. Current relations with China are good and it is hoped that this will not change.

The situation between the Palestine's 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 truce and has sent rockets into Israel territory killing Israel citizens and soldiers. In response, Israel has launched an all out assault on the Hamas Palestine territory. The results include killing many Palestine citizens, destroying tunnels which go into Israel territory, destroying weapons the Hamas Group are using to fight Israel and destroying many homes and buildings. Egypt has made several efforts in trying

to help negotiate a peace settlement between Israel and Palestine but those efforts have not been successful in the past. Hopefully, the latest cease-fire agreement negotiated by Egypt will hold. In Nigeria, another extremist organization has emerged, called Boko Haram. They have kidnapped children, killed innocent civilians and caused many problems in Nigeria other parts of Africa. Recently, this extremist group has teamed up with ISIS to spread their brand of Islamic rule.

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. Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was shot down by a Russian-made missile killing 298 people aboard the plane. Russia denies providing the missile to the pro-Moscow separatists and said that the Ukrainian military may have shot down the plane. The Ukrainian military continues attempts to retake the eastern Ukraine from the pro-Russian insurgents. 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. Unfortunately, President Obama believes these illegal immigrants deserve a blank amnesty and should be welcomed as American citizens. There are already laws in affect that describe the requirements which must be met for U.S. citizenship. These laws should be enforced.

US policy is to not negotiate with terrorists. The current administration's decision to exchange five Taliban prisoners for Bowe Bergdahl, without congress approval, has been an undesirable issue. Bowe Bergdahl deserted his post, and his fellow soldiers, while serving in Afghanistan and either joined or ended up as a prisoner of the Taliban. This soldier is currently charged as a deserter and at this writing is facing court martial charges. National Security interests were ignored and the administration has come under much criticism because of this breach of policy.

Our country has been in a recession. Currently, the economy has improved, and the strength of the US dollar is rising. Oil prices have been lowered and unemployment rates have decreased. Unfortunately, the country is faced with huge debts that must be eliminated and 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. These issues are 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. The American Legion organization is focusing on resolutions to balance the federal budget with the least amount of impact on our military forces. This country must be extremely pro-active in our search for dangerous Islamic extremists that kill innocent civilians and challenge our way of life. Recently, Islamic terrorists have struck France and other nations with deadly attacks resulting in the deaths of many innocent civilians. These same terrorists continue to threaten our nation. Cyber attacks on our nation's communications systems are causing serious problems. Recent election results have sent a strong message to the leaders of this country, that our citizens believe positive changes are overdue and desperately needed.

Besides the threat of terrorism, there are many other 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, balance the federal budget, encourage US manufacturing in our country, to continue reducing current oil prices, reduce our dependence on foreign oil (with the exception of Canada). The proposed pipeline from Canada to Houston Oil Refineries would appear to be in the best interests of this country and this project should be approved. Recently congress recommended approval for this project but President Obama put his Veto on the bill. Canada has proven to be one of our finest allies. And, we need to secure our borders with Mexico and Canada.

ORATORICAL **Jeff Holmes**

First off, I would like to congratulate and thank Gavin Sison of Butte 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 Butte Post #115 for sponsoring the oratorical contest as part of their post objectives. I truly believe our new contest format worked to perfection, and all four finalists were quality candidates. It is a true testament to Gavin's ability.

Speaking of new contest formats, I have submitted a resolution to change the format of the National Oratorical Contest. It is a resolution discussed and endorsed by all departments and approved for action at last fall's 2014 American Legion Oratorical Chairman's Conference. The goal of this resolution is to allow the first and second place kids to advance to the semi-finals round. It is a very forward thinking resolution, and I encourage the membership to vote in favor of it. It will create more opportunities for our department winners.

I realize that this year's date presented some problems for some students and districts and I apologize for that. The date was chosen because it is prior to all high school basketball tournaments which caused a great number of conflicts in the small schools, and was after the Super Bowl. I think this was a better

date than last year's later date. I also realize that it was a pain for some. I look forward to discussing with you further if you would like.

Lastly, I would like thank Mike Mehegan for making the contacts and getting the word out, to David Driver for lining up the afternoon judges, and all other Legionnaires who volunteered to act as judges and timers. I would also like to thank Lowell Long for his expertise and hard work during the contest. This past year's successful department contest was truly a team effort. Finally, I would like to thank Jamie Stevens and the Great Falls Central Catholic High School for their wonderful hospitality and letting us use their quality facilities. Thanks again to everyone. I really appreciate it.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS & PUBLICATIONS

Keith Sibbert

This was the first year of producing the Montana Legionnaire quarterly and seems to have worked out well though I haven't received any feedback from the membership. The only concern is with the number of pages that will be needed after a busy spring and summer. It is yet to be determined how this will continue to work out for the Department.

This year's newsletter competition was similar to last year. The newsletters were distributed as follows:

Small Posts – 2, Medium Posts – 6, Large Posts – 3

The District representation was: District 1 – 0, District 2 – 0, District 3 – 0, District 4 – 2, District 5 – 3, District 6 – 2, District 7 – 1, District 8 – 2, District 9 – 0, District 10 – 0, District 11 – 1

Thank you for the opportunity to serve in this capacity and wish the Department all the best in the years to come.

WEBMASTER

Kevin Kent

Last year I wanted to implement a feature on the website that would show markers on Google maps as to where all of the Posts are located. Unfortunately there was not enough information on many Posts to get this completed. New features to look for this year will be a new "comments" section, the one currently in place has confused some people and this one will be more user friendly and will be launched within the week. Also please send me pictures and articles for your District News sections, only a few Posts are currently doing that. In addition, for the next set of District Meetings there will be an interactive map on the site showing directions to that weekends meetings and have all the info for location, time etc. I have also had a few emails regarding having a Legion Riders tab on the website, if there is anyone that wants to get me information to put on that tab I will certainly add it. As always you can go to Contact Us on the website and email me any suggestions or ideas you may have, they are greatly appreciated.

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. The last report from National put us at 22nd place with 91.566%. If our Detachment records are correct, we should be at 97.262% with 888 members and that would put us in the top ten for the Nation. As of this date I am sending in six more membership which should put us up some more. Just look where we could be if we worked a little harder on renewals. 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.

I am attending the Spring SAL NEC Conference in Indianapolis. I have placed the names of two SAL Detachment people in for National Committee appointments. I am hoping they will receive them. SAL Detachment Adjutant Dick Ellwein will be interviewed this coming October at the Fall Meeting in Indianapolis for National Chaplain of the Sons of the American Legion for the 2016-2017 year. Wish him luck.

I may have more to report at the Convention after I get back from the Spring Conference in Indianapolis.

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 SAL 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 expense paid trips to compete in the National Championship. The next American Legion National Championship is a shoulder-to-shoulder match, programmed held in August 2015 at the USA Shooting range facilities, at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado. If you are getting started we would strongly recommend that you focus your program 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 Web Pages @ www.odcmp.com/Services/Programs/3P.htm. Look at the National Standard 3-Position Rules @ <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. The CMP has an excellent extended payment program to purchase either the 853 or the M888 rifles. More information can be found @ [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 your Post continues 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. One of the active programs or I can provide you with more information if you would like. We hope that the above will prove to be helpful. If we can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for your interest in 3-position air rifle and The American Legion's Junior Shooting Sports Program.

Please update your Shooting Sports Contact Information and watch for the 2015-16 Junior Shooting Sports Program Match Program. I have a list of the current programs registered and the points of contact. Please confirm that the coordinators are current and that they have

5/13/2015 Message received from American Legion Shooting Sports

Good afternoon Department Adjutants and Junior Shooting Sports Program Department Chairmen!

I'm very happy to announce that the field for the 25th Annual American Legion Junior Three Position Air Rifle National Championships has been set!

The Championship will be held July 21 - 25, 2015 at the USA Shooting range facility located at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The winners in both the Precision and Sporter category will each receive a \$5,000.00 college scholarship provided in part by The American Legion and The Sons of the American Legion. The two winners will also receive an expense paid trip to Baltimore, Maryland, in Baltimore they will be honored as part of the Youth Champions Delegation during the American Legion National Convention.

I'm also happy to report that for the first time in the championship's 25-year history, an annual \$1,000.00 college scholarship will be awarded to the second place finishers in both the Sporter and Precision categories. This scholarship is being generously provided by The American Legion Auxiliary.

In the preliminary postal round for the 2015 competition, 1,503 athletes entered the individual competition and 375 teams entered the team competition, additionally, the 2016 national championship will be held July 19 - July 23 and the 2017 national championship be held July 18 - 22 at the USA Shooting range facility located at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

And lastly, the inaugural Junior Shooting Sports Chairmen's Conference will be held September 19 - 20, 2015 at the Sheraton City Centre Hotel. Additional information will be posted on the program website. This is the same weekend as the annual Children & Youth Conference.

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

Kelly Ackerman

I participated in a VA&R Commission Meeting via conference call on May 5, 2015. We voted on 12 resolutions, which will be discussed in more detail during the National convention. There are approximately 550 active resolutions before the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission for consideration.

As directed by VA&R Headquarters, I will continue to participate in local Town Hall meetings. I am also tracking our local Appeals at the Board of Veterans Appeals in DC.

Since the passage of the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014, the bill has been revised a couple of times. This Act was meant to ensure veterans who struggle to receive care have improved access to care. Revision of the “as the crow flies” standard of measuring distance has been revised. If a VA facility is NOT within 40 miles of the residence, which now is calculated in driving distance, they would be possibly eligible for the Choice card as its being referred to. There are other factors such as driving “obstacles”, and the level of care offered at the nearest VA medical facility. Questions on this bill can be addressed at the Convention.

VETERAN ECONOMICS

Laura Brookie

(not submitted)

VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – BILLINGS

Vacant

VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – Fort Harrison

Bill White

1. Attended fourth and first quarter V.A.V.S. meetings at VA Fort Harrison, MT
2. Provided refreshments for veterans at Fort Harrison using American Legion V.A.V.S. funds and working with the local Nabisco outlet for additional refreshments
3. Continued working with Gary White to ensure avenue of flags becomes a reality and as of this date 14 poles and sleeves have been received at VA Fort Harrison.
4. Worked with Gary White to ensure that ALL American Legion Volunteers are registered so that the American Legion gets proper credit with a big addition of Laurel Montana Legion members.
5. Appointed to the Veterans Advisory Council as Co-Chair and Veterans Representative and continue to attend called meetings.
6. Re-appointed to The Veterans Transportation Committee that oversees the Veterans Transportation System (VTS) used at VA Fort Harrison as one of the veteran’s representatives. This system now covers all of Montana and works with patients in parts of Northern Wyoming and Western North Dakota and parts of Eastern Idaho.
7. Worked with Legion oratorical contest in Townsend, Montana
- 8.

VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – Miles City

Vacant

WAYS & MEANS

Bill Applegate

I would like to thank all the committee helpers that assisted me this year to get our projects completed. We are still doing the Big K and the Label Program.

I would like to say, at the time of this writing, not all of the fundraising projects are completed, and we are still doing the Raffle tickets. We decided to raffle four prizes, which are as follows: a Remington 7MM mag rifle, S & W .380 Pistol with laser (both have ammo with it), a genuine ruby earring & necklace set donated by Riddles Jewelry and \$300 in cash. This year, I went to the following gun shows (within the state) to sell tickets. I started off in Missoula on August 1st - 3rd, 2014; then Hamilton on Sept 19th - 21st, back to Missoula on Oct 3rd - 5th, Butte on Oct 24th - 26th, on to Helena on Oct 31st - Nov 2nd,

then Hamilton on Dec 5th - 7th. This took care of the first half of the year. In January 2015, Butte was on Jan 2nd - 4th, Kalispell on 9th - 11th; Hamilton on Feb 20th - 22nd; Helena on March 13th -15th; Missoula on April 10th - 12th, Butte on May 1st - 3rd; still have Helena on May 29th - 31st. Other places that I scheduled to sell raffle tickets was at the November Veteran's Day Breakfast at Post 27, two events at Rosauer's in Missoula on March 8th & May 10th; both were very successful so now I am considering trying to schedule one at Wal-Mart Supercenter in the near future.

I also worked on getting cash calendar ads so we can get these going. At the time of this writing, we need four sponsorship ads. I am going to contact all those helpers for updates and/or find out if there are places that we have not considered yet to ask. This is really close to being ready to put together! I have names of people that have expressed buying calendars when they are printed and ready to sell.

WOMEN'S VETERANS COORDINATOR

Kim Kay C. McCarty-Martin

I attended the Department of Montana American Legion Fall conference 2014. Before and after the conference I talked with Ruth Cheney on what she did as women veterans outreach coordinator. Afterwards, I talked with Jonna Brenton, (women veterans program manager) and Christina Lundstrom, (patient advocate) at VA Fort Harrison to introduce myself and get a better understanding of programs the VA offers women veterans. On the 6th of January, I talked again with Christina Lundstrom in regards to the Women's Health Care Clinic. She informed me then that there would not be a clinic at Fort Harrison but did not know the reasoning.

There are four Veteran Centers in Montana that are affiliated with the Department of Veterans Affairs that provide readjustment counseling to the veteran and their family. In February, I learned from Mary Quinn, a counselor at the Great Falls center, that they offer Women Veterans Support Group on Tuesdays where topics are discussed and socializing with peers. Organization was in the process for a Military Sexual Trauma Walk at Fort Harrison on the 28th of April 2015 an event I did attend. I pursued the lack of Women's Health Care Clinic in Montana. I talked to a Dr. at the VA in early March. I was told that about three years ago VA facilities were allocated money for women's clinics. The money for Montana's clinic was dispersed elsewhere instead of for the women's clinic. Jonna Brenton did not know anything about this when I talked to her and at this point I am not sure if it's worth pursuing.

I called Glenda Trochmann, women veteran's program manager at the VA in Fargo North Dakota. I asked her about the Women's Recognition Dinner that is held yearly in ND. She was able to give me information on how to set up that program here in Montana. Jonna Brenton would be a guest speaker but would be unable to help host. I am viewing options for The American Legion to host or co-host this program as it is a great way to recognize female veterans for their service and honor WWII women veterans, as well as a way to hopefully further recruitment.

I attended 9 of the 11 Spring District meetings, meeting new Legionnaires. I have started a voluntary database with contact information on women Legionnaires in Montana. With help, I have heard from thirteen posts and have 120 female Legionnaires. During my visit to the District meetings I was greeted in a variety of ways by Legionnaires, from being ignored by some to a warm welcome by many. When talking about why some women veterans do not want to join the American Legion, I understood their reasoning. I did meet some male Legionnaires who were reluctant to talk to a female veteran, even to invite them to their post meeting. I am hoping the reasons why women don't join become minimal as

together we expand our recruitment numbers to meet goal. Thankfully, I have had help in obtaining information that I have been able to pass on to fellow female veterans. As I meet more women whom have served I am hopefully able to answer their questions or direct them elsewhere. Besides writing articles in the Legionnaire, attending District meetings, I will be working on expanding communication with Legionnaires both electronically and in person.