



AMERICAN
LEGION

Department Commander

Ken Simon

As I sit down to write my final report, I do so with mixed emotions as this has been a Memorable year. Following the footsteps of some very dedicated and hardworking Legionnaires that have been at the helm, has left me humble and appreciative of those who helped me along the way. Our year began with the Fall District Meetings, and I was able to make District 1 in Plentywood and District 10 in Terry. Between the Spring Department Convention in Glasgow and this, the last day of May 2025 I have made several trips around the State.

On July 4th, I participated in the Flag Ceremony, the parade on Main Street, and was asked by Post 58 Commander, Paul McKay, to say a few words at the Dedication of the Veterans Memorial in Plentywood. It was attended by members of the U.S. Border Patrol, Customs & Border Protection Officers, members of the Sheridan County Sheriffs Office, and EMS personnel as well as several members of the community.

I attended a funeral in Big Timber for Past Department Commander Art Sell in July. Art served as the Department Commander from 1999 to 2000.

On July 28th I travelled to Gt Falls to work with Andy Rice, North Central Zone Commander and Vice Commander Kim Kay, to man the Legion Booth at the Montana State Fair. It was an interesting time to be able to meet and visit with the people who stopped by the booth.

August 8th, my wife and I attended the funeral for Past Department Chaplin, VA & R representative, Liaison to Governor Gianforte, and Western Zone Commander, William "Bill" White at the Montana Veterans Cemetery in Helena. Our Montana Legion Family lost a Very Dedicated, Hard-working, well-liked and Valuable member and Friend. Bill will be missed by all who knew and interacted with him during his time with us.

From August 8th to the 29th my wife and I attended the National American Legion Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana. It was an experience to try some of the Cajun Food and also experience Bourbon Street. And we also

had a little rain to keep it interesting during our stay. The Montana Department of the American Legion received the CPR Award which was presented to Commander Lowell Long by the National Commander. On Sept 14th, my wife and



I travelled to Terry Post 32 for a USO Celebration of the 100th Bomb Group from WWII at the invitation of the District Vice Commander, Cynthia Tusler. The individual who took still photographs of the Bomb Groups aircraft with crews and videos of live bomb runs and attacks by German fighters had provided color pictures to the Post. That night one of his sons was present and also other family members, that added to the importance of the evening. If you are ever going by Terry and have a few minutes to spare, I recommend stopping in and going to the Post and view those photographs.

October 6th to the 10th I was in Indianapolis with Adjutant Cunningham to for the Commander and Adjutant meetings. While we were there I was treated to the Ye Stivos program put on by the Adjutants. It was an interesting evening.

Fall Conference was October 22nd to the 27th in Helena. National Commander James A. LaCoursiere Jr. made a visit and participated in a "Be the One Walk" with several members from the Headquarters to the Museum and back. Department Historian Ray Read gave the Commander a guided tour around the museum to several of the displays. The National Honor Society program was held at the East

Department Commander continued

Helena High School with Adjutant Cunningham, ALR Director Carpenter, Department Finance Officer Cummins, and myself. The high light of Commander LeCoursiere's visit, was being the Guest Speaker and also handing out awards to the Inductees.

November 6th and 7th I assisted with the Veterans Job Symposium along with Adjutant Cunningham and Adjutants Assistant Erin Carpenter. During that time, I visited with several people about the "Be the One Program" and its importance to not only the American Legion but the Legion family and all veterans.

Veterans Day, November 11th I was invited by District 1 Commander Jerry Davenport to say a few words. The program was well attended by not only community members but some of the school's students.

On November 12th while in Billings, District 11 Commander Richard Klose invited me to accompany him to Post 315 at Crow Agency for a Post Meeting.

My wife and I were invited to the Post 41 Christmas dinner for a celebration of all Post 41 veterans. There were several veterans that had served in Vietnam and other over seas units, some I had not seen since they or I graduated from high school. It was good to see these men and enjoy the camaraderie as veterans.

I had made plans to attend the 4 Chaplains Ceremony on February 6th, in Helena, however inclement weather prevented me from doing that and the same happened for my fallback ceremony in Laurel.

At the end of February Adjutant Duane Cunningham, NEC Larry Dobb, Legislative Liaison, Roger Hagan, and myself flew to Washington, D.C. to meet with the Montana Legislators; Senators Steve Daines, Tim Sheehy, and Representative Ryan Zinke and Troy Downing. The four of us met with Senators Daines and Sheehy, then Representatives Zinke and Downing in their offices due to scheduling conflicts and discussed veteran's issues and concerns. One aspect of the visit was that I found the office staff in all four offices were very professional, respectful, and accommodating, as well as informed of why we were there. We also got to sit in the Senate Veterans Affairs meeting when National Commander LaCoursiere spoke about veteran's issues.

Spring District Meetings was a challenge across the state due to snowstorms and bad road conditions. I managed to make the district 8 Meeting in Glendive, the District 1 Meeting in Wolf Point, District 5 Meeting in Missoula. District 4 Meeting in Eureka, the District 11 Meeting in Laurel, District 7 meeting in Livingston, and the final District 9 meeting in Harlowton. Overall, the District Commanders held good meetings, however I feel that more Post Officers and members need to make these meetings due to the amount of information that is disseminated.

The Department Oratory was held at East Helena High School on March 29th with four applicants. I was able to hear, meet, and present the awards to all of them. Like the District Meetings, there needs to be more than three, four or five applicants to compete in this program. It's been said before and if we look at how all of you rose to the occasion for the Revitalization, you can also find at least one or two young people to compete in the Oratory Program all the way to the Department.

The end of March I attended the funeral for WWII veteran and fifty-year member of the American Legion, 100-year-old Stan Lindbloom of Sidney. He was about ten days from his one hundred and first birthday. Mr. Lindbloom was honored with a fifty-year certificate by Doug Urig, who was the Western Regional National Vice Commander at the time.

I also attended two joint funerals for two more WWII veterans on May 9th at the National Veterans Cemetery in Laurel, Montana. They were the father and uncle of one of my college friends, Brent Lang who resides in Belgrade. Eric Dryden and myself were asked to be part of this remembrance.

On May 10th I was in Culbertson for the funeral of a very good friend who I had known for forty-eight years, Retired Sergeant Major Leo "Buddy" Waldhausen. Buddy served in the Montana Army National Guard thirty years. I met Buddy when I worked for Roosevelt County and also as an Officer in the Montana National Guard.

On April 12th was the American Legion Riders Department Legion College which was held in the auditorium at Ft Harrison. The program was put together by Legion College graduate and Dean, District 10 Commander Irene Dickerson, assisted by National officers Ken Nadeau and Ken George, Dean of the National American Legion College. Congratulations to all of the American Legion Riders who attended the ALR Legion College. Your attendance reflects your desire, dedication, and willingness to step up and learn more about the American Legion.

Thank You for your attendance.

In April I had surgery in Billings that prevented me from traveling more. I appreciated the many people who knew or found out and sent me Get Well Wishes on my phone or called me. Your support and understanding were greatly appreciated. I was unable to participate physically in the Revitalization; however, I made phone calls – checked post rosters and added four people who were expired to our total. I would like to Congratulate ALL of you for your Dedication, Willingness to help, or make phone calls. This Montana Team Effort resulted in you blowing by what National had for a goal as well as what the Adj and Adj's Asst set – with a total of 145+ new, renewed or transferred members which set a new standard for the rest of the Nation for Revitalizations – Thank You.

Department Commander continued

To Erin and Duane, Great Job of putting the plan together and organizing things.

I am both Humbled and Proud to have served as your Department Commander this past year. Thank You is not enough; however, you have given me memories to carry with me down the road. I intend to continue to support and be involved in the Department as the Immediate Past Department Commander and on down the road after that. There are so many of you to Thank and you all know who you are – so again, My Heartfelt Thank you for all you did during my year as Commander.

Department Adjutant

Duane Cunningham

It continues to be an honor to serve as the Department Adjutant for the American Legion Department of Montana. This past year has been a strong reflection of what commitment, collaboration, and vision can accomplish when driven by dedicated Legionnaires.

From an administrative standpoint, we have maintained consistency in our internal policies and procedures while working to improve clarity in employee roles, expectations, and support systems. Our office staff has remained steadfast in their responsibilities, contributing to the day-to-day efficiency of the department and ensuring that communication and logistical efforts run smoothly.

It is important to take a moment and speak directly to the seriousness of maintaining our responsibilities as a business entity. The Department Headquarters is not just a post office box or a gathering space it is the operational core of a nonprofit organization that must fully comply with the laws of the State of Montana. This includes but is not limited to adherence to labor laws, employee rights, and fair and lawful compensation practices. As Legionnaires, we pride ourselves on service and honor. That same integrity must be reflected in how we manage and treat our employees. Expectations must be clear, professional standards must be upheld, and our workplace must remain one where legal compliance is not optional it is required.

This year, Montana has once again demonstrated the power of teamwork and perseverance. A round of applause is due to each of our program chairs, whose leadership and tireless energy brought to life some of the most successful events we've seen in recent memory. Whether it was Boys State, Oratorical, Baseball, or countless local and district programs, your work is

what keeps our mission thriving across generations. Congratulations are also in order for the outstanding revitalization efforts across the state. This year's campaign

brought together volunteers, community members, and Legionnaires in a way that truly showcased what Montana is capable of when we come together to serve our veterans and communities. New members were welcomed, dormant Posts were engaged, and our visibility within towns and cities across the state was reignited with pride.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to our Finance Committee, whose dedication and long hours have not gone unnoticed. Their commitment to becoming true stewards of our budget and resources has laid a solid foundation for financial responsibility and future planning. Their efforts help ensure that our programs are well-supported and that the Department remains fiscally healthy for years to come.

As we look ahead, I remain confident in our direction and proud of the shared progress we've made. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.



Vice Commander

Kim Kay

A hardy thank you to everyone who participated in any way with the state wide revitalization in May. There were many events put on by different Districts during the weekend of 16 May, including the Women's Symposium. Thank you for the phone calls, door knocking, and comradery shown to fellow veterans. National Vice-Commander Leach and Michele Steinmetz from National did some door knocking in the Helena area along with Department Adjutant Duane Cunningham. The weekend goal was to receive 86 new members or renewed members in 3 days and with your diligence, hard work, and enthusiasm we surpassed that goal. Your dedication added 135 members to our roster! Thank you for your can do spirit!

On November 4th, 2024, I was invited to attend Power Post 103's American Legion Boys State, American Legion Auxiliary Girls State (ALBSLAGS) Dinner. Every year they invite the Junior Class to a Dinner held at their post where ALBSLAGS is discussed. It was well attended and the food was delicious.

One of the responsibilities of the Department Vice-Commander is to attend the Western Caucus monthly membership meetings via zoom with Western Vice-Commander Gary Leach. This is an opportunity for each Department in the west to hear what the other 13 states and 2 other countries are doing for membership. It has given me perspective on how important membership is not only at the state level but at the national level as well.

8 February 2025, I attended Lori Noble's Funeral in Ronan, MT. Lori, late wife of NEC-Alternate Glen Sharbano, was very active in the Auxiliary throughout the state. Years ago, when I was the Woman Veterans Coordinator, the women Legionnaires made her an Honorary Woman Veteran for her assistance and support with the Women Veterans Recognition Luncheons.

There was a lot of work and time spent putting together an ALBSLAGS Fundraiser Dinner in Helena on the 12th of February. Department and Auxiliary worked diligently in gathering together congressional members and businesses throughout the state in an informational event with silent auction and wonderful food. The money raised will be used for the program that will be held at Carol College this year in June. As I listened to the speakers, I became more aware of how this Legion and Auxiliary program influences the junior youth now and in their careers in the future, including getting 5 extra points on their service academy application.

I attended a variety of The American Legion Training Tuesdays zoom meetings including Be The One on suicide prevention and resolution writing. If you ever get the time to go online for Training Tuesday, I highly recommend

it. The topics range from how to hold a Post meeting to information on Service Animals. They are held on the last Tuesday of every month on Legion.org at 5pm and last about a hour. If you're interested but cannot attend, it can be accessible online under Training Tuesdays previously recorded sessions.

In March, I spent over a week emailing the Department's expiring members from post 1 to post 46 and post 120 to post 341. I greatly appreciated the help from Vice-Commander nominees Ireen Dickerson, Linda Cousineau, and Andy Rice with emailing post 47 to post 119 as there was a lot of emails. I also made numerous phone calls with those who didn't have an email address.

Along with the Department Commander Ken Simon, Department Adjutant Duane Cunningham, Bill Cummings and others from Montana American Legion, I was invited to a reception at Governor Gianforte's house in Helena. There were Legislative members there and those from different veterans' organizations, all who support veterans and the military. I enjoyed mingling with those present and engaged with a few about our American Legion programs. On the 29th of March, I attended the Department Oratory Contest at East Helena High School. There were 5 contestants this year and as a judge, we had a hard time scoring the students as they were very articulate and well informed about the American Constitution.

District meetings were held in March and April. I was able to attend all the Districts except District 2 as it was held on the same day as District 10. It was great to see everyone and I enjoyed meeting old and new friends. With the Post reports during the District meetings, I was able to hear how active posts are in their area and gained some ideas that my post can try to engage within the community.

On the 12th of April, I attended American Legion Rider College held at Fort Harrison. The instructors were from National and both are Legion Riders. Brian Carpenter, ALR Director, put together a good program.

I assisted Malmstrom Post 341 on the 25-27 April with a booth at the gun show in Great Falls. We sold the cash calendars and raffle tickets for the tandem kayak along with telling show attendees about The American Legion and our programs.

With Post 341, we went to CMR High School, Great Falls High, and Scouting Troop 007 promoting ALBSLAGS program. We talked with the leaders and youth of Troop 007 at a meeting days before talking to a few students with the guidance counselor at CMR and setting up a booth for career day at Great Falls High.

On the 2nd of May, I assisted Malmstrom Post 341 with a Poppie table at Super 1 Foods and Smiths Grocery in Great falls. This is their main fundraiser of the year where the money goes to ALBSLAGS and other youth programs. I attended the Women's Symposium on the 16th of May to

Vice Commander continued

the 18th of May. On Friday, I made numerous phone calls to transfer members to local posts. The symposium was well attended and some of the break out sessions made an impact with the attendees, especially the self defense class and fly tying. We had opportunities to get to know each other and tell stories which made the event all the more worth attending.

On 26 May, I participated in Memorial Day services hosted by Vaughn Legion Post 130 at Fort Shaw and Sun River Valley cemeteries. We held services at 9, 10, and 11 where I was part of the Honor Guards firing squad. It was an honor being able to participate in the small communities showing their respects to all those who paid the ultimate price. Afterwards, I stopped by the Manchester Cemetery where Post 341 had put flags on the veterans' graves. I arrived a little before the Marine Corp held their Memorial Day Ceremony at 1230. Then I attended the Memorial Day Ceremony at the Veterans Memorial in Great Falls at 2pm.

I've communicated with Commander Simon via e-mail and phone on numerous occasions as I have done with our Department Adjutant Duane and Erin. I've communicated with our hard-working Zone and District Commanders about membership, and congratulated Posts for their achievements in membership goals.

I put out a challenge for membership that the first District reaching 75% in membership gets Scouting Popcorn. District 2 reached the 75% target first. Congratulations, I hope the popcorn tasted good!

I had another challenge that challenged all posts – the first post to reach 100% in each District would receive \$100, so the posts who made these membership goals are as follows:

District 1 - Post 85 Bainville; District 2 – Post 67 Rocky Boy; District 3 – Post 37 Conrad; District 4 - Post 426 Lakeside; District 5 – Post 125 Drummond; District 6 – Post 42 Townsend; District 8 – Post 133 Cascade; District 9 – Post 120 Winifred; District 10 – Post 114 Fairview; and District 11 – Post 100 Park City.

With all the outpouring of your hard work, diligence and dedication, our department has risen in the ranks from 38th position in National rankings to 32nd with 91.14%. Thank you very much!

Join Us in Tampa Bay for the 106th National Convention

The American Legion's 106th National Convention will take place from August 22–28, 2025, in sunny Tampa, Florida. This annual event is an incredible opportunity for members to engage in the business of The American Legion, connect with fellow Legionnaires from across the country, and celebrate our shared mission of service to veterans, their families, and our communities.

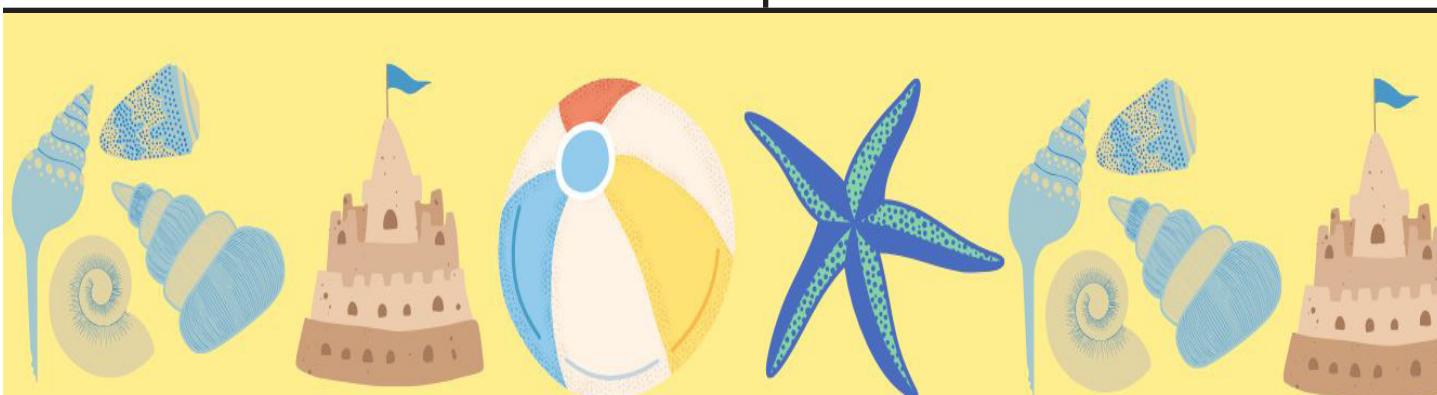
Montana delegates will stay at the Hyatt Place Downtown Tampa, located at 325 N. Florida Ave., just 13 blocks from the Tampa Convention Center. Shuttle services will be available between the hotel and the convention venue for your convenience. Delegates are required to stay at the designated convention hotel. Room rates start at \$131 per night for double occupancy, with additional charges for triple and quad occupancies. Please note that valet parking is \$29 per day, with no self-parking options available.

Members interested in attending must request registration forms from Department Headquarters by emailing amlegmtsec@gmail.com. Completed forms must be submitted at the Department Convention in Helena, scheduled for June 20–22, 2025. All convention registrations are due prior to the Department Convention, with deposits required by July 1.

If you plan to attend the prestigious National Commander's Banquet, make sure to submit your \$70 payment by March 20, 2025. This non-refundable payment ensures your seat at one of the convention's highlight events. Banquet tickets are only non-refundable, so we encourage early reservations to secure your attendance. Details about the entertainment for the banquet will be announced soon.

The National Convention promises to be an exciting and memorable experience for all attendees. Don't miss this opportunity to represent Montana and contribute to the important work of The American Legion.

For more information, contact Department Headquarters or visit the American Legion's National Convention website.



WORKING FOR ALL LEGIONNAIRES

Hello, fellow Legionnaires! My name is Irene Dickerson, and I am running for Vice Commander of the American Legion Department of Montana. I'm a retired Army officer with 30 years of active duty and Reserve service, including deployments to Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan, retiring in 2013. I've been a Legion member since 2014, serving as Adjutant for Post 524 in Texas and currently as District 10 Commander in Southeast Montana. I also serve as the Dean of Montana American Legion College and the Department's Woman Veterans Coordinator.

I am committed to growing the American Legion College, increasing female veteran involvement, and expanding Montana's membership through training, outreach, and community engagement. My leadership philosophy is rooted in teamwork, open-mindedness, and problem-solving, with a focus on ensuring The American Legion remains impactful and relevant.

I look forward to working with you to strengthen our mission.



Lowell Long, Alternate NEC



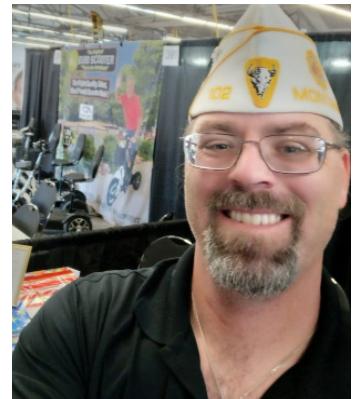
He has served in the following leadership positions in the American Legion and SAL. Post 48 Commander and Adjutant, District 2 Commander and Adjutant, North Central Zone Commander, Department Vice Commander, Department Commander, Squadron 48 Adjutant, North Central Zone Commander, Detachment Commander, and SAL Alternate NEC.

He has served on many Department and National Committees including Boys State Committee, Oratorical Scholarship Committee, the Centennial Committee, the Conventional Armed Forces Committee at National and the Membership Training and Development Committee for the Sons of the American Legion at National.

I look forward to continuing to serve the Department of Montana and represent our Department at the National Level. Please Vote for Lowell Long for Alternate NEC at our Department Convention this June in Helena.

Greetings fellow Legionnaires! Many of you know me, but for those that do not my name is Andrew Rice and I am currently serving as the North Central Zone Commander. During the fall conference I officially announced my campaign to run for Department Vice Commander. First, I will start with a little history about me. I am 39 years old and served a total of 8 years in the US Army and Army National Guard. During that span I deployed to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom 5-7. Early into my military career, my father, Hal Rice, was insistent that I join the American Legion and I have now been a member of this great organization for 21 years. Over the course of my time in the American Legion I have served and am currently serving as the Post 102 commander in Geraldine. I have also been the district 8 commander before moving into the zone commander position for my respective area. Each position I have held has been greatly enjoyable and a fulfilling experience and I have also been at the forefront of our push to be more visible in the public and helping the department to implement some of the ideas that have been put forth. Other positions I currently have are the Squadron 102 commander in Geraldine and I am also serving as the Detachment Commander for the SAL.

Now a bit about my reasoning to want to run for the Department Vice Commander position. Many talks have been had about wanting to infuse some youth into the organization and I find myself in a unique position that I can relate to our existing membership in many ways but also understand the mentality of the younger veterans across the state and some of the things they are looking for. During my time manning booths at the fairs and talking to veterans in public I have been able to recruit and have meaningful talks with many of the veterans from Malmstrom Air Force Base and other communities. Much of this falls into my vision for the American Legion and it falls into just three words: Unity, Family and Mission. Unity in that we work together to reach our goals. Family that we work together across the board. The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, and the Legion Riders are the family and as a family we are so much stronger together. As we know, family does not always agree with each other but we can always work out our differences to focus on the third word; mission. The mission is always to be there for our veterans. Whether they are a member or not, we are there for our veterans. For me this is an amazing organization to belong to and I end this with my solemn promise to give this organization and our members and veterans my absolute full effort and attention to keep it as strong and amazing as possible.



PDC Richard A. Klose Sr. for NEC

Fellow Legionnaires,

I am honored to announce my candidacy for National Executive Committeeman (NEC) to represent Montana at the National NEC meetings.

As a proud resident of Laurel in south-central Montana, I am centrally located and well-positioned to travel throughout the state, assisting the Department wherever and whenever needed.

With my experience as a member of the National Membership and Post Activities (M&PA) Committee, I have gained valuable insight into the workings and responsibilities at the National level. This experience has prepared me to effectively advocate for Montana's interests and contribute to the success of our Legion programs.

I humbly ask for your support and your vote at our 2025 Department Convention. Together, we can strengthen our mission and ensure Montana's voice is heard.

**RICHARD A
KLOSE SR.**
NATIONAL EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEE



Vote For Me

Department Commander



KIM KAY C MCCARTY MARTIN



**AMERICAN
LEGION**

VOTE

Linda Cousineau

Department Vice Commander



"Life is forever changing"

I'm 110% ready for our next change

15 year member

My goal as Vice Commander is to help develop a good Legion Family working relationship in all posts. When the post, unit, and squadron all work together sharing ideas, brainstorming and networking, you will all become a stronger force to be reckoned with. This strength will unify your Legion Family and hopefully help you become successful in your goals; ie. membership and taking care of veterans and their families. Remember to include all Legion Family members and non-Legion veterans and their families.

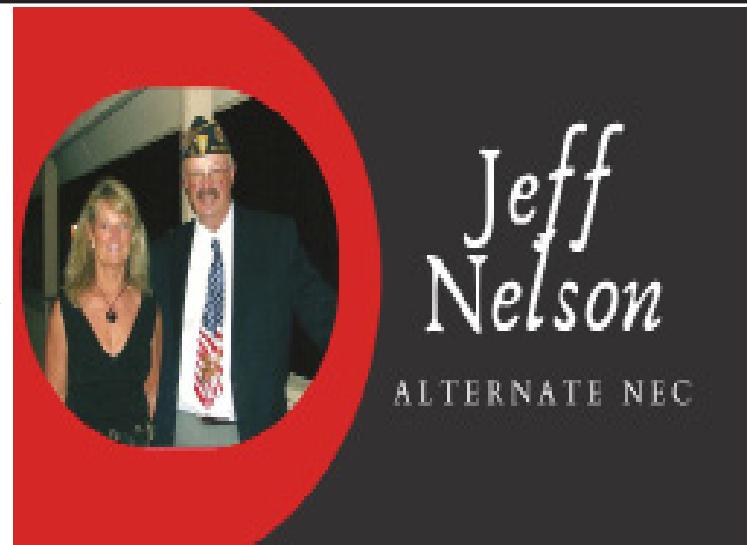
As my campaign motto states, "Life is forever changing". We need to start thinking outside the norm. With Legion members becoming harder to recruit and retain, we need to utilize every resource available including Auxiliary and Sons of the Legion. They all have different perspectives on how they see and think to solve challenges. Let's embrace that difference, be inclusive and overcome our challenges on the road to success together.

I will bring leadership experience, diversity and commitment to the Vice Commander position in support of our entire Legion Family.

Jeff Nelson

I am running for the position of Alternate NEC and would like your support. My background includes 2 years as Montana Dept. Commander, serving through the covid years, Named Commander of the year by National as the highest ranking Commander for surpassing goal in membership 2019, Being Montana SAL Commander the following year, Having attended 14 National conventions and meeting many delegates from all areas of the United States and served on numerous committees with them.

I feel it is a time for trust and transparency from our leaders and am asking your support in seeking this position.



Raymond Read, Department Historian

I am announcing my candidacy for re-election as the Department Historian for the year 2025-2026, This would be my 22nd year in that elected position. Previous position I have held. Past Commander of American Legion Post 2, Department Shooting Sports Chair, Department Homeless Veterans chair, 100 Anniversary Committee Chair and Department Adjutant 2001-2003. I have been a continuous member of the American Legion since 1983.



“Inspire, Train, Learn”

VOTE

Glen Sharbono

**National Executive Committee
2025-2027**

Post Adjutant 2014-2025

Post Vice Commander 2015-2017

Post Commander 2018-2021/2022-2025

American Legion Family Ribbon

Post Excellence Award

Post and District Oratory Chairman

District Vice Commander/Adjutant

Merv Gunderson Award

District Commander

2017 Graduate American Legion Basic Training

2017 Graduate of Montana Legion College

2017 Graduate of The National American Legion College

Dean of The Montana Legion College

Department Vice Commander

Department Commander



Glen Sharbono



Alternate NEC Member currently serving since 2023 and trained to be your next National Executive Committee Member!

National Executive Committee (N.E.C.)

Larry Dobb

The National Executive Committee (NEC) of The American Legion convened its annual Spring Meetings on May 7–8, 2025, at the National Headquarters in Indianapolis. Preparatory sessions, including commission and committee meetings, were held May 5–6 at the Sheraton City Centre Hotel.

During this session, the NEC reviewed and approved 18 resolutions covering a range of topics, including national security, veteran benefits, commemorative initiatives, and organizational policy.

II. Summary of Key Resolutions

Below is a summary of selected resolutions passed by the NEC during the May 2025 meetings. All 18 resolutions are available for public access in the American Legion Digital Archive.

A. National Security and Foreign Affairs

Resolution No. 1 – Ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)
Urges the U.S. Senate to ratify UNCLOS in support of American national security interests and to strengthen U.S. influence over international maritime law.

B. Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation

Resolution No. 2 – Adjustment of Specially Adaptive Housing Grants
Calls on the Department of Veterans Affairs, Congress, and federal agencies to adjust the Specially Adaptive Housing grant amounts to reflect increased construction and modification costs for homes of disabled veterans.
Resolution No. 9 – Recognition of Post-9/11 Domestic Responder Health Conditions
Requests that the Department of Defense, Department of Veterans Affairs, and Congress formally recognize service-related health conditions among 9/11 domestic responders at the Pentagon, Shanksville, and Ground Zero as presumptive for benefits and care.

C. Commemorative and Patriotic Programs

Resolution No. 5 – America 250 Commission Participation
Encourages Legion departments and posts to actively engage with their state-level America 250 Commissions in anticipation of the United States' 250th anniversary.

Resolution No. 6 – Commemoration of Service Branch Sesquicentennials

Promotes participation in planned observances of the 250th anniversaries of the United States Army, Navy, and Marine Corps.

D. Children and Youth Programs

Resolution No. 14 – Increase in Temporary Financial Assistance (TFA) Grant Limits

Increases the maximum TFA grant from \$1,500 to \$2,500 for children of active-duty military personnel or American Legion members who are experiencing financial hardship.

III. Additional Topics Addressed

While only highlights are listed above, the NEC also passed resolutions on:

Organizational policy and procedure

Education and youth engagement

Veteran employment and homelessness

Legislative priorities and federal relations

A full list of the resolutions can be found at the American Legion Digital Archive: <https://archive.legion.org>

IV. Conclusion

The Spring 2025 NEC meetings reaffirmed The American Legion's commitment to legislative advocacy, patriotic education, and veterans' welfare. The 18 resolutions adopted reflect broad support for adapting benefits to current needs, promoting national unity through commemorative efforts, and strengthening the voice of veterans in national policy.

For further information or detailed resolution text, departments and members are encouraged to visit the official archive or contact National Headquarters.

***I HAVE HARD COPIES OF ALL**



Chaplain

Dorothy Goodwin

Since Fall Conference there hasn't been much going on. I have sent out several sympathy cards, was going to do a 4 Chaplain ceremony but was sick from the middle of January to March. The month of February being the worst of it. For Memorial Day I had performed the prayer for the Polson Hardwick Post 112. I have had the privilege of doing several position but this position had the most meaning for me as I was also thinking of my 4 uncles who served in the military before me and have all passed.

Here at State Department Convention, I pass on the position to the selected Legion member by the New Department Commander.

Take care, call me if you need any help as I am still learning this job also.

Service Officer and VA and R

Eric Beals

BRIDGING THE GAP: ENHANCING OUTREACH TO SUPPORT VETERANS' MENTAL HEALTH

- S. 609: Building Resources and Access for Veterans' Mental Health Engagement (BRAVE) Act
- To improve mental health services of the Department of Veterans Affairs and for other purposes (American Legion supports this act)
- S. 1139: HOPE for Heroes Act
- To amend the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019 to modify and reauthorize the Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes. (American Legion supports this act)
- S. 793: A bill to amend the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019 to modify and reauthorize the Staff Sergeant Parker Gordon Fox Suicide Prevention Grant Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (American Legion supports this act)
- S. 1361: Every State Counts for Vets Mental Health Act
- To require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to give priority in the consideration of suicide prevention grants to entities located in States that have not received such a grant, and for other purposes. (American Legion supports this act as currently written)

EXAMINING VA EFFORTS TO DECREASE DELAYS IN VETERANS' DISABILITY ON COMPENSATION CLAIMS

- The following were the American Legion's recommendations
- Adopt best practices seen within the St. Petersburg RO that utilizes AI to improve employee productivity, eliminate redundancy, and increase morale
- Urge VA to leverage its oversight ability to hold contracted examiners accountable. DBQs should be filled out in their entirety to ensure all claims are processed and always completed thoroughly for every veteran
- Formalize and expand the Overdevelopment Reduction Taskforce with representation from field level employees

and stakeholders like Veteran Service Organizations

- Tap into VSOs like The American Legion as partners in training delivery.
- Clarify the adjudication procedures to separate presumptive claims processing guidance from standard direct service connection guidance
- Expand in person training opportunities for VBA employees, especially those in rural areas or remote territories like The United States Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico to attend 10 stateside training programs
- Conduct a national internal audit to evaluate the correlation between training delivery methods and claims accuracy

-March 2025

PENDING AND DRAFT LEGISLATION

- S. 124 – Restore VA Accountability Act of 2025
- To amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for disciplinary procedures for supervisors and managers at the Department of Veterans Affairs and to modify the procedures of personnel actions against employees of the Department, and for other purposes. (American Legion supports this act as currently written)
- S. 275 – ACCESS Act of 2025
- To improve the provision of care services under the Veterans Community Care Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes. (American Legion supports this act as currently written)
- S. 410 – Love Lives On Act of 2025
- To amend titles 10 and 38, United States Code, to improve benefits and services for surviving spouses, and for other purposes. (American Legion supports this act as currently written)
- S. 478 – Veterans 2nd Amendment Protection Act of 2025
- To amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit the Secretary of Veterans Affairs from transmitting certain information to the Department of Justice for use by the national instant criminal background check system . (American Legion supports this act as currently written)
- Draft Legislation – Veterans' Claims Act
- To amend title 38, United States Code, to reinstate criminal penalties for persons charging veterans unauthorized fees relating to claims for benefits under the laws admin-

Service Officer continued

administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes. (This draft legislation contains both provisions The American Legion would support and oppose based on our current resolution. Therefore, The American Legion has no official position but recommends changes.)

-Draft Legislation – Veterans Mental Health and Addiction Therapy Quality of Care Act

-To require a study on the quality-of-care difference between mental health and addiction therapy care provided by health care providers of the Department of Veterans Affairs compared to non Department providers, and for other purposes. (The American Legion supports the Veterans Mental Health and Addiction Therapy Quality of Care Act as currently written.)

-Governing Unaccredited Representatives Defrauding VA Benefits Act (GUARD)

-To amend title 38, United States Code, to reinstate penalties for persons charging veterans unauthorized fees relating to claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes. (American Legion supports this legislation)

-Preserving Lawful Utilization of Services for Veterans Act of 2025 (PLUS)

-To amend title 38, United States Code, to permit certain fee agreements between claimants and agents or attorneys for the preparation, presentation, or prosecution of initial claims for benefits under the laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes (American Legion opposes this legislation)

-February 2025

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: EVALUATING VA COMMUNITY CARE

-A meeting was held to evaluate the MISSION Act of 2018

Judge Advocate**Tim Fox**

Greetings to all my Legionnaire friends and colleagues. Much has happened in the world since our 2024 Fall Conference, and our Montana Legionnaires have been busy too.

ASSISTING POSTS

In November 2024, I worked with a committee to review some complaints made against a Post. After the committee thoroughly investigated the issues, the committee had a Zoom meeting with Post leadership to discuss the Post's take on the issues, and to discuss resolution of the issues. Among the issues discussed were the American Legion's strict rules prohibiting

-January 2025

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS' COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM

-A discussion the impact of the Community care program and the American Legions efforts to assist in matters

-December 2024

PENDING AND DRAFT LEGISLATION

-H.R. 214 – Veterans True Choice Act – Rep. Steube (R-FL)

To amend title 10, United States Code, to provide eligibility for TRICARE Select to veterans with service-connected disabilities, and for other purposes. (American Legion opposes this legislation)

-H.R. 3176 – Veterans Health Care Freedom Act – Rep. Biggs (R-AZ)

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to carry out a pilot program to improve the ability of veterans to access medical care in medical facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs and in the community by providing the veterans the ability to choose health care providers. (The American Legion opposes as currently drafted)

-H.R. 8481 – Emergency Community Care Time Adjustment Act of 2024

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish an extended deadline for the submission of applications regarding emergency treatment furnished in non-Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities, and for other purposes. (The American Legion supports as currently drafted.)

-H.R. X (Bost) – Complete the Mission Act of 2024

To improve the provision of care and services under the Veterans Community Care Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and for other purposes. (The American Legion supports as currently drafted.)

Legion members from directly or indirectly soliciting honor guard honorarium payments from the families of the deceased or from funeral homes.

AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES UPDATE

In January, I reviewed a revised American Legion Riders SOP.

REVISIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

I worked with Constitution and Internal Affairs Committee of the DEC over the course of the winter months on making much needed revisions to the Department's Constitution and Bylaws, the Boys State Bylaws, and the Uniform Code of Procedure for

Disciplinary Actions.

BOYS STATE AND AUXILIARY GIRLS STATE ALUMNI FUND-RAISING BANQUET

On February 12, I was a keynote speaker at the inaugural Boys State and Auxiliary Girls State Alumni Fundraising Banquet at the Delta Colonial Hotel in Helena. Among other things, I spoke about my time as a Boy Stater in 1975. The banquet was a success and a lot of fun. I look forward to next year's banquet.

NAVY-ARMY FOOTBALL GAME

On December 14, 2024, I was happy to watch Navy beat Army 31 to 13. Go Navy!!

SCAM E-MAILS

Like many of you, I continue to

Judge Advocate continued

receive e-mail messages from scammers. Many of the e-mails appear initially to be legitimate, but on closer inspection they are scams. Some scam e-mails appear to be from our fellow Legionnaires, and some appear to be from

Historian**Ray Read**

Upon my return from the 105th National American Legion Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana, I would like to emphasize the following for post commanders and any appointed post/district Historians about the processes for preparing Post/District Histories. During the 2023-24 Montana Department Convention in Lewistown, Montana, no post histories were submitted to participate in the annual post history contest, the second year in a row. During this year there is an opportunity for Montana American Legion posts to submit histories for the annual post history categories for a one-year post narrative history, or one-year post yearbook based on the 2025 Historians' guidance.

The Department of Montana supports the preparation of annual Post histories to instill the process in the various aspects of the post/district operations throughout the membership year. The American Legion strongly encourages the preparation of post histories. Such information on the Post's activities will be of considerable value in subsequent years.

National Headquarters and I am aware that a professional historian does not normally fill the position of historian in most posts. This need not prevent a proper recording of the Post's activities.

The scope of information included is the main consideration, keeping in mind, however, comprehensiveness, readability, and arrangement, to make history both an interesting account of the post and a reference source.

I was not able to attend many of the District meetings due to a reduction in the travel budget instituted by the Department of Montana. However, the Department historian program has been working behind the scenes to support the American Legion History, and I am actively working to increase my interface with the efforts of the various posts. To assist American Legion Family organizations to commemorate the 80th anniversary of World War II the following Senate Joint Resolution was approved by the 67th Annual Montana Legislative Assembly.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 20
INTRODUCED BY M. CUFFE, and E. BYRNE

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA RECOGNIZING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE END OF WORLD WAR II AND MON-

established companies like Norton Anti-Virus, PayPal, and Glacier Bank. It's always best to think twice before clicking on links or downloading attachments from any e-mail you receive.

TANA'S VETERANS OF THAT WAR.**American Legion National History Contest**

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

American Legion National History Contest Guidance

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

Department will be able to submit:

- 1 one-year digital Department history for contest (these entries will be judged and showcased on the online exhibit)
- 1 one-year hard-copy Post history for showcase (these entries will be showcased at National Convention)
- 1 one-year digital Post history for showcase (these entries will be showcased on the online exhibit)

Entries in the department digital contest should consist of one PDF file not to exceed 100MB and should be submitted digitally no later than Aug. 1, 2025. Submission details, including the website for submission, will be provided directly to Department Adjutants via communication from the national historian.

Post submissions for the national showcase (digital and hard copy) need to be received by the national library no later than Aug. 8, 2025. Submission details, including the website for digital submissions, will be provided to the Department Adjutants via communication from the national historian.

For further information go to the: National History Contest and Showcase

Information: <http://legionhistoryshowcase.omeka.net/exhibit/shoe/2025entries-contest-and-showcase-info> The American Legion 2025 Historians Guide can be accessed at: <http://talwha.org/wp-contest/uploads/2025/01-Historian-Guide.pdf>.



SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION



Montana SAL Detachment Softball Tournament

• September 5-7, 2025

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

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

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

Homerun Derby – Friday, September 5th

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

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

Register your team today!

Contact: Detachment of Montana

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



40 & 8



2025 National Box Car Fundraiser

Grande Du Montana has again been limited in the number of 2025 National Box Car Pins provided by The National Box Car program. To qualify to apply for the annual maintenance fund our Grande must raise a minimum of \$150 dollars in pin sales and other donations. This year the fundraiser will include the limited pin sales (100), the National Crew Card (100) and the Second Chance Cards (50).

Buy a 2026 National Box Car Association Pin pictured below. Price is \$5.00. The Grand will retain \$2.00 for support of the Box Car and its programs. SO, Buy a 2025 Crew Card for \$5.00 and become eligible for a cash drawings totaling \$225, with \$100 for first draw; \$75 for 2nd draw and \$50 for third draw. Only 100 cards are available. Announcement! This year we are again conducting a Second Chance Drawing which will generate cash prizes of \$75 for First Draw; \$50 for Second Draw and \$25 for Third Draw. Only 50 cards are Available. After Pin and cards sales are complete funds generated necessary funds will be returned to Nationale to pay for the Pins and cards and the remainder will be placed in support of the Maintenance and upgrade of the Montana MERCI CAR located at the Montana Military Museum at Fort Harrison. Montana's Car marked its 75th Anniversary in October 2024.

Buy and proudly wear the 2025 National Box Car Association Pin and associated cards with proceeds going to support the maintenance and enhancement of the Montana MERCI CAR

Drawing will occur at the 40 & 8 Social in Helena, Montana during the 2025 American Legion/40 & 8 Convention.

Also, Grand du Montana is selling pins for the 40 & 8 for the Child Welfare program. The prices for the pins is \$5.00 and the proceeds will go to this program. We only have an allocation of 80 pins for 2025. Proceeds go to support our on-going Nurses Training Scholarship. This has averaged \$500 per year since inception. 1955-2025 68 years x \$500 = \$35,000. Only 80 pins available.

\$25.00 for all five items! For great causes!!

Members of 40 & 8 have pins and cards. Please contact: Larry Steele, Linda Cousineau, Eddy White, Jed Damson, Lowell Long, Dick Ellwein, Kim Kay McCarty Martin, Don Jones, or me for details. Thank you!

Ray Read 406-458-9847 or 406-235-0290 or e-mail myfun51@msn.com Stay Safe! Also approach any of the Grand Officers or the voiture Cheminots.



**Order Form American Legion Department of
Montana
Glassware Sets**

Support the American Legion by purchasing a set of custom glasses featuring our Family Logos!

Product Details:

- **Beer Pint Glass Set (4 glasses) - \$40**
- **Whiskey Glass Set (4 glasses) - \$40**

Each set features the official American Legion Family Logos, making them perfect for gifts or personal use!

Customer Information:

- **Name:** _____
- **Address:** _____
- **Phone:** _____
- **Email:** _____

Order Details:

Item	Quantity	Price per Set	Total Price
Beer Pint Glass Set	_____	\$40	_____
Whiskey Glass Set	_____	\$40	_____

Subtotal: \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

Payment Method:

Check (Payable to American Legion of Montana)

Credit/Debit add 4% processing fee

<input type="checkbox"/>	Visa
<input type="checkbox"/>	MasterCard
<input type="checkbox"/>	Discover
<input type="checkbox"/>	Amex

Account #									
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Expires:
____ / ____ / ____

CVV#		
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CALL TO CONVENTION

GREETINGS

The 106TH Annual Convention of The American Legion, Department of Montana is hereby called to meet and assemble at Helena, Montana June 20, 21, 22 2025 to transact and consider such matters as are included in this call and any other business which may properly come before it.

PURPOSE

The Convention is called for the purpose of electing officers to the ensuing year, electing delegates to the National Convention, amending the Department Constitution, presentation of annual reports, and the transactions of such other business as may be brought before it in conformity with the provisions of the National and Department Constitution.

BASIS OF REPRESENTATION

Representation in the Convention will be by Posts. Each Post in good standing shall be entitled to two delegates and two alternates and in addition shall be entitled to one delegate and one alternate for each one hundred members, or major fraction thereof, whose dues have been received by the Department thirty days prior to the date of the Convention, or May 29, 2024. A Post, to be in good standing must have a minimum of ten paid members and no indebtedness to the Department.

CREDENTIALS

Posts shall submit to Department Headquarters in Helena prior to June 15, the names of delegates and alternates. Cards for voting delegates will be in the Convention office. Each Post delegation should select a Chairman prior to departure of delegates for the Convention.

DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A regular meeting of the committee will be held on Thursday, June 19, 2025 at 3:15 P.M. The first stated meeting of the Department Executive Committee following the Department Convention will be held immediately upon adjournment of the Convention. The term of office of the newly elected members will commence immediately with the adjournment of the Convention.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

All Department Officers and District Commanders will be sworn into office at the conclusion of the session on Sunday morning, June 22, 2025 and will automatically become members of the Department Executive Committees.

Any inquiries for information with reference to the Convention will be answered from Department Headquarters.



THE AUXILIARY SERVICE STAR



Montana ALA Thrilled to Welcome ALA National President Trish Ward

The American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) Department of Montana is buzzing with excitement as it prepares to host National President Trish Ward. As the 2024–2025 National President, Trish Ward has launched an inspiring campaign to strengthen grassroots membership and bolster unit vitality across the United States. The Big Sky State looks forward to embracing her with open arms.

A Vision Rooted in Service and Leadership

Trish Ward assumed the highest office in the ALA during the organization's 103rd National Convention in New Orleans, held August 23–29, 2024. She brings decades of experience in ALA leadership—serving at unit, district, department, and national levels. She has chaired numerous key committees, including Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, Children & Youth, Legislative, Public Relations, and Membership. Notably, she served as National Vice President during the 2023–2024 administrative year.

Her presidency centers on rebuilding local units; enhancing leadership capacity, reversing declining membership trends, and preventing lost charters in rural communities. Ward

introduced the Department Merit Medallion Recognition—a program designed to motivate departments to hit specific membership, governance, finance, and impact benchmarks by mid-2025.

Bringing National Leadership to Montana's Doorstep

Montana ALA leaders warmly anticipate nationwide chapters joining together at upcoming events when they welcome Trish Ward. She will be highlighting her “content enablement experience”—a toolkit of resources, best practices, and strategic guidance for units aiming to fortify leadership, governance, and membership engagement.

Ward's corporate background—as a senior lead project manager at Lumen, with degrees from USC and Kansas—gives her a track record of initiatives grounded in project management and leadership principles. That real-world expertise, she'll tell Montana's units, can be translated into nonprofit strength and resilience.

A Shared Mission: Service, Not Self

Montana ALA's adoption of the national theme—“Invest in our units—our future depends on them”—reflects Ward's call to action for all departments. Participants will hear her mantra: “Follow your passion. It will lead

to your purpose.”

Montana's hospitality—its scenic backdrop and proud veteran heritage—provides the perfect environment to energize the mission: supporting veterans, military personnel, and their families across the state.

Looking Ahead

Ward's visit is not just ceremonial: it marks a pivotal moment for growth and renewal in Montana's ALA. By aligning with her national initiatives, Montana aims to emerge stronger, with fortified leadership, stable membership rosters, and vibrant unit-level governance.

As Trish Ward steps onto Montana soil, she brings more than speeches—she brings a partnership. One that underscores Montana's role in a nationwide effort to reinvigorate the American Legion Auxiliary—from its grassroots units all the way to the national stage.

About Trish Ward

Trish Ward is a 26-year member of the ALA, hailing from John P Hand Unit 250 in Louisburg, Kansas. She qualifies through her father and grandfather—both WWII veterans—and retired in 2023 from Lumen. A parliamentary procedure enthusiast, Ward holds degrees from the University of Southern California and the University of Kansas.



AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS



Legion Riders' Director Brian Carpenter

It is with great pride that I submit this report on the progress and achievements of the American Legion Riders (ALR) program in Montana over the past year. The momentum we are building is a testament to the dedication of our chapters and the collaborative spirit that defines the Riders across our great Department.

One of the most successful initiatives we implemented this year has been the Monthly ALR Director Zoom Meetings. These virtual meetings have become a cornerstone of our program, fostering real-time communication, problem-solving, and sharing of best practices between chapters across the state. The consistent engagement from chapter leadership has helped strengthen cohesion among Riders and ensured that each group remains informed, supported, and connected to the Department's broader mission.

A major milestone was reached in April with the inaugural ALR College, the first of its kind in Montana. This educational and leadership-focused event brought Riders together to grow as leaders, learn about organizational structure, and enhance operational effectiveness. We extend a heartfelt thank you to Ken Nadeau of New Mexico, whose experience and insight as our guest instructor added tremendous

value to the event. The success of this first ALR College lays the foundation for future opportunities to develop and empower our Rider leaders.

We are also taking important steps to formalize our Department-level operations. Efforts are underway to structure the ALR Committee more effectively by establishing officer positions to assist in planning statewide rides, coordinating communication, and supporting fundraising efforts to benefit key American Legion programs. These structural improvements will allow us to operate with greater efficiency and ensure long-term sustainability of our shared mission. Our chapters continue to grow both in size and in number. This year, we proudly welcomed Golden Triangle Chapter 3 in Great Falls into the ALR family. Additionally, we are actively tracking developments and interest in launching new chapters in Butte and Anaconda, further expanding our footprint and impact across the state.

The Montana ALR is more than just a riding group—we are a unified, mission-driven extension of The American Legion, committed to honoring our veterans, serving our communities, and promoting the Four Pillars. With continued collaboration, strong leadership, and the unwavering spirit of our Riders, we will continue to grow and thrive. Ride safe, stay strong, and thank you all for your commitment.

American Legion Riders MT R.O.M.P. 2025: Scenic Rides, Camaraderie & Brotherhood on the Open Road

The 2025 Montana R.O.M.P. (Riders On Military Patrol) is set to roll out August 22–24, hosted by ALR Billings Heights Chapter #119. Open exclusively to American Legion Riders who are members in Montana, this year's event promises exhilarating rides, unforgettable stops, and strong Legion family bonds.

Pre-registration for the event has officially closed as of June 1, with excitement building for this year's journey through the stunning landscapes of

southeastern Montana, Wyoming, and South Dakota.

Weekend Highlights Include:

Well-Planned Routes – Riders will explore scenic byways across three states, with the featured ride traveling from Billings to Rapid City and time spent experiencing the breathtaking Needles Scenic Byway within Custer State Park. **Friday Night Welcome Dinner** – Participants will enjoy a catered Italian dinner upon arrival at the host hotel, giving everyone a chance to relax and connect.

Support Vehicle Coverage – A chase vehicle will be available throughout the ride, providing luggage transport and

emergency support.

Unforgettable Moments – From rolling hills to tight switchbacks, the event promises countless motorcycling memories for all who attend.

This annual R.O.M.P. event continues to be a favorite tradition among Montana's ALR community, blending purpose with adventure as Riders hit the road in honor of service, sacrifice, and camaraderie.

For those seeking further details or who have registered, updates and inquiries can be directed to the host chapter at alrbillingsheights119@gmail.com.

Legislative

Roger Hagan

First off, I must apologize for not being at the Convention in person. My family reunion was planned more than two years ago, and we could not change the dates. So, this report will have to do.

Your Legislative Committee has continued to represent the Department in a variety of venues since the Fall Conference. Of course, the November election and preparation for the 2025 Legislative Session were getting the most attention.

The results of the November election required us to appoint some new Legislative Liaisons for our Congressional Members. Now our liaison team is: Richard Klose, liaison to Senator Daines; Duane Cunningham, liaison to Senator Sheehy, Ryan McMillon, liaison to Representative Zinke; and Lowell Long, liaison to Representative Downing. This team was approved by Commander Simon and approved at the national level by the NEC.

Since I was no longer able to directly lobby the legislature due to my appointment by the Governor to the Board of Veterans Affairs, we had to do something different. The Department joined with the Montana National Guard Association (Officers) and the Montana National Guard Enlisted Association, in a tag-team effort to present testimony to various committees on legislation of interest to our organizations. The team consisted of Adjutant Duane Cunningham, Mike Talia (former JAG for the MT NG), and Dennis Stoner (Legislation Committee Chair for the Enlisted Association). Helping out occasionally from Great Falls was Tom Figarelle. I coordinated the schedule of hearings, provided background information on bills and stayed in the background. It was a large change for me after 46 years of working directly with the legislators and committees, but I think we did a good job. A huge shout-out to

Adjutant Cunningham who attended most of the hearings, representing the American Legion and often the other two NG associations if the other guys were not available. Also, thank you Duane for your May Montana Legionnaire comprehensive recap of the 32 bills we tracked, testified on, and saw to completion (either passed, failed, or killed). I encourage all of you to read Duane's article in that newsletter. Of particular note, we were able to get 3 more Administrative Assistant Positions added to the MVAD (MT Veteran Affairs Division) budget. This will fill the remaining 3 Veteran Service Offices with an Admin position. Once all 9 offices have their Admin positions filled, our MVAD VSO's will be able to do more outreach and not be tied to a desk, answering phones. Additionally, we were able to remove the 10-year sunset on the 50% military retirement tax exemption law. We will continue to work on removing the 5-year limitation on taking the exemption and redefining eligibility for non-resident military retirees moving into Montana after retirement. Finally, we were able to, ONCE AGAIN, kill the Defend the Guard Act (HB 404). This act was killed by us in the 2023 Session, and we had to do it again. If you need information on this bill, check out the February 17th post on the MT American Legion Facebook page. 41 legislators supported this terrible bill and 58 legislators opposed it. Please see the voting record in this report booklet and contact your State Representative and either thank them for their 'no' vote or ask them why they supported this terrible bill with a 'yes' vote.

During the session, in February, your American Legion also represented you in D.C. at the Washington Conference. This conference culminated in National Commander LaCoursiere's testimony to the joint Senate and House Committees on Veterans Affairs. We also spent a day on Capitol Hill visiting with all 4 of our Congressio-

nal Members. Commander Simon, Adjutant Cunningham, Larry Dobb, Dennis Stoner and I, conveyed our National American Legion Legislative Priorities to each Montana Member of Congress. Dennis and I also carried the National Guard Enlisted Association legislative issues as the Enlisted Association was having a Legislative Rally at the same time. We were welcomed by Senators Danies and Sheehy as well as Representatives Zinke and Downing. I believe you were represented well.

One thing I will repeat in this report, and will continue to harp on in the future, is the need for more members of the Montana Department to participate in our Congressional Outreach program. It is important that all our members subscribe to the national program called VoterVOICE. You can click on the link (votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/home) and "Sign up for Alerts". While we have improved some, Montana is still near the bottom of the list of states contacting their congressional members concerning our national issues.

Again, I ask you to become/remain engaged in the political process. Get to know who your state legislators are and contact them early and often. Talk with them about military and veteran issues and find out where they stand on those issues. Then, let your Montana Department know of the results of your engagement. Grassroots is the lifeblood of legislative efforts, both on the state and national level.

69th Legislature 2025 Session HB 404
Vote History Vote

Date & Time: 3/5/2025, 2:00:06 PM

Motion: Do Pass

YES (41)

Brewster, Larry (R) HD-43; Byrne, Ed (R) HD-11; Caferro, Mary (D) HD-81; Deming, Lee (R) HD-54; Duram, Neil (R) HD-1; Essmann, Sherry (R) HD-49; Etchart, Jodee (R) HD-51; Falk, Terry (R) HD-10; Fielder, Paul (R) HD-14; Fyant, Shelly (D) HD-91; Gillette, Jane (R) HD-77; Hinkle,

Legislative continued

Hinkle, Jedediah (R) HD-67; Hinkle, Caleb (R) HD-68; Karlen, Jonathan (D) HD-98; Kelly, Steven (R) HD-9; Klakken, Shane (R) HD-37; Kmetz, Greg (R) HD-36; Ler, Brandon (R) HD-33; Love, Kathy (R) HD-85; Maness, Shannon (R) HD-70; Mercer, Bill (R) HD-52; Millett, Tom (R) HD-2; Mitchell, Braxton (R) HD-5; Nave, Fiona (R) HD-56; Nicastro, Anthony (R) HD-50; Nicol, Nelly (R)

Finance Officer

Bill Cummins

Over the past several months since becoming the Department Finance Officer there have been a few challenges. One of the most rewarding was having Duane Cunningham come over as your full-time adjutant and working out his financial package. I am still learning how to read and understand financial statements.

Working with Erin and Duane, they have both been very helpful to me and without them, I would be lost. The Department of Montana should be very grateful to have them as our Adjutant and Adjutant's assistant as they do outstanding work for the Department and their workload seems to have increased over the past two to three years. Most Departments would have had to add employees to keep up; these two are doing an excellent job in their positions and should be highly praised for that. There have been several Zoom meetings in regards to personnel and also budget matters over the past several months and working with the finance committee, we have made progress on the budget and we'll have a budget to bring forward to the convention. The biggest challenge going forward is fund-raising for the Department. In the past we have relied on raffles such as the Big K and cash calendars and other raffles decided on by the finance committee. The department has been able to survive financially. It does seem in the last couple of years that participation in these raffles is diminishing. We need to look for other ways to raise funds for our Department since the raffles have not been keeping up with expenses. I would request that anyone who may have an idea on fundraising, please bring it forward to myself or the finance committee for consideration. The Department has survived on a deficit budget over the last two years and there is still an overabundance in Investments that have been used to help out. In the past we have not used the money earned on investments for operating the department. We have done quite well in the last year on our investments and I feel we could use this to help fund the department in the operations accounts. Although I do not feel we can rely on that 100%, because one year we may do very well and the next year may not be as good. My suggestion on using the investments for our operating account is that I would propose that we only rely on about half of what our

HD-53; Oblender, Greg (R) HD-38; Overstreet, Greg (R) HD-88; Regier, Amy (R) HD-6; Running Wolf, Tyson (D) HD-16; Schillinger, Jerry (R) HD-34; Schubert, Lukas (R) HD-8; Seekins-Crowe, Kerri (R) HD-39; Sharp, Tracy (R) HD-12; Smith, Frank (D) HD-31; Stafman, Ed (D) HD-59; Thiel, Morgan (R) HD-30; Vinton, Mike (R) HD-40; Wirth, Zack (R) HD-17; Zephyr, Zooey (D) HD-95; Zolnikov, Katie (R) HD-44

investments earned in previous year to keep us from overspending in case the Investments did not do as well as the previous year. One of the challenges that has caused some problems for the Department this year has been that National has been sometimes 3 to 4 months behind on forwarding the finances from membership that went to National and we have had to on two separate occasions take money from our investment accounts to cover operations while waiting for national to provide the funds that should be provided monthly. I will keep working for the Department as the financial officer to try to find alternate ways to fund the Department and have enjoyed my short tenure as a finance officer. This is still a learning process for me. As I stated before, having Duane and Erin as our Department Adjutant and adjutant's assistant, they are such a great asset to the Department I personally want to praise them for the job that they do. I also thank the Finance Committee Chair and the finance committee members for their input and work on the matters that have come forward to the committee, and also for their work on the budget. Without them we could not operate.





Raise a Glass to the American Legion Pilsner – Order Yours Today!

Looking for a smooth, refreshing brew that also supports a great cause? The American Legion Pilsner is here! Whether you're stocking up for your own enjoyment or bringing it to your bar, this crisp and satisfying beer is the perfect way to show your support for The American Legion.

For Individuals – Order by the Case!

Why grab just a six-pack when you can get a whole case of this premium pilsner? Ordering is easy—just fill out the official form, submit it, and get ready to enjoy a brew that stands for service and community. All case orders will be ready for pick up at the

Department Convention in Helena!

For Legion Bars & Local Businesses – Get It on Tap!

Want to serve Legion Pilsner at your Post's bar or local establishment? We're making it happen! Simply send your Point of Contact (POC) details to amlegmtsec@gmail.com, and we'll work with our distributor to get this all-American brew flowing from your taps.

Don't wait—place your order today and raise a glass to camaraderie, service, and a great beer! 🍻



Meagher Post 25 is selling this vehicle. It is a 2006 Ford E450 Super Duty Diesel. It is a 12 passenger van and clean. The wheel chair lift is not working but the vehicle is in good condition. If you are interested, please call Commander Cummins at (406) 855-7751.



American Legion and Auxiliary Boys and Girls State



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