



**THE AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT
OF MONTANA**

DEPARTMENT CONVENTION REPORTS

2018

DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

&

COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Preamble to the Constitution

**FOR GOD AND COUNTRY, WE ASSOCIATE OURSELVES TOGETHER
FOR THE FOLLOWING PURPOSES:**

To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America;

To maintain law and order;

To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;

To preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the Great Wars;

To inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation;

To combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses;

To make right the master of might;

To promote peace and goodwill on earth;

To safeguard and transmit to Posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy;

To consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.



DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER Larry Dobb

The seven months since our Fall Conference have been extremely busy. When I submitted my report for the Fall Conference (27-29 Oct 17), the actual conference and visit by our National Commander Denise Rohan had not yet taken place. I can report that it was an excellent conference and visit. The only glitch was due to airline reservations that ended up with the National Commander and her husband flying into Butte instead of Helena. This required a last-minute trip to Butte by me and other Department Officers to bring her and her aide to Helena. On Thursday 26 October, Commander Rohan attended a dinner hosted by Broadwater Post 42 in Townsend that was well attended. On Sunday 29 October following the Conference, Commander Rohan and several Department officers traveled over Rogers Pass and to Anaconda where Post 21 hosted an excellent lunch. While both events were well attended, I would have liked to have seen more Legionnaires from surrounding communities show up and meet our National Commander. On the return trip we went through Butte had lunch with Post 115 Commander Lori Perkio and her husband and had a brief tour of the Berkeley Pit.

On 10-12 November, I departed for Alberta, Canada to participate in Remembrance Day Ceremonies in the community of Crowsnest Pass and wreath laying ceremonies at three Royal Canadian Legion Branches (Posts) in Coleman, Blairmore and Bellevue. I was accompanied by Adjutant Gary White, then ANEC David Driver, Roger Hagan, Ray Stolp, Past Post Commander of Post 2 and Coulter Landt Post 2 SAL. Roger Hagan spoke on behalf of the Department and did an excellent job. The hospitality at these events was outstanding and the participation by the communities impressive. On 16-17 November I and Department Adjutant Gary White went to Belgrade and Livingston to meet with the National Vice

Commander Paula Stephenson and attend revitalization training conducted by a trainer from National Headquarters and the start of a District 7 Revitalization Program. During this time, we conducted a Reconnect visit with a local National Guard unit and Department Vice Commander Klose took Vice Commander Stephenson to Billings to attend a POW flag presentation ceremony at a new school there named after WWII Veteran/POW Ben Steele. On 17 November I departed Livingston with Adjutant White and picked up ANEC David Driver and my wife Post 15 2nd Vice Commander Janice Dobb, in Great Falls and went to Lethbridge, Canada to participate in a HART Ceremony (Honoring Our Allies and Remembering Together). This was a joint event of the American Civil Air Patrol and the Army and Navy Cadets from Canada. Also, in attendance were Past Department Commander Jim Grosset and his wife Val, District 3 Commander Charlie Coutts and several Legionnaires from Posts in Sweet Grass, Conrad and Cut Bank for a total of thirteen representatives from the Department. I was one of a slate of speakers at this impressive ceremony. There were two American Gold Star Wives, both widows of men killed in Vietnam and five Canadian Memorial Cross families that had lost sons and in one case a daughter in Afghanistan. It involved hundreds of cadets and included impressive military drill and a marching band. On 18 Jan 2018, I attended a meeting of the State Administration and Veterans Affairs Board at the Capitol in Helena. It was well attended by numerous Department Officers, the Department Adjutant and Legionnaires. On 3 February, me and my wife attended a benefit dinner hosted by Post 341 in Great Falls to assist the Redhorn family whose home had burned down on 10 January. Ivan Redhorn, a U.S. Army combat veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan, his wife Shavonne and their six children had been left homeless. In addition to obtaining a TFA (Temporary Financial Assistance Grant), Post 341 put on a benefit dinner and had a large array of silent auction items donated by various businesses in Great Falls. It was a cold evening with heavy snow falling so unfortunately the crowd was not as large as it could have been. But it was well attended and demonstrated what the American Legion is all about. On 10 March, the Department Oratory Contest was held in Great Falls. We had six Districts out of the eleven represented. That is one better than the past few years, but every district should strive to have a contestant.

It's one of our premier youth programs and ideal for our rural posts whose local high school has a small enrollment. We are talking about one student to compete and home and private school students are eligible. The winner was Norris Blossom of Capital High School in Helena. He had previously won at the Post 2 and District 6 competitions. On 28 March, my wife and I attended the opening of the GI Bill Exhibit at the Military Museum at Ft Harrison in Helena. There was an excellent turnout of both public and Legionnaires. Media and representatives from National Headquarters were there with the principal speaker being former Vietnam War Nurse Diane Carlson of Helena Post 2, who led the movement to place the women's monument on the National Mall honoring women who served in Vietnam. On 31 March we lost our National Executive Committeeman Merv Gunderson. He had been at the GI Bill Exhibit opening just three days previous. His death was a severe loss to the Department and to the American Legion Nationally.

On 6 April, myself, Department Vice Commander Richard Klose, Department Adjutant White and Janice Dobb, Post 15 2nd Vice Commander met National Vice Commander Paula Stephenson at the Missoula Airport and were later joined by NEC David Driver and his wife for dinner. Vice Commander Stephenson attended the District 5 Meeting in Lolo and District 4 in St Ignatius.

On 10 April I attended Merv Gunderson's funeral in Bozeman. As expected the attendance was huge. The funeral home was packed. Past National Commander Charlie Schmidt and his wife attended as well as National Vice Commander Paula Stephenson and Ken Lee the NEC from the Department of Washington. Legionnaires from all over the Department showed up. There was a large construction project going on next to the funeral home with heavy equipment operating and a lot of noise. After the memorial, the military honors were conducted outside. The entire construction operation shut down, equipment stopped and the workers all lined up removed their headgear and remained so throughout the ceremony until after the completion of taps. To me it was an example that there is still a lot of good and decency in America.

The following day 11 April I joined fellow Legionnaires (and ANAVICUS members) Janice Dobb, Adjutant White, PDC Dick Ellwein, Bill White and Ray Stolp at Carroll College to award the Reverend Frank Lawrence Harrington

(ANAVICUS) Scholarship to Fiona Brasfield, a sophomore from Mercer Island, WA. On 19 April I attended an Appreciation Dinner put on by Post 341 in Great Falls for the Marine Corps League Honor Guard for their participation over numerous years in the Four Chaplains Ceremony conducted annually by Post 341. There were approximately twenty-four Marine Corps League members that attended.

On 2 May I attended the Mayors Annual Prayer Breakfast in Great Falls. My wife Janice, NEC David Driver and his wife Shirley and Les (Post member) and Sue (Post Vice Commander) Thario from Post 3 were there from the American Legion, but I also saw other Legionnaires from Post 3 and Post 130 as well as a full table from the VFW. I was amazed at the turn out as there were several hundred people present for the program and guest speaker.

I completed the spring 2018 District Fall Meetings on 29 April in Big Sandy (District 2). I attended ten of the eleven district meetings. The only one I missed was District 7 held in Manhattan on 24 March. My Vice Commander Richard Klose filled in for me at this meeting. I was very pleased with the attendance and how the meetings were conducted. As I stated in my last article of the Legionnaire, this was my fourth time attending all the various district meetings. This cycle was the best I have seen both in post participation and actual numbers. There was not a single case of a district not having a quorum, thus preventing them from conducting business and adherence to meeting protocol was also very good overall. District 1 which had lost their tax-exempt status is well on their way towards getting reinstated through the efforts of Zone Commander Harada. There seemed to be more interest in what's needed to retain a district or posts tax exempt status and incorporation then in past years.

There were a few issues that arose during the past months. The one that generated the most interest was the coyote hunt sponsored by one of our posts. This has been done before and is not at all unusual in rural Montana. This year an animal rights activist picked up on it and generated a flood of emails and phone calls to National and Department Headquarters and me personally. They all demanded it be stopped. Neither National nor Department have any control over individual posts activities unless they are illegal or per our Constitution controversial. Coyote hunting is

not illegal. There is no set season or hunting license required. As for being controversial, it's not generally considered so in most of Montana. Especially in rural areas or among anyone involved in agriculture. Another issue involved election irregularities. These controversies involving elections could have been prevented by strict adherence to posts by laws. In my last article in the Legionnaire, I stated that as my article went to press it was still unknown if the Department would make the 95% target by 11 April. We did, one of eight Departments out of the 55 that did so. We owe our thanks to a very dedicated, relatively small group of individuals who spent countless hours making phone calls to transfer members off the National DMS list into local posts or knocking on doors making personal contact seeking renewals. And as a result, by 9 May which was the target date for 100% we made it to 98%. I cannot say enough about everyone who has worked so hard on membership this year. Thank you! And I sincerely mean it.

DEPARTMENT VICE-COMMANDER

Richard Klose

In the November city election, I received three write-in votes for city council in Laurel, I guess someone thought that I needed something to do. I must have thought the something, as I took on the job.

Back in July the Laurel Post 123 received a call from Morningstar Retirement Home, asking us to do a flag and bugle program on veteran's day for the people living there. We decided to do it instead of the usual veteran's day ceremony in Billings. It turned out to be a great experience.

On the weekend of November 17-19, District #7 was to have a District membership revitalization at Post #23 in Livingston. Jeff Chapman from National along with District #7 members, department membership chairman Jim Lish were on hand. National Vice Commander Paula Stephenson was there as well.

I was there to transport the Vice Commander. Back in October I had arranged with the new "Ben Steele Middle School" in Billings to present a "POW/MIA" flag to the school. Ben Steele was a POW in WW11 in Japan. This ceremony was to take place on November 17th. That date would have Mr. Steeles 100 birthday. Many Laurel Post members along with Mrs. Steele and her daughter were present. After our briefing for the revitalization, the

National Vice Commander and I drove to Laurel where we had lunch at the Laurel Senior Center before going to the school. The National Vice Commander got to meet the three Yellowstone county commissioners at the center. After lunch we loaded the senior bus and went to the school.

Saturday the National Vice Commander and I drove to Big Timber Post#19 to talk to them about membership. When we got back to Livingston we went with the revitalization team to the Montana National Guard Engineer unit for a reconnect and American Legion recruitment. Sunday, I drove the National Vice Commander to the Bozeman airport. On the way we stopped at the Bozeman #14 Post. WE met NEC Merv Gunderson and his wife Patty at the airport for lunch.

On Pearl Harbor Day the Laurel Post along with several other veterans' groups did a wreath laying ceremony at both the Yellowstone National Cemetery and the Laurel city cemetery. On the 16th of December the same groups helped with "Wreaths Across America" ceremony at the Yellowstone National Cemetery.

On Saturday March 10th I was in Great Falls for the Dept. Oratorical contest. Sunday March 11th, I attended the Districts #3 and #8's spring District meetings in Power. I attended all spring District meetings. Great to see so many great legion members.

On March 28th I was at Fort Harrison for the opening ceremony Of the National Headquarters G I Bill exhibit. On March 31st we lost a great legion member, Merv Gunderson. I attended his funeral in Bozeman on April 10th.

As of this report I'm getting ready for "Armed Forces Day parade in Columbus as well as Memorial Day ceremonies at both cemeteries in Laurel, and finally getting ready for our Dept. convention in Great Falls.

ZONE COMMANDER – SOUTH CENTRAL

Joyce Babcock

My year began with the closing of 2017 Department Convention and our obligation to our positions explained by the material in the Zone Commander and District Commander's manual put out by Department Adjutant. Primary task is all phases of membership in The American Legion. Second task is to work with the program on Oratorical Contest and naturally all other phases of The American Legion programs.

I attended the National Convention in the later part of August and reported on the National Committee meetings which I was assigned to. The following week I sat through all the meetings of The American Legion while we were in business session until time for my departure on Thursday morning after the first program report and prior to the election and installation of National Officers.

The District meetings began soon after the 1st of September and my District was first. During that meeting I was the District Adjutant as well as District 11, Zone Commander. To make this meeting even more interesting, the District 11 Commander was unable to attend, and the Vice Commander chaired the meeting while I sat beside him as Adjutant and gave direction as to how I wanted meeting run. We had a successful meeting and were finished in almost record time but with all business of District covered. The other 2 Districts in my Zone were next, District #9 in Lewistown and District #7 in Livingston and both meetings went well, and their Commanders reported that all their desired business was covered successfully.

During the Fall months, each time one of the Post in any of the three Districts gained the first designated goal for that time, I as the Zone Commander sent either the Commander or the Adjutant a small note book with attached pencil as a minor "gift" for their achievement. By the designated goal after the first part of 2018, most all Posts in the three Districts had received a booklet for each the Commander and Adjutant as they all worked hard at getting in the memberships and the entire Zone had been number one for the entire period covered. As of the date of this writing---The South-Central Zone has attained its 100% goal in membership.

In the Spring I attended the District meetings for District 11 and District 7 but due to winters lovely roads was not able to get to District 9's spring meeting nor to Great Falls for Department Oratorical contest. I have continued to encourage the Officers of the three Districts in working all the programs of The American Legion that fit their District and have been available for questions or visits that they request.

I am looking forward to another year coming up as being as totally successful as the year just past.

ZONE COMMANDER – WESTERN

Elmer Palmer

At the completion of the Fall Conference I worked with the District Commanders to encourage a planned program for membership retention and development. I offered to assist in setting a schedule for District Revitalization for the three Districts. The only District to take me up on the idea was District 5. They requested a revitalization for December.

The Revitalization in December for District 5 was successful, Many DMS members were transferred into the Posts, and a fair number of Post members were renewed. I attended the District 5 monthly membership meetings of District 5.

I served as a rescorer for the mergers of Troy Post 139 with Libby Post 97 and Darby Post 38 with Hamilton Post 47. I was involved with the moving of Atlee Post from District 5 to District 4, a move that was desired by Arlee Post, as they are involved in several programs with St Ignatius Post 106.

Currently two Posts in District 5, Frenchtown Post 124 and Alberton Post 133 are both having problems with sufficient attendance at meetings to provide the needed officers for Post operation and are considering merger. We have started the process of attaining Meeting Minutes showing the vote of the Post has approved the merger.

Early in March I was scheduled to attend the District Meetings of Districts 5 and 4 in Lolo and St. Ignatius. The American Legion National Vice Commander Paula R. Stephenson was a guest at these meetings. Shortly before the date of the District 5 meeting we heard the Montana National Guard was holding a Yellow Ribbon event for a unit headed for Afghanistan. Adjutant White arranged for her to attend and address the soldiers. I was asked to be her guide and transportation from Lolo to Kalispell for the event. The round trip was accomplished and arrived in Lolo in time for her to address the District 5 meeting. Her speech at both events was well received. The following day I visited the District 4 Meeting, and again heard the National Vice.

In March I approached the District Commanders and again offered to help with a District Revitalization before the 100% Target in early May. Again, the only taker was District 5, with dates in late April. The

Revitalization was successful, bringing District 5 to 102.2% of goal.

The day after the Revitalization was completed I attended District 6 meeting in Lincoln. The meeting was well conducted and informative.

The remainder of the week was spent clearing up the remaining details of the revitalization, getting to some areas that we had not covered and adding over another dozen to the total and getting the department to over the 98% mark. This made us eligible for the financial incentives we have earned.

The first weekend of May was spent participated in a Veteran Appreciation and Suicide Prevention event in Missoula. Recruiting was hard, but I did recruit a new member for Post 27.

Mothers" day was spent generating a DMS lists for the three Districts. It located 89 members that were identified as available for transfer as Paid Up AD-105 members. The lists were sent to the District Commanders asking them to pass them to the Posts requesting they contact and transfer them. That number of members is nearly half of what the Department of Montana needs for goal.

ZONE COMMANDER – NORTH CENTRAL

Michael Mehegan

All the District Commanders have done an awesome job this year under very harsh conditions, such as; lower population and the decreasing number of veterans in their District. I would like to thank Lowell Long, Charlie Coutts and Kim Kay Carol McCarty Martin for the terrific job they did this year under a very demanding and harsh environment. Charlie, a great District Commander is retiring and all I can say is fair winds and following seas. We all appreciate the great work you have done.

District #3 & #8 Spring District Convention was held in Power, Mt and they could not have done a finer job of providing us with excellent facilities for the American Legion & the Auxiliary of both District 3& 8, plus a great meal for our joint banquet. District #3 & #8 Commander Charlies Coutts & Kim Kay Carol McCarty Martin both ran a well-organized meeting and accomplished a lot.

District #2 District meeting was held in Big Sandy and not only was it a superb facility, but the meal was second to none. Great job Big Sandy.

Lowell Long did a great job of conducting the meeting and a lot was accomplished.

ZONE COMMANDER – EASTERN **Michelle Harada**

MEMBERSHIP

When compared to last year (as of May 11, 2018): District #1 - 8 Posts were down in membership. Of the 5 Posts that were at or exceeded 100% goal, 4 had increased their membership! District #10 - When compared to last year, 6 Posts were down in membership. 2 Posts increased their membership. Although 4 Posts were at or exceeded 100% goal, 2 had a slight drop in membership.

ACTIVITIES

NOV 11: Assisted Andrew Pearson Post #117 with a ceremonial flag-raising at Cabela's. Attended Veterans Day Celebration held at the First Presbyterian Church, in Billings.

NOV 19: Attended Nakona Dakota Oyate Youth Council's Reservation-Wide Turkey Dinner, held at the Wolf Point Community Center. All veterans in attendance were honored for their service.

DEC 9: Attended Army v. Navy Party hosted by Andrew Pearson Post #117, held at the Squire, in Billings. I am happy to report Army 14 - Navy 13. GO ARMY! BEAT NAVY!

FEB 16: Acknowledged Mrs. Fiedler's 3rd grade class, from Poplar Elementary School, for posting "thank you veterans" notes and hand colored U.S. flags at American Legion Thomas Holt Wynia Post #55.

FEB 26-27: Attended the wake and funeral of my son's godfather, Mel Lone Hill, who served in the Army (1968-72) and was an Honorary Life Member of The American Legion Department of South Dakota, Batesland Post #281. I was honored to participate in the Final Roll Call during the wake and serve with the Oglala Lakota Veterans Honor Guard during the funeral. The greatest honor was being asked by the family to fold Mel's U.S. flag during Military Funeral Honors.

APR 21: Due to a funeral, I was unable to attend the District #10 Meeting held in Terry. I am proud of District #10 Commander Clancee Collins! She will be running for Eastern Zone Commander 2018-2020.

APR 22: I attended the District #1 Meeting held in Poplar, at Thomas Holt Wynia Post #55. Following the Joint Luncheon, I conducted a Memorial Service for the

late NEC and Past National Vice Commander Mervin Gunderson. He was my mentor for many years. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. I am proud of District #1 Commander Joe Yeoman for being re-elected. He will serve as District #1 Commander for another two years!

I worked with District #1 Commander Yeoman on getting the District's Tax-Exempt Status Reinstated. The District One Finance Officer was authorized by the District to file tax returns for 2011-2016 then complete the proper Retroactive Reinstatement paperwork and pay the IRS the proper Reinstatement fee.

I maintained contact with Department Membership Chair Jim Lish. There were scheduling problems when planning revitalizations for Districts #1 and #10. It was awesome working with District Commanders Yeoman and Collins. Both were energetic, motivated, and willing to learn. I did not have to "micromanage" membership. Both Commanders did their jobs productively and enthusiastically. It was an honor to be a mentor to both great Legionnaires. Although both Districts #1 and #10 may not make 100% goal, great things are starting to happen in both Districts!

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN (N.E.C.)

David Driver

After the Department Fall Conference I attended the Canadian Remembrance Day ceremonies in Crow's Nest Pass, Alberta, Canada along with several members of the Department. Next, I attended the HART (Honoring Allies and Remembering Together) in Lethbridge, Alberta. This was a gathering of Canadian Air Cadets and US Civil Air Patrol Units. The ceremony recognizes the legacy and service of all veterans on both sides of the Canada and U.S. border. On March 10th I attended the Department High School Oratory Contest held in Great Falls. I attended Districts 3 and 8 held in Power on 11 March. Again, I got to visit Winifred where I attended District 9's meeting on 17 March, representing the NEC. It was then on to District 11 on 18 March, which was held in Red Lodge. On 28 March I attended the opening of "The Greatest Legislation an American Legion Salute to the GI Bill". This was held at the Montana Military Museum at Fort William Henry Harrison and well attended. Little did I know that this would be the last time I would get to be with my friend and comrade, Merv Gunderson, NEC for the Department of Montana. Saturday

morning, 31 March, I received a phone call that Merv had passed. I took great pride in being Merv's spare tire. You learned a lot just being with him. He will be missed.

On the morning of 31 March, I assumed the duties of NEC for the Department, as Merv Gunderson transferred to the Post Everlasting. I attended District 5's Spring Meeting on 7 April in the company of the National Vice Commander, Paula Stephenson. The next day, 8 April, it was off to St. Ignatius, where we attended District 4's Spring Meeting. It was also well attended, and members were pleased to meet with the National Vice Commander. Just prior to the meeting ending of the District Meeting, the VC and I got a tour of St. Ignatius Mission. A National Historic Site, the mission was built in 1891 by American Indians and Jesuit missionaries. Adorning the mission's walls and ceiling are 58 hand-painted murals by Brother Joseph Carignano—a self-taught artist who worked as the mission cook and handyman years ago. We spent the night, 20 April, in Miles City and I got the chance to visit the Montana State Veterans' Cemetery. On 21 April, I attended District 10's Spring Meeting in Terry and then it was off to Poplar where District 1's meeting was held. The following weekend it was District 6 at Lincoln and finally Big Sandy for District 2's Spring Meeting. May 4 to 10 saw me in Indianapolis at National Headquarters, attending my first Spring Meeting of the National Executive Committee as our Department NEC. During this meeting 35 Resolutions were passed. A few will be of interest to all members. Resolution 4, Payment of Membership Dues for Multiple Years. This resolution is asking the National Internal Affairs Commission to investigate the possibility of allowing members to pay annual dues for multiple years, i.e. 1,3,5,10 etc. in addition to the existing PUFL plan. Resolution 24: the establishment of a Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Commission Executive Committee. After this resolution passed, the National Commander appointed Kelly Ackerman to this committee. All other resolutions may be seen on line at www.legion.org.

ALTERNATE NATIONAL COMMITTEEMAN (N.E.C.)

Hal Rice

I assumed the duties of Alternate NEC on May 1, 2018 to fill the remainder of the term. I look forward to learning from and serving with David Driver.

PAST DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Hal Rice

I truly enjoyed my time as Department Commander and the many faces that I met along the way. The saddest duty anyone can take to task is the lying to rest of a good friend and fellow legionnaire; on April 10th we all came together to say our goodbyes to our Comrade Merv Gunderson, may we meet again.

HISTORIAN

Ray Read

As the elected Department Historian, I have had the privilege and opportunity to travel to most of the 2017 Fall and 2018 Spring District meetings as well as attending the 2017 Fall Conference and special events such as the 2018 Montana Department National Oratorical Contest. Also attended the Montana Department 99th Annual convention in Billings, the 99th Annual National Convention in Reno, Nevada and The American Legion Fall Department Historian's meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana.

I find throughout Montana that the American Legion is doing what they have done best for 99+ years. They are supporting the veterans and their families as best they can, utilizing the Four Pillars of the American Legion's National Program: That is Supporting the many facets of Veterans Affairs; Supporting a Strong National Defense; Supporting viable Americanism programs; and Supporting our Nation's most precious resource our Children and Youth.

I was able to travel the State, meeting with many seasoned, as well as newer, younger veterans who populate the 129 American Legion Posts, mostly in rural environments, with all the challenges that manifest themselves in the Frontier State of Montana. I thank all who made my visits so memorable. I want to thank all those helped me with Operation Ruptured Duck program. This program is still active, and I am in the process of filling request by various posts.

As an American Legionnaire and an American Legion family member, I am tasked to provide the following guidance as a continuing commitment to the duties and responsibilities of the elected position of Department Historian, especially in the further development of the

American Legion Centennial 1919-2019. So, this is a repeat worth repeating. (SEE CENTENNIAL REPORT)

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT

Gary White

The year started with my attendance at the Class AA Baseball Tournament games in Bozeman and Class A Tournament games in Three Forks, followed by the Northwest Regional Tournament in Missoula. I attended the National Convention in Reno, NV where I performed the duties of delegation secretary and coordinated with all Montana delegates to ensure their stay was hassle free. I attended the Finance Committee meetings as an observer, not a delegate. Upon return from National Convention I attended all Fall District meetings.

In October I attended the Commander and Adjutants Conference at National Headquarters with the Department Commander, Alt NEC and NEC. I also organized and executed the Department Fall Conference.

In November I attended Remembrance Day ceremonies with the Royal Canadian Legion in Bellevue, Blairmore and Coleman, Alberta with the Department Commander Larry Dobb, Post 2 Past Commander Ray Stolp and the Department Legislative Chairman Roger Hagan.

In December I participated in Stevensville Post #94's school student visit to the Fort Harrison VA Hospital. In January I went to Minneapolis for the National Convention site visit and made appropriate coordination with the hotel.

In February I attended the Helena Post #2 Oratory Contest and attended the District 6 contest. I also attended Post #341 Four Chaplains ceremony in Great Falls.

During March I attended the Soldier for Life briefing held at Fort Harrison and the VA Montana Chief of Staff retreat; and attended all District meetings.

In April it was my sad duty to attend NEC Merv Gunderson's funeral, he will be sorely missed. I also attended the ANAVICUS Scholarship presentation at Carroll College with the Department Commander and 3 other ANAVICUS members. I was able to make all District meetings in April.

In May I attended the National Spring Meetings in Indianapolis with the new NEC David Driver.

Other day to day accomplishments included assisting the Publications Chairman in publishing six issues of the Montana Legionnaire, attending Montana Veterans Affairs

Division meetings, maintaining contact with the Montana National Guard Funeral Honors Program and the Yellow Ribbon Program; I attended 10 VSO VA Directors meetings and 3 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, 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.

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

To the Zone and District Commanders and to the Post Adjutants that work so hard I thank you for your dedication and cooperation; I hope we can continue to work together for the good of the American Legion. I would especially like to thank Erin Carpenter for the excellent work she has done as the Department Adjutant's Assistant.

CHAPLAIN Karen Semple

Opportunities for service have been many. Continued service as Post No. 2 Chaplain, which has involved many phone calls, home and hospital visits in addition to Post activities.

In October, had the opportunity to lead the Legion Family Service for God and Country Memorial Service following Fall Conference. One hundred thirty-two names of deceased Legion Family members were read.

In November, provided invocation and benediction at the Lewis and Clark Veterans Memorial for a Veterans Day Ceremony.

Submitted three Department Chaplain articles to the Legionnaire for publication. (One in November and two in March.)

On 11 December, attended the annual Wreaths Across America Ceremony held in the Capitol Rotunda (organized and led by the Daughters of the American Revolution.) Was honored to lead blessings and the lighting of the Chanukah menorah at the VA Hospital at Fort Harrison on 14 December, the third night of Chanukah. Also, finally met the head VA Chaplain, James Patterson, with whom I have developed a working relationship. (He is a very

busy man!) Thankfully, the VA is getting more chaplains on board to assist him in his work.

Attended the grand opening of the Helena Vet Center on 9 March. Supported the Department Oratorical Competition in Great Falls on 10 March. Provided invocation at "The Greatest Legislation" exhibit opening at the Montana Military Museum at Fort Harrison on 28 March. Provided invocation and benediction at the "Welcome Home" ceremony for Viet Nam veterans at the Capitol Rotunda on 30 March.

Was heartbroken to attend a memorial Service in April for Merv Gunderson. May his memory be a blessing forever. May God comfort all those who loved him.

Have facilitated seven monthly Character Development forums for Civil Air Patrol cadets since Department Conference.

Have participated in three Critical Incident Stress Debriefings with first responder personnel (EMS, Fire, Law Enforcement) following different very stressful incidents. Attended a National CISM Conference in Bozeman in May and am continuing work with the Montana CISM Network as Secretary.

SERVICEOFFICER Kelly Ackerman

As the AL DSO, I attended the following events:

Fall Conference in Helena, MT October 27-29, 2017.

I attended the Spring District 9 meeting in Winifred and the District 11 meeting in Red Lodge.

Spring District meetings were attended by MVAD/AL VSO's according to area of jurisdiction for Districts 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8/3, & 10.

During the Spring District meetings, they discussed all VA benefits including VA Healthcare, Disability Compensation, and Pension. There was an emphasis placed on the new Appeals Management Program, and the problems related to the criteria as well as recent changes.

Todd Dunlap, a VHA employee attended several of the District meetings to supplement the discussion regarding the Choice Act. He also assisted several Legion members with individual VHA issues.

I participated in a System Worth Saving (SWS) site visit October 23-25, 2017 with Warren Goldstein from AL Headquarters and Steve Kleinglass, a contractor from Minneapolis. In support of the SWS visit, we held a Town Hall meeting at Post 2 in Helena, which was a great

success with approximately 50 veterans and VA staff in attendance.

On November 17-18, 2017, I attended a Revitalization event at Post 23 in Livingston, MT.

I attended the Washington Conference February 25- 27, 2018, and DSO School February 28- March 1, 2018 in Washington DC.

I will be conducting Post Service Officer training during Department Convention in Great Falls, MT on June 23, 2018.

PARLIAMENTARIAN **George Blackard**

Having been in The American Legion and gotten to know Legionnaires across the country, I have heard many stories about how meetings sometimes go in other Departments. I always have the same "wow" expression on my face when I hear some of those stories and I am glad that I don't have any stories of my own to match them. I am proud of how well we work together in our Department and how smooth our meetings go and that is a testament to the character of all of you. We do not always agree but we work together and get the job done with professionalism and pride.

During the last year, there has been very few opportunities for me to lend guidance during a meeting which is a good thing. I have had the opportunity to answer a few questions for our comrades and I even had the pleasure of consulting with members of another civic organization when they were struggling with parliamentary procedure.

At times it can be a little tougher to have that same smooth flow of meetings at the Post level and many of us have experienced that. Meetings don't have to be more difficult at the Post level, but I believe they are because we often do not have the amount of experience at that level that Department has. At the Post level the passion of individuals tends to come out more and that passion can quickly take over a meeting, so it is important that we have strong well-versed leaders in our Posts.

At every level of our organization the Commander runs the meetings. That doesn't mean the Commander rules or acts as a dictator, it means that they are the one who sees that the meeting stays on course, follows the order of business, and remains civil. For instance, it is the Commander's job to know when someone is out of order, address it, and quickly get the meeting back on track.

That can be a difficult task if nobody else in the meeting knows proper procedure, so it is everyone's responsibility to know what proper procedure is. We are all volunteers and we all want to do good, so we must dedicate a little time educating ourselves on procedure so that we can be more productive as a group.

I encourage everyone to get a copy of your Post Constitution and By-laws, read them and familiarize yourself with them and take some time to learn parliamentary procedure by reviewing Robert's Rules of Order. The average member owes it to their fellow Legionnaires to know what is going on and how to conduct themselves properly. A Commander owes it to everyone in their meeting to know what they are doing and conduct a civil and productive meeting that accomplishes a maximum amount of business in a minimum amount of time which is precisely why U.S. Army Major Henry Robert wrote "Pocket Manual of Rules of Order for Deliberative Assemblies" back in 1876. We know it today as "Robert's Rules of Order".

The purpose of Robert's Rules is... a guide for conducting meetings and making decisions as a group. The purpose of the book is "to enable assemblies of any size, with due regard for every member's opinion, to arrive at the general will on the maximum number of questions of varying complexity in a minimum amount of time and under all kinds of internal climate ranging from total harmony to hardened or impassioned division of opinion."

These rules do not exist to keep anyone from participating in meetings, they exist to allow everyone the same opportunity to participate in meetings. If you never crack open Robert's Rules of Order or your Constitution and By-laws because you just don't want to take the time, can you really be upset if you are called out of order or fail to get a motion passed at a meeting?

To those of you who are in the know and have studied our guiding documents, you have a distinct advantage over other members. You have a useful tool, knowledge, that will help you accomplish many things. How you use this knowledge is up to you however you should not use this knowledge as a club to beat others with and show off how smart you are. I have been accused of this very thing and I want to share with you what I like to do to avoid being accused of that with this example.

I made a motion in a general meeting to give a \$500 CD as a scholarship to both the first-place boy and first place girl who were to receive an award for top students of the year at a local middle school. I received a second and discussion began. There was a member who was outspoken in their opinion that the scholarship was too much money and it was obvious that they were very frustrated and having a hard time getting their point across. I could have just let them speak, sit down, and be done with it but I didn't. I asked for permission from the Commander to help the member and received it. I explained to the member that if they believed my motion for two \$500 scholarships was too much, they could amend my motion and lower it to another figure such as \$250 each. I further explained that they would need a second on their amendment, we would have discussion and a vote on their amendment to lower the dollar amount. If their amendment passed, my original motion would be changed to reflect the amendment and we would vote to approve giving the scholarships. If their amendment did not pass, the original motion would remain the same and could be voted on.

The member made a motion to amend the original motion, received a second, discussion was asked for and then then the vote. The amendment to the original motion failed. The original motion was voted on and passed. The member was still very unhappy and disagreed with the fact that the motion passed.

I did what I did because I wanted to help a frustrated comrade participate in a meeting. I also hoped to show everyone that you can participate in all aspects of a meeting, I wanted to educate everyone at the meeting on how to amend a motion, and I wanted to demonstrate the importance of educating one's self in Robert's Rules of Order. I leveled the playing field for someone who did not know as much about the rules as I did, knowing that I may not get the motion passed as I wanted it but thought that the lesson was equally as important as the result of the vote. In the end, the member still thought I was a jerk and missed the lesson completely, but I tried to help them rather than just get my way. In the end, my motion passed not because I used the rules to beat up on someone or that I know so much but because I made a better presentation.

I encourage you to educate yourself on the rules, practice making motions, and practice giving your presentation. Just make something up and run the steps

through your head, talk it through. You may not have anything to present today but there will be a day when you want to make a motion for something you feel strongly about and if you practice now, you will be ready.

**FINANCE OFFICER
Eddy White**

Every month our various accounts that support our Department and programs go through reconciliation. This ensures all balances and outstanding liabilities are reviewed and verified. Other activities include signing of checks for various activities such as drawing for cash calendars, events such as Department Oratory contest and Boys State to addressing day to day operations.

This report is based on May 18th results. Our two recently added categories, Big Sky Gas and Non-Member Fundraising are doing well, Big Sky Gas tripled the amount based on 2017. Non-Member Fundraising remained relatively flat but did exceed expected budgeted income. Due to the good work on membership, we have not fallen much from that. In comparison to 2017, we are over \$65,000 for membership dues this year. However, comparing our budget from last year to this year, we still need better membership numbers.

We have exceeded our budgeted fundraising numbers by over 50%. With only one income line in the negative, this is good news. Just like last year we have brought in 82% of the budgeted income. We also saw our expenses move up from 69% to 81% from this time last year. With our budgeting issues we worked through at the 2017 Convention, we expected expenses percentage would be narrowed.

Our 2018 income is over \$28,000, which is less than this time last year. Some items of which we had no control of their returns are: USAA Revenue Share (\$4700), Interest & Dividend (\$5100) and AGIA Programs (\$3700). Membership ((\$12,000) and Cash Calendar (\$4500) are items we can control. We had just over \$28,000 less in income compared to this time last year. For expenses, we exceeded our 2017 numbers by over \$25,000. Almost all of that is attributed to the new vehicle replacement expense for the Department.

There are several key items not balanced out until after the end of June 2018, the end of our fiscal year. However, I will say that our financial health is good. The difficult effort to establish a balanced budget

will continue until we have consistent fundraising activities worked into the planning and budgeting efforts early in the process.

We are getting better at dealing with outstanding checks. However, this will continue to be a liability to the Department. I continue to ask those Post Commanders, Adjutants and other Post Officers to communicate with the membership to ensure that these distributed checks are not outstanding longer than a month. Please promptly cash or deposit these checks.

JUDGE ADVOCATE **Jim Shockley**

1. The Department did complete the sale of two lots in Ismay. The sale price was \$2,126.

2. Post 47, my post, also had a fire in the recent past that required professional repair. The Post had a problem with both completion of the work contracted for with Five Valleys Restoration and the amount owed to the company. The problem was resolved. Once again, get a lawyer involved before signing or agreeing to anything relating to a substantial sum of money.

3. District Finance Officer/construction engineer Hank Dolezal and Post Adjutant, Marilyn Bischof, have been essential in getting Paradise Post 129's bar and casino back in operation. The community has really pitched in donating used equipment, painting, and other work on the building. The Post Commander, Darin King, got thousands of dollars' worth of restaurant equipment and bar furnishings donated.

4. The bar is operating at least part time as of 15 May and should be fully operational by Memorial Day. There is more to be done, and Mr. Dolezal has obtained the free services of a "public adjustor" to wring more money out of a reluctant insurance company. There has been some criticism of the slow progress of the project because the building burned in 2013. The undersigned and Mr. Dolezal were not involved until June 2015 when the whole project was a mess; the contractor had defrauded the Post. The Department should be grateful to Mr. Dolezal and Ms. Bischof. This is another example of getting legal advice before the Post signs a contract.

5. I am still concerned by the instances of embezzlement, or other species of theft, by members of the various posts' leadership.

a. Post 101 was paying the commander and adjutant a total of \$1,700 per month from the operation of a successful bar and cafe operation. The offices of post commander and adjutant were swapped for many years between the same two legionaries. This came to light in 2017 when both the commander and adjutant died near the turn of the new year. New leadership took over and the arrangement became generally known.

b. Post 4's commander embezzled \$1,270 to pay for uniforms for his adult hockey team. He was coerced into giving the money back. The financial controls of the Post were very bad, a new Adjutant was a big help.

c. Back in 2013 Post 129 burned down due to arson. There was an alleged \$8,000 in the safe at the time of the fire; unfortunately, the bar's books were burned. I think this is very suspicious.

d. In another category, Post 1 owns a large apartment complex in Butte and did not even know the cash flow of the property, which was hundreds of thousands of dollars per year. The problem with Post supervision of the apartment complex was reported to be solved after a fight over a board seat on the Apartment Board was won by the member supported by Post leadership. Non-Legion members of the Apartment Board were attempting to take over the Post's property. This is a problem that needs investigated.

f. There are other instances of probable malfeasance, but the money was returned or the evidence weak, or difficult to obtain, or both.

5. Several posts have bars, some with food, or other money generating businesses. There are often no good controls at the local level, and of course the Department has no control. I believe that to give the Department at least some control in the forgoing situations a post with an ongoing money generating enterprise put the Department Adjutant on the board (or committee) supervising the enterprise. He would almost never attend a meeting, but he would have access to the minutes of the meeting of the board supervising the business enterprise and could report apparent irregularities.

6. Related to paragraphs 4 and 5, all Posts should change their by-laws to require two signatures on all check over \$100. Only one credit, or debit card, should be owned by the Post unless there is a business and that business should have another card on a separate account.

Every post's financial records should be reviewed by a panel of three people who are not involved with the financial dealings they are examining, but hopefully are familiar with financial records through their personal experience in business or by training. A true audit would require an accountant and is just too expensive to accomplish unless there is a special reason to think one is needed; e.g. embezzlement. A fraud audit would be even more expensive.

7. The Posts should be advised to contact the undersigned before making any significant financial transaction, such as an insurance claim, selling or buying real estate. I am not volunteering for many hours of legal work but could give the post informed legal advice and perhaps direct the post to a professional of some variety.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

John Kougioulis

After Fall Department Conference I was thinking that legionnaires should not feel that they were being punished when fined for mistakes during American Legion Events. I want to educate them on proper etiquette. The money from the fines go to a good cause. If Post members need to know more about proper flag, hat, etc. etiquette, have your SGT. @ Arms take time to go over such & orient new members to such. I've been fined for mistakes.

I was able to attend the special event & dinner our Post 42 held for the Nat'l Commander Denise Rohan, what a great experience.

I attended the funeral for our dedicated Legion member, Merv Gunderson, what a loss for the American Legion. He didn't "bat an eye" when he messed up & was fined.

I just want to help the American Legion members and don't want anyone to be afraid to ask any questions.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Jeff Holmes

Congratulations to all the following winners within their respective divisions. I would also like to thank all the Posts for sponsoring these contests as part of their Post objectives. It is a great way to promote the constitution and government to our youth. They were all great entries and the evaluations and rankings were tough for the judges. My cap goes off to you for making the time to make the tough decisions. Thank You!

2018 Winners!

High School Essay - 6 submitted

- 1st Sierra Rinta @ Twin Bridges HS
Dan Brockman Post # 31
- 2nd Devon Miller @ North Star School
Liberty County Post #88
- 3rd Sierra Dilworth @ Flathead HS
Kalispell Post #137

Junior High School Essay - 4 submitted

- 1st Jenna Nate @ Sheridan School
Anderson-Simpson Post #89
- 2nd Slayden Rasmussen @ CR Anderson
Lewis & Clark Post #2
- 3rd Isabella Richards @ Stevensville JH
Fort Owens Post #94

Government Survey for High School Seniors - 6 submitted

- 1st Faith Weber @ Dutton/Brady School 81%
Freeborn Post #64
- 2nd Sierra Rinta @ Twin Bridges HS 76%
Dan Brockman Post # 31
- 3rd Devon Miller @ North Star School 74%
Liberty County Post #88

Government Survey for Junior High 7th Grade - 1 submitted

- 1st Zeke Redfield @Twin Bridges Jr High 64%
Dan Brockman Post # 31
- 2nd None Submitted
- 3rd None Submitted

Government Survey for Junior High 8th Grade - 5 submitted

- 1st Corban Johnson @ Manhattan Jr High 78%
Manhattan Post #87
- 2nd Jenna Nate @ Sheridan Jr High 78%
Anderson-Simpson Post #89
- 3rd Kara Dale @ Twin Bridges Jr High 78%
Dan Brockman Post # 31

We had a tie with 8th Grade Surveys, so I used the essays to break the ties with an independent judge. There was also a problem with the answer key, so I went through and regraded them, so everyone was equal. The errors with the key were in the true/false section of the test. I am sorry about that confusion. I also had to use the Oratorical Contest tie breaking procedures to determine the

winners of the High School Essay Contest. Way to submit quality entries!

Thanks again to all who helped make these results possible. Congrats to all the winners!

DISTRICT COMMANDERS
DISTRICT 1 - COMMANDER

Joe Yeoman

I have visited most Post promoting American Legion Boys State and getting younger veterans. The biggest problem in our District is communication; my Vice Commander and I are working on how to work with all Post with communications. We had our District meeting in Poplar We had theist Post turn out in a long time. I was re-elected as Commander, Ken Simon Vice Commander, Lonny Johnson adj, Chelly Harada finance officer. If we can learn to communicate with our younger veterans, we can grow. District 1 & 10 are so wide spread this our biggest problem.

DISTRICT 2 – COMMANDER

Lowell Long

Membership has been a growing concern this year as our Posts worked to get their renewals in. As of this writing, we had two Posts at or above 100%. Malta, Post 57 is at 105.53% and Saco, Post 79 is at 125.00%. In addition to that, we have several Posts that are nearing 100% with Chinook; Post 48 at 97.87%, Big Sandy, Post 50 at 96.30%; Chester, Post 88 at 87.18%; and Fort Belknap, Post 110 at 84.62%. Our District started out great and met our target dates for the first few and then began to slip farther and farther behind. As a District, we slipped to last place and remained there for most of the later part of this membership year. We did finally break 80% on the last reports. As of today, we are at 81.84%.

I visited with all the Posts in my District right after the convention to deliver the Post packets. I tried to attend the Post meetings of the Posts in my District, but the weather always seemed to get in the way and the roads were bad or closed when I was scheduled to attend many of the meetings. I did get to Turner, Saco, and Big Sandy. I did go visit Malta but got the date wrong in my calendar and missed it by one day but had a good visit with several Post members and was able to answer their questions that evening.

District 2 held its fall meeting on Saturday, September 30, 2017 in Chinook, Montana. We had 6 of 9 Posts represented. We held our spring meeting in Big Sandy on April 29, 2018. We had 5 Posts represented. We had election of officers and conducted such business that was presented to our body. We had a great meeting and as usual, a lot of good information was presented to the Posts that were there. I want to congratulate Vince Schmoeckel of Malta as our new District 2 Commander. Ken Weiderrick of Malta will continue as our First Vice Commander. Terry Roemmick of Havre will serve as our Second Vice Commander. District 2 has put forth the name of Lowell Long as the North Central Zone Commander. We will have a good team working for us as District 2 moves forward.

I was able to attend all the District Meetings this fall and many in the spring as the Detachment of Montana Commander of the Sons of the American Legion. I was able to discuss with the Districts about SAL issues as well as share about the Oratorical Program and American Legion Boys State with some Districts. It was interesting to see how all the Districts conducted their meetings to see if there was something I could take away to make my District meeting better.

I want to thank you for the opportunity that I have had in representing you the past two years as your District 2 Commander. It has been a pleasure to work with all the legionnaires and the Posts in this District as we strived to work on our programs and membership. Keep up the good work you all do for our veterans and the youth in our community.

DISTRICT 3 - COMMANDER **Charlie Coutts**

I attended the fall conference 27-28-29 October in Helena. (November) Upon my return to Cut Bank, Post 40 started work on the Veterans Day dinner (Free dinner paid for by Post 40). It is a free dinner for all veterans and their families at the Cut Bank Moose Lodge. Our guest speaker this year was Kim Kay District Commander from Great Falls. The next function I attended was the Hart gathering in Lethbridge Canada. This was the first time the Dept of Montana was asked to attend, and we had about 13 people attend from Dept and other Posts in mt. Honor Guard attended funerals in the area. (December) Post 40 meeting first Tuesday of the month. Pearl Harbor day ceremony at the Cut Bank

Memorial. Membership, Membership, Membership for 75%. (January) Legion meeting first Tuesday of the month. Honor Guard funerals. Calls to legion Posts for Membership. More funerals (Honor Guard). (February) Funerals (Honor Guard) Legion meeting first Tuesday of the month. Calls to Posts for Membership. Take Post and District flags to senior center. More calls to Posts for membership. (March) Call Posts for membership Prepare for Post meeting. Post meeting first Tuesday of month. District meeting in Power Mt. Call Posts for membership. Meeting with Galata Post adj in Shelby. (April) Legion meeting first Tuesday of the month. Call Posts for Membership. (May) Legion meeting first Tuesday of the month. Send e-mail to all Posts about May 9th cut off for membership. NO RESPONSE.

DISTRICT 4 - COMMANDER Glen Sharbono

At the Spring District meeting on April 8th I had the honor of not only having in attendance the Department Commander Larry Dobb and his cabinet of Department Officers it was also a privilege to have the National Vice-Commander Paula R. Stephenson as well. Her speech was inspirational and during the banquet I presented her with a few gifts and mementos of Montana. The day before my District meeting on April 7th I along with Zone Commander Elmer Palmer and the National Vice-Commander attended a Yellow Ribbon Pre Deployment Event at the Hilton Garden Inn in Kalispell. We talked to the Servicemembers and their families about how we help as The American Legion.

I substituted as the Moderator for the District Oratorical Chairman in Polson. We had three contestants representing Posts #72 Columbia Falls, #112 Polson, and #137 Kalispell for the District. The candidate from Ronan Post #138 had to cancel at last minute. Some Posts have at their local contest as many competitors as produced at the District level. I would like to see the day when there is at least one candidate from each Post. I then attended, as the District Commander, the Department Oratory Competition in Great Falls. What a group of talented young people. Sierra Dilworth of Flathead High School in Kalispell won the District level in Polson and won the morning B pool where she advanced to the final round and took fourth in the Department that afternoon.

This year Ronan Post #138 acquired a Junior Shooting Sports team, you most likely saw the article in the Legionnaire. As of now it is the only team in the Fourth District. The team placed 4th in the Postal competition. On the 10th of February I attended an Air Rifle tournament in Ronan and watched a lot of well-behaved and nice young kids both boys and girls compete from Mineral, Sanders, Lake and Flathead Counties. So, there's opportunity for some of the Posts in those areas to pick up an American Legion sponsored team.

Arlee Post #113 was successfully transferred into District 4 which was more logical since they were in Lake County and the County line is the boundary between Districts 4 and 5. I met with the Commander Ron Tonasket and his Adjutant Bill Orr over coffee a couple of real nice guys, and we seemed to get a good feel of how each other operated. I believe they will be an asset to the Fourth District.

The health of both Columbia Falls Freedom Post #72 Commander and Adjutant took a turn for the worse so William Rhine stepped up as Commander and Rick Houston assumed the Adjutants Post. I would like to commend them for jumping in with both barrels "Cocked and Locked" and turning things around. They managed to achieve 100% membership by the first of February. They invited my wife and I to a potluck on the 27th of January and surprised us as guests of honor to show appreciation for all the help with their Post operations, believe me it had more to do with their determination. They are now over a 110%. Also, as well Post #74 of Eureka and Post #138 of Ronan are over 110%.

District four had approximately 97 members of Post 105 that are still in need of being transferred. Several people throughout the Department worked several lists making the calls and getting the transfers as well as calling the unrenewed. Some of the Posts Commander's and Adjutants have been pretty good at working the list, while other seem unable to grasp the necessity of the process and therefore deny their Posts and community a much needed and simple source of revenue to promote American Legion programs. So, for this reason I have written a resolution to hopefully resolve this issue. If nothing else, to at least spark some discussion about how to solve an ongoing problem. It is not the job of the District Commander to work the 105 list, it is that of the Membership Committee of each Post. To make it so negates the need for Post Officers through micro

management. If your Post consists of a lot of "Snow Birds" and one or more of them is the Adjutant or Membership Chairman, it is the Post Commanders duty to re-assign new ones. Otherwise you need to have all memberships transmitted to Department before the "Migratory Flight South". I am of the firm belief that Post Officers need to be the very first to renew soon after the beginning of the new membership year. This sets a precedence for the membership and reflects greatly on your leadership as a Post Officer. Not doing so is also a hindrance to Post awards such as an Honor Ribbon when membership goals are met by December 31st. It would be too bad that a Post lost this Honor because one of its Officers waited until after the first of the year to renew! This year Ronan Post #138 was the only Post in the District to meet this, others were quite close. On February 28th Erin Carpenter the Adjutants Assistant sent out a list of eleven Post Officers representing nine Posts in the Department of Montana that had still not renewed their memberships. This is the kind of inaction that pulls a Post down. Especially if it involves a Post Commander or Adjutant as they are the first ones to receive the Post packets following the Department Convention. If you are unaware the rules, please read The National Constitution and By-Laws

DISTRICT 5 - COMMANDER

Greg Marose

Met membership goal for October with 100% of the years goal.

Accomplishments at District Conference, April 7th, Lolo Mt, sponsored by Florence Post 134: Quorum present
Department Commander Dobbs presented Post 47, 63, 91, 101, & 134 100% goal certificates
Post membership goals were set.

Resolution on suggestion for National Defense budget was past, will be sent to Department.

Jim Kelly, Post 13, has created a state data base for DOT and helps Dist. 5 & 4 with Fatality Markers.

District Fall Conference tentatively set for Trapper Creek Job Corp, on Sunday, March 2018

Donations made to: American Legion NEF \$200.00

All nine posts in attendance of the October Exec meeting had Veterans' Day activities

Commander and Chaplin attended post meetings for Posts 13, 94, 101, 134, 135, 27, 83, 47, 68. Posts in

Frenchtown and Alberton have not been meeting. Drummond has new commander and is not having a regularly scheduled meeting on the same date and time each month. Condon will be visited on May 20.

DISTRICT 6 - COMMANDER

Josh Clement

I have enjoyed the opportunity to serve the Mining District as their commander. It has been a challenging year for me personally and look to drive into my second year of command with renewed vigor. During this first half of my command tour, I have been able to visit four posts meetings and chair two very successful District Meetings. Our District was able to put forth the Department Oratorical Champion for the second year in a row. Mr. Fred Verzani should be commended by the Department for running an outstanding program. District 6 was able to host our National Commander at four different posts events during her visit highlighting the inclusive, driven and family aspect of our Great Organization. Educating our community was championed this year by Ray Read and the "Greatest Legislation" display bought to Fort Harrison. Our Organization has been woven so deeply into the fabric of our Country. We need remind people who we are and what we have done.

8 of the 13 Post made goal, leading to the District making goal with the heavy support from Post 2. Two of the posts that missed goal at the time of the report, understands their struggle is based on an aging population. Few of their young members do not live in the area but are parents paying for their child's membership. This will continue to be a raising trend as many of the small ranch/farm communities do not have younger veterans return. The plan moving forward for this centennial year is for a District wide revitalization in November.

I remain resolved that the DEC should not to make any changes or revocation of the Philipsburg Charter as it is a Legacy post established in 1919. Understand the additional workload falls to the Department Adjutant but in this time of a centennial recognition it would be a travesty to pull a charter.

During my visits and District meetings, I remained focused on telling our story and educating our members. We need to continue to show the importance and history of The American Legion and our four pillars as it has

a direct correlation on our communities, Veterans and their families. I am excited to be a Legionnaire and leader during this upcoming year.

DISTRICT 7 - COMMANDER Randy Kemp

As District 7 Commander I installed officers at Post 14 after their election on June 8, 2018. I then delivered Post 87 membership packet on June 15, 2018. I delivered Post 93 membership packet on June 19, 2018. I delivered Post 65 membership packet on June 20, 2018. I attended the Department of Montana Convention in Billings and participated in all executive board meetings. I also attended the finance committee meeting. I also delivered Post 23 and Post 25 membership packets to representatives who attended the convention. Post 23's packet was given to the Unit 23 auxiliary member as no Post 23 legionnaire attended the convention. I delivered Post 78 membership packet on June 26, 2018. I delivered Post 99 membership packet on July 6, 2018. I delivered Post 118 membership packet on July 8, 2018. I talked with all Posts about getting started early with renewals and keep attempting to get new members.

I attended Post 99 meeting and was accompanied by Bud Sievert on August 1, 2018 and I was very impressed by the number of members that attended and the procedures they used to conduct their meeting.

I participated in Navy Week beginning on August 14, 2018 in Bozeman and observed some of the great things that are going on in the Navy for new sailors. I attended Ceremony for First Responders hosted by Post 14 in Bozeman on September 11, 2018. I attended Veterans Day ceremony in Bozeman on November 11, 2018.

I prepared and submitted Fall Conference report to Department Headquarters on October 11, 2018. I attended Post 23 meeting on November 14, 2018. I prepared and conducted District 7 revitalization on November 17-18, 2018. The exercise was very productive, and we were complimented by National Headquarters representative on a job well done. The exercise was terminated one day early because the goal was reached. I attended the dedication of the KIOSK at Sunset Hills Cemetery in Bozeman on November 29, 2018. I presided over the District 7 Oratory contest in Big Sky on February 24, 2018. I conducted District 7 Spring meeting in Manhattan on March 24, 2018.

I have had a busy year and while I didn't attend all Post meetings, I stayed in constant contact with each post via email and telephone. I have observed a lack of commitment from some posts to The American Legion mission and while some posts are doing great things in their own communities, they fail to attend Department of Montana sponsored events. This has been somewhat disappointing to me.

DISTRICT 8 - COMMANDER

Kim Kay Carol McCarty Martin

I have continued to assist Post 26 in Fort Benton with their paperwork and with training to Post Commander Panting and Finance Officer William Paris. With going through past and current finances it was discovered that an audit was needed due to the fact there was never one conducted since about 2008. Clara Santopietro, District Finance Officer agreed to do the audit as finding a public accountant to do the audit proved to be futile. We also determined that their current officers have never been voted upon. With no volunteers to resume the Adjutant responsibilities, I have agreed to continue the role until a volunteer comes forward. After continued assistance to post members, all officer positions except Adjutant have been installed.

I was invited to the Veterans Day Celebration Supper in Cut Bank by District Commander Coutts. I was honored to be the guest speaker and everyone who attended had a nice meal and enjoyable time. I was also invited to a Vaughn Post 130 and Power Post 103 supper meeting they had for American Legion Boys State attendees and American Legion Auxiliary Girls State attendees.

Since December, I went to Augusta a few times to meet with Post Adj Maggie Barrett only to find out they didn't have their officer's positions filled. With limited communication with Post 51 and showing up for their post meeting dates to find they don't hold meetings, I finally talked to a member of the community. I asked him to have Maggie call me. They do currently have members in officer positions and have had a meeting as they are gearing up for their yearly rodeo. After a phone conversation with Adj Maggie, we are in the planning stages of me attending a post meeting with a dinner incorporated.

I helped organize and set up for the Department Oratory Contest held in Great Falls on the 10th of March at the college. I attended the final contest between the four

speakers where I was impressed with not only the student's knowledge but also their presentation. I also learned through Oratory Chair Jeff Holms the process needed to conduct an Oratory contest.

I met with Power Adjutant Bill Burgess and Auxiliary Leona to discuss arrangements for Spring District 3 & 8 meeting to be held in Powers School. On 11 March we had our meeting where we were a little rushed due to lunch running over and time constraints. Reports from the posts in the District were forgo with the agreement of the posts sending them to the District Adjutant.

DISTRICT 9 - COMMANDER Demorise Allen

Congratulations to George and all members of Andrew Person Post # 117 for stepping up to the plate and hosting the 99th Department of Montana State Convention. A good time was had by all besides a little education also. Good job and THANK YOU!

Volunteering is becoming a coveted commodity. Same /same active members. We do need to work harder! It does take a lot of time that most of us must squeeze in. "BUT" Maybe a better word is "PRIORITIZE"!

I did help Judith Gap get their Boy Scout Troup renewed. All packets were collected or handed out in person by the 18th of July. I visited Wheatland Post 15 June 26th and introduced our new Department Commander Larry Dobb. I traveled most of the day the 18th of July and presented packets to Stanford, Denton and Roy. Had a good visit with Commander Gene Enrst, Commander John Drivdahl and attended Roy's Meeting. Paul Mayberry. their Adj. does a good job running things for Jacob Lalli. They did have about 12 members present. The next night I presented Judith Gap's Packet to them.

I attended the Department Auxiliary Finance meeting in Helena with Fran the 10th of August.

Our Legion and Auxiliary Fall District Meetings were hosted by Judith Gap the 16th of September. Hope all enjoyed. As the lately norm, attendance was short! If it wasn't for the Harlowton crew we would have really been short. They came with 8 members including our new DEPARTMENT COMMANDER, LARRY DOBB.

Our new Department Vice Commander RICHARD KLOSE did a great job with the morning session and had a great speech for our banquet. Thanks to all the Department people who tried to add to our knowledge.

A meeting at Hobson, the 10th of Oct. was canceled but I did stop in and had a good visit with their Adjutant Irene Welch.

I need to spend a lot of time with Stanford and Hobson and do some work with my own Post. I predict District #9 will have all Posts at 100% by year's end.

Our newly elected National Commander will be at our Fall Conference. Come meet DENISE ROHAN, The American Legion's first lady NATIONAL COMMANDER!!!!

Fran and I could not make the Fall Conference due to Fran's medical situation. Fran was right in the middle of radiation treatments. THANK YOU to all of you for all the well wishes, thoughts and prayers. Fran is doing quite well now. It is so nice to have our LEGION FAMILY.

Don Bost of Lewistown sat in for me at Fall Conference. Thank you, Don, Thanks for mailing my packet out.

We held our Spring meeting March 17th. I opened our Legion Meetings for the day. We enjoyed gaining a lot of information from several State officers and a couple of V.A. representatives in the morning. The presentations were very enlightening.

The American Legion, The Sons of Legionnaires and The Auxiliary were Hosted by Post and Unit 120 of Winifred. We were treated with a great corned beef and cabbage and dessert. Larry Dobb, Department Commander was our guest speaker. Great job Larry!

Richard Klose of Laurel stressed the importance of the Commanders speech on the American Legion and its basic training program.

Winter did make it interesting for all. Ended up as a long, cold, windy and snowy winter. This spring has been a muddy one. We have already had 4.4 inches of rain in May.

Gene Ernst moved to Bozeman to be closer to his daughter. Thank you, Gene, for all your years as Commander of the Stanford Post # 53!

The telephone and email were the tools often used. Seemed I was in contact with most Commanders and Adjutants with the phone often. Trying to help our Zone stay on top and win the membership race. Good luck Joyce! On that note, Joyce was in contact with me often. I knew she would be a great Zone Commander! We haven't got all Posts a 100% but I'm still hoping for a 100% across the board.

Lastly, I would like to announce Brad Marking of Roundup was elected our new District 9 Commander.

Congratulations Brad! Also, our members elected a new Vice Commander. Bruce Luhrsen of Post 70. Congratulations to Bruce also. The District will be in great hands.

THANK YOU ALL! I have sincerely enjoyed my time!!!

DISTRICT 10 - COMMANDER **Clancee Collins**

Attended fall conference in Helena 26-29 October 2017. Assisted Post #5 with putting out and picking up over 1400 small American flags at the Custer County Cemetery for Veteran's Day. We also put up 55, 3 x 5 flags at the Eastern Montana Veteran's Cemetery in the morning and took them down and folded them at dusk.

Participated in the Miles City Community College graduation ceremony and attended sixteen Veteran's funerals as a member of VFW Post #1579 honor guard.

Called all the posts in my district who did not have a constitution on file and informed them of what was needed to get a copy to department. Also passed on information regarding updating IRS Form 990's and what steps were needed if they had let them lapse.

On three separate occasions I called members, so they could transfer to local posts from the DMS lists. Kudos to department secretary, Erin Carpenter for sending out the lists. It was the most significant source of membership for posts in District 10. Of the members I could not contact I called the adjutants or commander of the local posts and gave them the information, so they could contact them. Approximately 14 members (that I contacted) were transferred from the DMS lists.

Sent out 14 letters to members of Broadus Post #128 informing them that if they did not have a commander or adjutant by June 9, 2018 their membership would likely be transferred to Miles City Post #5. A week after I sent the letters out I talked to an individual from the Broadus VFW who was interested in revitalizing the American Legion Post there. I sent him a copy of the Department Constitution, Custer Post #5 constitution and some membership applications. I informed him that if they could get enough interest in membership and have elections that I would be more than agreeable to talk to the membership.

Talked to a member of Terry Post #33 to see if he would be interested in running for District 10 commander

because he had held this position previously. He sounded genuinely interested and I informed him that he would have to now complete the American Legion Basic Training Course as a prerequisite to hold the position as commander. I think the fact that he had to complete the training gave him a change of heart because when we were at the spring meeting he told me he was no longer interested in becoming District 10 commander. I found myself scrambling at the meeting trying to get nominees. Thankfully, Bob Beals contacted the commander of Forsyth Post # 39, Dave Ofalt who agreed to accept the nomination.

Participated in an awards ceremony with Representative Greg Gianforte for Miles City Post #5-member Frank Stolz and Forsyth Post #39-member Stan Watson. Both participants received citizenship awards from Representative Gianforte for their service to their country and their communities. Despite the bad weather it was a very well attended event.

DISTRICT 11 - COMMANDER

Jim Lish

On 4/28 I assumed duties as the District 11 Commander. Upon assuming duties, I worked membership to make our District to 100% membership. I attended a Columbus Post 34 meeting and participated in their Post beautification day. I am honored to be able to assist in their wall dedication that will take place on May 19th. The beginning of May was the huge push to make our 100% goal and I am proud to report our District made 101% by our 100% target date. Well done! I would like to thank everyone in our District who made DMS phone calls and helped us make our goal. I look forward to working with all the Posts in our District the upcoming year. Thanks, Jim Lish 11th District Commander

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE CHAIRS

AMERICANISM

George Blackard

During the last year I have had several opportunities to promote our third pillar, Americanism, and The American Legion in general in Montana. I was the emcee of the annual 9/11 event held on the courthouse lawn in Billings. I have had the honor of being the emcee at

this event for about ten years and am proud to see how the event includes everyone from veteran's groups to high school kids. It has grown from a memorial service to a celebration of life and our American resilience.

In September I attended the dedication of the new Yellowstone Kelly Interpretive Site atop the rims in Billings. Members of Post 117 raised the first flag at the site along with a couple of ceremonial flags and I presented one of those Flags to one of the driving forces of the project, and now Mayor of Billings, Bill Cole. A lighted flag now flies daily atop the rims overlooking Billings and former U.S. Army officer Luther Kelly has a fitting tribute to his legacy in Montana. Many thanks to the Billings Chamber of Commerce, the committee and all the sponsors who made the site a reality and incorporated our Flag into the design. Many thanks to the members of Post 117 who donated the flag pole used on the site.

I attended the annual Veteran's Day celebration held in Billings with several members of Post 117 and afterward, paid a visit to VFW Post 6774 in Billings Heights for a luncheon and comradery with their members. We were fortunate to have Matthew Grills of Legion Magazine accompany us throughout the day, Henry is a real asset to the magazine and a great American.

I emceed a Veteran's Day ceremony at West Park Village Senior Living facility for the residents that cannot travel to the annual event in Billings. The residents there are very thankful to have someone hold special events just for them and there was plenty of stories to be told that day. I am very proud to be associated with Post 117 and their outreach to our senior citizens.

One of the events I look forward to every Veteran's Day is speaking at a local elementary school to the 4th grade classes. This year was fun as usual, and my thanks go to Mrs. Kammi Palm for inviting me to speak each year. While there I talk about service to our country, what it's like to be in the military, our flag, and the opportunities we have as Americans. Mrs. Palm is the daughter of our deceased comrade from Post 4, Dwayne Ahlgren and I know her father would be very proud of her.

One of the most enjoyable things I did in January was to give a flag folding presentation to a men's church group of about fifty people. With help from Post 117 Commander Jim Lish and a volunteer from the audience we

folded the flag while reciting the meaning of the thirteen folds of the flag. Afterward we had a discussion and question and answer session about facts and myths concerning the U.S. Flag. We spoke with several veterans afterward and made some great contacts. Because of this event, I was asked to do the same presentation at a Cub Scout advancement ceremony held in April. At that ceremony with Post 117 Adjutant Christina Bochy we used a couple of scouts to help us with the ceremony and presented them with challenge coins for their assistance.

In February I emceed a Four Chaplains ceremony at West Park Village Senior Living put on by members of Post 117. It was the first such event that I have participated in and I look forward to an even bigger and better event next year. It was a huge success and my thanks go out to Post 117 Commander Jim Lish, Post service Officer/Chaplain Adam Greenwell, and members Chris Lowman, Christina Bochy, David Moore for all that they did to make it a great event. Many thanks also to Kathy Shannon of West Park Village for allowing us to hold events for their residents and for the great cookies!

The first weekend in May I volunteered to cook for a pancake breakfast fundraiser for Boy Scout and Girls Scout Troop 394 at the Elks Lodge in Billings. It was a good event and the scouts were hard workers and very helpful. I had the opportunity to sit with the scouts and talk about The American Legion and present them with challenge coins for their volunteerism. I also had the opportunity work alongside and get to know several Elks members who are veterans which was very enjoyable. On May 19th I attended the Veteran's Wall dedication in Columbus, MT with members of Post 117 and Post 34. The project, spearheaded by former school teacher Jeanne Harsha, took about six years to complete and is a great addition to Railroad Park in Columbus. I was honored to present her with a plaque and certificate as a thank you for her efforts and accomplishment on behalf of Post 34 and The American Legion Department of Montana. After the ceremony I joined members of Post 117 and Post 34 at an open house for their Post on the Stillwater River. We cooked hot dogs and hamburgers and met with fellow veterans and members of the public. I was able to rekindle a relationship with the Elks Lodge and organize a flag retirement ceremony as part

of their annual Flag Day program in June. This was a great event that brought two organizations and their members together to celebrate our Flag. The Elks held their wonderful ceremony in the grand hall and afterward, we transitioned outside where I presided over a Flag retirement ceremony held by members of Post 117. The first ceremonial flag used for the ceremony was the funeral flag of our deceased comrade Don Olson of Post 4. It was a very special moment and I am very grateful and honored that Don's wife Rusty asked us to retire Don's Flag as part of the event.

BASEBALL

Ron Edwards

After an epic winter that just seemed to never end I am happy to report that we are playing baseball again across Montana and Alberta. We have 62 teams registered: 10 Class AA, 31 Class A and 21 Class B teams have registered to play American Legion baseball this year.

2018 AMERICAN LEGION TEAMS

CLASS AA

Billings Royals (SR)
 Billings Scarlets (SR)
 Bozeman, Post 14, Bozeman Bucks (SR)
 Butte Post #1 Western Montana Miners (SR)
 Great Falls Post 3 Chargers AA (SR)
 Helena Post 2 Senators (SR)
 Kalispell Lakers AA (SR)
 Lethbridge Elks (SR)
 Medicine Hat Moose Monarchs (SR)
 Missoula Mavericks AA (SR)

CLASS A

Fort Macleod Royals (SR)
 Gallatin Valley Outlaws (SR)
 Glacier Twins (SR)
 Glasgow Reds (SR)
 Glendive Blue Devils (SR)
 Great Falls Post 3 Chargers A (JR)
 Havre Northstars (SR)
 Helena Post 2 Reps (SR)
 Kalispell Lakers A (SR)
 Laurel Dodgers Post 123 (SR)
 Lethbridge Miners (SR)
 Lewistown Redbirds (SR)
 Libby Loggers (SR)
 Livingston Braves (SR)
 Medicine Hat Knights (SR)
 Miles City Mavericks (SR)
 Mission Valley Mariners (SR)
 Missoula Mavericks A (SR)
 Richland County Patriots (SR)
 Tri-County Cardinals (SR)
 Vauxhall Spurs (SR)

CLASS B

Belgrade Bandits Baseball B Team (JR)
 Billings Post 4-B (JR)
 Bitterroot Bucs - B Team (JR)
 Bitterroot Red Sox Post 47 B (SR)
 Bozeman Bucks B (JR)
 Butte Muckers B (JR)
 Colstrip Rangers (SR)
 Cranbrook Bandits B (JR)
 Deer Lodge, Post 10, Wranglers (SR)
 Fallon County Oilers (SR)
 Gallatin Valley Posse (JR)
 Glacier Twins B (JR)
 Havre-Comets B (JR)
 Helena Post 2 Independents (JR)
 Kalispell Lakers B (JR)
 Lewistown Redbirds "B" (JR)
 Libby Loggers B (JR)
 Miles City Colts B (SR)
 Mission Valley Mariners B (JR)
 Missoula Mavericks B (JR)
 Wolf Point Yellow Jackets (SR)

CLASS A

Anaconda A's (SR)
 Belgrade Bandits (SR)
 Billings Blue Jays (SR)
 Billings Cardinals (SR)
 Bitterroot Red Sox Post 47 (SR)
 Bitterroot Bucs (SR)
 Bozeman Post 14 Bucks A (SR)
 Butte Post 1 Muckers (JR)
 Cranbrook Bandits (SR)
 Dillon Post 20 Cubs (SR)

Deer Lodge has a team again this year, but we lost Kootenai Valley (Eureka) and Colstrip for this season. The District, State, Regional and World Series tournament schedules for the 2018 season are as follows:

TOURNAMENT	HOST TEAM	CITY	DATES
NORTHERN DISTRICT	TRI-COUNTY CARDINALS	CONRAD	JUL 26 - 29
SOUTHERN DISTRICT	HELENA REPS	HELENA	JUL 26 - 29
EASTERN DISTRICT	GLENDIVE BLUDEVILS	GLENDIVE	JUL 26 - 29
WESTERN DISTRICT	BITTERROOT RED SOX	GLACIER	JUL 26 - 29
STATE A	MILES CITY OUTLAWS	MILES CITY	AUG 01 - 05
STATE AA	KALISPELL LAKERS	KALISPELL	JUL 28 - 01
REGIONAL AA	MISSOULA MAVERICKS	MISSOULA	AUG 08 - 12
REGIONAL A (NWCART)	LEWISTON TWINS	LEWISTON, ID	AUG 10 - 14
WORLD SERIES		SHELBY, NC	AUG 16 - 21

And a thank you to Ural Wayne Raymond, West District; Jim Monteith, North District; and Pete Moe, East District who are back for the 2018 season. For more baseball information please visit us at www.montanalegionbaseball.org.

BOY SCOUTS

Dick Ellwein

There were no applicants for the Eagle Scout of Year. Two Posts submitted the Post Scouting award application. Post # 2 will receive the award this year. News flash, the LDS will not sponsor any scout units in 2019.

BOYS STATE

Don Jones

(No Report Submitted)

CENTENNIAL

Ray Read

The Department of Montana, the American Legion, Executive Committee, has established a Department Centennial Committee in accordance with the request of the 100th Anniversary Observance Committee. And the Department Historian has been designated the Department Centennial Chairman.

In addition, the Department authorized a three person 100th Centennial Committee. Currently the members are Joyce Babcock (Custer Post #5), Michael Shepard (Post 72, Columbia Falls) Lowell Long, (Blaine Post 48, Chinook). The Committee's task is engaging the Montana American Legion posts in meaningful participation concerning the American Legion Centennial.

I encourage all American Legion posts to implement The American Legion's Legacy Vision for the American Legion Centennial 1919-2019. Resolution No. 31, states,

"The American Legion wishes to call to the attention of the American People the record of achievements that have been accomplished by The American Legion during the 100 years since its founding, to emphasize the impact the organization has had upon the American society, and the extent of its contributions in national security and the welfare of military veterans, their families and their communities..

The American Legion wishes to set forth the objectives and the aims that will motivate its programs and activities during the years ahead and to illustrate the contribution made to the future of country as intended by these programs."

Some initial ideas for this very important program for Montana Legionnaires to review and implement.

1. All documents referenced above is available on the National American Legion website. Go to www.legion.org/centennial and follow the prompts. If your Post/Auxiliary/Sons of the American Legion have access to the internet you can accomplish the American Legion Centennial Challenge. Remember look to your strengths and leverage them. Also look to your local community for ideas and support.

2. I am asking all Montana Department American Posts to establish their Local Legacy-Your Post's History. National Headquarters has developed a webpage that will allow each participating post its own place online where photos, text and videos can be posted and shared. So, whether your post was established in 1919 to just few years ago you have the opportunity to tell your story in your community and throughout the American Legion.

I emphasize again that the all aspects of The American Legion Centennial Program are available on the National website www.legion.org/centennial.

In less than 60 days the American Legion will celebrate its 100th National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and in little more than 300 days the American Legion

100th Birthday will happen, March 15-17, 2019, and then American Legion Centennial will culminate its year the 101th Convention in Indianapolis, Indiana August 2019. Montana's contributions to the American Legion Legacy deserves to place on the national record.

It is a goal of the Montana Department to update its historical record by incorporating the current written record of the past 98 years in creating a Centennial History. With your cooperation and participation that can happen.

During the 2017 99th Montana Department Convention a Centennial Convention Committee was appointed to conduct a review of Department progress and make a report to the Convention Delegates.

The following is a summary of that report:

Committee members were: Ray Read, Department Centennial Chair and members Jim Carlisle, Mark Gangstad, Merv Kosteley, Janice Dobb, Robert "Bob" Beals and Daniel Nardinger. Ray Read chaired the Convention Committee and Janice Dobb served as the secretary/recorder

The Committee reviewed the elements of the Centennial program and discussed the following areas

1. Centennial Website located at www.legion.org is accessible by the American Legion family and may be also accessed through www.mtlegion.org . Twenty-one Posts have taken advantage of the Post History portal located www.legion.org/centennial. This leaves 110 to complete this connection. The department goal is to have 100% of the American Legion Posts of the Department of Montana utilizing this tool. Less than 24 months to accomplish. It may well require a dedicated team of legionnaires to get this accomplished

2. The Convention Committee discussed the importance of the Department of Montana and the recording of the same for current and future members of the American Legion family. The history is accumulative and incorporates the Post activities as well as the American Legion auxiliary units, the Sons of American Legion squadrons and the juniors of the American Legion Auxiliary. The goal is to record the story of Montana Department from its chartering in 1919 to the end of the Centennial period in 2019 and beyond. This story can utilize all forms of media, written, voice and via social media.

3. Reviewed the 100 Memorial/100 Cities Program and the availability of grants by the Pritzker Military Museum in coordination with American Legion's

Centennial Committee. The grant application process ended on July 10, 2017. Each state could receive a grant to restore a World War One monument or memorial after review of the Grant application to National Committee. Montana Department s received two grants one for the DoughboyStatue4 in Missoula County and the other the World War 1 monument in Dillon, Montana

4. Discussed the American legion's National Executive Committee Resolution #10, establishing a program to identify all military monuments, cemeteries or other sites located throughout the State to place them on a national database managed currently by the Centennial Committee. This identification process is done at post level or below. The tenets of the program and forms are available on www.legion.org.

5. Discussed the challenges of providing information on the Centennial program on a timely basis. Utilizing the available communications links of the Department Executive Committee, District Commanders and Post commanders will remain key to the Department's success. This also requires a commitment of time and talent to this project. The goal is to move the Department into its second century with a viable program record to posterity its achievements.

6. The following items were identified but require further discussion:

a. Publishing a Department of Montana Centennial History incorporating previous histories and adding approximately 20 years of new material. The purpose of this book is to provide copies to all communities and interested persons and was done in the previous two histories.

b. Creation of a Department of Montana Centennial Coin as a part of the National Centennial Coin program. In addition, creating Montana Department wearing apparel, patches and commemoratives.

c. Creating American Legion traveling displays to tell the Story.

d. Working Montana Department Public relations efforts to tell the story throughout the State.

e. Developing strategies to move into the 2nd Century of American Legion Service through interaction with the Membership.

7. All the above will require a development of a budget and identification of sources of funding.

8. As the Centennial Chair I travelled to the 2017 Fall and 2018 Spring District meetings and attend the 2017 Fall Conference in Helena, Montana the Districts and Posts were receptive to the Centennial Program, but the results are still developing.

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Sharon Doig

It has been a pleasure to continue to Chair Montana Department Children and Youth. National made changes on requirements. The amount limit per request is \$1500. **The qualifying veteran must be on active duty orders of be a member in good standing in a post.**

This year I received seven requests. National approved 5. Six families and sixteen children were helped. Total funds to help these families were \$3974.91.

Coordinated Children and Youth Committee received four requests. The committee approved \$1640.50 and seventeen children or four families. In addition, thanks go out to the Auxiliary Poppy fund which also helped for two of these families.

I received a call from National's Media Department to request a meeting with one of the families and National Commander Denise Rohan in March to do a testimonial interview. Thanks goes to the investigator Kim Kay McCarty-Martin who also was participated in the testimonial. If you get The Dispatch this was mentioned in it. Great Falls Post 341 were a big help for this family with helping for temporary housing and doing a fund raiser for this family along with The Red Cross helping with lodging. Post Commander Kim Kay C. McCarty-Martin did an excellent job as the investigator.

I cannot stress enough that the investigator needs to complete each page, especially **Other Assistance**. You must show that every source was applied for, date, status, and amount approved or explanation of ineligibility. You must also include all information on the creditor area. Checks are made out to them.

The best way to send me applications is via email in which I can forward easily to National. The committee meets twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays received before 0800 are reviewed on those days. Acceptance or denials are now down via email.

CONSTITUTION AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Sandy Youngbauer

(no report submitted)

CONVENTION 2018

David Driver

Well, the 100th Department of Montana Convention is here. A lot of work has been done by the members of Post 3, Post 130 and Post 341. I want to thank District 8 and Post 341 Commander, Kim Kay Carol McCarty Martin and the members of Post 341 for all the hard work they have done to make this convention happen. Thanks goes out to Zone Commander Mike Mehegan and Post 130 members and members of Unit 130 for all their hard work on this convention. Thank you, Post 3 Adjutant J.D. Atkinson, members of Post 3, Unit 3 members and Squadron 3 members for your hard work. A Special Thanks to the Department Auxiliary Convention Chair, Diana Reilly for her help and guidance in putting this together. I would also like to thank several other members of the Department, both Legion and Auxiliary, for your help in getting the 100th Convention of the Department of Montana going. For those of you who were around for the Department Fall Conference of 2010, you know I like to try something different than the usual and so it is for this year's convention, I threw in "The American Legion Department of Montana at the Ball Park". I figured that if they can do it at the National Convention, then why not at the Department Convention. I hope everyone enjoyed themselves and learned something at this Convention. If you just learned one thing, or met someone new and had some fun, then this 2018 Convention was a success.

CONVENTION 2019

Jeff Nelson

The centennial year is fast approaching for the American legion. The convention will be held in Polson at the KwaTaqNuk conference and banquet center on June 26th through the 30th of June 2019. There will be many amenities available to people staying at the resort, such as; casino, boat slips, swimming pool, and entertainment to name a few. The meeting rooms and breakout rooms are set up along with the evening banquet facilities to accommodate those attending the convention.

The Auxiliary will have their meeting room adjacent to the legion meeting so that everything is within one facility.

For those not wishing to stay at the resort there are other motels within blocks of the convention center.

There are also RV parks located around the Polson area for those wanting to bring a motor home or camper. On Thursday night there will be a 2-hour cruise around the bay on a tour boat "Shadow". A barbecue is planned while on the cruise with entertainment supplied.

For those that would like to explore some of the sites around the Mission Valley, there is plenty to see. The National Bison Range in Moiese, the Mission church with its beautiful painted frescos on the ceiling in St. Ignatius, Museums in both Ronan and Polson, and don't miss the "Miracle of America"

located just outside of Polson. There is a 27-hole golf course in Polson, one of the biggest dam's in the west, Kerr Dam, is located just a few miles from town. Other activities on the lake include rafting, kayaking, and public beaches Flathead lake is the largest freshwater natural lake west of the Mississippi.

We hope to make this convention one of the best, so if there are suggestions to make this an "event of a life time" please let us know. We are looking forward to seeing as many of you there as possible.

CONVENTION 2020
Justin Carter
(no report submitted)

DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE COORDINATOR
Karen Semple

This past winter brought snow depths many had not seen in decades. Ice jam flooding occurred near Townsend in mid-February. This was followed by blizzards that prompted disaster declarations in Glacier County, Hill County, Blackfoot Tribal Reservation, Fort Belknap Tribal Reservation, Northern Cheyenne Reservation and Golden Valley County as homes and cattle were isolated by drifts and roads were single lane to impassable into March. Many power lines were down. On 27 February the following State Emergency Declarations were issued: Executive Order No. EO-04-2018 Energy Emergency Executive Order No. EO-05-2018 Winter Storm Emergency Donations of hay/delivery to isolated cattle were coordinated by Montana DES in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Commerce to jurisdictions with disaster declarations.

This was followed in early April by warm temperatures and strong southerly winds which allowed several wildfires to develop in grassland areas. Thankfully, the fires were quickly contained; however, due to record snowpack in the mountains, as this report is written, many members are experiencing flooding - with many roads closed. On April 25th, Fergus County made an Emergency Declaration. This was exacerbated by heavy rains and thunderstorms.

In late April Yellowstone County reported a ransom ware attack on the Lockwood Fire Station. Law enforcement agencies are investigating.

Hundreds of families were evacuated, and some homes were lifted off foundations outside of Missoula as the Clark Fork River flooded. Flood warnings in Seeley Lake and Clearwater Rivers in Missoula County as well as the Yaak River in Lincoln County were issued. Cabins were inundated with flood waters in Lewis and Clark County in Lincoln and homes in the Helena Valley experienced flooding from rising groundwater seeping into basements and disabling septic drain fields. Members worked together in the Helena Valley to help protect their homes with sandbags. On May 11, Meagher County declared an emergency due to heavy runoff from snowmelt that caused severe damage to roads and the failure of the Badger Creek Stock Dam.

As of May 16th, there was forecasted long-term flooding (next 90 days - into August!) for the following Montana waterways:

- Big Hole River
- Jefferson River
- Sun River
- Clark's Fork of the Yellowstone River
- Shields River
- Clark Fork River
- Flathead River
- Bitterroot River

Many posts have still not accomplished basic disaster preparedness plans or business preparedness plans to place them in a position to survive and thrive following a disaster or emergency - which often comes without warning. Wildfire season will soon be upon us and can happen - not just in forests, but also cities, grasslands and towns. FiresafeMT.org has information under the Home and Landowners tab on preparing structures to survive a wildfire. Members are

encouraged to go to Ready.gov for information on how to prepare their families and posts for the unexpected. In the shadow of 9-11, National Preparedness Month is September. Posts are encouraged to reach out to their members and communities with preparedness information. Some posts host a "Preparedness Party" in September to further engage their members in preparedness. Consider contacting your county Disaster and Emergency Services Coordinator to attend Local Emergency Preparedness Committee meetings where posts can find out how to participate in disaster drills and exercises. Contact me for more information on how to host a "Preparedness Party".

As of this writing, no members or posts have filed for a National Emergency Fund grant.

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

Jim Grosset

I met our special guests at the Airport with the Alternate NEC. It was an Honor and a privilege to greet the First Female of the American Legion Denise Rohan and the first, First Gentleman of the American Legion. After settling in, we had a great dinner with lots of Legion friends.

The next day we toured the Fort Harrison Museum hosted by Comrade Ray. We continued our tour at the Broadwater Post 42. There was a good attendance and a lot of Legionnaires met the New Commander.

The next day we toured the Montana National Guard and the Veterans Service Officer and tour of the Hospital. Then it was off to tour the Capital Building. It was great to see and help them while in our State.

ENDOWMENT FUND

Jeff Nelson

At fall conference a resolution was brought forward to consolidate the endowment fund committee into the finance committee. It was decided to have the chairman appoint a member of the finance committee to head up the endowment fund. This would be a cost savings to the department and result in funds being diverted to other needed programs. The finance committee will oversee the yearly transactions within the endowment funds and may even see benefits that can improve the fund itself.

The purpose of the endowment fund is to provide additional resources and scholarships to legion youth programs, flags for schools, assist wounded veterans,

and provide family support for deployed veterans in the case of emergencies.

If you are thinking about investing a portion of your portfolio into a tax shelter, think about helping future veterans and children of veterans with funds that will provide an avenue of security when times are uncertain.

The principle that is invested stays within the endowment and the interest or growth is what is used to help those in need.

If there is any legionnaire that would like to create a legacy and leave an amount to be used towards helping one of the programs mentioned earlier, please contact me.

FLAG ALLIANCE

Linda Cousineau

1. H.J. Res. 61 - 115th Congress (2017-2018) Introduced in House (02/02/2017) [previously introduced as H.J. Res. 9 - 114th Congress (2015-2016) and many other titles in 6 previous sessions]

02/08/2017 Referred to the Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice.

Action By: House Judiciary

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States giving Congress power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States

Currently has partisan support of 27 Republicans. Has increased by four since last year's report. Montana still not represented. No other changes have been made.

2. S.J. Res. 46 - 115th Congress (2017-2-18) Introduced in Senate - Judiciary (06/14/2017)

A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States authorizing the Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.

Sponsor: Sen. Daines, Steve [R-MT]

Mr. Daines (for himself, Mr. Graham, Mr. Cornyn, Mr. Heller, Mr. Hatch, Mr. Crapo, Mr. Grassley, Mr. Isakson, and Mr. Rubio) introduced the following joint resolution; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Currently has partisan support of 13 Republicans.

JOINT RESOLUTION

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States authorizing the Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled (two-thirds of each House concurring therein), that the following article is proposed as an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which shall be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the Constitution when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States within 7 years after the date of its submission by the Congress:

"The Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States."

There was an article in the American Legion Paper 2017 that I read that should be added to this report:

The American Legion Supports Trump on Flag Issue; Calls for Constitutional Protection. American Legion National Commander Charles E. Schmidt praises President Donald Trump for his support of the American flag. In a tweet, Mr. Trump said, "Nobody should be allowed to burn the American flag - if they do, there must be consequences - perhaps loss of citizenship or year in jail!" As the leader of the nation's largest veterans service organization, Schmidt said, "Our brothers and sisters in arms have shed blood, even paid the ultimate sacrifice, in defense of our nation. The American Flag represents their sacrifice and our nation's way of freedom. No one should tolerate desecration of the American flag".

The American Legion strongly advocates for a constitutional ban on flag burning and calls on the new Commander-in-chief to support such a ban with the following wording, "Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States."

There is strong support for such a law. Every U.S. state has passed memorializing resolutions to ratify a constitutional amendment prohibiting flag desecration. Additionally, the House of Representatives has passed the amendment 6 times by super majorities, only to see it fall short in the Senate - by just one vote the last time it reached the floor.

"It's time to protect Old Glory from being burned or otherwise desecrated by protesters," Schmidt said "We are not against civil protest or demonstrations. However, these protesters are not burning a piece of cloth. They are desecrating the sacrifice and honor of all past, present and future Service members and their

family members who have given so much to this great nation."

MT currently has a State law against desecration of flags inclusive of the US flag and there were no new bills introduced in the MT Legislator in 2017 concerning flags.

Montana Code Annotated 2015

45-8-215. Desecration of flags. (1) In this section, the term "flag" means anything that is or purports to be the official flag of the United States, the United States shield, the United States coat of arms, the Montana state flag, or a copy, picture, or representation of any of the described articles.

(2) A person commits the offense of desecration of flags if the person purposely or knowingly:

(a) publicly mutilates, defiles, or casts contempt upon the flag;

(b) places on or attaches to the flag any work, mark, design, or advertisement not properly a part of the flag or exposes to public view a flag so altered;

(c) manufactures or exposes to public view an article of merchandise or a wrapper or receptacle for merchandise upon which the flag is depicted; or

(d) uses the flag for commercial advertising purposes.

(3) A person convicted of the offense of desecration of flags shall be imprisoned in the state prison for any term not to exceed 10 years or be fined an amount not to exceed \$50,000, or both.

(4) This section does not apply to flags depicted on written or printed documents or periodicals or on stationery, ornaments, pictures, or jewelry if there are not unauthorized words or designs on the flags and if the flag is not connected with any advertisement.

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 continue to be your Flag Alliance Chairman and will keep you updated on status as it develops.

FINANCE CHAIRMAN

Jeff Nelson

The budget for the upcoming year was studied and approved in a meeting with the adjutant, myself and the new incoming chairman in Helena. There was much discussion on making changes within the various programs. There were decreases where we thought we could save funds and places that we increased funding. It is never an easy decision to decide what programs or committees are cut and which ones are increased. We always look at what is best for the department of Montana and its' future. Everyone attending the department convention can have an opportunity to review the changes in this years' budget.

Our investments with D.A. Davidson continue to perform well. They are conservative investments that show a positive return yearly.

Our fundraising is lagging and hopefully by convention time we will see an increase in revenue. For fundraising to work everybody needs to participate. I can't encourage the members to sell raffle tickets enough to make the raffles a good return for our department

We are so close to making goal with membership, this has not happened for quite some time. The extra membership not only shows strength in Washington to our legislature but helps support the many programs within our department.

Our financial partnerships with Big Sky Gas and USAA credit card continue to grow and expand, along with AGI ins.

I would like to thank everyone that has supplied input and ideas with the finance department over the last 3 years as your chairman. I am stepping down and moving on to another position within the department of Montana. Elmer Palmer will become the new finance chairman for the department, and I wish him all the best in the next year.

HEROES TO HOMETOWN COORDINATOR

Josh Clement

The American Legion Heroes to Hometowns helps disabled veterans transition to civilian life, protecting their quality of life. This program ensures veterans wounded in the line of duty have the needed items for a quality of life for their residence or means of mobility as they transition smoothly to civilian life. This program is tied to active duty

orders. Operation Comfort Warrior compliments this program.

Currently, the Department has not received any request for support. The Montana National Guard has a few individuals currently deployed in support operations in the Middle East. There is a forecast increase in the opportunity of other units deploying soon. Montana Naval operations centers had only a couple of Reserve Sailors perform long term duty. There have been no updates on Marine or Army Reserve units on deployments forecast within near future. I will continue to reach out to the full-time leadership of these two components. My current position allows for me stay abreast with Montana National Guard deployments and planned operations.

This program will remain an on-order program due to the low intensity operations. The military has been tasked to ensure it is ready on a much shorter notice. If our Great Country moves toward defeated the various global treats being seen in the news daily, this program could need a large team to fully execute and serve the veterans following high intensity conflicts.

I strongly recommend to the budget committee and DEC to remove this appointment as a standing call-in.

HIGHWAY FATALITY MARKER

John Kougioulis

After Fall Conference, the phone calls about fatality markers were fewer, the callers have the same questions, most frequent questions are; why did a marker get removed, why was it not put back up, how do I get a fatality marker put up, why can't we decorate the marker, when others are decorated. I guide people to go to "Montana Legion.org." go to programs and read about the program.

I've had calls about other states wanting to adopt the same program.

I've been the Chairman for the past 4 years, and gave it 110%, it's time for someone else to take over as Chairman.

My stickers for the back of the markers, stating "not to put anything on the markers or decorate", was approved by the American Legion, they have helped.

Also, the stickers for the family members to put on the back of the marker with the deceased name, have appeased the family.

I will still help with the program, my wife Karon has assisted me the past years, and will be taking over as Department Fatality Marker Chairman, as called by the new Department Commander.

HOMELESS VETERAN COORDINATOR Ray Read

The Montana Department's participation in The American Legion's Homeless Veterans Program is now over 11 years old. Larry Dobb, 2017-18 Montana Department Commander, re-appointed me as the Coordinator of the Program as the as the Homeless Veterans Coordinator in July 2017. I respectfully submit the following report of the record to date.

Montana Statistics Related to Homeless Veterans is as follows:

Of the 92,397 veterans recognized and recorded by the VA as being in Montana, 72,876 are indicated as wartime veterans. Breakdown by era is: Gulf War- 33,115; Vietnam- 32,335; Korea-7,2901; WW II-2,827. Peacetime veterans number 19,501. The ratio of gender is Female veterans 8,365 and Male veterans 85,019. Comment: It is estimated that based on averaging 2.5 members per veteran's household that the total veteran's population including family members is at 230,000+- or nearly 1/4 of the total population of Montana. Re: VA Statistics 2017

National Statistics indicate that up to 3.8% of Montana's population of veterans is at risk or homeless. The definition of homeless as defined by United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is, "Without and abode or home, living with family or relative because they cannot afford or qualify for a home residence, or living in an institutional setting because they cannot qualify or are financially unable to rent or own a home."

In the latest Montana Homeless Survey conducted in January 2018 of the 1,247 Household with 1709-person respondents of which 279 Veterans Households with 320 respondents were identified. This indicates that homelessness among Montana veterans was 18% of the total homeless of Montana based on the Survey results. I believe the true number falls between 3.8% National statistic and the 18% identified in the HUD survey. The 2018 data is not yet available.

The following information was provided for the January 2018 Point in Time Survey by Housing & Urban Development

conducted in January 2018. These reflect the collection effort based in cities and towns broken into Districts by Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These districts do not emulate Montana Department /American Legion Districts as currently configured. HUD District 1,2,3-Eastern Montana; District 4- Havre; District 5- Great Falls; District 6- Lewistown; District 7- Billings; District 8- Helena; District 9- Bozeman; District 10- Kalispell; District 11- Missoula; and District 12-Butte Survey areas did not totally encompass Montana rural areas. The thing to take away from this is that Homelessness is still present and is a problem we must address at Post level and above: Montana AHAR report for 2016 recorded a-17.0% in homelessness from the 2015 AHAR report in 2017 the homeless rate for veterans has increased 8% but still better than the base rate established.in 2010. This is an -9.0 % decrease over 2010 numbers. The complete report is not yet available and therefore I provided last year's report for 2017

The total homeless individuals recorded in the Point in time survey was 1,418 a -21.00% decrease in respondents from the 1709 recorded in 2015

Of the 1418 respondents it was determined that 44.4% or 630 are unsheltered and 55.6% (788) are sheltered. Homelessness has decreased in 37 States. Montana in the top five with a 17% decrease. Individuals who were homeless in Montana decreased by 25% between 2015 and 2017. 574 family members are homeless with 40% (229) unsheltered. Of the 100 unaccompanied youth determined homeless 48 or 48% are unsheltered. There are 277 veterans identified as homeless. This number is in my estimation under-reported as the Point In time does not reach into the rural areas of Montana that encompasses about 32% percent of State's population.

Recommendations for 2018-2019:

1. That the Montana Department of the American Legion continue to develop and conduct its Homeless Veterans strategy in coordination with the National Economics Division of The American Legion, the Veterans Administration of Montana, Federal Housing and Urban Development, 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 strive to establish volunteer homeless

Veterans coordinators at Post, District and, Zone levels as necessary to interface with the Department on issues and offer solutions of Veterans homelessness. In lieu of dedicated resources the responsibility falls to the post, district, and zone commander by default.

3. That the Department of Montana of the American Legion supports the various Homeless Veterans Stand downs scheduled throughout Montana for the Remainder of 2018. Veteran related events previously identified as being in Plains, Helena, Missoula, Dillon, Miles City, Montana, and Libby, Montana and on the High line of Montana with Havre, Montana as the hub.

4. That those American Legion Posts conducting a Stand down coordinate and apply utilizing Stand Down Notice of Proposed Event Form available on line and complete the Stand Down After-Action Report available on line at the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. Email kmcevilly@nchv.org the website is www.nchv.org. Telephone number is 202-546-1969.

Addendum 1

INSURANCE DIRECTOR

Gary White

As of March 19, 2018 - \$184,856.00 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 \$16,545.00 since 2017. Last year we had a decrease of \$24,826. Allocations paid to the Department were \$10,697.00 a decrease of \$967.00; this is after last year's decrease of \$1,500.00. We received a promotional bonus of \$1,070, a decrease of \$96.00, this after last year's decrease of \$150.00. Our decrease in revenue from last year is due to 4 factors - dropping membership, the deaths of our most active insurance participants (World War II and Korea veterans), the confusion over National insurance programs and the LIT programs and lastly the inability to market our Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D). The decrease in all numbers is becoming a trend, however this year our decreases lessened.

This year our projection of income for 2018 was \$15,500.00, we missed that projection by \$3,733.00. With the aging of our membership we continue to lose insured members at a higher rate than 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 9,883 members on March 4, 2018 only 5,207 were enrolled in the free Accidental Death & Dismemberment program, 52.69% of our membership. This is an increase of 287 members, or a 3.43% 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. Once a member registers now they are registered for as long as they are members. 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. **Senior Auxiliary and senior Sons of the American Legion members can sign up for the free AD & D under the same conditions.**

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 bestselling 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 \$664.00, a decrease of \$54.00 Since 1967, when our Department joined with the Legionnaire Insurance Trust the Department has received \$668,215.00.

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 \$7050.00, but we received only a total of \$2502.02 a decrease of \$4758.07. **ADDENDUM 2**

LEGION RIDERS

Ken McMillon

Since last year, I have been in contact with the other chapters and keeping them up to date about the "ROMPS" that are going on in the western part of the states. Local poker runs are a part of the local scene and we take advantage of them. Many places that we go, we run into other bikers and they are always interested in what the Legion Riders is all about. We have gained some new members through that avenue of reaching out to the "Brotherhood" of motorcycle loving people. It's not just a slogan; it's a way of life for those us that choose to enjoy the 'Open Road" from the back of our bikes.

LEGISLATIVE

Roger Hagan

The Legislative Committee has served our Department membership actively since our Fall Conference in October. Your Department continues to attend Interim Committee Meetings during the 2017-2018 Montana Legislative Interim.

The State Administration and Veterans' Affairs (SAVA) Interim Committee met three times since our Fall Conference (January, March and May). Your Department remains vigilant to all veteran/military issues brought before SAVA and provides input from our perspective when appropriate.

At the January SAVA meeting a panel of experts was convened to discuss the role of the Montana Veterans Affairs Division (MVAD) Veteran's Service Officers (VSO's) training and certification. It was a very enlightening discussion. Panel members were: Joe Foster, MVAD Administrator; Kelly Ackerman, MVAD supervising VSO; Koryn Van Eimeren, VA Veteran Service Center Manager; Art Widhalm, past commander VFW; Rom Milam, Vietnam War veteran, Missoula; and George Blackard, American Legion Legislative Liaison to Senator Daines.

The March SAVA Interim Committee meeting did not include any military or veteran issues; however, I did atte

nd to address any questions the committee members may have had. Finally, the May meeting agenda included information briefings on Overseas and Military Voters and use of the Common Access Card (CAC). Additionally, the Office of Public Instruction briefed on the Interstate Compact for Military Children.

To assist our membership in future successes, I will again ask that you get involved at the grassroots level. Go out there and get to know your state senator and representative. Talk with them about military and veteran issues and find out where they stand on those issues. Grassroots is the lifeblood of legislative efforts, both on the state and national level.

On the national level, the Montana Department was represented well during the Washington D.C. Call-In and National Commander's Testimony to the Joint Senate and House Veteran's Affairs Committee. The February meeting was attended by our former NEC Merv Gunderson (God bless Merv) and his wife Patty; Bill White, Legislative Liaison to Representative Gianforte; Kelly Ackerman, Service Officer; and myself. We visited all three congressional offices and were recognized during the National Commander's testimony by Senator Tester.

Your legislative efforts continue to take a front seat with our Congressional Liaisons. Mike Shepard of Columbia Falls was appointed by NEC David Driver to be the liaison for Senator John Tester. Your liaisons have done a wonderful job communicating with staffers and their respective congress member on your behalf. Their work enhances the National American Legion's efforts and we are recognized by our national legislative staff for our proactive efforts.

If you have any questions or input, please be sure to share it with your post or the department so we can include your thoughts in our deliberations.

MEMBERSHIP

Jim Lish

Greetings fellow Legionaries! I would like to report on Membership activities since my last report. In November NVC Stephenson and volunteers from our Department participated in a revitalization in Livingston. Jeff Chapman gave a class on revitalizations and transferring members off the DMS list. It was a very informative class and brought members up to speed on how to cold call DMS members. The revitalization lasted three days and we transferred over 30 members off the

DMS (105) and through door knocking. We then worked on expired DMS and expired Post lists. We also had a National Guard reconnect! There was a lot of work and volunteer hours out into the revitalization and I would like to thank all the volunteers. During the extreme winter months, we noticed a significant drop in transmittals and activity. To boost numbers to make target dates our Department had a lot of the Zone and District Commanders and Post members making DMS calls. Their hard work payed off as we were able to keep ahead of those target dates. On April 6th I travelled to Butte for a Post 115 and Post 1 revitalization. We encountered a lot of DMS members that were current but with no phone contract numbers and questionable addresses. We were able to look up a lot of names and addresses on anywho.com and visit them. We worked the expired Post lists and expired DMS. Butte was a huge success in my book. The team worked extremely hard and were able to transfer a majority of the 2018 current DMS members in their area to a local Post. Also, we were able to do two reconnects. 1 was with the National Guard and 1 with the Reserve Center. Our final number in Butte were at least 11 transfers and collected dues on several expired members as well. A lot of time was spent door knocking and almost every Legionnaire we got in front of went to a local Post. Thanks to all the Post 115 members for all their hard work and letting me speak about membership at their regular Post 115 meeting. I would like to thank everyone for their final effort to achieve our 100% goal. Everyday there were great Legionnaires across our Department making phone calls to help transfer and retain our members and even though we fell short by 2%, it was a great effort by all. The only negative I can see is that there are Posts that sit on membership. Post Commanders and Adjutant's ensure that your transmittals are being sent to Department regularly! If you sit on membership it hurts our Department as a whole. Remember this if you are sitting on membership during the year you are only hurting the Posts and Districts that are working hard to make the Department target dates. Membership is every Legionnaires responsibility and it takes a team effort to make our mandated target dates. We all work together as a Department as a team and if you're sitting on membership you are only hindering the team. Thank you for all your hard work this year!

NATIONAL SECURITY

Hal Rice

I have taken over the duties of the National Security Chairman while our Comrade Randall Brown recovers from a heart attack. All reports are showing great improvement for Randall.

Randall was able to select the Department Law Officer and Firefighter of the year winners back in January. Congratulations to our firefighter Brent Peters of Laurel and our law officer Scott Burlingham of Hamilton.

ORATORICAL

Jeff Holmes

First off, I would like to congratulate and thank Norris Blossom of Helena for representing Montana at the National Oratorical Contest in April. You made us proud, and we are glad that you decided to further your leadership education through the American Legion Oratorical Program. Garret Nielson of Bozeman placed second, Michael McKay of Corvallis placed third, and Sierra Dilworth of Kalispell placed fourth. I would also like to thank Lewis & Clark Post #2 in Helena for sponsoring Norris, and all other participating Posts for sponsoring the Oratorical Contest as part of their Post objectives. This year, we had 6 District winners participating at the department level.

Perhaps the biggest thank you goes out to Kim Kay McCarty Martin and David Driver for recruiting all the judges. This is a very stressful job and is perhaps the most important of all. Thanks also to Malori and Tyler from Great Falls College - MSU for allowing us to use their facilities and waiving most of their fees. Thanks also to Mr. White and Mrs. Carpenter for keeping all the paperwork straight and printing out the certificates.

This year the results were contested, and I would like to thank all Legionnaires who helped run the contest and ensuring the placings of the judges were reflected and the whole contest was conducted according to the National Guidelines. I would especially like to thank Dick Ellwein, Lowell Long, and Kathy Long for standing up to the scrutiny. I am truly blessed to have these members on the Oratorical Committee and for the knowledge and professionalism they bring to the contest. Special thanks also to all other Legionnaires who showed up and volunteered to help whenever needed. Our Department Oratorical Contest is truly a team

effort and would not happen without your dedication. Thanks again to everyone. Your students and I really appreciate it.

We are exploring the possibility of hosting next year's contest in Big Sky. There are more questions than answers at this point, but it is an option for next year. We are scheduled to rotate to the Bozeman/Belgrade area this year anyway. The current plan is to keep it on a Saturday, and to keep it about the first couple weekends in March. I have not heard any complaints about the dates this past two years, and I think it works out quite well. I work for you, so please let me know what you think.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS & PUBLICATIONS

Jen Darlymple

As I submit this report, the Spring issue of the Montana Legionnaire should be hitting the streets. I have had good feedback from our readers throughout the State on the format changes that I instituted last Fall along the theme of "Visibility Means Membership." Legionnaires are responding with submissions demonstrating their actionable activities in their communities and taking credit for what they have accomplished. The American Legion Family branding is as important to retaining our members as it is in gaining new members for all three organizations. Keep the stories and pictures coming and I look forward to hearing and reading about them this summer. You are doing great!

The GI Bill exhibit in Helena was well received and I want to extend a special THANK YOU to Ray Read and Jeff Stofer for their efforts in bringing this national travelling exhibit to Helena. Friendship, roots and networking all played a part in the planning.

Now to the next level of change for The Montana Legionnaire - If you have special connections to someone or something that had a significant impact for our Montana Veterans, I would like to hear from you. My intent with this next change is to highlight significant individuals, actions or events that played a part in Montana's Veterans' lives and/or history. The story does not have to be about a Veteran per se but the impact that individual had on a Veteran(s). Veteran's, who's your hero?

As always, some components will remain the same such as the leadership columns, membership goals, Auxiliary

Service Star and Post Everlasting as these are very important to relay news, advice, current initiatives, Legion Family activities and to honor our departed sisters and brothers.

It is my honor to serve as The Montana Legionnaire Editor and I hope you are truly enjoying your paper. If you have any questions or concerns about it, please feel free to contact me at lmtprpub@gmail.com or call (406) 949-3660.

SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION (S.A.L.) ADVISOR Dick Ellwein

I attended the National SAL Fall and Spring NEC meeting in Indianapolis, IN. The SAL Detachment has made 100% Target in membership. See you at the Convention and the Detachment meeting.

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 Sons of the American Legion 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 the annual JUNIOR POSITION AIR RIFLE TOURNAMENT. The American Legion Annual 3-Position Junior Air Rifle National Championship is a tournament that begins with postal match.

A Postal Match is a match in which competitor's fire on their home ranges using targets which have been marked for identification. The fired targets are then sent to the American Legion for scoring and ranking for awards.

The American Legion presents its 27th junior 3-Position Air Rifle Tournament, which provides competitors an opportunity to test their marksmanship ability in competition with other junior competitors throughout the nation.

The Individual Tournament has three phases of competition:

- 1 First Round Postal match
- 2 Second Round - Qualifications
- 3 National Championships

The Team Tournament has two phases of competition:

1. First Round - State Championships
2. Second Round - National Championships

The First-Round team tournament is a "paper" match and is comprised of the top four athletes' individual tournament scores. A club with at least four individuals enters one team; at least eight individuals enters two teams; and so on.

The First Round and Second Round of the Individual Tournament are postal matches whereas the National Championship of the Individual Tournament is a shoulder-to-shoulder competition.

The First Round and the Second-Round phases of the Team Tournament are postal matches.

The Individual and Team Tournaments was conducted in accordance with the Official Match Program (OMP) and the 2017-2018 National Standard Three-Position Air Rifle Rule Book 11TH Edition.

In 2018, it is estimated that more than 1,450 youth entered round one of The American Legion's Junior Shooting Sports individual postal match competition for a chance to qualify for the Legion's 28th annual Junior 3-Position Air Rifle National Championships. Montana had a total of 16 competitors in the Precision Shooting category and 45 competitors in the Sporter category. Montana had four clubs shoot in the Precision category: Hellgate Junior Shooting Sports 1 (State Champion), Hellgate Junior Shooting Sports 2 sponsored by post 27 Missoula; Gallatin County 4H Shooting Sports 1, sponsored by Post 87 Manhattan and Yellowstone Rifle Club 1 Sponsored by Post 7, Billings.

Montana had 10 teams shoot in the Sporter Category: Mineral County Shooting Sports 1 sponsored by Post 13, St Regis, Gallatin County 4H Shooting Sports 1 and Gallatin county Sports 2 sponsored by Post 87, Manhattan, Lake County 4H #1, sponsored by Post 138, Ronan; Phillips County Shooting Sports Teams 1-4,

sponsored by Post 57, Malta; and Flathead 4-H Shooting Sports sponsored by Post 137, Kalispell.

Montana had three JSSP Competitors who qualified for the Second Round -Qualifications: Howard James Edison, of Mineral County 4H Shooting Sports, sponsored by St Regis Post 13 shot #1 in nation in Sporter. Elizabeth Lorentz of Hellgate Junior Shooters 1, sponsored by Post 27, Missoula shot 8th of top 25 and Jonna Warken of Hellgate Shooting Sports 1 shot 23 of 25 in Precision category.

In the team Tournament Hellgate Junior Shooters 1 placed 6th of 10 and will be shooting in the second-round Postal match. They will be competing for the Team National Championship.

As of May 15, 2018 Montanans, Lorentz, Warken, and Edison qualified for the top 30 marksmen and women, 15 in Sporter and 15 in Precision and qualify to travel to the U.S. Olympic Center in Colorado in July to compete. Shoulder to Shoulder National Championships are being held July 26-28, 2018. During the competition, the participants in both the Precision and Sportier category shoot a .177 caliber air rifle in three positions - prone, standing and kneeling. One competitor in each respective category will win the championship and a \$5,000 scholarship provided by the Legion and Sons of The American Legion. A \$1,000 scholarship, provided by the American Legion Auxiliary, will be awarded to the second-place finisher.

The Precision and Sporter champions also will also receive a trip to The American Legion's national convention in Minneapolis, Aug. 23-28, to be honored alongside other Legion youth program champions

2017-18 State Awards include:

- (1) Top Individual Precision; Elizabeth Warken, Hellgate Shooters 1- State Champion, Precision category
- (2) Top Individual Sporter: Howard J. Edison, Mineral County 4H Shooting Sports, - State Champion, Sporter category.
- (3) Top Team Precision; Hellgate Junior Shooters 1 (Elizabeth, Jonna, Warken, Alexandra Weisenburger and Samuel Weisenburger)
- (4) Top Team Sporter: Mineral County 4H Shooting Sports 1 (Howard Edison, Bailey Milender, Heath Edison and Decker Milender)
- (5) Participation recognition certificates for individuals and teams;

Montana JSSP programs submit your requests to the Montana Department JSSP Coordinator with information to the Department Adjutant.

American Legion Posts & Coaches Notes: If you are establishing a Junior Shooting Sports Program it is strongly recommend that you focus your efforts on the Sporter category. It does not take a lot of money to get started in the Sporter category. The junior Sporter athletes do not need any sort of sophisticated shooting clothing like the Precision category does. Remember Junior Shooting sports participants can compete in both categories but not in the same year. If you have not already done so we would recommend looking at the Civilian Marksmanship Program's Webpages. This will give you a very good background on what is allowed in terms of sporter category rifles, clothing, and additional equipment. Registration is handled online via www.legion.org

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_avan_t.html](http://Daisywebpages@daisy.ifware.com/cgi-bin/daisy2/products_avan_t.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 rifle. If you continue with the program and have some athletes who are interested in continuing in 3-Position competitive shooting that would be the time to consider moving them into the Precision category. The JSSP Coordinator can provide you with more information if you would like and request it.

VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – BILLINGS

Joyce Babcock

I have made monthly visits to the CBOC on a varied basis beginning in September 2017 and through May 2018 excepting for the months of January and February of 2018 when the roads were not passable due to winter weather.

When I visited the clinic, I took 3-pound cans of coffee and usually a tray of baked goods. When the National American Legion magazine arrives in mail I receive 4 copies and I take those to the clinic and place them in the heaviest used waiting room areas. I also receive the Armed Forces newspapers in various numbers, one for Marine Corps, three for US Navy and four each for Air Force and US Army. When these come in mail I put them in auto for next trip to town and distribute them in the various waiting rooms as well.

On my visits to the clinic there are usually older gentlemen at the check-in screens trying to sign in but unable to see the type well enough to follow directions and not wanting to go to desk and request assistance. I offer and then enter the required information and give directions or accompany them to their proper waiting station.

I spent several hours over a few days arranging for the organization "Cars for Charity" to be matched up with a local Veteran with a free car. The first contact came from the MSU-B Foundation office and the organization is consortium of several organization starting with State Farm Insurance who donated a wrecked auto and then this went through the repair and refinish process and ended with a Veteran and his wife from a Post in District 11. This was a very successful promotion and much appreciated by the recipient.

Over the past few weeks I have been passing on information on the State people who assist our Veterans to complete the correct forms, arrange the correct appointments and such to achieve their aim in visiting the VA medical mostly at CBOC in Billings but to be prepared to be referred to other VA facilities if necessary for treatment that they need for their care.

**VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – Fort
Harrison
Bill White**

1. Attended first and second quarter V.A.V.S. meetings at VA Fort Harrison, MT.
2. Continued s an appointed representative to the national VA and R committee
3. Continue working with Gary White to ensure that All American Legion Volunteers are registered so that the American Legion gets proper credit
4. Attended VA and R meetings in Washington DC
5. Continued to work on the Ad-Hoc committee with NEC Merv Gunderson to work on up-dating the VAVS Volunteer manual with the American Legion
6. Attended District meeting invited to as VAVS representative
7. Continued to Participate with new person orientation to give new employees an opportunity to hear some of the problems that Veterans face daily when going to the VA facilities also participating is American Legion members Doug Ham and Rebecca Hoolter
8. Worked Department Adjutant to see that Veterans at the CLC, in Miles City and those Veterans in Rehab at VA Fort Harrison also had a Merry Christmas.
9. Appointed American Legion Representative to Greg Gianforte
10. Attended opening of GI Bill exhibit in Helena, Montana along with Department Leadership
11. Represented American Legion, Department of Montana in the presentation of Eagle Award to Mr. Robert Wagner.
12. Participated in local District and Department Level oratory contest.
13. Worked with Stevensville Post and I Fly Big Sky to present photo taken of Stevensville High School and Post members on their Valentine 's Day visit to VA Fort Harrison.

**VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – Miles City
Clancee Collins**

Attended fall conference in Helena 26-29 October 2017. I purchased Thanksgiving holiday decorations for the Community Living Center in Miles City for the

Activities Director from Custer Post #5 allocated funds. I also purchased a printer for one of the residents to use for a writing project he was working on from the same funds.

I coordinated with Custer Post #5 Auxiliary in setting up the Christmas Store and assisted with the residents shopping. Afterwards we wrapped each resident's gifts and sent them to their relatives. There were refreshments and treats served. Nine volunteers and as many staff assisted as needed to make this a very successful event.

Worked with Custer Post #5 PR representative, Carol Prah in procuring funds for the weekly post bingo games at the Community Living Center in Miles City. At the Spring District meeting, District 10 donated \$100.00 and Terry Post #32 contributed another \$100.00. Within a week Carol had received another donation from the Custer County Marine Corps League for \$100.00. These monies as well as the budget provided by Custer Post #5 will have contributed to almost \$600.00 for the American Legion Post #5 weekly bingo for the year.

I contacted the Activities Director monthly to see if they needed any supplies, etc. She informed me that the bingo winnings the residents receive is sometimes the only funds they have, to buy pop or candy.

I contacted the Activities Director in April to see if any of the residents were interested in participating in the 4th of July parade. She told me she would let me know as soon as she was able to arrange transportation for them.

I spoke with Custer Post #5 Auxiliary several times to see if they needed any funds for their monthly lunch program or for coffee and cookies. They informed me that they had adequate funds and supplies for the time being and would let me know if they needed anything.

As of this writing, the Custer County Commissioners have asked for a six-month extension to decide whether they will take over ownership of the VA medical complex in Miles City. If the county declines VA's offer for the property, then it will be sold at public auction to the highest bidder. The VA has notified the county that they could not lease the space in the complex because a portion of the Community Living Center for the Veterans was found to be in the 100-year flood zone. The County Commissioners had counted on the VA to continue to lease the space for the living center and medical clinic. If the VA medical clinic and community

living center cannot lease an adequate building to house both entities somewhere in Miles City, it is believed by one county commissioner that they will have to build a new facility.

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

Kelly Ackerman

I attended the AL Fall Conference October 27-29, 2017. As the Vice-Chairman of the VA&R Commission, I attended the Washington Conference February 25-27, 2018.

As the Vice-Chairman of the VA&R Commission, I participated in conference calls on December 11, 2017 and January 23, 2018 to discuss the agenda for Washington Conference and March 28, 2018 to discuss resolutions to be presented during the Spring NEC meetings.

I participated in a System Worth Saving (SWS) site visit October 23-25, 2017 with Warren Goldstein from AL Headquarters and Steve Kleinglass, a contractor from Minneapolis. In support of the SWS visit, we held a Town Hall meeting at Post 2 in Helena, which was a great success with approximately 50 veterans and VA staff in attendance.

VETERANS ECONOMICS

Byron Erikson

Because Montana is a "frontier" state Montana is not allocated enough money to place veteran representatives at each state employment office. This is because of a formula adopted by the U.S. Department of Labor that does not consider service delivery area. The allocation formula only considers the unemployment rate and number of veterans, of working age, that live in the state.

The DOL/VETS did adopt a practice that promoted the training of a person from Workforce Services offices not having a trained DVOP/LVER on staff. Therefore, a person from a non-veteran representative staffed office receives training at the National Veterans Training Institute in Denver, Colorado (NVTI) at federal expense. The individual may not be a veteran but at least has knowledge of the needs of veterans. It is commendable that the DOL/VETS now promotes the program to assist rural area employment offices.

Highlight: The State of Montana has closed several offices across the state. They will be smaller offices. The cuts in a variety of federal programs is behind this. The unintended consequence is that rural veterans and service members may not receive the local help they need for services.

There are programs implemented by the DOD and federal government to get service members leaving the military certified or licensed in a trade they learned in the military that will transfer to civilian life straight across. It works in certain trades and helps veterans transition into work expeditiously. It is working well in certain trades but difficult in trades that may have different requirements for different states.

Bold initiative needed: Veterans coming home may receive good service from the remaining Job Service offices and the remaining veteran staff (DVOP's), but those staff are limited in the quality of job they can help some veterans obtain. High paying jobs with needed benefits are scarce. Veterans face leaving the state or taking substandard of living jobs.

Right now, many employers are narcotic and uninformed. We need patriots with motivational passion to do the right thing and respond to the needs of those who have given so much.

Initiative proposal: A monumental push nationwide to engage higher quality (pay, benefits and atmosphere) employers to break hiring barriers for veterans. The process can be streamlined, targeted, and all participating will benefit. The American Legion, and other service organizations can petition the DOL/VETS and our congress to hammer it out by providing motivational leadership that does not take no for an answer. Someone with initiative to do the networking necessary to champion for service members and veterans. Too much talk of the past and congressional leaders weak in passion and in their positions allow our veterans to wallow in the sea of apathy.

ESGR (Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve) still helps educate in USERRA law and mediate employer and service member's employment difficulties. They are cutting back on helping service member's employment as there are other organizations that provide that service. Disclaimer: The Ombudsman Director for Montana ESGR is also the author of this report.

Highlight: There are certain employers not patriotic when it comes to supporting their guard and reserve service members. It is not uncommon to find employers trying to pressure the military commanders or service members with retaliation because "they have a business to run." The lack of patriotism by certain employers is appalling and a cause for concern.

There is no priority of referral of veterans by the State of Montana employment offices. Their system brings up veterans first on a file search, but the process used does not do the work of good priority of referral...in my book. Many larger offices utilize email notifications...not phone calls. Orders are not held to give the veterans time to apply for a job before non-veterans. Who reading this will answer with passion enough to make it happen in Montana?

There is a belief that FCJL (those who get federal contracts) employers are required to give veteran preference when hiring for federal contract jobs. They are not. They are required to list with local employment offices or other places where veterans may go to find jobs. They also have other specialty employee recruitment requirements that may not be veterans. They can hire whomever they want, despite qualifications, no matter who applies, or their veteran status. No veteran preference. Poorly written law. The State of Montana's Veteran Preference law lags in practice, and enforcement. The veteran is left to a civil lawsuit at the veterans' expense if harmed. There are examples in the details of this statement. If we want teeth in this law state legislators need to take up the cause and make a state veteran preference law that works.

All in all, veterans are being placed in jobs. Only a low percentage who want to work are not working. Statistically this means the Montana economy is healthy.

Native American Veterans Focus

Reservations still have the highest unemployment rate in Montana. Federal agency hires at the Indian Health Services prioritize maintenance jobs for veterans. This is good, but disturbing as it is limited to this classification.

The closing of rural Job Service offices will also affect certain tribal veterans as they are in rural areas.

VA Benefits for Montana Veterans

Montana Department of Veteran Affairs is doing a great job of assisting veterans with application for medical or disability benefits. They are to be commended. They may be adding more positions but need funding to hire more in rural areas.

Something you may not know: War vets not able to work and having no or low income may be eligible for a non-service connected disability pension through the VA.

Disclosure: Author of this report is a voting member of the Veteran Affairs Board.

Veteran Provider Meetings

There are 9 Veteran Services Provider meetings held in local communities across Montana. Members area able to cross educate about needs of veterans and coordinate local, state, federal, and service organization services. Check out the one closest to you and participate if you can.

Final Note: I have seen good work done by congressional staff in the past, but partisanship cripples any representatives' efforts.

We lack great leadership at top levels to obtain success in getting veterans the employment benefits they deserve.

Veterans and patriotic citizens have economic impact when they stand for the right actions and principles. I did not watch a football game last season and was not going to until they fixed their disrespect of the flag problem. They suffered financially and indeed...should have.

WAYS & MEANS

Bill Applegate

Raffle- I have attended as many gun shows as I could however due to illness I was unable to attend as many as originally intended. I have turned in 15 books and am working on more. There were 2000 tickets printed; which is about 200 books; 145 have been distributed and only 72 returned. We have a laptop computer with printer, 20-gauge shotgun, over under shotgun, and LCP 380 pistol.

Big K- 1000 memberships available at \$25. Drawings for 2017-2018 started January 1st there were 6 drawings with a budgeted amount of \$1100; actual income \$944 compared to last years of \$1569 making the difference a lose of \$625. We paid \$393 out to Post Districts, \$125.50 to Auxiliary Districts, Posts received \$2184.50, Units 756.50, Squadrons 144.50. We have 257 American Legion members, 89 Auxiliary members and 17 SAL members

participating leaving 637 unpurchased membership. For every membership bought from your Post, Unit or Squadron \$8.50 is returned and \$1.50 is returned to the Districts. It is time that we make changes or even eliminate the Big K Membership.

Cash Calendars- we purchased 1,800 calendars- 1764 were distributed and 1,311 have been sold. Printing costs were \$4,300, prizes were \$11,635 and 46 color ads were sold and 7 black and white ads. We budgeted \$11,900 and had an actual profit of \$14,443. The calendar layout for the 2019 calendar will change resulting in less cost to print and only 1700 will be printed this year.

WOMEN'S VETERANS COORDINATOR

Kim Kay C McCarty Martin

After Fall Conference, I started the process of updating the Women Veterans Information Booklet that was put together 2 years ago using information from the American Legion, the Veterans Affairs Health Administration. VAMT's Women Veterans Program Manager Susan Calentine has taken time out of her schedule to help with updates. I contacted Susan Calentine's nurse navigator in January to verify phone numbers to reach Ms. Calentine and how long a vet must wait for a return phone call. Her number is 406-874-5624 and if you leave a message her nurse navigator will make sure the vet is contacted within 48 hours or less. I also called Gynecologist Dr. Bailey's nurse from Billings at the beginning of February. Dr Bailey use to split her time between Billings for 2 weeks, Fort Harrison for 2 weeks and then Sheridan Wyoming. Now Dr. Bailey works 2 weeks at Fort Harrison and 2 weeks at the Billings clinic. Dr. Bailey's phone number in Billings is 406-373-3911 or for her nurse Debat 406-373-3872.

I was able to attend all Spring District meetings except for one. I spoke about the Women Veterans Recognition Luncheons and that everyone is invited at no cost. Topics covered are basically helpful to all veterans and there isn't any cost. I also gave updates on Susan Calentine, Dr. Bailey, and topics to access on the VA website for information for women veterans (cwv). I also visited with the Auxiliary on the Uniform of Legionnaires and the upcoming recognition luncheons. Having a Women Veterans Recognition Luncheon in Glasgow in January had been changed to the spring due to the weather this winter. Plans for this year's Women Veterans Recognition Luncheons were started for

Kalispell on the 5th of May, Forsyth on 12 May, in Billings on the 19th of May, with Missoula on 2 June, and Glasgow on the 9th of June. With donations to cover the costs of the luncheons and individual women vets within the American Legion in MT offering their time and talents, most of the plans have taken shape. The hardest part is trying to get the word out of these events. Word of mouth from the District Meetings with both Legionnaires and the American Legion Auxiliary, along with radio, and newspapers are the methods used to inform female veterans of the Recognition Luncheons.