



DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Jim Grosset

After being elected your Department Commander, I went to Great Falls to help with the Revitalization of District 8. I found it to be very rewarding as it was an opportunity to get out and meet face to face with Legionnaires and find out why they had not renewed. It also gave me a chance to let them know what we could do for them and they could do for us.

Shortly after, I had the sad duty of attending the funeral of Past Department Commander and dear friend Ralph Gardner in Lewistown.

I had the opportunity to have lunch with Governor Steve Bullock in Calgary as he was in Calgary attending the Oil and Gas show. We met the new Lt Governor of Alberta Lois Mitchell and other local dignitaries.

Then it was off to Helena for the AA American Legion Baseball State Tournament. I threw out the first pitch at the first game during the opening ceremonies. It was nice to watch the youth of two countries face off in competition; I did not pick any favorites.

In August I traveled to Indianapolis for the membership workshop. It was informative and we all had a good time. My membership team and I met with Dale Barnett and gave him our plan.

At the end of August, many of us traveled to Baltimore for the National Convention. We stayed in a very swanky hotel and were right next to the Camden Yards Baseball Stadium, you could see the field from the hotel window. We went to an Orioles game that was lost to Tampa Bay. The parade had many entries; the only downside was the heat that we waited in for our turn to march. I gave up my Presidency of FODPAL and most of our Delegation was at the meeting. The MC for the convention was Noah Galloway, who has one leg and one arm and is a motivational speaker and somewhat of a dancer. The convention wrapped up with the election of Dale

Barnett from Georgia as our new National Commander. We went to his reception at the local Post, but it was so crowded that we left early.

In September I attended the reading of POW/MIA names at Memorial Park in Helena and then attended the rededication of the POW/MIA Plaque at the Capital. I then left to join the National Commander for his tour of Montana. We walked in a Parade in Belgrade, and then off to Big Timber for the District 7, 9, 11 meeting. They had an excellent meal and the meeting was good except for the noise from outside each District meeting. The next day we went to Missoula for the District 4, 5, and 6 meeting. It was held in the Armory and the facility was great. It was another successful meeting in Missoula.

The next week I was in Cut Bank for the District 3 and 8 meetings. My hat is off to all the Districts and Zones that had their meeting this fall.

After that meeting I had to get back to Calgary to speak at a Veterans Lunch at my Post; it was well attended and they learned what the American Legion is about.

DEPARTMENT VICE-COMMANDER

Hal Rice

Wow! Three months have passed and what a ride it has been! I have thoroughly enjoyed myself. Starting in August I flew to Indianapolis for the National membership workshop. There were members from all 50 states and territories. This was an intense 2 days of meetings on recruiting and retaining members in our Posts. Some of the ideas for recruiting were highway billboards, go to Applebee's or Golden Corral (or any business) when they offer free meals to veterans and ask if you can set up a recruiting station. The membership committee is already working on the billboard idea. Another suggestion was to go to the Vet Centers, stand downs and job fairs. Several Posts represented at the workshop shared that they pay active duty service members' dues. A suggestion to offset their dues was to set up a swear or donation jar at meetings.

If there is a member of your community leaving or is at Basic Training, take a blue star banner to their home, to start a relationship with their family, who might also be veterans themselves. Offer to pay dues for family members on active duty. Visit with a local realtor and ask if they would let you know when a veteran is moving into the community, giving you a chance to knock on another door.

Type facebook.com into your search engine and it will take you to Facebook and walk you through setting up a Facebook page for your Post. I recommend having 2 to 3 members of your Legion Family as administrators. This way it can be updated and information shared that may inspire someone to join your Post, Auxiliary or Squadron. Search Facebook for acquaintances that may be veterans and sign them up. Remember the last 25 years is open enrollment, and don't forget to recruit for the Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion. Phone numbers are

available on anywho.com or 411.com. Do not forget what a big difference our numbers make to Congress. So recruit, recruit and recruit some more!!

Now I would like to ask, if you have never attended a Post meeting, why not? We all remember the comradeship of being in the military; this still exists in the American Legion today! If you miss the company of your fellow veterans please attend a Post meeting and get involved in what they have going on. You may be pleasantly surprised at how well you are received.

Now onto Fall District meetings, NEC Merv Gunderson, Adjutant Gary White and I started from Helena on Friday September 11, driving to Miles City where we spent the night. While there we went out their veteran's cemetery; it is a very nice place.

On Saturday September 12 we drove to Baker for the District 10 meeting. Then to Sidney where we spent the night before heading onto Poplar for District 1 meeting. Meeting attendance at both Districts were dismal. I encourage members to please attend your District meetings.

The next week we were off to Townsend for Post 42 meeting with the National Commander in attendance. On to Belgrade! We all toured 1st 163rd Battalion Headquarters Armory. The trip then moved onto Bozeman, the home of Post 14, at their new Post home where National Commander Barnett commended them for rising from the ashes. The group then moved on to the Big Sky Post 99, where we toured the Big Sky Soldiers chapel, it is worth the drive just to see the chapel and the view of the mountains in the background.

We then departed to travel to Livingston where we toured the 143rd MP Co and to Livingston Post 23 for some outstanding Friday night burgers. On Saturday morning we had a breakfast meeting with NEC Merv Gunderson, Alt NEC David Driver, Commander Jim Grosset, Adjutant Gary White, National Commander Dale Barnett, Senator Steve Daines and myself. We then went to the marshalling site for Belgrade's Fall Festival Parade, where we marched to a very well attended parade. Leaving the parade we headed to Big Timber for the Zone meeting with Districts 7, 9, and 11. This was very well attended as they served prime rib for lunch, after the meeting we headed to Butte to spend the night.

Sunday September 20 we departed for Missoula for the Zone meeting for Districts 4, 5, and 6. After this meeting Zone Commander Larry Stroklund, Adjutant Gary White and I attended a meeting with members of Paradise Post and discussed problems they are having with the insurance company and contractor as they are trying to "rise from the ashes." The meeting went well and I hope things start moving along. With our butts dragging we headed for home.

The next weekend, September 26, I went to Cutbank for Districts 3 and 8 meetings. Everything went well, attendance was fair for all that is going on: sports, seeding, etc. Sunday I drove to Rocky Boy for the District 2 meeting. It is a beautiful drive into the foothills of the Bear Paw Mountains. Attendance was on the low side.

I am now going to issue a challenge to all Post Commanders for your District meetings. If you or your officers can not attend, make calls until you find someone to attend, there is a lot of information from Department and National offices that you need to know.

ZONE COMMANDER – SOUTH CENTRAL

Len Albright

At the end of September, Districts 7, 9, and 11 in this Zone have all reached target by over 10%. Our goal is to maintain this by the end of October. There are a couple of Posts we need to look at possible revitalization as they appear to be struggling. Some special visits might be in order.

The District/Zone Fall Convention in Big Timber Montana was well attended. This meeting was special as National Commander Dale Barnett, was in attendance. Districts 7, 9 and 11 pooled together and had a special hand crafted patriotic ink pen presented to him. The pen was crafted by Duane Carlton. Big Timber's hospitality and lunch was once again topnotch.

The Friday before the convention in Big Timber, the National Commander visited several Posts in District 7 which included a special visit to the Soldier's Chapel in Big Sky where we had lunch. While there Dale and Post 99 Commander Kenny pounded in the most recent fatality marker— a first for Dale. Dale also wound up with some close up photos of big horn sheep in the Gallatin Canyon. As Zone Commander I provided a guided tour of Bozeman, Post 14 and the Gallatin Canyon.

Our goal is to exceed our membership goal and to educate and make our veteran's aware of how the American Legion helps veterans and their families as well as the community and youth programs. We also want to help our struggling Posts and assist them with revitalization when and where we can.

ZONE COMMANDER – WESTERN

Larry Stroklund

I conducted the consolidated Districts 4, 5, and 6 Zone meeting on 20 Sep. Following that meeting we had a committee meeting on Post 129.

ZONE COMMANDER – NORTH CENTRAL

Lowell Long

This is my second year as the North Central Zone Commander and it is off to a good year. I have attended the District 3 and 8 joint meeting in Cut Bank on September 26th and the District 2 meeting on September 27th. These meetings have given the Department officers the opportunity to come and discuss with the members of the Districts what is happening in the Department and what is happening at the National level.

I have been working with the District Commanders on membership. I am happy to say that all three Districts in my Zone made the first target of 50%. Now it is time to keep working to make the next targets as they come up. I have shared my goal for this year in membership with each of the Districts at their District meetings. My goal is for all three of my Districts to reach 100% by the convention this June. I know that with a lot of hard work, we can achieve this goal.

I was asked to carry the American Flag in the homecoming parade in Harlem again this year. The parade was held on September 25th. 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 attended the Fall District meetings for my Zone. I first attended the Districts 3 and 8 meeting in Cut Bank on September 26th. A lot of great information was shared with the members in attendance by all the Department officers that were present. I then attended the District 2 meeting the next day in Rocky Boy. It was great to be able to be at these meetings and share my vision of where I would like to see us at the next convention. Over the next few months we will need to work hard to try to accomplish our goals.

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 the District #10 Commander deliver some of the packets. I had nice visits with many Post Commanders explaining the new items going into effect. We are losing ground as we were the only ones (Bob & I) from our District to attend the convention in Havre. Hope we can get more enthusiasm in the future, as that is the backbone of our organization. National Convention was very informative and enjoyed seeing old friends again.

We had the first Districts meeting this fall; I was happy to see more in attendance, this does help get our programs out. Please I would like to see more representatives in our Zone for the Oratorical Contest and The American Legion Boy's State programs... They need the best encouragement so please get out there and work for our high school students. I enjoyed visiting with all of you in District #1, you are great Legionnaires. We do need to get out there face to face to get our renewals, they are slow coming in.

Thanks you everyone in District #1 and #10 for your support.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN (N.E.C.)

Merv Gunderson

I attended the National Convention in Baltimore, MD 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 piece of business that garnered the most attention was a proposed \$5.00 dues increase beginning Jan 1, 2016. There was no debate from the floor, although delegates were given a great deal of procedural guidance. The Dues increase passed on a majority vote of the membership. The Department of Montana finished 33rd in the nation in membership so our seats were further back than usual.

September 12, 2015 I attended the District 10 meeting in Baker. All information about newly elected National officers, the dues increase, and other information were disseminated. The meeting was fairly well attended. It was nice to see Ralph Dukart back attending meeting. Zone Commander Bob Beals and District Commander Sylvia Beals oversaw the proceedings.

On September 13, 2015, I attended the District one meeting in Poplar. The meeting did not have enough Posts for a quorum so no financial business was conducted. District leadership will work to increase participation at the spring meeting.

On September 17, 2015 I picked up National Commander Dale Barnett and his aide, Dewey Moss at the Bozeman Airport. The Commander was shown areas of interest in the Gallatin Valley area including the Logan recreational site.

National Commander Barnett was given a special opportunity to visit small Posts. Belgrade Post 30, Manhattan Post 87, and Townsend Post 42 were visited on the 17th. The National Commander presented a special membership award in Townsend. All the Posts were very appreciative the National Commander stopped by.

On September 18, 2015 National Commander Barnett was taken to the Belgrade Armory for a tour of the facility. He had the opportunity while there to meet with our Montana Veterans Affairs Division service officers.

September 19 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 20 the second Zone meeting was held in Frenchtown. This meeting was well received with a few problems during the District breakout. The meeting went very well and National Commander Barnett was the guest speaker.

On September 21, 2015 I escorted Commander Barnett and his aide, Dewey Moss to the Missoula airport. They were very grateful for all the courtesies given them by the Montana Posts and Districts.

From September 27 through September 28 I worked with Jim Fiedler on a revitalization Post project in Ennis. We were successful in finding some new recruits who are willing to help that Post accomplish Post business. I returned a week later to pick up a few more members. District

Commander Duane Carlton accompanied me and we met with Lee Sargent to discuss revitalization plans.

On the 30th of September I traveled to Big Sky and picked up membership for their Post. Dick Allgood met with me. He was very appreciative of the help he received from the National Commander visit plus recruitment.

From October 10 through October 15, 2015 I attended the fall meetings in Indianapolis with Adjutant White, Commander Grosset, and Post 2 Commander Josh Clement. There was plenty of Legion business accomplished at the National Executive meeting. The American Legion is very viable and has a great potential for growth if we all work to increase membership.

One piece of business that directly affected Montana was the merging of the Peerless Post with the Scobey Post. The merger was approved by the National Executive Committee. The Scobey Post will have to accept the membership goal of Peerless. Montana will show a net loss of one Post. It is important that we keep our Post strength up. National will be looking for Montana to add a new Post in the near future.

While in Indianapolis we had the opportunity to visit with many of the individuals in the leadership of The American Legion. We were able to get Josh Clement introduced to several of those individuals. I am sure Josh will have a bright future with The American Legion.

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

ALTERNATE NATIONAL COMMITTEEMAN (N.E.C.)

David Driver

After the Department Convention in Havre, I attended the National Convention in Baltimore. I didn't get back in time to attend Districts 1 and 10's fall meetings, however, I did get to attend the dinner put on by Townsend Post 42 for the National Commander Dale Barnett who was visiting the Department. I attended a breakfast meeting in Belgrade with the National Commander, Department NEC, Department Commander, Department Vice Commander and US Senator Daines. I participated in a parade through Belgrade with Post 30, the National Commander and Department officers. I attended the presentation of the Silver Star Medal at Post 2 in Helena by US Senator Daines, to an US Army Nurse who served in the Vietnam War. I attended the 9-11 ceremonies put on by Post 2 in Helena. I also participated in the rededication of the Montana POW/MIA Freedom Tree and plaque at the State Capital. I attended the South Central Zone and Western Zone Fall meetings. I also attended the Districts 3 & 8 Fall Meetings in Cut Bank. I also took a tour of the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation. Rocky Boy was derived from the name of a leader of a band of Chippewa Indians. It actually meant "Stone Child" but was not translated correctly from Chippewa to English and "Rocky Boy" evolved.

Had a late lunch meeting in Great Falls at a local establishment with the Department Adjutant and was briefed on the District 2 Fall meeting.

PAST DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Roger Hancock

I attended the American Legion National Convention in Baltimore, Maryland. I was honored to represent the Department of Montana as the Convention Chairman. The Department earned two awards for 100% Post Consolidated Report and 100% National Emergency Fund participation. It was a privilege to lead the Montana delegation in the parade, but it seems my Navy commands were lost in translation on the Army and Air Force participants. The sailing was not as smooth as I had hoped, but a fun time for all.

The only other meeting that I attended since has been the Western Zone meeting in Missoula on September 20.

HISTORIAN

Ray Read

The Montana Department, the American Legion, Centennial Celebration 1919-2019; the Department 100th Anniversary Committee; and Post One Year narrative and Post One Year yearbook (pictorial) history Program.

Reference is made to:

1. Letter, dated July 31, 2015, from the American Legion 100th Anniversary Observance Committee announcing the updated 5 year plan for the American Legion Centennial 1919-2019.
2. The American Legion's Centennial Celebration Workbook;
3. The American Legion's Legacy Vision brochure;
4. The American Legion's Post 9/11 Veterans Booklet
5. Resolution No. 31, Spring 2011, National Executive Committee
6. The American Legion 2015 Officer's guide and Manual of Ceremonies

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

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

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

"The American Legion wishes to call to the attention of the American People the record of achievements that have been accomplished by The American Legion during the 100 years since its founding, to emphasize the impact the

organization has had upon the American society, and the extent of its contributions in national security and the welfare of military veterans, their families and their communities...

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

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

1. All documents referenced above are available on the National American Legion website. Go to www.legion.org/centennial and follow the prompts. If your Post/Auxiliary/Sons of the American Legion have access to the internet you can accomplish the American Legion Centennial Challenge. Remember look to your strengths and leverage them. Also look to your local community for ideas and support.
2. I am asking all Montana Department American Posts to establish their Local Legacy-Your Post's History. National Headquarters has developed a webpage that will allow each participating Post its own place online where photos, text and videos can be Posted and shared. So whether your Post was established in 1919 to just few years ago you have the opportunity to tell your story in your community and throughout the American Legion.

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

In less than 1000 days the American Legion will celebrate its 100th National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and in less than 1250 days the American Legion will celebrate its 100th Anniversary March 15-17, 2019. Montana's contributions to the American Legion deserve to be placed on the record.

It is a goal of the Montana Department to update its historical record by incorporating the current written record of the past 96 years in creating a Centennial History. With your cooperation and participation that can happen.

Annual One Year Narrative and one year yearbook (pictorial) history Contests

By utilizing the National Program of Post one-year Narrative and Yearbooks (Pictorial) history the efforts to produce the Post Web based Legacy History will support the collection of Post history and the Centennial program. For your information, there are four (4) annual contests conducted on the National level. The contests involve the Post "First Place" winners in the Montana Department for a one-year narrative and yearbook contests; as well as entries for a one-year Department Narrative and Yearbook. I will forward a first place winner in each Post category to the National Historian by September 15, 2016. The Judging will be accomplished in October 2016. Post entries are due at the Montana Department Convention, Bozeman, Montana at the end of June 2016.

The American Legion Officer's guide and Manual of Ceremonies contain much information about the history contest. Also in that section of the *Guide* are "Capsule History of the American legion" and "Helpful Hints for District/County Historians." Please notify your Posts in your District of this readily available material. This information will also be sent out through electronic means via the Montana American Legion website www.mtleion.org or by mail as necessary. All entries will be judged and the

first place winners in either category (narrative or yearbook) will be certified and I will forward them to National Historian for entry in the announced contest for that category. Keep in mind the requirements that have to be met for the National Contest. And I refer you to the most current edition of the Officers Guide (March 2016) as the official rules of the 2015-2016 Legion year, or at the legion website www.legion.org.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT

Gary White

After the Department Convention in Havre I prepared for the National Convention in Baltimore. At the National Convention in Baltimore, MD I was assigned to the Finance Committee; the dues increase resolution was addressed and passed the committee and eventually the National Convention. I made all Fall District Meetings, I was able to do so because we conducted two Zone Meetings and 1 multiple District Meeting 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 the Western Zone has elected to discontinue them; the South Central Zone has decided to continue their Zone Meeting, additionally Districts 3 and 8 have decided to do joint meetings. 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 or deleted. Maybe there is a subject you would like training on that would fit into the District Meeting timeframe. 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, Townsend and Anaconda. 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. I attended the AA American Legion Baseball State Tournament in Helena and was present for most of the games and the pre tournament banquet; kudos to the Department Baseball Chairman George Haegele for an excellent tournament. With other Department officers I attended the funeral of Past Department Commander Ralph Gardner in Lewistown. The National Commander's visit to the South Central and Western Zones was coordinated by me with the assistance of the NEC and Alternate NEC. I also attended the Fort Harrison VA Avenue of Flags dedication. Additionally I attended the POW / MIA dedication ceremony in Helena at Memorial Park and at the Capital.

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 45 Posts signed up; an increase of 15 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.

At the District Meetings I gave detailed instructions to all in attendance how the Posts should handle the dues increase effective January 1, 2016. I would like to remind everyone that your increased rate and effective date must be reported to Department Headquarters no later than noon on December 10, 2015 using a Post Data Form.

CHAPLAIN

Sam Birky

As the newly appointed Department Chaplain, the months following the Department meeting have been filled with a funeral for a WWII US Navy Veteran Libby, participation in a Post #137 Freedom Walk on 9/11 in Kalispell, Benghazi Memorial observance in Bigfork, Post #137 color guard posting colors at a Veteran Benefit Picnic at Depot Park Kalispell.

There was a Gold Star Mothers and Families observance on Sunday the 27th of September in Ronan. Ronan has a memorial dedicated to the Gold Star families. You can check out the observance by opening the following link: https://www.facebook.com/VeteransHonorGuard?ref=aymt_homepage_panel

Preparations are being made to send an email to each District chaplain with an outline of Legion Chaplain responsibilities and resources to accomplish the various missions supporting the Legion priorities. An outline is provided for better understanding of chaplain duties.

The American Legion Chaplain:

“The greatest number of questions addressed to me relate to the work of a chaplain. People want to know just what a chaplain is supposed to do. Many either have just been installed or are waiting to be installed for the first time. They know there is a chaplain, but what is he/she to do. I answer that the work can be as large and diverse as one is willing to make it. Generally, our task is to serve and minister where there is a need. The chaplain, being on the staff of the commander, is to serve as spiritual advisor for all members of the Post.”

The chaplain should participate in the following:

- Four Chaplains Days and Religious Emphasis Weeks.
- Independence Day events.
- Veterans Day Memorials.
- Installations.

- Initiations.
- Funeral and memorials when requested.
- Visit the ill, bereaved, shut-ins, disabled, and prospective members.
- Send cards and make telephone calls as needed.
- Take part in all rituals and ceremonies of The American Legion.
- Communicate with officers, members, and community organizations.
- Provide spiritual leadership through the Legion's "Service to God and Country" program.

Annual Calendar:

January - New Year's Day; Vietnam Cease-Fire - January 27, 1973

February - Americanism Month; First Sunday - Four Chaplains Sunday; Religious Emphasis Week; Presidents' Day; Valentine's Day

March - American Legion Birthday; Holy Season

April - Children & Youth Month

May - Mother's Day; Armed Forces Day; Poppy Day; Memorial Day

June D-day - June 6, 1944; Flag Day; Father's Day

July - Independence Day; Korean War Ended - July 27, 1953

August - American Legion National Convention

September - V-J Day - September 2, 1945; Labor Day; Citizenship Day; Patriot Day

October - Columbus Day

November - Election Day; Veterans Day; Thanksgiving Day; Family Week

December - Pearl Harbor Day - December 7, 1941; Festival of Hanukkah & Christmas

Service to God and Country – *"The American Legion urges every Post to demonstrate service to God and Country among the people of its community."*

Service to God

- **Regular Public Worship** – The American Legion encourages all families to attend and participate in public worship of their God, that they may enjoy closer relationships with Him and others.
- **Daily Family Prayer** – Prayer is the foundation of a partnership of faith, hope, tolerance, and mutual love, sustaining and keeping the family strong.
- **Religious Training of Children** – Youth who know God and are trained in the tenets of their faith will grow to appreciate, understand and respect more fully such principles of law, government and justice."

Service to Country

- **Individual** – Legionnaires should strive to be an example of honest, faithful and diligent service to entire community – not just to our own families, houses of worship or Posts, but to all.
- **Community** – 'Devotion to mutual helpfulness' means service to community. No individual is an island. Each of us is a part of the fabric of our community. Every

Legionnaire and every Post should be eager to make their community a good place to live.

- **Nation** – Service to nation is reflected in the Legion’s vow to uphold and defend the Constitution, and to foster and perpetuate a 100 Americanism. Though society is undergoing constant change, we must work within it to create conditions that afford the fullest possible life for each individual.

Taken from the Chaplain’s handbook: Service to God and Country

Prayer for our Nation

Dear Heavenly Father:

We pause as citizens of this nation who has as its motto, “in God we trust.” In remembering the tragic events of 11 September 2001, we are mindful of the malicious intent in the hearts of men who are far from you. We lift our prayers before your holy throne at this hour in our acknowledgement of our dependence upon thee.

We are grateful for your divine protection that restrains the malevolent and rewards all who express trust in you. According to your holy word, we pray that you will deliver our souls from the wicked with your sword. With the Psalmist we proclaim, “The Lord is our rock, our fortress and our deliverer. We call upon you because you are worthy to be praised.”

Bless those who mourn the loss of loved ones, strengthen the hearts of all who mourn and instill within us the desire to seek they favor by good and godly lives.

In the holy name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

SERVICE OFFICER

Kelly Ackerman

As the AL DSO, I attended the following events:

August 6-8, 2014- DSO School in Indianapolis. I took 3 of our Divisions Veteran Service Officers to training as well.

National Convention, Baltimore, MD- August 28-30, 2015

All Fall District meetings were attended by MVAD/AL VSO’s according to area of jurisdiction with the exception of the District 4, 5, 6 meeting in Missoula.

During the Fall District meetings, they discussed all VA benefits including VA Healthcare, Disability Compensation, and Pension. There was an emphasis placed on the Choice Act, and the problems related to the criteria.

Our Division has gone paperless which has increased the effectiveness with submission time. We have added a 4th Veteran Service Officer in our Billings office, and a 3rd Veteran Service Officer in our Kalispell office.

PARLIAMENTARIAN

George Blackard

During the annual convention in June we saw something that we do not often see, we saw a new comer to our ranks get up and participate in the process. She had something to say and she wanted to effect a change so she mustered the courage to get up and participate. This is worth noting because participating in any meeting, let alone the annual convention, can be nerve wracking for many if not most people. I give her kudos for doing what she did and it energized me to see a new participant in what can certainly seem like a process dominated by the same people every time.

To keep our meetings running smoothly we must adhere to our rules of convention and Roberts Rules of Order or run the risk of our meetings running long and getting completely out of hand. With that in mind it is the responsibility of all members to have at least a basic understanding of how our meetings are supposed to be run. The caveat here is nobody is perfect and nobody knows everything and if we are to engage more people in the process and create lifelong Legionnaires out of them we must encourage them to participate and we must help them along until they do know the process. One way to guarantee that someone never participates again is to shame or mock them either verbally or through body language (rolling eyes, throwing hands in the air, fines etc.) for not saying or doing the correct thing every time.

I encourage everyone to set aside ten minutes of your monthly Post meeting to do some training on parliamentary procedure and review how things are done at our meetings. Do whatever you can to engage your new comrades and build the confidence they need to become an active and engaged member of The American Legion.

The responsibility falls on all of us to mentor and encourage our newly active comrades until they have gained the knowledge they need to carry on our business. We as “veteran” Legionnaires are not always going to be around to carry the weight and therefore we must be kind to and considerate of our successors lest there be no one left to take care of business when we are gone.

FINANCE OFFICER

Eddy White

I have been making monthly trips to the Department of Montana office for bank account reconciliations and on several coordinated occasions, I signed checks to meet the day to day business needs and other needs to Gary.

The reports before you are as of September 30th. On the profit & loss statement for the projected budget income is \$200,717.50; we are at \$174,806.56 (just above 87%). This is a little less than the report made this time last year and is within less than a 1% margin of difference.

The projected budget expenses are \$352,623.15 and we are at \$118,306.98 (just over 33%). There are many more months and pending programs that will occur as we move forward with this budget. However, I do not see or have any concerns.

Membership revenue is currently at over 119.55% of the budget. However, due to the increase of Membership Dues by National and the Department and Posts, that is to be expected. Recently, membership numbers have slowed down and will most likely slow down once the dues increase goes into effect on January 1, 2016. I project an increase in Paid Up For Life (PUFL) memberships which will affect the budget this time next year. We will get a better feel of the impact in January as we see applications for PUFLs go through as well as how much of a slowdown in renewals that may possibly occur. Obviously, we need to communicate with our members as to why the dues increased and keep communicating this through the membership year.

Although we are still seeing checks still outstanding, this has improved. Please continue to be prompt in cashing your checks from the Department. If you have lost a check, please be sure to contact Gary. (See addendum)

JUDGE ADVOCATE

Jim Shockley

I. Paradise Post 129's building burned down on 31 July 2013 and the Post had not communicated with the Department for over a year. A Committee was appointed by the Department Commander to look into what was happening in Paradise. I am the non-voting member of that Committee. The District Commander, Jack Fay, and I met with the Post in the summer. The Committee met with the Post's representatives at the District 4 meeting in Missoula and things are progressing with the assistance of the Post.

- (a) At this time the destroyed building has been removed and a prefabricated steel building was delivered to the site in August of 2014, purchased by the Post independent of the construction contractor. A contract was signed with a Texas construction firm in October 2014 and the corporation was paid over \$62,000. The corporation has done nothing since the lot was cleared.
- (b) I visited with the State Auditor's attorney for assistance with the insurance company. He will send Nova, the insurance company, a letter expressing the Auditor's concern for the way the insurance company has treated its insured, Post 129. I also have conferred with Mike Cok in Bozeman with the idea of his firm handling any possible litigation in regard to the contract to rebuild the Post, and the actions, or inactions, of the insurance company. He suggests an offer to the contractor to return all monies paid to it and an offer to the insurance company to simply pay the balance of the policy. I have hired Mr. Cok before and he is very competent. He represented the Bozeman Post after its fire and they were well satisfied with his work.

- (c) This is an object lesson for Posts with legal issues; contracts and insurance are legal issues. While everyone hates lawyers and paying them for their time, a small amount of money spent on legal advise is much better than getting cheated out of tens of thousands of dollars. For \$2,000, or less, of legal advise Post 129 would not have its current problem. As a matter of fact the Post had asked for help on a small matter (around \$6,000) related to the burning of the Post's building, and I solved the problem with one letter. When the Post was dealing with a contractor for something over \$200,000 I was not contacted and I my time is free. I will not make it a practice to actually litigate a matter, but I can give advise and refer the Post to a competent, reputable attorney.

God created insurance companies to make lawyers look good.

II. Post 27 is being sued by the Sons of the American Legion (SAL).

- (a) Because the Post did not live up to its oral contract related to operating the Legion Bingo Booth in 2014 their affiliated SAL Squadron 27 sued the Post. An oral contract is a contract once executed, the Squadron had preformed the work related to the Bingo Booth and was owed money by the Post. The Post acknowledges that it did not pay the squadron anything and the issue in Justice Court is how much the Post owes the SAL. I am representing the Post, although the Squadron is trying to have me removed from the case.

III. Thompson Falls, Post 52, had a question concerning a check drawn on their Post checking account. It was not clear that it was for a proper purpose. The problem was solved, the \$500 was returned to the Post.

IV. Baseball remains quiet.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

Karen Semple

I attended the annual Convention in Havre, where a record low number of fines were collected due to adherence to protocol by most attendees. I presented the POW/MIA Memorial Service at the Joint Banquet Saturday night and also attended a Bronze Star presentation in Helena in July.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Jeff Holmes

Below are the deadlines for the following programs:

- 7 & 8 Grade Essay Contest starts Sept 12th and **must be Postmarked** by March 1, 2016.
- High School Essay Contest starts Sept 12th and **must be Postmarked** by March 1, 2016.
- Senior Survey **must be Postmarked** by March 1, 2016.

2015 Award Winners

High School Essay

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

Junior High School Essay

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

Government Survey for Seniors

1st	Paige Phillips	Twin Bridges Post # 31
2nd	Lucas Reed	Turner Post # 109
3rd	Mykaela Edwards	Helena Post #2

My contact information has changed AGAIN! I have accepted the Ag Teacher / FFA Advisor Position in Judith Gap, Montana. My new home address is: Box 213 Judith Gap, MT 59453. 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.**

DISTRICT COMMANDERS

DISTRICT 1 - COMMANDER

David Dean

1. The town of Culbertson gave new flag holders and mounts for the new light poles that were installed on Main Street to Thomas Mann Post 81.
2. Working on getting the S.A.L. for Post 81 up and running.
3. Membership Chair, Chelly Harada and I traveled to Scobey on the evening on 9-16-15 to meet with Scobey Post 56 to start paper work to merge Whitetail Post 121 with Scobey. Scobey Post welcomes Whitetail.
4. Gregg LaBatte Adj. with Homestead Post 49 has requested to merge with Culbertson Post 81. This request will be brought up at the next Thomas Mann Post meeting on 10-8-15 for Post approval.
5. At this time Thomas Mann Post has 2 new members, 1 is active duty and the other is prior service.

6. Will be contacting all Posts in District 1 to come up with ideas to improve Membership attendance at District meetings. Local Post member thought that there may be a need for only one District meeting and that being in the spring.

7. Have been given a great idea for a fund raiser to be held at the Roosevelt County Fair next August, Thomas Mann Post for the last 4 years have had a booth at the fair with 3 Judges Choice awards and 1 first place.

DISTRICT 2 – COMMANDER
Jon Monteaux

My fifth year as District 2 Commander was tough because of the low membership numbers in my District. Part of it is due to my health issues as I was not able to travel to very many Post visits. My home Post 67, hosted the Fall District 2 meeting that was held at the Rocky Boy senior center. There was low turnout, due to a number of reasons, a new location perhaps being one of them. Vice Commander Hal Rice, Geraldine Post 102 was our guest speaker at the luncheon.

As District 2 Commander I will be traveling to Fort Belknap on Veterans Day to attend their events and speak at annual feed the veterans and families. I will also announce the winner of their raffle for the buffalo hunt. Congratulations to the Posts in District 2 who are on target for membership at this time and please keep up the good work.

DISTRICT 3 - COMMANDER
Patrick Becker

After the State Convention in Havre I did my usual packet delivery; traveling to Shelby, Cut Bank, Valier back to Conrad. Met with most of the adjutants in my travels and talked about recruitment of new members.

For National Night Out, me and local Post 37 Commander Jay Mullennax gave out free ice cream cones. We went through 6 gallons or 140 ice-cream cones; needless to say we stayed busy for awhile. We did not get any new members for our efforts.

Our joint District meeting 3 and 8 was held in Cut Bank, all Posts were present except one from District 3. The use of their High School made for a great meeting and lunch was also good.

DISTRICT 4 - COMMANDER
Jack Fay

Glen Sharbono and I attended the Department Convention in Havre, June 25th-28th. I attended the LEAD training on the 25th and was installed as District 4 Commander on the 28th. I gave and mailed packets to the Posts in my area.

On August 7th and 8th, I attended the membership workshop in Indianapolis, Indiana; it was very informative. I toured National Headquarters and met the National Commander.

On September 9th Judge Advocate Shockley and I attended the American Legion Post #129-Paradise meeting; which was held in Plains at the VFW Hall. We met to discuss the progress of the American Legion Post that had burnt down.

On September 20th I attended the Zone meeting at the Armory in Missoula which included Districts 4, 5, and 6. I opened the business meeting for District 4 where we voted not to participate in any more Zone meetings; each District will hold their own. We had a good turnout from District 4.

I have been able to visit Plains and Charlo Posts and have plans to get to the others.

DISTRICT 5 - COMMANDER

Bill Applegate

- I attended the playoff of the American Legion Baseball team in Helena
- I have visited Post (s) 27 - Missoula, 13 – St Regis, 131 – Alberton, 91 – Corvallis
- I attended Fall District Meeting 4, 5, & 6 in Missoula at the Armory

DISTRICT 6 - COMMANDER

Lori Perkio

I was able to attend the Bronze Star presentation at Post 2 in Helena for Ethel La Rock. Ethel had only received a Bronze Star certificate following her service in Korea and Vietnam but had never the medal. The National Guard Transition Assistance Program, Pete Gardzena was instrumental in obtaining the Bronze Star medal and working with Post 2 in order for Senator Steve Daines to present the medal to Ms. La Rock. This event was well attended by the family of Ms La Rock and well as members of the Montana National Guard and of course American Legion members from across Montana.

I am so proud of District 6 and to have the opportunity to get to know the Legion Family members and the wonderful things the Posts are doing in their communities. I had the pleasure of conducting the officer installation ceremony for Anaconda, Post 21. This event was preceded by the Post 21 Legion family picnic at Washoe Park. The attendance of Legion family members was well over seventy. While National Commander Barnett visited Department of Montana I attended the dinner hosted by Townsend Post 42 who did a fabulous job. My husband and I were able to share an evening meal with Commander Barnett and Department personnel when they stopped in Butte before heading over to Missoula for the Zone/District meetings in Missoula. While at the District 6 meeting we needed to appoint a new District Vice Commander as Tim Gavin who was elected at Spring District Meeting notified me that he has

moved out of the state. During our District meeting Josh Clement, Post 2 was nominated and elected as District 6 Vice Commander. Congratulations Josh!

In visiting with the Posts in District 6, I want to share with you one Post in particular; Dan Brockman Post 31 in Twin Bridges. When delivering the packets from Department I was able to meet Post Commander Bill Gibson and Adjutant Doug Martin while they were working on the fishing pond the Post maintains for children. The concrete, fire pits, stocking of fish, and more are all donated. This fishing pond is only one portion of the responsibilities Post 31 members have. Dan Brockman Post 31 only has 33 members and the evening I attended their meeting seven members were present. The involvement this Post has with the school programs is about the children. Veterans Day is about the community, their 57th Annual Christmas dinner (ordering 24 turkeys) and raffle is their major fund raiser and only seven members do all of the work to prepare for this event. The businesses in this community support Post 31 in a way that I have not previously heard of in any community. This small Post in this small community accomplishes so much. I came away from this meeting inspired. I visited Legion Town, U.S.A. in Twin Bridges, Montana!

DISTRICT 7 - COMMANDER

Duane Carlton

Status of the District as of 1 Oct 2015. Since election and swearing in at the 2015 Department Convention, the District 7 staff has been very busy getting the new American Legion year moving forward. I delivered the 2016 membership packets to Posts 23 (Park), 93 (Three Forks), 99 (Big Sky), 118 (Gardiner), 65 (Ennis), and 78 (West Yellowstone) by the 7th of July. In August, I visited Posts 23 (Park), 19 (Big Timber), 99 (Big Sky), and 93 (Three Forks) and delivered more Department materials. My staff and I have conducted 5 official Post visits – 30 (Belgrade), 99 (Big Sky), 25 (White Sulphur Springs), 14 (Bozeman), and 93 (Three Forks). We intend to continue our efforts with a goal of having an official visit with each of the 11 District 7 Posts by February 2016. One of our challenges is that some of the Posts do not meet in the summer due to transient members and business considerations, and others do not meet in the winter for the same reasons. We have to work with these Posts to meet our District staff obligations. As of 1 October, our District membership is at 62.43%, which meets the October 14th target of 55%. We have 2 Posts lagging a bit, but we are working with them to hit their membership goals. As you know, this is a work in progress considering only one District within the Department met goal in 2015.

The highlight of our 2016 year so far was the visit to our District by new National Commander Dale Barnett. He arrived in Bozeman on the Thursday the 17th of September, and immediately visited Post 30 (Belgrade) for a late lunch and a quick meet & greet with the Post leadership.

He moved on to Post 87 (Manhattan) for an introduction to their leadership and members and a very well done musical exhibition by nationally renowned bag piper Eric Fendler. On Friday, he toured the 1-163rd Infantry Battalion Headquarters and Post 30 Commander Hank Adams provided the commentary for the visit. Dale then moved on to Post 14 (Bozeman) for a meet and greet, and then to Post 99 (Big Sky) for a presentation on Soldier's Chapel, lunch, and the dedication of a fatality marker on the Big Sky Spur highway. From there, he toured the 143rd MP Company Armory in Livingston followed by dinner with the Post 23 members and leadership. On Saturday, the 19th, He met with Senator Steve Daines during a breakfast at his hotel in Belgrade, then joined the Post 30 (Belgrade) color guard for a march down main street during the Belgrade Fall Festival. His last District 7 activity was attending the South-Central Zone meeting, which included Districts 7, 9 and 11, at the Post 19 club in Big Timber. After a magnificent prime rib meal, the Zone and District meetings were completed. Dale then departed our District area for Butte, and the rest of his Montana visit. We were deeply honored by his visit.

DISTRICT 8 - COMMANDER

Lowell Carver

I have had the privilege of visiting four of the Posts in my District, being elected Commander of District 8, and have been greeted with great hospitality. I also had six packets of documents to get to the Posts that didn't have anyone attend the state convention. That was taken care of within three days after the convention.

Post 40 Cutbank hosted the District 3 and 8 fall conventions in Cutbank and they did an outstanding job in every way. The location was superb and the meal was also great!

Oratory will be held for Great Falls at Post 3 on Feb 20. All three Great Falls High Schools have been notified.

District 3 and 8 will hold their spring convention in Geraldine. No date has been set at this time.

DISTRICT 9 - COMMANDER

Larry Dobb

I have made Post visitations to three of the nine Posts in the District since being installed at the Department Convention in June. Of the remaining six Posts, four do not have regular monthly meetings. I have a Post visitation scheduled at Hobson on October 13th. I have talked to the Post Commander and/or his Adjutant for a couple other Posts. I am now able to contact eight of the Posts via email as either the commander or adjutant or sometimes both have email. This is up from five when I first assumed this position last year. This is a great help in forwarding the

latest membership status or other electronic correspondence received from Department and is a significant savings in Postage and printing costs. The remaining Post still receives information by regular mail. I still use formal letters to the Post Commanders and/or Adjutants on significant issues or accomplishments such as exceeding their membership goal.

The District is doing quite well in membership with seven of nine Posts being at or above target as of October 2, 2015. Of the two that are behind, only Post 120 Winifred is showing well behind with only slightly over 10%. However they were in a similar position last year at this time and finished the year by surpassing their goal. The former District Commander has also told me that they always come through in the end. Winifred like several other Posts in District 9 is in a rural area and members have been engaged in the harvest or seeding. The District as a whole is currently first in the Department at 70%+.

Our Fall District Meeting was held in Big Timber on September 19, 2015 as part of the South Central Zone Meeting. (Len Albright, Commander). Sweet Grass Post 19 did an excellent job hosting this Zone Meeting. District 9 had three of nine Posts represented (Post 15 Harlowton – 4 counting myself, Post 16 Lewistown -5, Post 70 Judith Gap -1). Although only three of nine Posts were represented, the ten members included the District Vice Commander, all three Post Commanders and two Post Adjutants. The District 9 Posts that did attend all felt that they would prefer to have an individual District Meeting. However, a poll of the Districts indicated that District 7 liked the Zone concept and District 11 wanted to try one more year.

A few highlights were: (1) During Post Visitations to Posts 15 in Harlowton, Post 16 in Lewistown and Post 70 in Judith Gap, I presented the Commanders Race to the Top Ribbon for their Post Colors in recognition of the Districts performance last year. (2) While conducting a Post visit to Lewistown Post 16 I also got to make an appearance at the SAL Squadron 16 meeting. Their project to restore the ICBM missile in the local Veteran's Park has been completed and they have future plans for the Vietnam Memorial and the Veteran's Park in general. (3) Fergus Post 16 continues to be strong and active. Again this September, they set up an information booth on Main St during the communities Chokecherry Festival. Last year they were the seventh largest Post in the Department and feel they can reach four hundred members this year. They have formal, well attended meetings and are active. (4) Harlowton's Post 15, continues to have well attended meetings (19-24 each month) and is active. This meeting had excellent attendance (31 individuals present including American Legion and Auxiliary) and included a great presentation by the Post's delegate to Girls State (5) My visitation to Post 70 included a great pot luck dinner and presentations from two boys and a girl who had attended Boys State/Girls State and was well attended by American Legion members, Auxiliary and parents and guests.

The SAL Squadron 16 (Lewistown) is still showing a year to date total of 0 members on the October 2, 2015 report. However they have a number of renewals and some new members. Harlowton's SAL Squadron 15 is at 59% with 13 members. Both Squadrons were 100% last year and I know there are renewals yet to be reported to Department.

DISTRICT 10 - COMMANDER

Bob Beals

Since our Spring meeting in Glendive, which was very well provided by Post #28, we have attended the Department Convention in Havre.

The convention handled many upcoming issues including the dues increase imposed by National to be addressed at the convention in Baltimore late August and early September. This increase was passed and will be implemented on January 20, 2016. All Posts must complete a new Post Data Form in order to change their dues in December for National to change the amount on January renewal notices.

Also, the Department passed resolutions to follow more closely the procedures that National follows at conventions to bring Montana Department in better alignment.

After convention we delivered packets to Posts with information to complete upcoming changes.

We attempted to reconnect with Lame Deer and met with 3 interested veterans. Sylvia and I also met with Colstrip at their monthly meeting presented their packet and discussed future possibilities concerning Lame Deer.

I worked with Baker to set up the upcoming District Meeting and discussed concerns of a former member. Information was sent to Department Auxiliary and Posts with the meeting date and time of events.

We attended The American Legion National Convention in Baltimore which was informative and handled the business of resolutions presented by Departments as well as commissions.

We hope to set up Post visits as soon as we can and will attempt to do so prior to our Spring Meeting which will be tentatively in Terry Post #32.

We plan to attend the Department Fall Conference in Helena, October 23-25. All members of Posts are invited to attend but only Executive Board members can vote on issues and resolutions. Hope to see many of you there.

DISTRICT 11 - COMMANDER

Richard Klose

To start with, it's an honor to be District Commander.

My first duty was to go to the Red Lodge Post Meeting, and work with them on getting a new Post Commander. Their current Post Commander needed to step down because of personal reasons.

On August 7th and 8th I attended the 2015 National Membership workshop in Indianapolis. On August 14th I was the MC for the Veterans Day at the Montana Fair in Billings. On September 2nd I took a bus load of Laurel Legion members to the Metra in Billings, as the Secretary of the Navy was there to announce the naming of two ships honoring both Billings and Montana. On September 11th I MC'd at the 9/11 Ceremony in Laurel honoring those lost in the 9/11 disaster. On September 18th I held a POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony at both the Laurel High School and the Yellowstone National Cemetery. Part of the ceremony was ordering of a headstone for a POW/MIA, Alan Ashall from Billings, who is a POW/MIA from the Vietnam War. When I called Lt Commander Ashall's family for permission to order the headstone, I did not know that for years the family had been looking for closure to Lt Commander Ashall's status. His mother stated before her death, that she was afraid that he would be forever forgotten. What an honor it was for me to do this ceremony knowing that I was helping a family dealing with the loss of Lt Commander Ashall. On September 19th we held our Zone Meeting in Big Timber with Districts 7 and 9.

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE CHAIRS

AMERICANISM

George Blackard

It seems that in certain circles of our society these days the word Americanism has lost its meaning. Indeed some misguided souls even equate it with words like communism or fascism and believe it to be a bad thing. It is more important now than ever that we do everything we can to promote Americanism to all members of our society but especially our youth.

We must be in the schools demonstrating our love of country by the way we present ourselves and the way we speak and we must engage those children by making interesting presentations. Children love to learn when things are presented in a fun or interesting way. If you get up there in front of a class dressed shabbily and speaking in a monotone voice you will have zero impact on your audience. Get excited for the opportunity to be there in front of a class of children and that excitement will transmit to your audience. Make your presentation but be sure to ask questions of your audience as you go, make them participate with you. If you can get into a school to make a presentation be it for Veteran's Day or Memorial Day or Independence Day I

guarantee that you will have a great time and if you do it right, they will be calling you to come back again year after year.

Americanism is defined in the dictionary as “devotion or loyalty to the U.S., or to its traditions, customs, institutions, etc”. There are all kinds of things you can do to promote Americanism in schools to children of all ages. We all know about our essay contests and that is a great thing if you can get the schools to participate. The problem with that is you have to leave the information with them, they have to disburse it, collect it, then get it back to you. It takes effort on their part. Simplicity is what makes presentations so much easier and effective. YOU engage the audience and put a personal touch on the material being presented. You can see if your audience is losing interest and you can change things up to get them back. You have control of the situation. Whatever your presentation is about, practice it over and over and then give it everything you have got when presenting it to your audience and your passion will come through creating a great and lasting memory for your audience.

I often hear “we just can’t get into the schools anymore” and I know what that is like but we cannot stop trying, it’s far too important and we cannot afford to give up. Keep trying.

BASEBALL

George Haegele

2015 has been a good year for American Legion Baseball. We added 2 more teams. This gives us 58 teams and nearly 900 young men playing Department of Montana American Legion Baseball in Montana, Idaho, Southern Alberta and British Columbia.

Ten teams play at the AA level, 32 teams at the A level and 16 teams at the B level. At the present time our Class B teams do not play a conference or Post season games. We anticipate more teams entering this category and this will necessitate coming up with conference and Post season play in the future. The Class A Tournament was held in Kalispell. Carl Hennell and his committee did a great job hosting this tournament. The winning team was the Bitterroot Red Sox. They went on to represent Montana at the Northwest Class A Regional Tournament in Logan, Utah. The Red Sox were victorious over teams from Wyoming, Utah, Oregon, Idaho and Alaska. Congratulations to the players, coaches and fans of the Bitterroot Red Sox.

The Class AA State Tournament was held in Helena. Montana Governor Bullock (a former American Legion Boys Stater) spoke at the banquet honoring the teams. Host Chairman Bill Houston did an outstanding job of putting on the tournament. The winning team was the Billings Scarlets. They went on to represent Montana at the Northwest Regional Tournament (Region 7) in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The Scarlets lost their first two games and were eliminated. Oregon won the Regional Tournament and went on to represent Region 7 at the American Legion World Series where they lost in a semi-final game to eventual World Series Champion South Carolina.

The 2015 World Series was a great experience for all participants. I was honored to be on the World Series Staff as the Field Manager for this prestigious event. The two semi-final games and the Championship game were broadcast live on ESPN U. Of the 15 games played at the World Series, 11 were 1 run games and two of those went to extra innings. The two semi-final games were both 4to 3 contests with South Carolina defeating Oregon and Louisiana defeating two time defending World Series Champion New Jersey. The Championship was won by South Carolina 9-2. This game was 3-2 into the seventh inning.

Each year that the World Series has been held in Shelby, they have set new records for ticket sales. This year ticket sales for the fifteen games were just over 114,000. The attendance for the Championship Game was 8,500.

Each year we award two \$1,000.00 scholarships, one for a Class A player and one for a Class AA player. This year's recipients are Tre Bradley, Class A Lewistown Redbirds, and Nicholas Wrigg, Class AA Helena Senators.

BOY SCOUTS

Dick Ellwein

I attended the Sons of The American Legion National Convention in Baltimore MD. I attended a dinner at Post # 42 in Townsend to meet and hear National Commander Dale Barnett speak. I attended the rededication of the POW-MIA memorial and tree at the State Capital. I attended Zone 4-5-6 meeting in Missoula, including the District 6 meeting during the breakout session. National Commander Dale Barnett was the guest speaker at the luncheon. I contacted the seven Posts who charter a Scout unit, 4 Posts charter two units and three Posts charter one unit. I will be participating in the Scouting Chairman Teleconference on October 27, 2015.

BOYS STATE

John Louk

The 2016 session of Montana American Legion Boys State will be held at Carroll College from June 5-10,2016. 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 opening session at 12:00 noon on Sunday June 5, 2016. 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 2016. This is important so the delegates can apply for the Samsung Scholarship.

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

The new Legion year for Children and Youth started at the Department Convention in Havre. As Department Chair for Children and Youth, I was the MC for Children and Youth luncheon which was well attended.

I also received applications for TFA's; although I approved the applications, National did not. There was a change of personal who were going through a learning curve. The kinks were worked out. The three resubmitted were approved. The total amount approved to help children was \$5602.97 and helped a total of eight children.

I received an application that did not qualify assistance from National, but did qualify for assistance within the Department's guidelines and was approved by the committee for \$250 and was dispensed. In addition, I received another application which I denied as the veteran's circumstances were other than honorable discharge.

As Department Chair of Children and Youth, I was required to review all Posts consolidated reports for 2014-2015. Although our Department had 100% reporting, many Posts had nothing under children and youth as well as other categories. As we are only in the first quarter of the 2015-16, I suggest Posts work on this. Children and Youth are one of our four Pillars. Take the time at your next monthly meeting and review what is reported on the consolidated reports.

CONSTITUTION & INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Duane Carlton

The Constitution and Internal Affairs Committee completed two major tasks in 2015 – rewriting the Department of Montana's Constitution and Bylaws and writing and staffing the rules for conducting the Department conferences. The new Constitution and Bylaws are now printed and distributed to the Posts. The committee has not received further tasking since the 2015 Department of Montana Convention. We (Merv Gunderson, David Driver and I) stand ready to support the Department for the 2015 – 2016 Legion year.

CONVENTION 2016

Randy Kemp

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

1. The Grand Tree Plus Best Western Motel has been notified that The Department of Montana Convention will return to Bozeman for 2016. Rooms are blocked out for the Convention attendees and rooms necessary for the official business of the Department have been identified. An after action review was conducted with the motel staff and specific problem were address. These minor problems will not occur in the 2016 Convention. After re-contacting The Gran Tree Plus a room rate has been reached. Also more rooms have been blocked out to accommodate more Legion guests. Office space for Department Headquarters has been determined.
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.
6. We are currently working out meals needs and the cost for each meal to inform Legionaries what they can expect when they register. We are trying to make sure all Legionaries are satisfied with unique meal requirements.

Work has begun on the 2016 Convention Pin which will be unique in all aspects.

CONVENTION 2017

George Blackard

Planning for the 2017 Department Convention in Billings is going smoothly. We have lined up several sponsors for the event that will add some excitement and fun for everyone and have several nights of entertainment lined out that is sure to help make the convention memorable.

The Billings Hotel and Convention Center is a great facility that will allow everyone to meet in the same building for all of their meetings no matter which group or committee they are meeting with. All dinners and luncheons will be on site making it easier for everyone.

It is our wish that everyone stay in the same hotel for convention adding to the camaraderie of the event so we are working hard to secure an affordable room rate and we will be offering up random cash prizes to those who stay in the convention hotel. We will have a few chauffeured excursions planned for those who want to get out and see some of Billings while they are here so keep an eye out for more information as the event draws near.

CONVENTION 2018

David Driver

Posts 3, 130 and 341 are in the process of locating a venue to hold the 2018 Department Convention. At the present time it looks like the Holiday Inn as the main venue with a couple other hotels, such as the TownHouse as alternative hotels at a lower cost for overnight stays.

There are several fine eating establishments located near the Holiday Inn for those who do not wish to dine in the Holiday Inn. If you have time, there are several places in Great Falls to occupy your time, such as the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, the C.M. Russell Museum and even Minor League Baseball (if they are in town). More information to follow, please stay tuned.

DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE COORDINATOR

Karen Semple

October is Earthquake Preparedness Month. To date, no National Emergency Fund grant requests have been submitted to NHQ since June. I visited with Montana Disaster and Emergency Services to obtain FEMA grant information for individuals affected by disaster. I also attended ASIST (Applied Suicide Prevention Skills Training) in August. I attended Group and Individual Critical Incident Stress Management Training in late September and early October. Despite a request to District Commanders for assistance shagging Post preparedness information, have only received nine Post Preparedness Surveys – 0 from District 1, 1 from District 2, 1 from District 3, 1 from District 4, 0 from District 5, 3 from District 6, 2 from District 7, 1 from District 8, and 0 from Districts 9, 10 and 11. For the Department of Montana to join

Montana VOAD (Volunteer Organizations Assisting in Disaster) we need preparedness information from more if not all Montana Posts!

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

John Pellegrini

I was appointed chairman of the Distinguished Guest Committee by Commander Gossett in June.

My first action as chairman was to greet National Commander Barnett as he traveled thru Butte on his way to the Western Zone Fall Meeting. We took the Commander to dinner at Jake's Garage in Butte and he enjoyed the atmosphere. I purchased a Montana belt buckle for him which was presented to him at the Zone meeting. He seemed very pleased with it.

I will be going to Canada on Veteran's Day, which is Remembrance Day in Canada, and will meet the Officers of the Alberta Command of the Royal Canadian Legion.

ENDOWMENT FUND

Jeff Nelson

The endowment fund was established to provide additional resources and scholarships to youth participating in Montana American Legion programs. It also serves as an aid to helping disabled veterans that are transitioning from military to civilian life.

These funds are acquired from donations, wills, and memorials to be given to the various benefactors.

We will have a special meeting to determine implementing some of these funds at the fall conference.

FLAG ALLIANCE

Linda Cousineau

RESOLUTION

[S.J.Res.21](#) — 114th Congress (2015-2016)

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

Sponsor: [Sen. Vitter, David \[R-LA\]](#) (Introduced 07/30/2015)

Committees: Senate - Judiciary

Latest Action: 07/30/2015 Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Tracker: This bill has the status Introduced

[H.J.Res.9](#) — 114th Congress (2015-2016)

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

Sponsor: [Rep. Womack, Steve \[R-AR-3\]](#) (Introduced 01/06/2015)

Committees: House - Judiciary

Latest Action: 01/12/2015 Referred to the Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice.

Tracker: This bill has the status Introduced

H.R.916 - All-American Flag Act

Sponsor: Rep. Bustos, Cheri [D-IL-17] (Introduced 02/12/2015)

Committees: House - Oversight and Government Reform

Latest Action: 02/12/2015 Referred to the House Committee on Oversight and Government.

Tracker: This bill has the status Introduced.

Requires any flags of the United States acquired for use by the federal government to be entirely manufactured in the United States from articles, materials, or supplies entirely grown, produced, or manufactured in the United States.

H.R.1691 - No Federal Funds without the American Flag Act

Sponsor: Rep. Duffy, Sean P. [R-WI-7] (Introduced 03/26/2015)

Committees: House - Education and the Workforce

Latest Action: 03/26/2015 Referred to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce.

Tracker: This bill has the status Introduced

Amends the Higher Education Act of 1965 to prohibit an institution of higher education that is located in the United States from participating in title IV's student assistance programs if it bans the display of the American flag on its campus.

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

FINANCE CHAIRMAN
Jeff Nelson

The finance committee met at the Dept. convention in Havre on June 24th to discuss various topics. Among the subjects we discussed was the possibility of a dues increase for the coming year. A resolution was drawn up to increase the dept. dues by 50 cents and pass along

national's increase of \$5.00, to become effective on January 1st of 2016. Also Post 105 dues would go to \$40.00/ year.

A recommendation was made to create a centennial committee with 3 members appointed by the incoming commander for 2016. This committee would have a budget of \$250.00 / member and would come up with ideas for celebrating the Legions' 100th birthday in the state and would cease to exist after fiscal year 2019.

We heard from Big Sky Gas Company of Montana about creating a partnership that would provide a usage donation back to the Dept. for customers wishing to participate in the program. After advice from our Judge Advocate the language in the contract was determined to be too lengthy for a simple contract and was brought before the delegates assembled to be voted upon. It was voted down to enter into a partnership at this time.

The Ways and Means committee has implemented the cash calendar as a fundraiser for the upcoming year and appears to be on its' way to generate a new source of revenue for the Dept. along with the pistol raffle. Without continued sources of extra revenue many of the programs would find it difficult to operate from year to year. Our income from membership continues to decrease each year and therefore new sources of revenue are needed.

Not only is membership decreasing but participation in the American Legion Boys' State program. So much, that there was a shortfall in finances and Department covered some of the expenses at the end of the session.

There was also an idea of advertising to get new members recruited. Due to the expense of the program to accomplish this, it was tabled to check out further cost of initiating a program such as this and what might be the payback versus the cost.

The budget was addressed and approved for the 2015 – 2016 year. Many of the committees saw an increase in their budgets, as the cost of travel and expenses have risen since the last time there was an increase allocated.

Finally I would like to thank my committee members for their help and input this past year; and especially, our Adjutant, Gary White and Secretary, Erin Carpenter for keeping our Department moving forward.

HEROES TO HOMETOWN COORDINATOR

Scott Eldridge

No Report

HIGHWAY FATALITY MARKER

John Kougioulis

Thank you Past Fatality Marker Chairman for filling me in on something that I knew little about! It has been interesting and challenging with all the phone calls and emails. Thank You Lee Hesel for forwarding emails to me, it has been a great help. On 8 August I was invited to a press conference South of Laurel on Highway 202, by the Department of Transportation director Mike Toole, this was a Vision Zero Program. They are trying to "crack down" on fatalities by "Drunk Drivers." This was attended by Highway Patrol, local police units, fire Department, EMS and First Responders. They are working on improving this stretch of highway by adding a larger Task Force to cut down on fatalities. It was a great opportunity for me. I've traveled around the state and noticed the fatality markers. District Commanders, Post Commanders, please try getting your Posts to maintain these markers, some really need attention, and please remind folks, these are fatality markers, not memorials! I realize we have a problem with families decorating the markers, but this is also distracting to other drivers. Remove the decorations and place them at the bottom of the marker. If they continue to keep putting stuff on the fatality marker, then remove the marker. If they call and ask why, let them know the purpose of the fatality marker and that DOT may ask the American Legion to discontinue this program, due to the distractions. You may replace the marker if they agree to not put up more decorations. Remember, if the highway has been improved since the fatality marker was placed, they need not to be replaced, as this stretch of highway is no longer considered a hazard. When in question, check with the DOT. Thank You for Your Support.

HOMELESS VETERAN COORDINATOR

Ray Read

The Montana Department's participation in The American Legion's Homeless Veterans Program is now 8 years old. Jim Grosset, 2015-16 Montana Department Commander, re-appointed me as the Coordinator of the Program as the as the Homeless Veterans Coordinator in July 2015. 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 conducted in January 2015 of the 1,247 Household with 1709 person respondents of which 279 Veterans Households with 320 respondents were identified. This indicates that homelessness among Montana veterans was 18% of the total homeless of Montana based on the Survey results. I believe the true number falls between 3.8% National statistic and the 18% identified in the HUDsurvey.

The following information was provided for the January 2015 Point in Time Survey by Housing & Urban Development conducted in January 2015. These reflect the collection effort based in cities and towns broken into Districts by Housing and Urban Development (HUD). These Districts do not emulate Montana Department /American Legion Districts as currently configured. HUD District 1,2,3-Eastern Montana; District 4- Havre; District 5- Great Falls; District 6- Lewistown; District 7- Billings; District 8- Helena; District 9- Bozeman; District 10- Kalispell; District 11- Missoula; and District 12-Butte Survey areas did not totally encompass Montana rural areas. The thing to take away from this is that Homelessness is still present and is a problem we must address at Post level and above:

CHART 1 - Montana Total Homeless – Identified

Total Households and Persons	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven ^a		
Total Number Of Households	393	179	0	675	1,247
Total Number of Persons	535	302	0	872	1,709
Number of Children (under age 18)	121	119		134	374
Number of Persons (18 to 24)	40	26	0	159	225
Number of Persons (over age 24)	374	157	0	579	1,110

Gender	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe		

Haven^a

Female	261	157	0	293	711
Male	274	144	0	578	996
Transgender (male to female)	0	0	0	1	1
Transgender (female to male)	0	1	0	0	1

Ethnicity	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven ^a		
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	487	284	0	808	1,579
Hispanic/Latino	48	18	0	64	130

Race	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
White	381	242	0	658	1,281
Black or African-American	14	4	0	20	38
Asian	0	0	0	0	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	110	41	0	170	321
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	0	0	4	5
Multiple Races	29	15	0	20	64

CHART 2 – Veterans total Homeless identified

Total Households and Persons	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
Total Number of Households	52	46	0	179	277
Total Number of Persons	65	48	0	207	320
Total Number of Veterans	52	46	0	179	277

Gender	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
Female	11	4	0	10	25
Male	41	42	0	169	252
Transgender (male to female)	0	0	0	0	0
Transgender (female to male)	0	0	0	0	0

Ethnicity	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
Non-Hispanic/Non-Latino	49	45	0	174	268
Hispanic/Latino	3	1	0	5	9

Race	Sheltered			Unsheltered	Total
	Emergency	Transitional	Safe Haven		
White	42	41	0	158	241
Black or African-American	1	1	0	3	5
Asian	0	0	0	0	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	7	2	0	12	21
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0	0	1	1
Multiple Races	2	2	0	5	9

Recommendations for 2015-2016:

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

2. That the Department of Montana of the American Legion strive to establish volunteer homeless Veterans coordinators at Post, District and, Zone levels as necessary to interface with the Department on issues and offer solutions of Veterans homelessness. In lieu of dedicated resources the responsibility falls to the Post, District, and Zone commander by default.

3. That the Department of Montana of the American Legion support the various Homeless Veterans Stand downs scheduled throughout Montana for the Remainder of 2015 and on into 2016. Veteran related events previously identified as being in Plains, Helena, Missoula, Dillon, Miles City, Montana, and Libby, Montana and on the High line of Montana with Havre, Montana as the hub.

INSURANCE DIRECTOR

Gary White

We have received no new disbursements since the last report in June 2015; our next anticipated disbursements will be in April 2016. We continue to show a decline in policy holders, therefore we will see a decline in revenue from the insurance programs. But, we have showed a steady increase in registrations for the free AD & D. We need the help of all Posts and members to insure members are receiving and returning the AGIA insurance registration cards. Those who fill out or have already filled out the registration cards after 1 January 2015 will never have to register again, as long as they are current with their American Legion dues. Remember you may also register online at www.TheLit.com or by calling 800-235-6943. Senior (over 18 years of age) SAL and Auxiliary members are now eligible for the \$1000 AD & D free insurance, as well as the \$5000.00 AD & D insurance if they are on Legion Family business.

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. (See addendum)

LEGION RIDERS

Roger Knoell

The riding season of 2015 was a good one for the American Legion Riders of Montana. We have approximately 50 riders in the state at 12 Posts. In some cases we have Posts combined together in order to let riders join. In one case a whole District (District #4) has combined.

The American Legion Riders have participated in several parades (Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day and many local parades) throughout the state. Ten ALR members were present at the Department Convention in Havre in June 2015. There were several Legion Riders that participated in the Ride to Remember MIA/POW ride from Helena to West Yellowstone. American Legion Riders were present at the re-dedication of the MIA/POW memorial at the Freedom Tree on the Capital Grounds in Helena. Also they have been on many honor guards for funerals and memorials. In all, the American Legion Riders of Montana have volunteered in excess of 90,000 man hours in American Legion projects and community service.

The American Legion Riders of Montana had 13 members attend the Western Area ROMP (Ride on Military Pride) in Heber/Overgaard Az. during the week of 4-7 June 2015. We had over 200 bikes from all 12 western states. We had guided rides on Friday and Saturday, a banquet on Saturday night and finished the week and ROMP off with training on Sunday.

MEMBERSHIP

Elmer Palmer

After attending the Department Convention in Havre, Montana, I returned home and started attending to the business of membership. In early August I attended the National M&PA meeting in Indianapolis, IN, which was immediately followed by the 2016 Membership workshop. In addition to the Commander and Vice Commander, three District Commanders attended the workshop. As the Leading Candidate for National Commander, Commander Dale Barnett addressed the workshop and laid out his membership plan for this year. He also met with the officers and chairmen of each Department to set the goal for the 2016 for their Department.

In Late August I attended the National Convention in Baltimore, MD. I represented the Department of Montana at the National Convention of The American Legion. The prime discussion was the use of the District Revitalization program. This process has been used in several Districts across the nation, including twice in Montana, and have been quite successful. We discussed the implementation of this program in local Districts.

I have initiated a plan for five District Revitalizations within the Department over the next few months. Two of these will be National Membership driven, the first being in District Four in November and the second being in District Six in April. A third will be directed by Jim Fiedler in Districts Ten and Eleven (outlying areas) In October. The remaining two will be conducted locally with National Membership administrative support. The first will be District Five in October and the second will be District Three (outlying areas) in April.

The National Vice Commanders have been tasked with a visit to each Department, and may do a second visit to the Department for a membership event. This may be in conjunction with one of the revitalization in April.

Membership is slowly coming in. At the last report we are about 400 members behind last year at this time (9/25). A number of District Commanders and District Membership Chairmen believe that the dues raise on 1 January 2016 will hurt our membership numbers. The answer to that is to have all members renewed prior to the 1 January 2016 date. This will delay the panic over a five dollar dues raise.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Randall Brown

At the Department Convention that was held in Havre during the month of June 2015, I made my written and oral report and chaired a meeting with the National Security Committee. During

the convention, Senator Tester, Senator Daines and Representative Zinke all made remarks as to the problems concerning ISIS. Representative Zinke alluded to the fact that the United States was not doing enough to assist in this critical situation. He indicated that the current leadership from the United States was losing respect with other world leaders because of their lack of decisiveness in this and other world situations. He believes that the United States must provide more military assistance to help defeat ISIS including arming the Kurds in northern Iraq. He expressed concerns that Iran (currently involved in this conflict) is ultimately going to be the biggest problem in the region if the United States does not take more action very soon.

ISIS has claimed responsibility for a terrorist attack in Garland Texas. Two terrorists opened fire at a Texas cartoon contest featuring images of the Muslim Prophet Muhammad. Both suspects were shot and killed by a Texas Police Officer.

In Chattanooga, Tennessee a gunman opened fire at a military recruiting station and at a nearby military facility killing four Marines and wounding three others in another terrorist attack. The terrorist was also killed. ISIS and al-Qaida Terrorist leaders are encouraging these lone wolf style attacks in the U.S. and abroad.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban and al-Qaida continue their resistance with military action, suicide attacks and the use of improvised explosive devices. Recently, some of these terrorists have infiltrated the Afghanistan Security Forces and have killed several of our NATO advisors, (mostly US Forces). The NATO combat role has ended and is making a transition from a training to an advise and assist role has been implemented. Recent negotiations with the Afghanistan President have cleared the way to keep some US troops in that country for an extended period.

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

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

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

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

Yemen is a training area for terrorists. The U.S. has been involved with counterterrorism aid to this Arab nation, however, recent events involving Yemen's Shiite rebels (known as Houthis,) overthrowing of the nation's president and his staff have changed the situation. In March, US troops evacuated a southern air base crucial to America's drone strike program. Militants have taken control of the government supposedly in pro-reform movements. The U.S. Embassy has sent many staff members home and is only occupied by a skeleton crew. It is unclear as to how these events will affect our efforts to combat al-Qaida in that country. Saudi Arabia and its allies have been conducting air strikes against the Shiite rebels and Egyptian officials said a ground assault will follow. This situation also has serious consequences involving other events taking place in this part of the world.

In Syria, demonstrators against the current government have been attacked and many killed by government forces. Many of these demonstrators are also al-Qaida inspired Sunni militants ISIS (known as Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) and are involved in fighting in both Syria and Iraq. Unfortunately, many innocent civilians have also been killed or forced to leave their homes. Earlier, many countries expressed their desire to have the current leader to step down which did not happen. Because of the involvement of the Sunni militants, support for the demonstrators has declined. The United States has closed its embassy in Syria and recalled its ambassador. Syria has launched missiles into neighboring Turkey and evidence points to the fact that chemical weapons may have been used against protesters and innocent citizens which is a major concern. The United States has now deployed Patriot Missile Batteries along Turkish border and is launching air strikes out of Turkey. There has not been much support for military involvement in Syria by the American public and our allies. However, because of the recent beheadings of American, Japanese and English civilians in Syria, and the death of an American

woman, there is now support for the air strikes against the militant organization of ISIS. Because of the burning alive of a Jordan pilot who is Muslim, there is more support of Muslim countries to provide military aid in the fight against ISIS. Thousands of refugees have fled Syria to European countries which are having a huge impact on those countries trying to assist them. This is an international situation which has created a multitude of problems for those nations.

Because of Iran's nuclear program, which western nations believe is enriching uranium for weapons purposes, the U.S. recently imposed sanctions which include targeting Iran's ability to sell oil on the world market. Canada has closed its embassy and brought their ambassador home. They have also sent Iran's diplomats back to Iran. Other nations have pledged to buy less oil from this country. Israel considers a nuclear-armed Iran to be a threat because of its missile capabilities and support for anti-Israel militants. Iran has made frequent references by its president to destroy Israel. The US is concerned that Israel might be preparing to attack Iran over its nuclear program. The current administration and several other countries have reached an agreement with Iran concerning its nuclear program. The terms of this agreement must be agreed upon by members of Congress if it is to pass. In early September, it was announced that 34 votes from Democrat Senators has clinched this agreement and that Republican Senators oppose this Iran agreement. (The American Legion also opposes this agreement). This issue has resulted in US relations with Israel deteriorating considerably in the past several weeks.

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

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

In Nigeria, another extremist organization has emerged, called Boko Haram. They have kidnapped children, killed innocent civilians and caused many problems in Nigeria other parts of

Africa. Recently, this extremist group has teamed up with ISIS to spread their brand of Islamic rule.

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

Illegal immigrants entering this country from Canada, and mostly from the Mexican border, continue to be a national security concern. A large percentage of these illegals actually enter the United States on a VISA, however, never return to their country. Many of these illegal immigrants siphon off welfare funds, become involved in criminal activity, and receive humanitarian aid that is designed for legal residents of this country. The Canadian border has many areas across the United States where it is relatively easy to cross without being detected. When illegal Mexican immigrants are apprehended, there is little or no punishment involved, and they are returned to Mexico. Often times, they are back across the border within days of deportation. This is a serious problem. Unfortunately, President Obama believes these illegal immigrants deserve a blank amnesty and should be welcomed as American citizens. There are already laws in affect that describe the requirements which must be met for U.S. citizenship. These laws should be enforced.

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

Our country has been in a recession. Currently, the economy has improved, and the strength of the US dollar is rising. Oil prices have been lowered and unemployment rates have decreased. Unfortunately, the country is faced with huge debts that must be eliminated and the majority of employment opportunities are within the service industry. The higher-paying manufacturing jobs continue to be eliminated or exported out of the country. It has become more and more difficult to even buy products that are made in America. The current administration is

drastically reducing our military forces and military capabilities which could have the affect of unemployment problems and impact our national security interests. Mandatory Federal spending cuts have taken place, which are having huge impacts on national security issues. And, at the same time this administration is giving millions of dollars away in aid to other countries. Almost daily, waste fraud and abuse issues are surfacing at all levels of government. These issues are all part of the debt problems that this nation is experiencing. Current policies need to be re-examined and it is evident that changes are needed. The American Legion organization is focusing on resolutions to balance the federal budget with the least amount of impact on our military forces. This country must be extremely pro-active in our search for dangerous Islamic extremists that kill innocent civilians and challenge our way of life. Recently, Islamic terrorists have struck France and other nations with deadly attacks resulting in the deaths of many innocent civilians. These same terrorists continue to threaten our nation. Cyber attacks on our nation's communications systems are causing serious problems. Recent election results have sent a strong message to the leaders of this country, that our citizens believe positive changes are overdue and desperately needed.

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

ORATORICAL

Jeff Holmes

Congratulations again to Gavin Sison for representing Montana at the National Oratorical Contest. Congrats also to Butte Post #115 for sponsoring the contest and Gavin as part of your Post objectives. I would also like to congratulate and thank again Lowell Long and all other Legion members for helping out and doing such a great job at our Department Oratorical Contest in Great Falls this past spring. You deserve all the credit for such an efficient and professional contest.

I am also pleased to announce that the Oratorical Resolution we passed at the Department Convention passed the first hurdle at the National Convention and has been referred to the Children and Youth Standing Sub Committee. It also has to pass through the financial committees as well. The process of passing through all these committees will probably take at least a year or two before it is approved. At least we got the ball rolling, and it is still a great opportunity for our future Department winners.

Our new Department format is now in effect. I do think it was a huge step forward for our contest. I do think this change made for a much more competitive final.

My contact information has changed AGAIN! I have accepted the Ag Teacher / FFA Advisor Position in Judith Gap, Montana. My new home address is: Box 213 Judith Gap, MT 59453. 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 28th 2016 in Belgrade. It is a tad later than last year, so I hope this helps your scheduling conflicts a tad. We have to have our Department winner submitted by March 18th to National, so we are not able to move it too much. Thanks also to Mr. Merv Gunderson for making the building reservations.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS & PUBLICATIONS

Lori Perkio

As I write this we are finalizing the November issue of the Legionnaire. I want to thank the Department Officers for your timely submission of articles. Proofing your articles before sending them has been very helpful and saves us a lot of time. I will be sending a reminder once a month of the next deadline for submittal to the Legionnaire. The deadline for the February 2016 issue will be January 1st. Please send your submittals to LMTPRPUB@GMAIL.COM and include the full names of those pictured, Post number as well as the community that Post is in, it would be greatly appreciated. You are doing great things in your Post; let us know by submitting your photos and articles to the Legionnaire. Remember to submit your Post and District Newsletters to LMTPRPUB@GMAIL.COM for the newsletter competition no later than April 1, 2016.

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

John Pellegrini

Membership this year is starting off very well. As of this report, we are eighth in the nation for members and at over 90% for renewals. We will have no problem with being on top next August if we can keep this movement going.

There are still some Posts out there that don't realize how import an SAL Squadron can be. Here are a few of the stats on just what the SAL has done to aid our American Legion Programs during 2015.

VA&R: 349,126 total volunteer hours with 18,529 visits and \$1,249,154 in cash and gifts.

Children and Youth: CWF: \$360,510.00, Special Olympics: \$203,997.00 Children's Miracle Network: \$70,115.00, Other Children and Youth Programs: \$620,738.00 Total C&Y Programs \$1,203,088.00

Americanism: A total of \$2,127,994.00 in support of all Americanism Programs.

Dick Ellwein and I will be attending the SAL NEC Fall Meeting where Dick will be interviewed for the Position of SAL National Chaplin.

I have been appointed to the Committee on Committees Commission for one more year. I hope we can keep this appointment in the Montana delegation.

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.
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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 26th National Championship is a shoulder-to-shoulder match to be held August 2016 (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.

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

Kelly Ackerman

As a member of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission (VA&R), I attended the National Convention in Baltimore, MD on August 29-30 2015. The Commission was introduced

to the newly appointed VA Under Secretary of Health, Dr. David J. Shulkin. Allison Hickey, the Under Secretary for Benefits gave a presentation regarding the VA's endeavor to reduce the backlog of Compensation Claims nation-wide. There was an entire day of presentations by various VA managers and program coordinators.

The VA&R Commission had a breakout session with the National Cemetery Committee, Veterans Benefits Committee, and the Health Administration Committee to discuss current resolutions. There were 29 resolutions discussed between the 3 committee's, and I was assigned to the Benefits committee. The resolutions that were approved by the Commission were as follows:

Benefits:

- Timely Processing of Overpayments
- DIC for surviving POW spouses
- Compensation for Veterans requiring Hearing Aids for Service Connected Hearing Loss
- Restore VA's Informal Claims and Appeals Process
- Increased Accessibility to VA Claims for Accredited Representatives
- Fiduciary Responsibility oversight
- Local Accredited Representative access to VBMS Decisions

Healthcare:

- Return the name "A System Worth Saving" and make it a permanent program
- Funding of In vitro Fertilization (IVF) by VHA
- Give veterans a choice of non-VA care referrals that is permanent
- Make Healing Water Fly Fishing a permanent alternative treatment program
- VA funded training of Service Dogs for service connected PTSD
- Dental Care eligibility for veterans service connected at 50% or more
- Complementary and Alternative Medicine
- Increase funding for VA provider recruitment and retention
- Medal of Honor recipients be placed in VHA Priority Group 1

National Cemetery:

- 180 days of Active Duty be the minimum time criteria for burial in a National Cemetery
- Allow Presidential Certificate

In September 2015, an issue came up regarding a failing Consultation Tracking program at Ft. Harrison VA Hospital. An anonymous letter by a VA Healthcare Provider was sent to AL Headquarters, as well as many other organizations and the Montana Congressmen. This letter

brought to light a Consultation Tracking program that was not only ineffective, but possibly corrupt. I worked with AL VA&R Headquarters staff, and researched the program. The allegations were correct, and in visiting with the VHA Director and his staff on September 14, 2015, learned that there had already been measures taken to correct the problems. In early September, VHA Montana was inspected by a Clinical Review Team from VA Central Office and the VISN Director. They conducted a Mortality Review to ensure that there were no deaths related to pending referrals, and concluded that there had been none. The actions taken to clean up this program included, but are not limited to replacing the staff member in charge of Consult Tracking, more than doubling the staff assigned to tracking, and performing a daily review of pending consultations. I was assured that this program and its progress will be transparent. VA&R headquarters staff will assist me with the follow up to ensure accountability.

VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – BILLINGS

Joyce Babcock

Beginning in April I worked at completing the necessary paperwork to become the VA Representative at the Billings VA Clinic for The American Legion. A rather tedious project I discovered as it took five months to finally complete all the requirements to finally receive my name badge and be fully qualified to actually carry the title of VA Hospital Representative. I want to thank Bill White and Gary White (no relation by the way!) for their assistance and persistence in getting me through that process.

I have made several trips to the clinic to spend time finding my way about the clinic itself and to see what they need in the way of volunteers and other items we might provide. Coffee is the biggest item that requires constant replenishment and luckily we have other Veteran groups helping in that area. The main clinic uses at least one 3 pound can of coffee each week. I gathered donations and used my funds to purchase a total of four of the three pound cans plus two large trays of cookies during the month of August and have reported to Voluntary Services on my activities for the month of August as that was my first sort of complete month as a Registered Volunteer. Finally received my name tag in early September and have recruited three Legionnaires from the lower Yellowstone valley who agreed to complete the Volunteer papers and donate some time in assisting Veterans with logging in on the computer system as well as whatever else volunteer activity the Clinic asks. They believe when they get their credentials they will be able to give some hours at least once a week.

There is also the possibility that another will complete the paperwork and have time to volunteer as a driver for the DAV van that travels from Billings to Fort Harrison but that is in progress at present. I will make one more visit to the clinic to leave coffee and treats during early October and several of the American Legion Auxiliary Units in District 11 have agreed to also provide cookies on an irregular basis as it works out for them.

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 refreshments for veterans at Fort Harrison using American Legion V.A.V.S. funds and working with the local Nabisco outlet for additional refreshments.
3. Participated in raising first flag on avenue of flags at Fort Harrison.
4. Worked with Gary White to ensure that All American Legion Volunteers are registered so that the American Legion gets proper credit with a big addition of Laurel Montana Legion members as this is an ongoing problem of individuals volunteering and not getting credit for their service.
5. Appointed to the Veterans Advisory Council at Fort Harrison and Co-Chair and serve as a Veterans Representative and continue to attend called meetings.
6. Re-appointed to the Veterans Transportation Committee that over sees the Veterans Transportation System (VTS) used at VA Fort Harrison as one of the veterans representative. This system now covers all of Montana and works with patients in parts of Northern Wyoming and Western North Dakota and parts of Eastern Idaho.

Note: Avenue of Flags

To date The American Legion and The Fort Harrison Thrift Store have purchased fourteen (14) poles and sleeves of the fifty (50) needed.

Where is the Montana American Legion?

We voted in Bozeman, Montana on June 28, 2014 on Resolution 14-14 resolving to raise money for 25 to 50 poles and sleeves effective immediately upon acceptance of the proposal to do this. If each Post donated \$47.00 we the Montana American Legion would fulfill our obligation.

Send Donations to the Department Adjutant Gary White at PO Box 6075, Helena MT 59604

VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – Miles City

TBN

WAYS & MEANS

Bill Applegate

I sold 28 calendars; attended gun shows at Missoula and Kalispell, and plan to be in Helena on Oct 30, 31 & Nov 1st; Nov 27, 28 & 29th is at Billings; Dec 4, 5, & 6 is in Hamilton. I do not have the new book for the gun shows for 2016. Also, I have scheduled to be at the Missoula Rosauers September 27th, October 18th, November 15th & 22nd; December 13th & 20th to sell calendars and raffle tickets. After the first of the New Year I will schedule more dates for Rosauers. I am looking at setting up at Sportsman Warehouse after the first of the year.

Update: I have sent in 10 books; selling a book last night & 4 calendars.

There were 4000 tickets printed
116 books issued as of 10/6/15
8 books returned plus the 10 books above

Calendar Update

Purchased 2000
Checked out 1589
Paid for 526 plus the 28 I sent in
Left to Collect 1058
Calendars left at Headquarters 411

WEBMASTER

Kevin Kent

Some new features have recently been added to the site that I wanted to bring to your attention. The first and largest one is the new "Legion Chat" tab located at the top of the website next to the "Photos & Videos" tab. This area will allow you to discuss anything with fellow Legion members or anyone who has registered at the site. You can also Post links to articles or Post pictures on there if you would like. If you have already created an account with mtlegion.org then your login will be the same for the forums in Legion Chat. Feel free to create a new topic to talk about or give your opinion on an existing topic that is already being discussed. The next feature is a simple questions tab that drops down off the "Contact Us" tab. This is to send a quick question to Department HQ and will be useful for citizens using the site to ask general questions about different programs. I have also been adding a lot of pictures to the "Photos" tab and would like some Posts to please e-mail any they want put up at deucekilo7@gmail.com so I can get a Post tab created for your pictures. I would also like to start Posting video so if you have any please send me that as well or just a link to the YouTube video etc. will work too. As always please e-mail me with any questions or comments on the site, thank you.

WOMEN'S VETERANS COORDINATOR

Kim Martin

I attended the 11 Department of Montana American Legion District fall meetings. I have stated that I have two goals for this 2015-2016 year. One is to help increase our member numbers for females, not just males which would increase our American Legion family. The other goal is for females Legionnaires to have a voice with National to push women's clinics at Fort Harrison VA Hospital and Billings Clinic and qualified physicians in women's health care at all CBOC's in Montana.

The lack of qualified physicians and specialty care physicians in Montana does a disservice to all veterans who use the VA Facilities. Doing research into this area has brought to the forefront that the VA would rather hire a warm body that is not qualified in the specialty of gynecology than to leave the billet open for a qualified Dr. For a year now women veterans depending on the VA Hospital for care have to continue to wait for an appointment to see Dr. Magneto. As of last week there is a job listing for a gynecologist of which I am hoping Dr. Magnito is not leaving. I have not been able to contact him to verify at this time.

I have kept in contact with Glenda Trochmann, women veteran's program manager at the VA in Fargo North Dakota about their hosting a Women's Recognition Luncheon. I have talked with a dozen women Legionnaires in hopes of forming a committee to organize within the Montana American Legion to host this program as it is a great way to recognize female veterans for their service and honor WWII women veterans, as well as a way to hopefully further recruitment. Debbie Hancock, Laure Brookie, and Marg Wood met with me in Lewistown in August to come up with a resolution to form a committee in pursuit of this goal. The resolution was brought up at a Lolo Post meeting and passed before being passed also at District 5 Fall meeting. We are hoping the resolution will pass at Fall Conference so we can begin making this Recognition Luncheon before Convention and before we lose the few WWII female veterans we have in Montana.

I talked on the phone with a female WWII veteran, Elsie Rieger, from Clinton Montana. Clara Santopietro, Ed Sperry and I met with Elsie in September where we talked about her and her military experience. Elsie is one of the few female WWII veterans who knew she was considered a veteran as her father and brother were veterans. She was never thanked or officially recognized for her service and having a Luncheon in her honor would be wonderful.

I met 20 or more women veterans at the Homeless Veterans Stand-down in Great Falls in September. Most of them did not know about the American Legion. I gave each a copy of the Guide for Women Veterans that used to be published by The American Legion along with my business card. As I meet more women whom have served, I am hoping to increase their

awareness of the benefits that they are entitled to. I also met a few male veterans that were surprised to see a female Legionnaire. They were under the impression that women were Auxiliary members only. This has shown me that veterans of both genders need to be more aware of the American Legion and that women can be American Legion members too.

With information from fellow Legionnaires, I have 172 female veterans from 53 Posts in my database. I was hoping to increase this number by now but am happy with the progress so far. There is a lot more progress that needs to be done because the articles I've submitted in the Legionnaire and attending District Meetings are falling short of my expectation in gathering this vital information needed to enable women Legion members to have an increased voice with National in dealing with VA situations. I also had thought by now that male Legion members would be less opposed to women being recognized within Montana for their service.