



DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Roger Hancock

I attended the membership workshop in Indianapolis. National stressed the importance of having a membership team and the importance of consistency with all members. It is also important to ensure each member of the team is efficient and highly motivated. The National goal for the American Legion centennial is 3.2 million members. Currently the American Legion is sitting at 2.4 million. When you do the math, we are 800 thousand short. Last year we finished with over 12,400 members. We made goal last year even though our renewal rate was only around 88.5 percent. We need to redouble our efforts to retain our members. What's happening that we're not? Businesses that don't change to customer demands slowly die out. Those that do change thrive and ultimately increase their business. We need to change to meet the needs of our younger veterans without changing our founding core values. These young veterans number 800,000 plus and are our future leaders.

Two new positions were created at our first Executive Committee meeting. The Department Emergency Response Coordinator (DERC) job is to train and prepare Posts to respond to disasters within their communities and coordinate their efforts. The other position is the American Legion Rider Coordinator (ALRC) whose job is to provide a point of contact (POC) for riders from all of the ALR Chapters within the Department, be a liaison between the Chapters and the Department and provide available information from outside the Department.

On September 18th thru the 21st the Department was visited by The American Legion National Commander, Mike Helm. We attended the funeral of 1st Lt. William D. Bernier, Army Air Corp, who was lost more than 70 years ago. The funeral was in Augusta and well attended by Legionnaires. We numbered close to 20 in uniform far surpassing any other VSO present. Immediately following that event we attended a POW/MIA ceremony at Malmstrom Air Force Base. The base Commander and Vice Commander treated all of the American Legion members present with great respect and fanfare.

I attended the Districts 2, 3, and 8 Meetings and both Zone Meetings for the South Central and Western Zones. The Zone Meetings were well attended and for the most part enjoyed due to the camaraderie from Legionnaires from other Districts.

I made the decision to cancel the calendar fundraiser. The calendar needed to be printed prior to September for sales which left advertising with less than two months to accomplish that task. That was asking the impossible of the Ways and Means Committee. The Committee is making plans to have a 2016 calendar for sale by Department Convention.

DEPARTMENT VICE-COMMANDER

Jim Grosset

First I would like to thank the weather Gods for giving us such great weather for our Fall Meetings. I started my term as your Vice Commander after the Convention in Bozeman, by attending the American Legion AA Baseball Tournament in Lethbridge, Alberta. I was a guest at the banquet and had the honor to throughout the first pitch. There were eight teams from Bozeman to Missoula and Great Falls and up in Alberta with the host team of Lethbridge and Medicine Hat.

My next duty was to attend the Membership Conference in Indianapolis. I learned a lot about membership with our Commander. We met with new Commander Mike Helm and were given our new goals.

At the Convention in Charlotte, I attended the Digital Media workshop and found it very enlightening. I learned the ins and outs of the internet and how to get up a web site. The highlight for me was being elected as the new President of FODPAL. I got to go up and present donations to our National Commander on behalf of FODPAL. Another highlight was listening to Oliver North and Montel Williams. The President of the United States was there also.

September, I put on a lot of miles going to all the District Meetings. The first was District #10 in Sydney, and then on a bit of a tour to Ft, Union, North Dakota, before our meeting with District #1 in Opheim. I came home up to Saskatchewan on a long way to home.

The next week was District #8 in Dutton with our new Commander Mike Helm. Commander Helm is a real Blue Cap Legionnaire. This was the only meeting that I did not have to give a speech. The next day was in Conrad for the District #3 meeting.

Then next week I drove to Lolo and met up with Commander Hancock and we went to Big Timber for the first Zone meeting. This was for Districts 7, 9, and 11. Big Timber has a wonderful Post, but the District Meetings part was all in the same hall and a bit distracting. All in all, there was a positive feeling and the consensus was to try it next fall once again. The next day we were off to Frenchtown for the next Zone meeting of Districts 4, 5, and 6. This was great meeting and the District part was in separate rooms. My only complaint is sitting in those lunchroom benches. This meeting was also wishing to try it one more time.

Our final District meeting was in Big Sandy. I stayed in Havre the night before as it was closer for me. We held the meeting in the Big Sandy Historical Society. There is some beautiful history in this building.

I was sorry that the turnout at most of these meeting was so low. I hope that all that attended learned a bit about recruiting and retention.

ZONE COMMANDER – SOUTH CENTRAL

Dale Webb

As Zone Commander I have been trying to help my Districts with their membership for 2015. So far I am proud of the District Commanders for their hard work.

I attended the State Convention in June and was pleased by the hospitality and reception given us. We had a good convention and I was chosen as a delegate for the National Convention in August.

I attended the convention and since it was my first one I was very proud of our Montana Delegation and was impressed with how the convention was run. I went to my committee meetings and to all the general floor meetings.

Several politicians gave their speeches and I listened to them all whether I agreed or not. I realized that what I have always believed is true. The American Legion is a Blue

Cap Organization. All the others just take your ideas and run with them.

We held the first Zone Meeting in Big Timber with Districts 7, 9, and 11 present. It was interesting and I liked how the members from different Districts interacted with one another. All three Districts voted to have another one next fall.

ZONE COMMANDER – WESTERN

John Pellegrini

This year we tried something new for the Fall District Meetings. We held a Western Zone Meeting in Stevensville on September 28, 2014, the meeting started off with a joint opening and the Department information session. We then had a joint luncheon with Vice Commander Jim Grosset as the speaker. After lunch the Districts assembled in different rooms and carried on their District business as usual. At the conclusion of the District Meetings, we once again assembled jointly for comments and the closing. After some discussion, the Districts voted to have another joint meeting next Fall.

The new goals were presented to the Districts and they assigned the additions to some of the Posts in their District.

Membership is doing fine at present but we must still push renewals. Membership Chairman

Elmer Palmer seems to be feeling better and is back on line. We are thankful for that. Remember, membership is the life line of our organization. It's everybody's job.

ZONE COMMANDER – NORTH CENTRAL

Lowell Long

Upon being elected to the position of Zone Commander for the North Central Zone of the American Legion representing Districts 2, 3, and 8, I have had the honor of attending the district meetings in all three districts. I first attended the District 8 meeting in Dutton, Montana. I was able to address the members that attended that meeting. It was great to be able to meet all the Legionnaires from that district. I then went to Conrad, Montana for the District 3 meeting. This was especially exciting for me as I grew up in Conrad and being able to attend their meeting there was special. Another thing that was great about those meetings was being able to meet the National Commander and hear from him what his vision was for the American Legion for this year. Two weeks later, I was at the District 2 meeting in Big Sandy, Montana. We had a great meeting but attendance was low with harvest and fall work for farmers.

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

I have been working with the District Commanders on membership and working with the numbers that we are being given to try to attain the goals we need for our 100th anniversary. I will continue to work with them as we strive for one of the best years for our Zone.

Thank you for your support as we work toward making the American Legion better in North Central Montana. Thank you for supporting me as I work for you as your Zone Commander.

ZONE COMMANDER – EASTERN

Sylvia Beals

After the Department Convention I made a trip to help District #10 Commander deliver some of the packets. I had nice visits with several Posts. National Convention was very informative and enjoyed seeing old friends again.

I was disappointed in District #10 meeting as there were only 6 Legionnaires in attendance. District meetings are very important and need someone from every Post to attend. You get to meet Department leaders, and receive the newest and best out there for all veterans, then relay it back to your Post. After the meeting I sent out e-mails to all Post, asking for input on what would help to increase attendance at our District meetings.

District #1 had a good turn-out, it was very nice to see that many in attendance to take back the information to everyone in their Post, enjoyed visiting with all of the Legionnaires present. It was a good weekend. We need to continue to work hard to get our membership up to date; I know if we work hard we can all do it.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN (N.E.C.)

Merv Gunderson

I attended the National Convention in Charlotte, NC at the end of August. I was present at my assigned committee and all Meetings of the convention. The convention accomplished a great deal of business. The NEC man from NC, Jerry Hedrick passed away at the convention. He was a great leader and mentor. Gary White, David Driver and I attended the funeral following the convention as representatives of Montana. I attended both the preconvention NEC and Post convention NEC.

September 8, 2014 I attended a veteran meet and greet with Ryan Zinke. During the session several issues were discussed including the need for VA improvement. We also discussed funding for other veteran issues including the COLA for veterans and benefits veterans are entitled to.

On September 10, 2014, I attended the town hall meeting of the VA at Fort Harrison. It was a productive meeting and showed me several areas we could improve on here in Montana. The primary issue facing the Montana VA is the need for a new director. No decision has been made at this time.

All Fall District Meetings were attended by me along with the Alternate NEC David Driver. David was appointed as Alternate NEC due to the resignation of David McLean. The District 10 meeting was held in Sydney on September 13, 2014. The District 1 meeting was held in Opheim and September 14, 2014. These District meeting took 4 days to accomplish because of travel distances.

On September 17, 2014 I attended the funeral of Past Department Commander Don Pemberton outside Browning. The funeral involved Catholic and Native American ceremonies. I had the honor of serving on the honor guard at the graveside services. The funeral was well attended and all honors were rendered.

On September 18, 2014 I picked up National Commander Mike Helm and his Aide, Don Suchy at the Great Falls Airport. The Commander was shown areas of interest in Great Falls, including the Veterans Memorial. He was given a briefing at Malmstrom Air Force Base and attended the POW/MIA ceremony on the base. All arrangements were made by David Driver and were well done.

National Commander Helm was given a special opportunity to attend the internment of remains of a MIA WWII bombardier in Augusta. That funeral was attended by the Legion Post in

Augusta, Malmstrom AF Base personnel, Patriot Guard and local Masons. The funeral and internment was quite impressive and gave the family closure.

On September 20, 2014 I attended the District 8 meeting in Dutton with the National Commander Helm. On Sep 21 I attended the District 3 meeting in Conrad with National Commander Helm. I took the Commander to the airport in Great Falls for his departure.

September 27 was the first zone meeting for the Department. South central zone was hosted in Big Timber. This meeting went fairly well with a few minor issues during the District breakout. On September 28 the second zone meeting was held in Frenchtown. This meeting was well received with a few problems during the District breakout.

On October 1, 2014 I attended Senator Tester's last veteran listening session in Bozeman. There were several questions that were raised at this session. The VA outreach, CBOCs, staffing, facilities and travel were all discussed.

On October 4, 2014 I attended the District 2 meeting in Big Sandy. This was a good meeting. Attendance was lacking as only a few Posts attended.

On October 10, 2014 I traveled to Indianapolis for the Fall Meetings. At this writing there is nothing to report. Also, for the Fall Department Meetings I will be escorting National Vice Commander Jake Jacobs from Wyoming.

Thank you allowing me to serve as your NEC man. It is a privilege I take very seriously.

NEF Grants have been increased to \$3000.00 for individuals and \$5000.00 for Posts. This is double the previous amounts allowed.

The National Executive Committee meeting was held in Indianapolis on October 15, 2014 and October 16, 2014. Several new items were discussed and several new resolutions that affect all legionnaires were passed.

The Finance commission proposed three new marketing resolutions. The resolutions are designed to raise funding for The American Legion. Some of that revenue will be shared with the departments. The amount returned will be dependent on the payback for the advertisement and the total amount of revenue generated. Our membership will start to see advertisements in the near future.

The issues within the VA that The American Legion Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission have been working on are varied and complex. They have held town hall meeting where veterans were encouraged to speak about issues they have experienced. The 3,000 accredited Service Officers of The American Legion have been able to represent 735,000 claimants which generated over \$758,000,000 in monetary benefits. The American Legion has been responsible for \$72.5 Billion in fiscal years 2014.

An area of concern is the loss of American Legion Baseball teams. Since 2009 there have been approximately 1,200 less teams. American Legion Boys State has seen a decrease of 795

participants. These programs are extremely important to our youth and communities. Legion posts should make a concerted effort to promote all the programs of The American Legion.

Finally, I would like to offer congratulations to Colter Norick of Columbia Falls, MT. He is the winner of a \$20,000.00 Samsung scholarship. The Samsung scholarships are now to be distributed by regions. This will allow Samsung Corporation a better opportunity to track the scholarships and perhaps enhance the revenue for the program.

ALTERNATE NATIONAL COMMITTEEMAN (N.E.C.)

David Driver

Since being appointed by the Department Commander and approved by the Department Executive Committee, I attended Senator Tester's Veterans listening session about VA healthcare and benefits that was held in Great Falls in August. I attended the National Convention held in Charlotte, NC as a delegate and attended the Foreign Relations Commission, Pre-Convention NEC meeting and was present at all the National Convention sessions. I accompanied the Department NEC at the Post-Convention NEC meeting. I attended all the Department Fall District Meetings, except Districts 1 and 10, where I attended in my other capacity as Detachment Commander of the Sons of The American Legion. I accompanied the new National Commander, Mike Helm, around Great Falls, Malmstrom AFB, and the funeral services in Augusta for a WWII Army Air Corp MIA who was returned home.

PAST DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Dick Ellwein

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

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

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

On September 28, 2014 I attended the Western Zone meeting held at Frenchtown High School.

HISTORIAN

Art Ellison

Since the Department convention in June I have maintained a heavy traveling schedule. As your Historian, it is my responsibility to oversee and compile the historical records of the Department and to provide the Department Commander with a scrapbook.

I have traveled 1,420 miles in my own vehicle to meet the Department vehicle and an additional few thousand miles with the Department Officers. I interviewed 6 Legionnaires for articles in the Legionnaire and took 1,296 photographs since the Department Convention. During our travels we stopped at Fort Union and Fort Parker which were an integral part Montana history.

In June I traveled to Canada for the State American Legion Baseball Tournament; which was won by Missoula.

In August, I attended The National Convention in Charlotte North Carolina. As always it was a very informative and successful meeting. One of the many speakers was President Obama. The weather was very cooperative for the Convention Parade. Many new Committees had been formed to combine the old Committees. I sat on the Benefits and Education Committee. Only 16 Delegates from Montana attended the Convention. This is the least number of Delegates I have seen in my 20+ years of attending Conventions.

On our return to Montana we began the District Meetings in September; I attended all of the Meetings. And once again Montana had another first; with the support of the Districts two Zone Meetings were conducted. Districts 4, 5 and 6 comprising the Western Zone and Districts 7, 9 and 11 of the South-Central Zone were held in Frenchtown and Big Timber respectively. Everything appeared to go smoothly with only a few minor problems, which can easily be corrected. The advantage of this is camaraderie between the Districts and the Delegates attending the meeting. It also cuts down on the amount of travel for the Department Officers. At the District Meetings I was impressed by the number of Legionnaires who talk to me about historical records they have found; Thompson Falls Post found boxes of records dating back to 1919 in a shed. They presented them to the Thompson Falls Historical Museum which gladly received them. There is now an American Legion room in the museum. My presentation at the District Meetings was about getting ready for the upcoming 100th anniversary of the American Legion, which kicks off at the National Convention in 2018; I talked of the steps to be taken for successful celebration.

Activities within the Department that I attended and photographed and wrote articles for the Montana Legionnaire are: The Legion Riders Western Romp, hosted by Livingston Chapter 13 Riders from New Mexico, Arizona, California, Washington, Oregon and Idaho all attended. The section of highway from Helena to West Yellowstone was dedicated as the POW/MIA Memorial Highway. At the dedication were Governor Bullock and the head of the Department of Transportation, Helena Post 2 and the Patriot Riders organized the dedication.

I was very humbled at the Department Convention when a resolution was passed nominating me for National Historian.

I left the 10th of October for Indianapolis to judge the Post year books and narratives that have been submitted.

I would like to thank all Montana Legionnaires for reelecting me for the fourth year as your Department Historian.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT

Gary White

After the Department Convention in Bozeman I prepared for the National Convention in Charlotte. At the National Convention in Charlotte, NC I was assigned to the Finance Committee; the National organization is in good shape financially and there are no dues increases forthcoming nor projected. For the first time ever I made all Fall District Meetings, I was able to do so because we conducted two Zone Meetings for the first time ever, so we finished the District Meetings prior to the National Commander's and Adjutants Conference in Indianapolis. Although the Zone Meetings seemed to work okay it appears the Districts involved want to give it another try before they make a permanent commitment. Distances involved for some of the Posts outweighed any perceived benefit in meeting new Legionnaires and learning from other Districts and Posts. I don't know the reason, but this Fall's set of District Meetings was the worst attended I have ever seen, at two of them there were more Department personnel there than District members, and two other just barely beat those numbers. District and Post Commanders need to start encouraging attendance from every Post on a regular basis, start when the schedule is published and continue until just days before the start of the meeting. The District commanders also need to make frequent contact with their officers to ensure their presence as well. The Department is looking for ways to make the meetings more interesting for your members as well, please let us know what you would like changed as well as added. Maybe it is something as simple as doing away with the banquet, or there is a presentation you would like added. Let's make a renewed effort to encourage attendance at the District Meeting. Most problems with Posts could be solved if the Post would send representatives and officers to District Meetings on a regular basis.

Other activities included visits to Posts in Big Timber, Belgrade and Glendive. I continued to work with the Legislative Chairman on Legislative matters and either participated in or attended the State Administration and Veteran Affairs Interim Committee meetings, visited the Eastern Montana State Cemetery and the Western Montana Cemetery, as well as the Yellowstone County Veterans Cemetery in Laurel. Additionally in coordination with the Montana National Guard I briefed at 1 Demobilization briefing, as well as assisting with the planning of 1 other. I also conducted 4 reconnect visits. I attended the AA American Legion Baseball State Tournament in Lethbridge; kudos to the Department Baseball Chairman George Haegele for an excellent tournament. With other Department officers I attended the funeral in Augusta for 1LT William Bernier whose remains from World War II were recovered in Papua, New Guinea. In attendance at the funeral were National Commander Mike Helms and his aide. The Commander's trip to Districts 8 and 3 was coordinated by me with the assistance of the NEC

and Alternate NEC. I also attended the Fort Harrison VA town hall meeting with the Department Service Officer and the NEC. Additionally I attend the POW / MIA dedication ceremony in Helena.

On line renewals still continue to be a learning process for all involved, if we could get all the Adjutants and Commanders to attend the District meetings a lot of our problems could be solved. Use of MyLegion.com continues to be a slow process; we gain new Posts using this program at the rate of about 1 a month. We currently have 43 Posts signed up; a decrease of 13 from last year, but only about 30 are actively using it. We must continue to teach and encourage our Posts to sign up for this free program and to actively use it.

It is still a challenge to get District commanders, Post Adjutants and Post Commanders to use the Department website and to regularly read and respond to emails. For the cost of sending 1 letter via mail we can send 100 emails. Post and District Commanders and Adjutants must start using email. Currently National only has 23% of their members email addresses and I doubt the department has more than 15%. Please encourage your members to provide email addresses.

CHAPLAIN

Ronn Moccasin

REPORT NOT SUBMITTED

SERVICE OFFICER

Kelly Ackerman

As the AL DSO, I attended the following events:

July 30-August 2, 2014- DSO School in Indianapolis

National Convention, Charlotte, NC- August 22-24, 2014

All Fall District meetings were attended by MVAD/AL VSO's according to area of jurisdiction with the exception of the District 10 meeting.

During the Fall District meetings, they discussed all VA benefits including VA Healthcare, Disability Compensation, and Pension. There was an emphasis placed on the importance of registering with Myhealthvet and eBenefits.

Our Division is moving forward with the paperless process which is helping to shorten the wait time for veterans' claims processing. Each of our 10 offices has new laptops and scanners that are used for outreach services.

PARLIAMENTARIAN

Duane Carlton

As the Parliamentarian, I am not required to attend the District/Zone Meetings. However, I did attend the South-Central Zone meeting in Big Timber on 27 September. The meeting was well run by Zone Commander Dale Webb, and then I attended the Follow-on District 7 meeting as the District Adjutant. I've spent most of my Parliamentarian time reviewing the Department Constitution and Bylaws, per the guidance of Department Commander Roger Hancock. His intent is to align our Constitution and Bylaws to be more in line with the National document, and to eliminate unnecessary verbiage which does not accomplish what we need to do as a Department. This is a work in progress, and will continue through to the 2015 Department Convention.

FINANCE OFFICER

Eddy White

I would like to thank Commander Roger Hancock for appointing me as your Finance Officer and Adjutant Gary White for the recommendation. I have been involved as a Secretary/Treasurer in a Helena non-profit that manages the Lewis and Clark County Veterans Memorial for over 8 years. I am truly honored to hold this position.

In July, I started making trips to the Department of Montana office on a monthly basis for bank account reconciliations and on several coordinated occasions, I met with Gary for check signatures.

The reports before you are as of October 4th. On the profit & loss statement for the projected budget income is \$196,395.00; we are at \$96,257.11 (just above 49%). This is better than this time last year which was normal. As for the projected budget expenses are \$194,609.32 and we are at \$31,037.30 (just under 16%). This is less than last year's actual of 21.6%, but we have several more months to go with this budget.

Membership revenue is currently at 63.61% of budgeted. We are doing better than this time last year, but not as good it was in 2012. I suggest that all posts ensure that when they receive renewals and new memberships, they get them turned in as soon as possible and well before the target dates.

We are still seeing dozens of distributed checks still outstanding as far back as February. This is not good. As probably been stated several times before, please be more prompt in cashing your checks from Department. Also, if you have lost a check, please be sure to contact Gary about this.

JUDGE ADVOCATE

Jim Shockley

1. The Paradise Post (#129) was threatened with a lawsuit related to a fire that destroyed the Post's building and displaced a renter. The renter thought that he had a right to a portion of the fire insurance, as did his lawyer. I believe that they were wrong and they seem to have adopted my position.
2. Some members of the St. Regis Post (#13) had concerns about the purchase of a parcel upon which it is expected that a new building will be constructed. It was my opinion that the purchase of the parcel was permitted by the Department's Constitution and By-Laws.
3. Baseball is once again quiet.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

Karen Semple

\$86 in fines were collected at the convention in Bozeman – all of it goes directly to the National Emergency Fund. (The bulk was from phones ringing during convention – if a \$5 fine for a ringing phone bothered a member, they can be grateful they weren't in California, where a \$20 fine for a ringing phone is levied!) Special guests escorted to the podium at the convention included Firefighter of the Year, James Van Nice, Laurel Fire Department, and Law Enforcement Officer of the Year, Sheriff Leo Dutton, Lewis and Clark County. Additionally, escorted Governor Steve Bullock, (who took time from his family vacation) Senator John Walsh and Congressman Steve Daines to the podium to speak to the convention attendees. A POW/MIA Ceremony was conducted at the Convention Banquet. Most recently with other Department Officers and Legion members, attended the funeral of 1st LT William, "Laddie" Bernier, a WWII bombardier, who died when the B-24D Liberator in which he was flying was shot down over Papua New Guinea. His repatriated remains were escorted from Schofield Barracks, HI to Augusta for interment.

DISTRICT COMMANDERS

DISTRICT 1 - COMMANDER

David Dean

1. Thomas Mann Post 81 of District 1 Posted the Colors in Sidney, Montana. On 7-25-14 for the State Elk's Convention.
2. Met with Jim Fiedler National Membership Officer at me home on 7-23-14. It was a very interesting meeting. Also I had Pete Olson past District 1-10 Zone Commander attend.

3. Thomas Mann Post 81 will be repairing and painting the White Crosses as we are able with the weather.
4. Had the honor to help the wounded warriors from Wolf Point Post 22 with a Military Funeral on 7-30-14
5. Cameron Lambert will obtain his Eagle Scout Badge by repairing the head stones of Veteran's at the Culbertson Cemetery. This project will start on 10-18-14
6. Thomas Mann Post 81 had a booth at the Roosevelt County Fair again this year and for the 3rd year in a row got Judge's Choice Award.
7. Membership started off with a bang but has slowed down. I will be getting with District 1 Membership Officer Harry McCormick to work on this.
8. Will be talking to 3 Post in District 1 that are behind on Per Capita dues. Two of those Post's are in arrears from 2012.

DISTRICT 2 – COMMANDER

Jon Monteaux

In this third term as District Commander, the Post visitations are down and membership renewals are down also. While four Posts out of nine have made goal there is much room for improvement and growth. Congratulations to Post #48 Chinook, Post #57 Malta, Post #79 Saco, Post#109 Turner, great job gentlemen. As your Commander, not to make excuses, travel has been difficult for me due to an auto accident; my health has been a big issue. With two pending surgeries, it may not get any better. My Post #67 at Rockyboy had only 68% renewals. The reason for that is the tribal business committee was paying for the other 32% out of tribal funds. Now the tribe can no longer pick up those members due to some unfortunate recent events. So that number may stay off by that amount in the future. We did sign two new members to the Post who are still active and serving at Fort Benning. They will return next year and we will see that they stay involved and active members.

DISTRICT 3 - COMMANDER

Patrick Becker

On Tuesday, June 1, after being sworn in as District 3 Commander at State Convention in Bozeman, I made a pilgrimage I had made before to deliver packets to Post Adjutants in Conrad, Shelby, Galata, Sweetgrass, Cut Bank, Browning and Valier. The Galata Adjutant lives in Shelby so two stops there. Sweetgrass Adjutant lives in Oilmont, Dustin Bailey. In Cut Bank I delivered to Travis Shook and met Michael DesRosier Post Commander at Browning. Finally to the Keith Stark Post in Valier. Jim Grosset of Post CN20 picked up his packet at the Convention in Bozeman. Because I did not have to go to Browning, it was only a 135 mile trip.

I talked to Dean Young a past District Commander several times about recruiting and retention, neither one of us has a solution. I lined up the Moose Club in Conrad for the Fall meeting and arranged for dinner Saturday, the evening of the 20th, at Joes Steak House for the National Commander Michael Helm, who expounded on his goals for the year. He left before dinner to catch a plane. The ladies of the Moose served and excellent dinner.

Our meeting was called to order at 1:10 p.m. No major discussion except consolidation of Districts and trial Zone Conferences. Our resolution for a patch or a badge for law enforcement uniforms is on hold until after elections. Our Spring meeting will be held in Cut Bank.

DISTRICT 4 - COMMANDER

Ron Hawkinson

Having just returned from our first combined District Meetings I have few thoughts to share. I was pleased as to how the meeting was conducted. The distance we in District 4 had to travel reduced the attendance we normally would expect at a District meeting. However the business we needed to address was completed. At the conclusion of the meeting it was brought up that District 4 should host the next combined meeting. The purpose as I understand it is that the combined meeting would be held at a central location for Districts 4, 5, and 6. That being said, District 4 would be a long way for most to drive if we were to host it at one of our Posts. District 4 to host it in a central location (Missoula) would be extremely difficult because of the logistics involved. I am not willing to try and locate and organize a meeting in a location so far from home, not being familiar with facilities that might be available etc. would make it extremely difficult. We need to discuss this at length and come to a solution if we do this again.

Most Posts in the District are doing well however a few are not. Paradise Post 129 has the building site prepared and material delivered for the construction of their building. Negotiations are under way with the contractor and insurance company. The Post is way behind in membership and still seems to be in turmoil internally. Troy Post 139 has lost their adjutant and the Commander is seeking help finding another, they are having a meeting with the membership to find a solution. Columbia Falls Post 72 was revitalized with a new Post Commander after the Past Commander turned over all Post documents and resigned. The new Commander has exceeded all expectations and now leads the District with membership goals.

Whitefish Post 108 will host the spring meeting, dates to be determined.

DISTRICT 5 - COMMANDER

Gerald Christensen

While most Legionnaires were still at the State Convention in Bozeman, many District 5 members assisted with the annual Veterans Stand Down which took place on June 28th in Missoula. Legion members from Post 27, 91, and 101 were among the many that assisted over

300 veterans who showed up for the event at the National Guard and Army Reserve Armory in Missoula.

In July American Legion Members were out in force for the "Heroes to Home" event which took place at Fort Missoula. Along with other veteran groups and service providers' members of Posts 27, 101, 124, 101, 135 and the American Legion Auxiliary were present to assist veterans. Many new veterans were recruited as members into the American Legion at this event.

The District 5 Commander traveled to Corvallis Post 91 in July to initiate and swear in new Post Officers. Post 91 is very active in the Bitterroot Valley and puts on the annual Memorial Day parade which draws large crowds from throughout the Bitterroot.

Also in July Frenchtown Post 124 along with Alberton Post 131 were active at the annual Rail Road Days celebration in Alberton, Montana. The Posts participated in a new flag raising ceremony at the community center in Alberton. Post 124 took part in the Rail Road Days parade with their restored 1948 military jeep and trailer, decked out with American Legion recruiting banners.

On September 11, members of District five along with members of the United Veterans Council took part in the "Never Forget" ceremony at the Rose Park in Missoula, to honor the fallen from the 9/11/2001 attack on our homeland. District 5 also organized and conducted the first Patriots Day+2 parade in Missoula to honor District 5 veterans and first responders. This was the first parade to do so in Missoula for 25 years.

There were over 35 entries in the parade, many from District 5 Posts, together with law enforcement, fire Departments, ROTC, and the Army Reserve and the Vietnam Veterans Association. The parade received much attention from the local news media and the Commander was interviewed by all three of the local TV stations.

Under the Commanders direction District 5 has established its own web page which includes information on all Posts within the District. It can be viewed at: americanlegionfive.com. The site will assist all Posts within the District in recruiting new members. Along with information about the American Legion it lists the names and contact information of all Post Officers in District 5, as well as links to American Legion programs within the state, such as Boys & Girls state, American Legion baseball, junior shooting sports, Boy Scouts, the Oratorical and essay contests, American Legion Riders, etc. It can be up-dated on a regular basis. This will assist District 5 in getting out information about the Legion as we also have established a District 5 Facebook page as well.

District 5 hosted the combined Districts 4, 5, and 6 Fall Conference on Sunday, September 28, at the high school in Frenchtown. There were 82 registered people from the three Districts attending. It was recommended that the District do the combined District Meetings for another year. Post 27 will host the Spring District Conference at their Post Headquarters in Missoula in March.

DISTRICT 6 - COMMANDER

John Kougioulis

After the June 2014 Department Convention in Bozeman, I delivered Post Packets to District 6 Posts. I was invited, along with Post 42 Broadwater, to a picnic and music night at White Sulphur Springs Post 24. I jammed on my guitar with a great group of musicians. District 7 Commander and the NEC were also there.

Post 42 helped WSS Post with funerals and let them borrow our rifles for funerals this past year.

I have been visiting Posts in my District. Butte Post 1 is getting ready to break ground for their new building. Their programs are going well. Helena's Post 2 programs and activities continue to grow. The Vice Commander of Post 42, Broadwater, invited me to attend her MIA/POW program held at the Townsend High School.

I was invited to sing the National Anthem to open up the Military Memorial Program held at the Townsend Fall Fest. I carried the District 6 Flag along with the Post 42 members carrying the Post flags and the women veterans carrying the service flags.

Post 90, Wisdom, and Post 20, Dillon, are very close to completing their merge. I also got all the Oratorical packets to each Post. The District 6 Oratorical Contest will be held in Townsend, 31 January 2015 at the Townsend High School Library as it was last year.

DISTRICT 7 - COMMANDER

Ken McMillon

1. Since this year's Department Convention, I have participated in 2 more Flag Education classes here in the Gallatin Valley.
2. On 14 June, we held a Flag Retirement Ceremony in Belgrade.
3. I continue to as the contact with our Cub Scout Pack #3648 in Belgrade. I attend Meetings with the different dens during each month.
4. I often go to the Belgrade Senior Center and present different programs with them. Major holidays are big on their list and ask for my continued assistance to them.
5. We marched in the Belgrade Fall Festival with 5 of our members as the Color Guard.
6. Through the year I have re-visited many of my Posts and continue to do so.
7. Our Color Guard was at the first home opener for the American Legion ball team, Belgrade Bandits.
8. In April, I presented medals and awards to the Air Force ROTC awards ceremony.
9. In May, I participated in the White Cross Maintenance day with Big Sky Post 99.
10. Presented a power point show at the Belgrade Senior Center on Armed Forces day.
11. Participated in the Memorial Day Ceremony in Gardener.
12. Participated in the Memorial Day Ceremony in White Sulphur.
13. Participated in a Flag Retirement and Flag folding with the Civil Air Patrol in Belgrade in September.

14. Participated in the American Legion Riders Western States Romp.
15. In August, participated in the POW/MIA Recognition Ride along with 180 other riders.
16. Held District 7/Zone meeting in September.

DISTRICT 8 - COMMANDER

Mike Mehegan

I was sworn in as District #8 Commander on Sunday, June 29, 2014 at the Department Convention in Bozeman, Mt. I hand delivered the packet of seven (7) Posts that were unable to attend the Department Convention.

I wrote all eleven (11) Post in the District on Jun 16th prior to the Convention and thanked them for all the work they did in the previous year and what our goals for 2015 would be: (1) Increase membership by retaining our present members including getting expired back on board, recruit new members and get them actively involved and get transfers from Post #105. The best approach is to personally contact these people. (2) We need to rejuvenate our Oratorical program which is a wonderful program for the individual, schools and excellent PR for our Post. (3) We as Legionnaires do a lot of good stuff for the veterans, our community and nation but we need to get this information out to the public and in our Legionnaire paper.

Post #64 Dutton was the host for our Fall District Meeting on September 20, 2014 which had as our special guest National Commander, Michael D. Helm. The Post and Auxiliary did an outstanding job of hosting the meeting and showing him that warm hospitality that Montana is noted for. All but one (1) Post in the District had representative at the meeting which is the most we have had in many years. It was a lot of work for many people but well worth it.

I have made three (3) visits to Dutton Post #64 this summer to organize the Fall District Meeting. I visited Fairfield Post #80 and asked if they would be willing to host our 2015 Spring Meeting. They eagerly accepted the challenge. I have also attended a meeting of Malmstrom Post #341 and my own Post Vaughn #130 which recently lost our Commander Ruben Gebhardt. I plan on visiting all our Post in the near future.

DISTRICT 9 - COMMANDER

Larry Dobb

I have made Post visitations to four of the nine Posts in the District since being installed at the Department Convention in June and have two more scheduled for October. In addition, I have talked to the Post Commander and/or his Adjutant for all the other Posts. I am able to contact six of the Posts via email as either the commander or adjutant or sometimes both have email. This is a great help in forwarding the latest membership status or other electronic correspondence received from Department. The remaining Posts still receive information by regular mail.

The District is doing quite well in membership with six of nine Posts being well above target as of October 3, 2014. Of the three that are behind, only Post 120 Winifred is showing well behind with slightly over 10%. I have talked to their adjutant and he assures me that he has 15 or 16 renewals he has to send in. Winifred like several other Posts in District 9 are in rural areas and members have been engaged in the harvest or seeding and do not get home until quite late. This also creates a problem for me contacting those Posts without an email contact.

Based on the actual visitations I have made and in telephone discussions with commanders/adjutants, there is quite a range of how formal their Post Meetings are. Some Posts follow the meeting ritual from the Officer's Guide to the letter or nearly so. Some have only the Pledge of Allegiance and maybe an opening and closing prayer. A couple Posts have only two or three actual Meetings a year, usually associated with Memorial Day and Veterans Day and perhaps a major Post fundraiser. All other Post business, such as picking American Legion Boy's State delegates, oratorical contestants and government surveys, is conducted by the commander/adjutant and perhaps a couple other Post officers over coffee in a local cafe. I have to give credit to these smaller Posts for continuing the programs of the American Legion despite the lack of a formal meeting schedule. The major veteran's holidays, funeral honors, color guards, the Highway Fatality Marker program are still getting done. Attendance at regular Meetings I have attended run from a low of five to a high of nineteen. A couple Post Meetings have been held in conjunction with the American Legion Auxiliary, usually with a half dozen or so members present. I will have a better idea of what is going on once I have attended Post Meetings for all those with a regular meeting schedule.

Our Fall District Meeting was held in Big Timber on September 27, 2014 as part of the South Central Zone Meeting. (Dale Webb, Commander). Sweet Grass Post 19 did an excellent job hosting this Zone Meeting. District 9 had four of nine Posts represented (Post 15 Harlowton – 4 counting myself, Post 16 Lewistown -2, Post 70 Judith Gap -1, Post 76 Hobson -1). Everyone seemed to enjoy the Zone Meeting because it generated a large attendance overall and the opportunity to see and visit with other American Legion members only seen once a year by those that attend the Department Convention. My only concern with this arrangement was when we broke up into Districts in the afternoon. Because of three Meetings going on in the same room, there was a problem with background noise and Department officers having to move between the various Meetings to see how they were being conducted. The general opinion was to continue with the Zone Meeting program for now and see how it goes.

A few highlights were: (1) attending a Post Meeting and BBQ at Denton Post 62 in August. I was able to meet a number of the Post members, hear a report from their American Legion Boys State delegate and participate with Fran Allen, District 9 President in awarding a scholarship to a young lady as well as have an excellent meal, (2) I received a warm reception from Post 70 Judith Gap in September with an excellent pot luck meal provided by their Auxiliary and a very well conducted meeting, (3) Judith Basin Post 76 in Hobson did not plan on having a regular meeting in September, but when I called their commander about a visitation, they scheduled a meeting. I really appreciated the gesture and enjoyed the meeting and was pleased to see a young Iraq/Afghanistan veteran in attendance (4) I attended the District 8 Fall Meeting in Dutton in September, as the National Commander Mike Helm was attending and I wanted to hear what

he had to say from the National viewpoint, I found him to be very friendly and easy to talk too as he comes from a Post and District not unlike those in rural Montana.

I have enjoyed my first three months as a District Commander and look forward to getting around to all the Posts and meeting the key people face to face. It's much easier to call or email someone when you have actually met them.

DISTRICT 10 - COMMANDER

Richard Nielson

REPORT NOT SUBMITTED

DISTRICT 11 - COMMANDER

George Blackard

It has been an honor to continue to serve as the District 11 Commander during the second year of my two year term. Since submitting my annual report for Department Convention in June, I have been privileged to participate in several events honoring veterans and our military service personnel and have had the honor of working together with other service organizations in my area to promote patriotism and Americanism.

On June 15th I participated in a Flag Day ceremony with the members of Elks Lodge #394 in Billings. The members of Lodge #394 along with a local Boy Scout troop executed the traditional Elk's Flag Day ceremony and afterward we gathered outside to retire approximately fifty U.S. Flags. I used a receptacle/incinerator built for this specific purpose and placed every flag into the flames with honor. The Elks did an outstanding job with their ceremony and the event was well attended. Discussions are ongoing to make this a joint event between the Elks and American Legion Andrew Pearson Post 117.

On June 27th thru June 29th I attended the American Legion Department Convention held in Bozeman, MT and Bozeman Post 14 did an outstanding job of hosting convention.

On July 13th I worked with the members of US Navy Operational Support Center (NOSC) Billings and members of Andrew Pearson Post 117 to paint the house of an ailing Viet Nam Veteran and fellow Legionnaire. Between the two organizations we had twenty people attend the house painting and the entire house was painted in three hours. It was a pleasure and an honor to work with the men and women of NOSC Billings on the joint effort.

On August 16th I attended a command picnic of US Navy Operational Support Center Billings and presented the unit with a framed certificate and American Legion Meritorious Service Medal for their participation in the house painting project on July 13th. Also on that day, I set up a table at Montana Fair in Billings for Military and Veterans Appreciation Day. The weather was bad but I managed to speak to a few veterans about The American legion and what we do.

On August 24th I participated in the 1st Annual Warrior Run 5k/8.5 mile run hosted by Andrew Pearson Post 117 in Billings. Post 117 did an excellent job of planning and hosting the event which drew 192 entries and raised over \$5,000 which was donated to a young Montana Army National Guard soldier from Billings who has been stricken with a rare form of cancer. My family and I participated in the 5K portion of the run and had a great time. I was privileged to present the medals and trophies to the winners of each age group as District 11 Commander.

On August 25th thru August 28th I attended the American Legion National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. This was my first National Convention and I enjoyed meeting with our comrades from all across the country and it was especially good to see my fellow classmates from National American Legion College Class of 2012.

September 2nd was a sad day for me as I presided over a memorial service at Dahl Funeral Chapel in Billings for Kenneth George Talakte who died on August 20th, 2014. Ken was a member of Grand Canyon Post 42 and a dear friend. For the service I used parts of the American Legion memorial service from the American Legion manual of ceremonies.

On September 11th I participated in the 13th Annual 9/11 Remembrance and Celebration of Life hosted by Family Church and Andrew Pearson Post 117 and held on the Yellowstone County Courthouse lawn. I was honored to serve as the emcee for the event whose guest speaker was Tyler Murray, an OIF veteran and member of the MSUB ROTC. Mr. Murray gave an excellent speech and was well received. Additionally the Central Catholic High School band participated in the event playing a tribute to our armed forces. Special thanks go to City Councilman Mike Yakawich of Billings for including me in this event every year.

On September 14th I was the keynote speaker for another 9/11 ceremony on the courthouse lawn held by several motorcycle clubs from Billings. The event kicked off their annual poker run fundraiser in support of Laurel Home Town Troops, an organization that has been sending care packages to deployed Montana troops since 2002.

On September 24th I attended a meeting as District Commander at my home post, Andrew Pearson post 117. That night they had two guest speakers including a young lady from Hardin that the post sponsored on a trip to Europe with a student ambassador program and Michael Worsley, the new Team Leader for the Vet Center in Billings. The post had an enormous amount of business to discuss including preparations for their 2nd annual fundraising benefit dinner on January 24th, 2015. The Post 117 meetings are well attended and participation is high.

On October 1st I participated in a meeting at the Billings VA Clinic with VA Rocky Mountain Region Director Ralph Gigliotti. The meeting was attended by members of the DAV, VFW, ROC and I representing the American Legion. The meeting was small by design and it gave those participating an opportunity to express concerns about VA services and practices and share ideas for solutions and ways to provide better service to our veterans. One of the concerns I shared had to do with prescription medications... On multiple occasions while doing a home visit with a veteran, I have seen unopened bags of VA prescriptions sitting on the counter. When I ask the veteran about them they have told me they quit taking those pills but the VA continues to send them. Sometimes the veteran even states that they have mentioned this to their VA doctor but the pills keep coming. Couldn't there be more questions asked at the VA when a patient is in for an appointment that would help to correct this? For example – 1. Are you still taking all of the medications prescribed to you? If not, why did you stop taking them? 2. Would you like to reduce the number of medications you are taking? If so, which ones do you feel you can do without? 3. Do you have medications laying around or piling up in your home? It would

seem that this would help reduce waste, save money, ensure medications are disposed of properly and possibly reduce the amount of medications a patient takes. Director Gigliotti was receptive to our feedback and I enjoyed the opportunity to meet with him.

On October 6th I attended a Post meeting for Treasure Post 92 in Hysham. The meeting included delicious food provided by the Unit 92 Auxiliary and the guest speaker was a young lady who attended American Legion Auxiliary Girls State this year. Post 92 may be a small post but they have a lot of heart and are about as active as they can be. I always enjoy making their meetings.

On October 7th I attended a Post meeting for A.C. Buckner Post 111 of Custer. The meeting was well attended and the post had much business to discuss. This is another great bunch of people who are active in the communities of both Custer and Huntley. I am impressed with their involvement in the schools and with the youth of their communities.

On October 12th I served as emcee at a fundraising dinner and auction for a local soldier and fellow Legionnaire stricken with cancer.

In addition to the events I have listed I attended other functions in the community as District Commander including meetings, baseball games, and fundraisers and appeared on local television and radio shows and in the local paper promoting the American Legion.

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE CHAIRS

AMERICANISM

Joyce Babcock

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

At 2014 Department Convention I met with members assigned to the Americanism Committee and we discussed the resolutions sent to us by the Resolutions committee. The members moved do pass on the two resolutions and they were subsequently passed by the Convention body. One was on asking Congress to pass a law allowing prayer in schools and it was sent on to the National Convention where it also passed by action of that Americanism Committee action.

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

On September 27th I attended the combined meeting of Districts 7, 9, and 11 for the combined Zone session in the a.m. with District 11's meeting after lunch.

BASEBALL

George Haegele

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

This year the Department of Montana had 54 teams and over 800 players. Most of these young men play and practice for 8 months of the year.

The 2014 Class A District Tournaments were hosted by the Richland County Patriots (Sidney), Fort MacLeod Royals, Gallatin Valley Outlaws (Three Forks), and Kalispell Lakers. Lewistown Redbirds hosted the Class A State Tournament joined by Laurel Dodgers from the Eastern District, Mission Valley Mariners (Polson) and Glacier Twins (Whitefish) from the West, Vauxhall Spurs and Medicine Hat Knights from the North, and Gallatin Valley Outlaws (Three Forks) and Belgrade Bandits from the South.

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

The Class AA State Tournament was held in Lethbridge, Alberta. The Missoula Mavs lost their first game to the Medicine Hat Moose Monarchs 17-12. Then they defeated the Great Falls Stallions 14-8, the Billings Scarlets 5-4, Lethbridge KB Heating Elks 9-6, and then won the State Class AA Tournament by defeating the Billings Royals 16-0 and finally 3-2 in the Championship game. Missoula went on to the Northwest Regional Tournament in Eugene, Oregon. The Mavs defeated Boise, Idaho 5-3 in their first game. They lost to Medford, Oregon 12-7 and then were eliminated by Waipahu, Hawaii 16-12. Hawaii lost their first game of the tournament but then went on to win their next five games, defeating Medford, Oregon on the last day 7-4 and 8-6 for the Regional Championship.

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

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

Each year we award a \$1,000.00 scholarship to a deserving Class AA and Class A player. This year's Class A winner is Jacob Anderson (Laurel Dodgers). The Class AA winner is Slade Heggen (Missoula Mavs). Slade also won the Northwest Region Scholarship, which is another \$2,500.00. Congratulations to these outstanding young men.

This year's Class A Most Valuable Player is A. J. Wetsch (Glacier Twins) and the Class AA Most Valuable Player is Shane Olson (Missoula Mavs).

Billings Scarlet's pitcher Gage Hinsz was selected in the Major League Baseball June draft and was signed by the Pittsburg Pirates. He received a seven figure dollar signing bonus. We had several players' scholarship to NCAA D-1 Universities. We again had approximately 100 players who received offers of scholarship aid from work study to full scholarships at Community Colleges, Junior Colleges, NAIA and NCAA D2 and D-3 Colleges and Universities.

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

BOY SCOUTS

Dick Ellwein

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

BOYS STATE

John Louk

The 2015 session of Montana American Legion Boys State will be held at Carroll College from June 7-12, 2015. The delegate fees are \$250.00 per delegate.

Delegates do NOT need to be in Helena before 8:00 a.m. on the opening day as they cannot check in until 8:00 a.m., they need to be in Helena before 11:00 a.m. to be checked in and ready for the opening session at 12:00 noon on Sunday June 7, 2015. Any late arrivals are to

be verified and permission given by the American Legion Boys State Director, Mike Hedegaard. All delegates must register online again this year. The online registration address is: <http://mtlegion.org/Department/boysstate-registration.html>

Once the delegate is registered online then you need to send the fees to the Registrar, Gary White, by May 1st and no later than May 3, 2015. This is important so the delegates can apply for the Samsung Scholarship.

Please be advised that it is extremely important that the BLUE American Legion Post Chairman Card be filled out and sent in **AS SOON AS POSSIBLE**, even if you have the same chairman. Any questions may be directed to Chairman John Louk, phone # 259-9032, Director Mike Hedegaard or the Registrar Gary White.

Reminder:

Starting in 2015, the American Legion Boys State program will no longer refund a delegates fee due to **NO SHOW**. Those funds will have to be collected by the Legion Post or the school where the Delegate came from. It is not the fault of the American Legion Boys State Program that the Delegate did not attend.

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Sharon Doig

I was honored to be asked to be the Department's chair for Children and Youth.

I was able to attend my first Department Convention in Bozeman. I attended the Luncheon for the Joint Children and Youth programs. It was an enlightening experience and I look forward to next year's luncheon where I will be the MC! I also attended the meeting for the Joint Children and Youth Programs where we voted to give a scholarship.

As of September 9th I have received one TFA. Although approved by me, it was denied by National Headquarters. The veteran is in treatment out of state and I resubmitted additional paper work to be considered; and the application was accepted. I am looking forward to meeting Jason Kees in Indianapolis, Manager of Americanism Division and contact person.

I will be attending the National Conference on Children and Youth in Indianapolis on September and looking forward to learning a lot to assist me in this position.

I received notice for change in the deadline and approval process for TFA's. Checks will be distributed only on Tuesday's and Thursday's and applications must be received to later than 0900 Eastern Standard Time on those days to be considered for that day's check.

CONSTITUTION & INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Duane Carlton

The Constitution and Internal Affairs Committee will meet during the Fall Department meeting to discuss the alignment of our Department Constitution and Bylaws with the National document. This undertaking is at the direction of Department Commander Roger Hancock. I've spent much time since appointment as the committee chair in reviewing both documents. The committee members (David Driver and Merv Gunderson – both past Department Commanders

who have excellent experience in this type of task) and our Department Judge Advocate (Jim Shockley, another member with outstanding knowledge) also have this guidance. Streamlining our Department document will be difficult but certainly doable. Another task along these same lines is to actually develop job descriptions and expectations for each of the committee chairmen. Merv suggested that these be established and placed in our Department Bylaws.

CONVENTION 2015

Jed Damson

The American Legion Havre Post #11 and District #2 will host the American Legion Department Convention 2015 in Havre, Montana June 24 through June 28, 2015.

- We have blocked several rooms at different hotels.
- The meetings and the 40 & 8 BQ will be held out at HRDC located at 2229 5th Ave.
- The Children & Youth Banquet, Presidents Banquet and the Joint Banquet will be held at the Eagles.
- Senior Center will serve the Go Getters breakfast and the incoming District Presidents breakfast.
- PJ's will serve the Past Commanders breakfast.
- The Vineyard will serve the Past Department Presidents luncheon.

CONVENTION 2016

Randy Kemp

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

1. The Grand Tree Plus Best Western Motel has been notified that The Department of Montana Convention will return to Bozeman for 2016. Rooms are blocked out for the Convention attendees and rooms necessary for the official business of the Department have been identified. An after action review was conducted with the motel staff and specific problems were address. These minor problems will not occur in the 2016 Convention.
2. The Chamber of Commerce has been notified of the Convention and will advertise the Convention on the official web site when time gets closer. They will again provide information for all attendees which will be helpful for those who have never been to Bozeman.
3. Committees are set up for the following area.
 - a. Decorating
 - b. Food and Beverage
 - c. Registration
 - d. Advertising

4. Post 14 hosted Convention 2014 and learned many things needed to conduct Convention 2016 in an excellent manor. Many Convention 2014 attendees provided input to correct any minor glitches that may have occurred. This information was captured and will be put to good use in the 2016 Convention. Post 14 looks forward to serving the Department for Convention 2016.
5. More information will be provided as time dictates. Information was also provided to Convention 2015 for reference and Convention 2016 Chairman is available to answer any questions concerning Convention 2016.

CONVENTION 2017

George Blackard

The American Legion Department of Montana 2017 Convention will be held at the Billings Hotel and Convention Center at 1223 Muldowney Lane in Billings. The convention will be a joint effort and hosted by Andrew Pearson Post 117 of Billings, Post 100 of Park City, and Post 123 of Laurel.

The Billings Hotel is located just off of King Ave West and Interstate 90 so those who detest city driving can hop on and off of the interstate and avoid all of that city traffic. Those who enjoy visiting the city will have quick access to all of the shopping and eateries that King Ave has to offer and be just minutes away from historic Down Town Billings. Downtown, visitors will see such attractions as Dehler Park - home of the Billings Mustangs, The Moss Mansion, and the Montana Purple Heart Memorial.

The Billings Hotel offers everything a convention could need with resizable conference rooms from small to extra-large that hold from 10 to 1,400 people, wireless internet, projectors, sound systems, tables, comfortable seating and more. The full service Stony Brook Café serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and is located in the center of the building just off of the lobby. The hotel bar called The R-Club, also located off of the lobby, serves cocktails and offers live music and national comedy acts. There is a casino for those who like gaming and even an indoor pool with waterslides!

The hotel offers several different room sizes and configurations including rooms tailored for entertaining and hospitality events. At this time we are a little too far out to have pricing on the rooms but the event hosts recognize that part of a memorable convention, includes quality at a reasonable price.

Further details will be provided in the near future.

DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Karen Semple

Following appointment at Department Convention in Bozeman in June, contact with Montana Volunteer Organizations Assisting in Disaster (MTVOAD) was made, establishing the need to inventory Montana American Legion post resources (locations and resources at post facilities,

trained personnel, etc. that might be available for use by emergency management/incident management during a local disaster or emergency) before the application for MTVOAD membership can be submitted. At Convention in June, two Disaster Response Team Leaders (Districts 6 and 7) were solidly identified, with other Districts yet remaining. Disaster Response/National Emergency Fund training for Team Leaders/Team Members will occur at a later date, after all individuals needed have been identified and agreed to serve. Received an NEF briefing via telephone by NHQ NEF Director, David Elmore, who sent materials to be distributed to Team Leaders.

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

Sam Pappas

We hosted our National Commander, Michael Helm on September 19th, upon his arrival to Montana he was met by our NEC, Merv Gunderson, Alt NEC David Driver, Department Adjutant Gary White, and Department Commander Roger Hancock. While in Great Falls he met Mayor Michael Winters and was given a tour of the Great Falls Veterans Memorial and was also given a short briefing by Mayor Winters. His next stop was at the Dam and then had a guided tour of the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center. He visited Malmstrom AFB and was briefed by the base Commander. Later that afternoon he attended an MIA/POW ceremony at the base. He had a busy day.

On September 20th, the party departed to Dutton and was greeted by Post 64 hosting the District 8 Fall Meeting. Commander Helm was the main speaker at the Districts luncheon. The following day, September 21st, Commander Helm and party departed for Conrad for his visitation. Post37 was the host Post for the District 3 meeting.

We enjoyed the visit of our National Commander and wish him a positive and enjoyable year as our National Commander. On a closing note, National Vice-Commander Jake L. Jacobs will visit the Department of Montana at our Fall Conference in Helena.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Jeff Holmes

Below are the deadlines for the following programs:

- 7th & 8th Grade Essay Contest starts Sept 12th and must be completed by March 1st 2015.
- High School Essay Contest starts Sept 12th and must be completed by March 1st 2015.
- Senior Survey must be completed by March 1st 2015.

My contact information has changed. I have accepted the Ag Teacher / FFA Advisor Position at CCDHS in Miles City, Montana. My new home address is: 710 S Merriam Avenue in Miles City, MT 59301. My broncojeff7@hotmail.com email is still good. My cell phone number is still the same at (406) 350-1347. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. **Any other contact information you have for me is now obsolete.**

Lastly, I would like to congratulate and thank Fred Bell for all his great work as Education/Training Committee Chairman in the past. You have left some big shoes to fill.

ENDOWMENT FUND

Sam Birky

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

The youth program scholarships supported by the endowment fund include:

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

It will assist veterans and their families

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

The endowment fund committee is now active. I have visited with Elmer Palmer and will receive the materials related to forming a 501-C-3 non-profit corporation. It is the intent of the committee to begin the process to form the Endowment Fund and to then share with the Department the opportunity for Legionnaires to support and contribute to the fund.

FINANCE CHAIRMAN

Jeff Nelson

The American Legion of Montana is maintaining its' budgetary directive. A budget that was set up to place the Department of Montana with resources needed in case of an emergency and yet have the flexibility to address issues that may come up during the year. We are working on a budget of \$196,395.00 to provide the programs and committee's the dollars needed to run those areas.

The checking accounts are reviewed monthly and checked for any imbalance. Each expense is placed in its' correct category to determine the budget limits.

Our investments are showing good growth and should continue throughout the coming year.

One of the proposed fundraising projects that were to be initiated this year was the introduction of a raffle calendar. Due to publication problems the calendar was not able to be implemented in time. Therefore, the Ways and Means committee will try and get it out for next years' fundraiser. What that means is we as an organization are going to have to take the remaining fundraisers and aggressively push for their success. That includes promoting the Big K program in the districts throughout the state and selling as many of the rifle raffle tickets as possible. The returns on these fundraisers are what provide the dollars for the various programs.

If you are a chairman of a committee and are looking to make a change in your budget for the next year, evaluate your program now and submit those changes for review. Budget reviews will be conducted after January of the new year.

As this is my first year as Chairman of the finance committee I want to thank my committee members for their advice from time to time, along with our Commander and Adjutant. I also want to thank the Montana legionnaires for having me as the chair of this committee and hopefully I can fill the shoes of the chairman before me in steering the financial direction of the Montana American Legion.

FLAG ALLIANCE

Linda Cousineau

Senate Joint Resolution 17 (S.J. Res.17) sponsored by the Senator Orrin Hatch of UT was introduced 13 June 2013, read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. It is a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States authorizing Congress to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States.113th Congress (2013-2014)

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

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

For general information, Montana Code Annotated 2013 already includes a section on desecration of official flags under 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.

To date, I was not able to find any legal cases of US flag desecration in the state of Montana.

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

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

HEROES TO HOMETOWN COORDINATOR

Sam Birky

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

Resolution 12, passed during the National Executive Committee's Fall Meetings earlier this month, consolidated H2H into OCW, making all troop-support efforts for wounded, injured or ill

service members and service-connected veterans fall under the umbrella of OCW – a program that provides comfort items and recreational events to wounded warriors recovering in military medical facilities and warrior transition units.

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

- Electronics
- Sweat suits
- Gift cards
- Exercise equipment
- Other popular items.

Its services will be enhanced by what was previously provided under H2H – an outreach program that relies heavily on a national network of volunteers to assist service members and their families with the transition into civilian life. This included checking eligibility for temporary financial assistance, housing and family support.

Whereas OCW previously focused on wounded warrior units, Heroes to Hometowns concentrated on helping individual troops with disabilities transition home. - See more at: <http://www.legion.org/operationcomfortwarriors/212722/> - legion-troop-support-programs.

National Commander James E. Koutz has made OCW his primary fundraising project program during his tenure, with his goal to raise \$500,000 for it. Thanks to the consolidation, veterans and service members who previously would have applied only to H2H stand to benefit.

To inquire about aid under OCW or to be connected with a local volunteer H2H coordinator, email ocw@legion.org. Donations to OCW are tax-deductible and can be made here. Every dollar of every contribution made to OCW goes to benefit wounded warriors. Administrative and marketing funds come from membership fees paid by Legionnaires.

HIGHWAY FATALITY MARKER

Hank Adams

Since my appointment in June 2014 as the Highway Fatality Marker Committee Chairman my phone has not stopped ringing. I did not have any idea of the scope of the job. Fortunately, I received a great briefing of my duties and responsibilities from the previous Chairman.

During my brief tenure as Chairman, I have assisted over a dozen concerned citizens with the fatality marker process. Many have to obtain additional information before the process can proceed. My mission is to reduce the burden at the Post level by providing the following information:

Fatality name, date of accident, highway and nearest mile marker, nearest town/city, other fatalities (if known), accident report (If available), Point of Contact (POC), and if the family would like to be involved in the planting of the marker.

In the future, I will work with the Montana DOT on an informational packet on the fatality marker program that will be made available at Montana rest stops.

HOMELESS VETERAN COORDINATOR

Ray Read

The Montana Department's participation in The American Legion's Homeless Veterans Program is now 7 years old. Department Commander re-appointed me as the Coordinator of the Program as the as the Homeless Veterans Coordinator in July 2014. I respectfully submit the following report of the record to date.

Montana Statistics Related to Homeless Veterans is as follows:

Facts Of the 101,597 veterans recognized and recorded by the VA as being in Montana, 77,175 are indicated as wartime veterans. Breakdown by era is: Gulf War- 31,095; Vietnam- 34,478; Korea-9,613; WW II-4,275. Peacetime veterans number 24,422. The ratio of gender is Female veterans 7,174 and Male veterans 92,422. Comment: It is estimated that based on averaging 2.5 members per veterans household that the total veterans population including family members is at 255,000+- or over 1/4 of the total population of Montana.

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

In the latest Montana Homeless Survey for 2014 of the 1,809 respondents 255 they had served in the Military but had no family with them; 186 respondents had family members with them totaling 592 of which I estimated that 163 were children. This indicates that homelessness among Montana veterans was 14% of the total homeless of Montana based on the Survey results. I believe the true number is between 3.8% and the 14% surveyed. I am looking forward to updating this survey in the up-coming months.

Montana Point-in-Time Homeless Survey Data

Prepared by MT CoC Coalition

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

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

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

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

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

INSURANCE DIRECTOR

Gary White

We have received no new disbursements since the last report in June; our next anticipated disbursements will be in April 2015. We are starting to see some gains in the number of policy holders, therefore we should see an increase in revenue from the insurance programs (as a reminder we were down about \$1000.00 last year). We need the help of all Posts and members to insure members are receiving and returning the AGIA Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD & D) insurance forms and cards. For the month of August we had 46 members fill out and submit their AD & D forms. Those who fill out the forms will be signed up until August 2016. We must continue to encourage our members to look at the Legionnaire Insurance Trust programs for their insurance needs. The Trust is constantly updating their programs looking for new and better insurance products for our members. It is not our intent to be selling insurance, but we should be making our members aware of the products available to them.

During the District Meetings we continued to register members for the free AD & D; I encourage you to do the same at your local Posts Meetings periodically.

Please encourage any of your members who have homeowners or auto insurance policies with USAA to notify USAA that they are American Legion members and want to be associated with the American Legion affinity program, remember to do the same with your USAA Credit Cards. For all Legion members thus registered the Department will receive a percentage.

LEGISLATIVE

Tim Gavin

August 15, 2014 - Attended a meeting of the State Administration and Veterans' Affairs Interim Committee (SAVA) to discuss the concept of creating a position along the lines of a Governor's Office veteran advocate or Ombudsman.

The position of The American Legion is to not support the creation of a state level Veterans Ombudsman.

Below is an excerpt from the Administrator for the Montana Veterans Affairs department outlining the work session after the testimony.

Bottom Line Up Front: SAVA is going to draft “2-3 bills” regarding the ombudsman/outreach person.

Specific Comments (not quoted unless so noted), in order:

Rep. Blyton – Don’t create a new position, rather focus any generated resources – including budget – into MVAD.

Sen. Jent – Community-level focus is valid, veteran’s service officers are the key resource. Regarding state (Governor) level position – no.

Sen. Malek – Augment the Job Services, but “need more time” to figure out what needs to be done.

Rep. Bennett – Don’t have “time,” rather, move forward with some proposals to consider in the next meeting (November). But, need more time to attain necessary information. He stated that he doesn’t think that a Governor’s Office veteran advocate (as has been proposed) is needed, but, there does need to be a person identified that consolidates all the veteran service resources (fed/state/community) available. Also, develop a community grant program that is designed to be utilized at the community level.

Sen. Lewis – Sees the need to develop a program that can inform veterans of ARCH program (the federal veteran medical services at local facilities that Bruce Knutson spoke of) services/resources/processes and other veteran services (along the line of what Rep. Bennett proposed – community level).

Sen. Brown – There should be a DPHHS person created who works specifically on veteran ombudsman/outreach services.

Sen. Malek – Wants the state to fund a “Brian Becker” (Missoula Vet Center) who could work with him and maybe “split the state.”

Sen. Brown – SAVA is going forward with drafts, and solicited input from those in attendance.

Rep. Kary – “Why can’t we get veterans to the right services? We should use public facilities instead of federal.”

Sen. Brown – SAVA will draft 2-3 bills, and again solicited input from those in attendance, closed the hearing.

Below is a follow up submitted by the Research Analyst Montana Legislative Services Division:

I am sending this email on behalf of the State Administration and Veterans’ Affairs Interim Committee (SAVA) of the State Legislature. On Aug. 15, SAVA instructed me, as the committee’s staff, to contact stakeholders and any interested persons concerned with providing outreach, services, or benefit claims help to veterans and their families in order to solicit a “wish list” of ideas for state legislation to promote two things:

Community outreach to help veterans and their families learn about and navigate the range of services and benefits available and to connect them to what they may need (housing, employment, mental health treatment, benefit claims help, etc.); and

Statewide technical assistance for this community-based effort.

This “wish list” of ideas for state legislation could encompass three types of legislative approaches:

Legislation that would establish a policy framework in statute for this community-based effort and statewide technical assistance (i.e., to place in statute a “who, what, where, when, how” as a map for community-based efforts and to designate or establish a statewide coordinator”);

legislation that would provide for specialized changes or additions to state statutes concerning certain programs (e.g., selected changes to statutes concerning veteran-related programs in the areas of housing, employment, mental health, benefit claims, the role of veteran service officers, the scope of the mission for the board of veterans affairs, etc); and

Legislation that would provide funding (e.g., a state grant program to assist community-based efforts).

The discussion on veteran-related bill drafts is tentatively scheduled for 3:15 p.m., Nov. 17, but please stay tuned for any changes and continue to check the SAVA website for any updates. The website will be updated throughout the weeks leading up to the November 17 meeting to provide access to all meeting materials as they become available. Public comment is invited during the meeting. Written public comment is encouraged. Also, please feel free to sign up at the following link for email notification of any changes to the agenda or website. http://leg.mt.gov/css/Lyris/email_logon.asp

LEGION RIDER COORDINATOR

Roger Knoell

I have been researching the department and national by-laws so I can put together a Constitution and By-Laws that will work for the Department of Montana. I attended the Livingston ROMP June 5, 6, 7 & 8. We had 7 states represented. On 6 June we did a 310 mile ride with a pasty lunch in Butte hosted by Post #1. On

7 June we did a 300+ mile ride with lunch in Virginia City. On 8 June we had an awards ceremony and ALR training. We then voted to have the next ROMP in Heber/Overguard Az.

MEMBERSHIP

Elmer Palmer

After the Department Convention, the Commander and Vice Commander traveled to Indianapolis for the National Membership Workshop. The rough estimate of the increase of goal that had been estimated was underestimated by the Commander, Vice Commander and the Membership Chairman by over 170 members. Working with the Adjutant, we were able to reach a compromise that would take part of the added goal from the Headquarters Post and share the remainder with the districts and posts.

I attended the National Convention in Charlotte, N.C. as a duly elected delegate from Department of Montana. I attended both the Internal Affairs Commission and the Membership and Post Activities Committee portions of the Standing Committee and Commission meetings. I was the delegate to the Membership and Post Activities in the Convention Committee.

The Convention Committee referred two resolutions to the Standing Committee and rejected one. The committee referred the resolution we passed in convention in Bozeman to the Standing Committee. It was the one that requested release of the un-renewed DMS members to the departments earlier in the member year.

The Department of Montana has made the first two targets for the 2015 Membership Year, and has a fair start on the third. One thing that will help us retain members is to get them out of the headquarters post into the local posts. At this meeting, I will give to the District Commanders and Zone Commanders a listing of the Headquarters Post members that live in the area of the zones and districts. I will be asking the commanders to inform me as to what actions they have taken with these lists.

National Commander Helm has published his requirements for his membership pin:

“During the 2014-2015 membership year, National Commander Mike Helm will award his **National Commander pin** to any American Legion Family member who obtains three new members into The American Legion.

“A new member is defined as any eligible person joining for the 2015 membership year who was not a member of The American Legion during the 2014 membership year.

“Each member listed must be eligible for membership in The American Legion. Please forward names of SAL members or Auxiliary members to your detachment or unit for use in their respective incentive programs.

“To maintain the integrity of the National Commander's pin incentive program, only one pin will be awarded per individual.”

The form should be available shortly.

I want to thank those that held me in their thoughts and prayers during my recent run-in within the past few weeks. I remember almost none of the first nine days, and little of the remaining six.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Randall Brown

At the Department Convention that was held in Bozeman during the month of June 2014, I made my written and oral report. I also worked with the National Security committee on three resolutions that were submitted.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban and al-Qaida continue their resistance with military action, suicide attacks and the use of improvised explosive devices. Recently, some of these terrorists have infiltrated the Afghanistan Security Forces and have killed several of our NATO advisors, (mostly US Forces). As a result, many of these advisors have suspended training operations with their Afghanistan counter parts. Currently, NATO Troop levels are being reduced and more areas of the country are being turned over to the Afghanistan Army for their control. Current plans are ending the NATO combat role and making a transition to training, advise and assist

role. Additionally, plans are being made to withdraw the troops from Afghanistan if a security pact cannot be reached.

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

President Obama has recently authorized air strikes into Syria to help combat the ISIS threat and provide military aid to some of the militant organizations that are also fighting ISIS.

North Korea continues to be a national security concern because of its nuclear program and the fact that this country has launched various military strikes against South Korea many times over the past years. Currently, this country is making threats that it is ready to launch nuclear weapons on the U.S. and its allies. This situation is a serious threat and must be kept in check.

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

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

In Syria, demonstrators against the current government have been attacked and many killed by government forces. Many of these demonstrators are also al-Qaida inspired Sunni militants ISIS (known as Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) and are involved in fighting in both Syria and Iraq. Unfortunately, many innocent civilians have also been killed or forced to leave their homes. Earlier, many countries expressed their desire to have the current leader to step down which did not happen. Because of the involvement of the Sunni militants, support for the demonstrators has declined. The United States has closed its embassy in Syria and recalled its ambassador.

Syria has launched missiles into neighboring Turkey and evidence points to the fact that chemical weapons may have been used against protesters and innocent citizens which is a major concern. The United States has now deployed Patriot Missile Batteries along Turkish border and has deployed Navy units near Syria. These units are designed to counter attack any further missile launches from Syria and have the capabilities to launch cruise missiles. There has not been much support for military involvement in Syria by the American public and our allies. However, because of the recent beheadings of American and English civilians in Syria, there is now support for the air strikes against the militant organization of ISIS which is operating in Iraq and Syria. Additionally, there is support to provide military aid to other militant organizations in the fight against ISIS.

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

China has military strength and capabilities that cannot be ignored. Recently, China has constructed and deployed its first Navy Aircraft Carrier. Current relations with China are good and it is hoped that this will not change.

The situation between the Palestine's and the Israelis is always a national security concern. Currently, the Fatah group controls the West Bank and the Hamas group has seized control of the Gaza Strip, therefore, splitting the two parties. Israel and other western nations are supporting the Fatah Group, but do not recognize or support the Hamas Group. The Hamas Group continues to defy an uneasy truce and has sent rockets into Israel territory killing Israel citizens and soldiers. In response, Israel has launched an all out assault on the Hamas Palestine territory. The results include killing many Palestine citizens, destroying tunnels which go into Israel territory, destroying weapons the Hamas Group are using to fight Israel and destroying many homes and buildings. Egypt has made several efforts in trying to help negotiate a peace settlement between Israel and Palestine but those efforts have not been successful in the past. Hopefully, the latest cease-fire agreement negotiated by Egypt will hold.

The recent takeover of Crimea by Russia from the Ukraine has caused major concerns from other nations including the United States. Because of this action, sanctions have been placed on Russia by several countries and NATO is beginning to get involved with this situation. Pro-Russian insurgents have seized Ukrainian armored vehicles and several government buildings in eastern Ukraine, a hotbed of unrest against Ukraine's interim government. Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 was shot down by a Russian-made missile killing 298 people aboard the plane. Russia denies providing the missile to the pro-Moscow separatists and said that the Ukrainian military may have shot down the plane. The Ukrainian military continues to retake the eastern Ukraine

from the pro-Russian insurgents. There is much concern that Russia may continue aggression and invade Ukraine. This situation is serious and is an undesirable situation.

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

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

In summary, there are many national security concerns that affect this country. The United States must be very careful about possibly intervening in pro-reform events taking place in the Middle East and African nations, and to re-examine our foreign aid policies. Our US intelligence programs must be re-evaluated and changes appear to be needed. The things that our nation needs to make top priorities are the total support of the Armed Forces and it's needs, balance the federal budget, encourage US manufacturing in our country, to reduce the current oil prices, reduce our dependence on foreign oil (with the exception of Canada). The proposed pipeline from Canada to Houston Oil Refineries would appear to be in the best interests of this country and this project should be approved. Canada has proven to be one of our finest allies. And, we need to secure our borders with Mexico and Canada.

ORATORICAL

Jeff Holmes

Congratulations again to Jackson Smith of Missoula for representing Montana at the National Oratorical Contest. Congrats also to Hellgate Post #27 for sponsoring the contest and Jackson as part of your Post objectives. I would also like to congratulate and thank again Larry Hanson and Lowell Long for doing such an awesome job at our Department Oratorical Contest in Helena this past spring. They deserve all the credit for such an efficient contest.

Our new Department format is now in effect. Upon arrival at the Department Contest, each student will be divided into one of two separate pools in lieu of the old zone contest in the morning. The top two winners from each pool will compete at the Department Finals in the afternoon. I do think this is a great change and will lead to a more competitive final.

My contact information has changed. I have accepted the Ag Teacher / FFA Advisor Position at CCDHS in Miles City, Montana. My new home address is: 710 S Merriam Avenue in Miles City, MT 59301. My broncojeff7@hotmail.com email is still good. My cell phone number is still the same at (406) 350-1347. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. **Any other contact information you have for me is now obsolete.**

Lastly, just a reminder that our Department Contest will be held on February 8th 2015 in Great Falls. This is about a month earlier than last year so please adjust accordingly.

PUBLIC RELATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

Keith Sibbert

The Montana Legionnaire is now a quarterly publication and will print at the end of January, April, July and October. The deadline for submitting articles have changed accordingly. They are now:

January 1 - February through April Edition

April 1 – May through July Edition

July 1 – August through October Edition

Oct 1 – November through January Edition

In addition the Montana American Legion Auxiliary Executive Committee decided to eliminate the cost of including the Service Star in the Montana Legionnaire as a way to help decrease costs due in part to declining membership. This will result in a loss of revenue of \$650 per edition and some savings in postage and printing costs but may ultimately result in a net loss to the Department depending on the number of pages filled. According to Adjutant White if we can maintain 16 pages we should see a net reduction in costs but if we produce fewer than 16 pages it may result in a loss due to the way the layout person is paid.

That being said District Commanders we could use your assistance. Please encourage your Posts to submit articles and pictures to ensure we can fill as many pages as possible. This is not only needed for financial reasons but also for encouraging our membership to keep at it "For God and Country..." and see what others are doing.

The Montana Legionnaire was selected by the National American Legion Press Association as the 2014 George W. Hooten Category 1-B (Departments under 40,000) 2nd Place award winner. The award logo is shown below and will be included in future issues of the publication.

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

John Pellegrini

Once again, the membership of the Detachment is close to the top in the Nation. Presently we are at 5th place; however, we are about 7% lower than we were last year at this time. We have to step up and work on those renewals as well as new members.

SAL National Commander Mike Moss is offering a Recruitment Award Pin to those who sign up five new members during the year. Commander Moss will also be in attendance at our Fall Conference. This is the first time an SAL National Commander has visited Montana that I know of. Commander Moss volunteered himself to attend our Conference and we thank him very graciously.

I will be attending the SAL NEC Fall Meeting in Indianapolis before our Department Fall Conference and may have more to report at that time.

SHOOTING SPORTS

Ray Read

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

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

Another highlight of The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program is our annual JUNIOR POSITION AIR RIFLE TOURNAMENT. The tournament begins with Postal matches to determinate state and/or regional champions. The next stage is a Qualification Round (also a Postal match) to determine the shooters who will earn expense paid trips to compete in the National Championship. The 25th National Championship is a shoulder-to-shoulder match to be held August 2015(Dates TBA) at the USA Shooting range facilities, at the Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

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

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

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

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

If you continue with the program and have some athletes who are interested in continuing in 3-Position competitive shooting that would be the time to consider moving them into the precision category. We can provide you with more information if you would like.
Enclosure 1, Montana Current Program

Montana has been involved in the American Legion Junior Air Rifle Shooting Sports Program since its inception some twenty-six years ago. During this time the program has continued to grow and mature. As of this date there have been 30 American Legion sponsored Junior Air Rifle Shooting Sports Teams across Montana. Points of Contact on this list are subject to change.

Team Name	First Name	Last Name	Address	City	State	Postal Code
Silver Bow Post 1 Shooting Team	Thomas L.	Fiscus	310 Blacktail Canyon Road	Butte	MT	59701-
Valley County 4-H Shooting Sports	William J.	Lauckner	172 FAS 438	Nashua	MT	59248-90
Lincoln County 4-H	Rae Lynn	Benson	P.O. Box 1140	Eureka	MT	59917-
Western Valley 4-H	Jim	Tollefson	PO Box 296	Hinsdale	MT	59241-
Lake County 4-H Shooting Team	Jeff	Nelson	4011 East Shore	Polson	MT	59860-
Gallatin County 4-H Shooting Sports	Paul	Snider	395 Mountain View Dr.	Bozeman	MT	59718-
Lewis and Clark 4-H Shooting Sports Club	Buck	Buck-master	P.O. Box 357	East Helena	MT	59635-03
Anaconda Snakeeyes	Jesse	Parrow	614 Alder	Anaconda	MT	59711-
Eureka Patriots	Maurice F.	Egan	1550 Barnaby Lake Road	Eureka	MT	59917-
Phillips County 4-H Shooting Sports	Robert	Sunford	P.O. Box 163	Malta	MT	59261-
Flathead Co. 4-H Shooting Sports	Gavin	Corrigan	121 Westview Dr.	Kalispell	MT	59901-
4-H Shooting Sports "Southside Sparks"	Doug	Mitch	P.O. Box 849	Plains	MT	59859-
Yellowstone Post 4 Rifle Team	Kathleen	Glenn	4432 Hillcrest Road	Billings	MT	59101-
Post 111 Shooting Team	Joyce	Babcock	212 3rd Street/ P.O. Box 21	Custer	MT	59024-

Team Name	First Name	Last Name	Address	City	State	Postal Code
Twin Bridges Shooting Sports	Dan	Busarow	5913 Hwy 41	Whitehall	MT	59759-
Sun River Valley	David	Capps	1448 Cleveland Dr.	Great Falls	MT	59404-
Carter County Shooting Sports	Jim A.	Keith	406 S. Center	Miles City	MT	59301-
Kalispell Sure-Shots	Margaret	Byrd	P.O. Box 1043	Marion	MT	59925-
Fort Owen Post 94 Shooting Team	Bruce	Nelson	P.O. Box 416/217 S. Kootenai Rd.	Stevensville	MT	59870-
Eureka 4-H Shooting Sports	Michael	Gannon	Box 1211	Eureka	MT	59917-
Golden Triangle Junior Shooters	Larry	Blanchard	14 Sun Loop Lane	Great Falls	MT	59404-
Mineral County 4-H Shooting Sports	Debra R.	Regan	77 Cedar Creek Road	Superior	MT	59872-
Wingina 4-H Club	Mike	Hoggan	2546 Belgian Hill Road	Valier	MT	59486-
Libby Legion Junior Rifle Team	James	Pierce	617 W. 1st Street	Libby	MT	59923-16
Mountain Man Shooting Team	Danny	Riddle	826 Dixon Avenue	Missoula	MT	59801-
Post 21 Shooting Sports Team	David M.	McLean	108 E. Park Street	Anaconda	MT	59711-
Alder 4-H Shooting Sports	Jenny	Wood	2997 Hwy 287	Sheridan	MT	59749-
Ronan Shooting Sports	Levi	Read		Ronan,	MT	59864

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

Kelly Ackerman

I attended the 2014 National Convention in Charlotte, NC and served as the Secretary of the Claims and Rating Subcommittee for the VA&R Committee. There were 126 Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation resolutions presented for consideration.

As directed by VA&R Headquarters, I have participated in local Town Hall meetings. I am also tracking our local Appeals at the Board of Veterans Appeals in DC. The VA has informed us that they are working on reducing the backlog of Appeals pending.

VETERANS ECONOMIC

Laura Brookie

REPORT NOT SUBMITTED

VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – BILLINGS

Dale Webb

I worked with Bill White and Gary White to help pass the resolution for having the flags displayed at Fort Harrison.

I have been trying to get volunteers for the CBOC in Billings, but haven't had a lot of volunteers as of today. Will keep working on this.

I am also trying to work to get the coffee and some cookies donated to the CBOC. I will continue to talk to these people.

I have been a phone participant in both the spring and summer meetings of the VAVS Reps.

I will continue to work to make our CBOC a pleasant experience for our vets.

VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – Fort Harrison

Bill White

1. Attended second and third quarter V.A.V.S. Meetings at VA Fort Harrison, MT.

2. Provided Gas card for needy veterans at Fort Harrison VA.
3. Provided refreshments for veterans at Fort Harrison using American Legion V.A.V.S funds.
4. Continue working with Dale Webb the V.A.V.S. Representative for the Eastern Part of the State To ensure veterans are taken care at the Billings CBOC
5. Worked with Dale Webb and Gary White to ensure passage of the avenue of flags resolution at VA Fort Harrison.
6. Work with Gary White to ensure that All American Legion Volunteers are registered so that the American Legion gets proper credit.
7. Working with Nabisco Cookie Company in Helena to ensure that Veterans are supplied with refreshments.
8. Appointed to the Veterans Advisory Council at Co-Chair and Veterans Representative
9. Re-appointed to The Veterans Transportation Committee that over sees the Veterans Transportation System (VTS) system used at VA Fort Harrison as one of the veterans representatives

VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – Miles City

Robert Crowe

REPORT NOT SUBMITTED

WAYS & MEANS

Bill Applegate

REPORT NOT SUBMITTED