



**Department of Montana
Department Fall Conference
Helena, Montana
October 28-29, 2022
Reports of The
Department Executive Committee
&
Department Committee Chairs
“For God and Country”**

Preamble to the Constitution

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

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

To maintain law and order;

To foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism;

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

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

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

To make right the master of might;

To promote peace and goodwill on earth;

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

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



DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Lowell Long

First, I want to take a few minutes to congratulate Roger and Debra Hancock and everyone who worked hard to put on our convention in June. The hospitality shown by the community of Missoula and the American Legion Posts in that district was truly outstanding.

Since being elected at our convention this past June, I have been very busy. I attended a meeting to help revitalize the post in Browning and help them establish officers. Several meetings were held and the post is up and running with new officers.

I attended the Fourth of July parade in Laurel. They had an excellent turnout to honor our country and it was great to sit and watch the showing of support for our country.

On July 21-24, 2022, I attended the American Legion Northern Division A Baseball games in Havre. It was an enjoyable time watching these young men play hard and show great sportsmanship during this tournament. The next week, I traveled to Billings to watch the American Legion AA Tournament. I was able to see most of the games and shared the experience with my granddaughters as they joined us to see their first baseball games.

On July 29th, I went to the dedication ceremony in Terry to dedicate the photograph display from a combat photographer in WW2. The program was very well done and the photos are well worth going to see.

August had me traveling to Milwaukee to the National American Legion Convention. As usual, it was a great time reconnecting with old friends and meeting new friends. We had an excellent contingent of delegates and alternates from Montana go. If you haven't attended a convention, then I encourage you to consider going to one. You learn a lot about our great organization by attending the committee meetings and the convention.

Upon returning from the National Convention, our district meetings began. I attended all the district meetings except District 1 and 6. While at the district meetings, I delivered my challenge coin and certificate to all the posts that achieved 100% or more of their goal for last year. I mailed some that I was not able to get to.

September 15-17, 2022 saw us in Helena hosting our National Commander Jim Troiola. We took him to the POW/MIA remembrance ceremony in Helena on a rainy day. He gave an excellent speech commemorating this event. We met with Governor Gianforte's staff and discussed legislative issues we are going to be working on this year. We gave him a tour of the VA in Helena. That evening, we went to Three Forks to a football game and the Commander tossed the coin to start the game. The next day, we went to District 8 in Dutton.

Sadly, I attended the funeral of the District 10 Commander in Glendive on October 1st. When a veteran passes away, it is always hard but even harder when it is one for someone you know and have worked with. My prayers go out to the family and community.

On October 9-12, 2022, I attended the fall meetings in Indianapolis for Commanders and Adjutants. It was an excellent time connecting with commanders from other Departments and learning what they are doing and seeing if we can learn something we might be able to try here in Montana. I now have a group of commanders that I can contact to share ideas as I move forward this year.

I returned to Browning on October 13th to install their officers and help answer any questions that they may have had.

On the 21-24th of October, I traveled to Melfort, Saskatchewan for the Royal Legion, Saskatchewan Command Convention along with Jeff Nelson, Glen Sharbono, and Kathy Long. This was an enjoyable event and we were treated very well. We renewed friendships and made some new friends while there. I was able to address their convention on Sunday afternoon bringing greetings from the Department of Montana.

I am looking forward to continuing to come and see anyone that would like me to come to their area. Reach out to me at crazymarinevet@outlook.com or (406) 945-4209 and I will get your event on my calendar.

DEPARTMENT VICE-COMMANDER

Lonnie Johnson

Report not submitted.

ZONE COMMANDER – SOUTH CENTRAL

Bill Cummins

By the time of this fall's Executive meeting, I will have attended my three District meetings, with the purpose of introducing myself to the districts.

I have asked the Posts to communicate and exchange ideas with each other. I also have encouraged the Posts to work closely with their Auxiliary Units as a good healthy Auxiliary Unit and a Posts working together results in a healthy Post.

At last summer's convention we were encouraged to attend the American Legion Baseball Tournaments in our area, I did attend the Class A Tournament in Billings. I was there for the second of two days of the tournament, so I did not see the opening ceremony. While I was there, I did not see any Legion members from the host Post. I also observed two team busses that did not have any American Legion signs on them; they had their team's name but nothing indicating American Legion Baseball. American Legion Baseball is one of our most visible programs. American Legion Baseball needs to be supported by the Legion members and also should be displayed on the team buses. The public needs to see and know that the American Legion does sponsor and is supporting or youth programs.

ZONE COMMANDER – WESTERN

Dorothy Goodwin

Since obtaining the Western Zone Commander (District 4, 5, and 6) position, I have been in contract with all three Districts starting with emails and phone calls.

On September 25th, 2022, District 4 held the fall district meeting via zoom due to Libby where the meeting was to be held, reached out for the meeting to be changed due to a breakout of Covid. District 4's newest post in Lakeside offered to hold the spring district meeting. We all welcome Lakeside Post 426 to the American Legion Family.

On October 8th, 2022, I attended District 5 in Missoula. Prior to the meeting, the District 6 Commander Terry Wahl contacted me to be the guest speaker. I was honored to do so. With the meeting being held with District first and Department after the meeting was fast moving.

After attending Missoula District 5 I drove to Butte for the District 6 meeting to be held on Sunday, October 9th, 2022. Again District 6 Commander, Linda Cousineau contacted to me to request that I be the guest speaker. I was honored to tell Linda, yes. Again, another fast-moving meeting.

I have told all Districts that I would like to visit with all Posts be it a meeting or an event for a goal. Look forward to visit with one and all Posts.

ZONE COMMANDER – NORTH CENTRAL

Kim Kay C. McCarty Martin

As North Central Zone CDR, I kept lines of communication open with District 2 CDR Jed Damson, District 3 and occasionally called CDR Bailey and CDR Rice. It is great to see District 3 leading in membership currently as they have been working hard. I was only able to attend the Fall District Meetings for District 3, and 8 and ended up missing District 2.

In July, I attended the Post meeting in Fort Benton. The Officers are doing well in their jobs and the Post is focused on the future and growing their programs. On the 5th of August, I lined up a informal meeting with 2 members of the Browning Post 127. District 3 CDR Dusty Bailey and District 3 Vice-CDR Keith Stark attended with me to get a feel as to the possibility of getting the Post up and running soon. We got a positive response from Leo Pollock, who was willing to become the CDR and work on getting more active members. On the 8th of September, Browning Post 127 had tentative members to be CDR, Vice-CDR, ADJ and Service Officer. We met in Browning with District 3 Vice-CDR Stark to put together a new Constitution and By-Laws for the Franklin Juneau post and have it emailed, and snail mailed to all members on the roster for the post. On the 16th of Post 127 held elections and all pertinent offices were filled.

On the 1st of October, I participated in Vaughn Post bake sale they had in Great Falls. There were a lot of baked goods and a lot of supporters for them. On the 12th of October, I attended Henry Greisbach Jr. Post 24 meeting. They are looking for volunteers to help with their Wreaths Across America wreath laying in December. On the 13th of October, I attended Post 127 installation of their officers by Department CDR Lowell Long. After a nice ceremony, they held their 2nd official meeting. I will be offering my assistance in the future if they need any. I will be helping teach Montana Legion College and attending the Fall Convention in Helena next week.

ZONE COMMANDER – EASTERN

Ken Simon

I assumed the duties of the Eastern Zone Commander in late June. The 27th through the 30th of July I was in Indianapolis to attend the Membership and Post Activities Conference along with Richard Klose. The District 10 Commander had assumed his duties after the Spring Meeting in Terry and I had stopped in to assist him in any way I could on occasions when I was passing through. On July 21st I attended a Post Meeting of Post 41 in Glasgow.

On September 25th I received a phone call from Doug Byron, the District 10 Adjutant to inform me of the death of District 10 Commander Dale Hewitt on September 24th. I contacted Department Adjutant Duane Cunningham and notified him of this. On September 28th I drove to Glendive and met with Doug Byron and Bill Dolatta regarding the upcoming District 10 Fall Meeting to be held on Oct 2nd. This meeting had been scheduled earlier in October during a phone call with Dale and we decided that it still needed to be held. A graveside committal service was held October 1st in Glendive for Commander Dale Hewitt and that was attended by me, Past Department Commander Richard Klose, Department Commander Lowell Long and Vice Commander Lonnie Johnson.

I attended the District 10 Fall Meeting on October 2nd, which was well attended. During the meeting, two candidates stepped forward and were interviewed by Department Commander Lowell Long. On October the 5th Commander Long appointed Irene Dickerson from Post 39

as the new District 10 Commander. Since the 5th I have been in contact with Commander Dickerson discussing plans to visit all the Posts in District 10 and that I will be available to provide assistance in any way I could.

On October 7th I was in Glasgow for the Glasgow High School Homecoming Parade to ride the Veterans Float. However, due to a change of personnel to carry flags I was asked by District 1 Commander Joe Yeoman to carry the American Flag. This was an Honor for me as I graduated from Glasgow High School, and this was the first time I had participated in their Homecoming Parade. There were a lot of people lining the entire parade route from start to finish. I have plans to attend all the Post Meetings in both District 1 and 10 before the end of this 2022

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN (N.E.C.)

Hal Rice

Greetings, As your NEC, it has been a busy few months, as I attend a couple of the Fall District meetings and hosted the National Commander for his visit to our Department. I escorted the National Commander to a POW/MIA memorial in Helena. The names were read in a steady rain after which the Commander gave an inspiring speech. I tried to shield the commander from the rain by holding an umbrella over him, but he was still drenched at the conclusion. I had to pay a fine at the Ye Steivos banquet for letting the National Commander get wet. All in fun.

During his visit we traveled to Three Forks attending a football game with the National Commander flipping the coin at the beginning of the game. Visiting with him later he was honored to participate in the festivities, the next day we went to Dutton for District 8 meetings. On the way back he was treated to a very good dinner in Craig.

In October, I attended Fall Conference in Indianapolis, it was a very good meeting. I am a committee member of the Finance Commission and attended there meeting on Tuesday and NEC meetings through Thursday. We received very positive and encouraging information regarding the American Legion partnership with Indy Car Racing and the American Legion sponsored team (Resolution I).

The impact and growth of our sponsorship with Chip Ganassi Racing and the Number #48 Indy Car driven by Jimmy Johnson has been tremendous. Ad sponsorship, brand recognition and advertising of the American Legion equated to around 14 million dollars. Talk about bang for your buck! We did learn that Jimmie Johnson was semi-retiring at the end of the year but plans to continue his partnership with the American Legion, leading by example at National Convention with a 1.5-million-dollar donation from Jimmy and his spouse. Tony Kanaan is currently scheduled to drive the American Legion #48 this upcoming season. It was also announced that Indy Car Racing is partnering with the American Legion to sell merchandise with both the Indy Car and American Legion logos on it at no cost to the

American Legion. The partnership raises the awareness of both programs and the Commander's "Be the One" campaign.

At Convention there were 25 resolutions that were passed with two of them coming directly from Montana Legionnaires. The big picture button is growing our numbers by welcoming in our younger Veterans. We must consider new and innovative ways to draw in membership as there is a lot of competition out there. The National Commander dinner was great! Good meal and a veteran comedian who had everyone in stitches. The new National Chaplain said the closing prayer "You think your jobs are hard, try to give a prayer after that!".

It's an honor to serve as your Department NEC.

ALTERNATE NATIONAL COMMITTEEMAN (N.E.C.)

Larry Dobb

Since my report to the Department Convention in Missoula in June, myself and NEC Hal Rice picked up the National Commander and his aide at the airport and brought them to the Convention where Commander Dillard addressed the American Legion Auxiliary and the Son's of the American Legion and spoke at the banquet. He had just returned from ten days in Europe visiting several countries and Omaha Beach and had visited another Department before coming to Missoula, so they were quite tired, and we did not do too much sightseeing.

On July 24th I attended a Wreaths Across America function here in Great Falls. It was sponsored by the DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution). The semi with the exhibits was escorted into town by a large number of Legion Riders to the event in the Target parking lot. American Legion Post 341 had a booth, as did two VFW Posts, the DAV, the VA and a couple other veteran oriented groups. The semi included a small theater with a movie about the program. When I went through, the rest of the audience were people from the Legion Riders and some other veteran motorcycle groups. After the film, the narrator went around the room and asked everyone what branch they had served in and when they went on active duty. Except for me the rest were all Gulf War or Iraq/Afghanistan vets. I got a special coin and all the younger vets made a point of coming over and shaking my hand and making comments about how different it was for Vietnam era veterans etc. It was spur of the moment thing but it made me sort of emotional.

On 9 August I attended a ceremony at Post 3 held at the Elks Lodge to award a 75 Year Membership Certificate Leo Moe. He lives in Great Falls, but has maintained his membership in a Post in North Dakota, since he came home from WWII. The certificate was originally sent to his post who contacted Post 3 who made arrangements to do it here. NEC Hal Rice was master of ceremonies. In addition the Post Commanders of Post 3 and Post 341, Past NEC and Department Commander David Driver were present along with about 25 members of Mr. Moe's family and friends. Mr. Moe even wore his American Legion cap from his Post in

North Dakota. There were refreshments cakes, coffee, juice etc. Mr. Moe is very sharp and I enjoyed visiting with him. He was a Navy Seabee in the Pacific at Okinawa and served in Japan (Nagasaki) after the surrender. He said mostly blowing up bunkers of munitions the Japanese had stored in preparation for the invasion.

I attended the American Legion National Convention in Milwaukee from 25 August to 1 Sept. I then attended two District Meetings, District 9 in Judith Gap and District 8 in Dutton. National Commander Troiola attended the District 8 meeting as part of his visit to Montana.

From 10-13 October, I attended the National Executive Committee in Indianapolis along with NEC Hal Rice, Department Commander Long and Adjutant Cunningham. I was able to sit in on the actual NEC meeting as well as the training for new NEC's and new Department Commanders. I felt both these training sessions were better than the first time I went through them.

PAST DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Glen Sharbono

First, I want to thank Past Department Commander Roger Hancock and his crew from Chief Joseph Post #135 in Lolo for hosting a great Convention in my hometown of Missoula. Bringing a close to the longest shortest year of my American Legion career. It was an honor to serve the Department of Montana and its more than 10,000 members. I also had the privilege of serving along side my counter parts Jeff Nelson 2x Past Department Commander and Sons of The American Legion and Chris Nelson Department Auxiliary President, both of whom I am glad to call good friends. The 40 & 8 BBQ at the Airport was not only good food but very educational as we got to take our picture under Miss Montana and learn the history of her recent



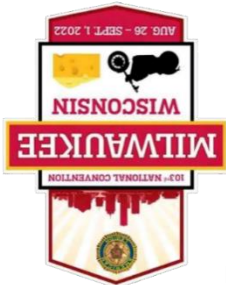
journey to Normandy, France. And I would be a little amiss if I didn't mention that thanks to Army letting Navy beat them that I was forced to eat a little crow...I mean cake in a lost bet to Department Adjutant Cunningham who couldn't have been more thrilled! I was surprised that I was the Department Recruiter of the year! It was humbling and yet sad at how few new members it took to win this prestigious award. However, I was especially honored to receive the Canadian Friendship Award from



Ken Box.

And now on to National Convention in Milwaukee Wisconsin. Thirty-three yes 33 hours one way on a train. I hope I never have to ride another train in my life.

Once there it was a good time. I served on the Legislative Committees. Daniel Seehafer was sworn in as the new chairman for the committee. Spent too much money again at Emblem Sales.



Attended the business meeting for the National American Legion College Alumni and then the BBQ at one of the local Posts. At the Convention I got to pet an ocelot from the Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom. I guess Erin's daughter Hailey got to pet the snake and alligator, good for her! Standing at the Convention Center door was a security guard. I think he was rather rude. No matter how many times you said hello or tried to ask him for directions he would just coldly stare at us.



Some of us walked about 10 blocks to visit the Harley Davidson Museum. Finding out that PDC Richard Klose had never set on a Harley rectified and a biker guy on one and I anyone said anything on Richard's face made it well than worth the price of admission



was something that had to be overheard us and told him to go sit they could answer to him. The look worth the walk. The Museum more as well as lunch after.

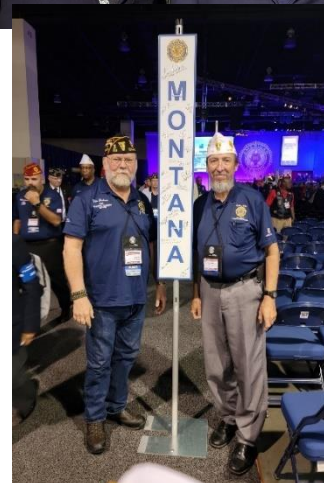
Department Adjutant Duane Cunningham and I had the honor



of being inducted in as new members of ANAVICUS (Army Navy Air Force Veterans in Canada and the United States) we received new purples hats, certificate, membership card, lapel pin and medal, along with a good lunch. I noticed that anyone attending who forgot their purple had received a



fine! The National Commanders banquet for National Commander Paul Dillard was huge! There were 209 numbered tables that we could see that seated 10 each and at least 30 at a double head table. There was a pretty good band playing after as well. On Wednesday I went on stage and accepted the Departments plaque for 100% CPR reporting.



On the last day of Convention, I got to cast the Delegate votes for Vincent James “Jim” Troiola. We all then jumped in behind the Department of New York and paraded around the center in celebration and watched as he took the stage to be sworn in as our new National American Legion Commander. It was quite an event to witness this as well as listen to all the guest speakers and it was amazing at all the money that came in as donations from the different Departments somewhere around \$25 million! I and Commander Long posed by the Department of Montana banner. At the end of convention, we both got to keep a side as a memento. The next picture is a group of us who walked down to have lunch at the Brat House I had a Bratwurst and sauerkraut sandwich. A local lady was kind enough to snap the picture.



On the 15th of September Funeral Honors were finally given to PVT John Emit Shaughnessy of the Polar Bear Expedition to Russia he had contact pneumonia there and died. Although he was buried in 1929 his records were lost, and it took until now to get him a headstone and his final Honors. If you look just of the right of the headstone of John J., his father, apparently, he built some of the barracks at Fort Missoula. Pictured below is The Department of Montana American Legion attendees. PDC Roger Hancock, Dept. Commander Lowell Long, Dept. Vice Commander Lonnie Johnson, PDC Glen Sharbono, Department



Auxiliary Sgt-At-Arms Lorie Noble and Debra Hancock of Post #135.

October 3rd the Polson and Ronan joint Children and Youth Banquet was held at the North Crow Club House and new Ronan Post home. We will now alternate between Posts as the venue where we honor the candidates for all Then American Legion and Auxiliary Youth programs. This year I cooked a baked 3 cheese mac and cheese with stuffed wieners, it had clam shell, fancy elbow, bows and fancy twisted macaroni and was served with green beans & bacon, green salad, and cinnamon rolls for dessert. The kids thought it was great and one kid must have come back 3 times, several adults ate more than once. We had about 30 in attendance with parents, coaches, and sponsors. I only had to charge Polson \$75.00 for their half! The honoree's all took turns to tell their experiences and thank The American Legion for giving them the opportunity.



A fourteenth Post was added to the 4th District with Post #426 of Lakeside. Welcome to the District!

HISTORIAN

Ray Read

This is my 18th Year as the Department Historian for a great organization that has been serving the veterans, their families, and the many communities that the posts serve. I had the privilege and opportunity to travel the 103rd American Legion National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It was refreshing, impressive and educational in all aspects of my position and appointments. I recommend that all Montana Legionnaires to attend. To be sure travelling by AMTRAK was a good experience and if the opportunity repeats itself, I will attend the 104th TAL in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Highlights so far this year: With the assistance of American Legion National Headquarters and supporters such as Jeff Stoffer and Holly Sori, Montana Department, TAL, was able schedule two major exhibits: The Exhibits: The Flag of Our Nation and 1944 Veterans Readjustment Act known as the the GI Bill. These were on display at the Montana Military Museum and also the Flag of Our Nation at the 103rd Department Convention.

National Commander Vincent J. "Jim" Troiola (pronounced Tree-Ola) came to visit in third week of September and provided a special element at the 44th Annual National POW-MIA Recognition Day, completed in inclement weather with good results. You can review program on You Tub.

The State veterans' community celebrated the 80th Anniversary of the establishment of the First Special Service Force on August 9, 2022 at Fort Harrison. A very significant event that has paid forwarded with the current Special Operation Force known as the Green Berets. Their professionalism and patriotism was on proud display

Of great significance is The American Legion's National initiative BE the ONE. We are asking everyone to ASK veterans in your life how they are doing; to LISTEN when a veteran needs to talk; and to REACH out when a veteran is struggling. Pledge to Be the One by signing up for email updates. BE the ONE!!

So far, I have been able to attend most all of the 2022 Fall District meetings. It good to meet with American Legion leaders who strive to make the Four Pillars work better. The unique locations of Judith Gap, Dutton, Big Timber, Cutbank, Libby (by Zoom), Hinsdale, Glendive, Missoula, Butte, Fromberg and Rocky Boy shows the absolute Statewide communication efforts and travel challenges necessary but emphasizes the continued strength of our community involvement. Outreach allowed Department leadership to emphasize the various programs available in Montana my programs surrounding the importance of history to American Legion posts attending leadership and local commemorations in various communities.

I found throughout Montana that the American Legion is continuing to do what they have done best for 103 plus years. They are supporting the veterans and their families as best they can, utilizing the Four Pillars of the American Legion's National Program: That is Supporting the many facets of Veterans Affairs; Supporting a Strong National Defense; Supporting viable

Americanism programs; and supporting our Nation's most precious resource our Children and Youth. The district meetings have allowed me to travel the State, work with many seasoned, as well as newer, younger veterans who populate the 130 plus American Legion Posts, mostly in rural environments, with all the challenges that manifest themselves in the Frontier State of Montana.

I thank all who made my visits so memorable. I want to thank all those helped me with Operation Ruptured Duck program. This program is still active, and I am in the process of filling request by various posts. The program will continue if World War II veterans are living in our communities and still serving their fellow veterans are able to participate.

I am asking all Montana Department American Posts to continue establish their Local Legacy. Your Post's History is important to defining your Post accomplishments. To facilitate 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 all aspects of The American Legion Centennial Program are available on the National website www.legion.org/centennial.

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

I encourage all Legionnaires to participate in the annual or special Veteran related events. Ongoing Veterans and Memorial Day and up-coming events. Including Law Enforcement officer, the year, Firefighter of the year, all veteran related employment awards, the Children and Youth /Americanism programs such as the Government Survey the Constitutional essays, The American Legion Oratorical program, and the 76th annual American Legion Boys State and American Legion Auxiliary Girls State. Get out there, get involved and make it 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 2023. The Judging will be accomplished in October 2023. Post entries are due at the Montana Department Convention, Lewistown, Montana at the start of the 2023 Department end of June.

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 must be met for the National Contest. And I refer you to the most current edition of the Officers Guide for the official rules of the 2022-2023 Legion year, or at the legion website www.legion.org.

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT

Duane Cunningham

The last few month have brought a lot of activity; the first piece of news would be that Department has finally resettled back into the Headquarters space. After 10 months and 4 moves, Department has its home back, and while it is a bit smaller, the use of a conference room on site should be helpful.

The National Convention was held in Milwaukee in late August; by car, plane and even train, 37 Montana delegates attended Convention this year. Eight of us took the train to Milwaukee, the Amtrak experience wasn't too bad at all; the tickets were inexpensive and check in procedures, luggage rules and carry-on baggage were easier, and less stressful than flying. Really enjoyed the conversations with fellow Legionnaires and was even able to catch up on a little work. The ride was around 26 hours and dropped us off 4 blocks from the hotel. If the opportunity to take the train to Convention comes up again, I recommend giving it a try.

A lot of American Legon business was completed throughout the week and a new National Commander was installed as Vincent James Troiola became the American Legions 104th National Commander. Commander Troiola's theme as national commander is "V.E.T.S., Veterans, Education, Teamwork and Sponsor." Commander Troiola's initiative is the "Be the One" campaign designed to bring Veteran suicide awareness to the forefront of Veteran issues. The American Legion's new "Be The One" campaign aims to raise awareness about the veteran suicide rate and empower everyone to take the initiative to save the life of a veteran who is at risk.

There were 26 Resolutions passed at the 103rd National Convention; of them Montana had two out of 3 of its own resolutions pass. The resolutions were:

Resolution No. 6: Increase Cancer Screenings by the Department of Veterans Affairs Origin: Montana Submitted by: Convention Committee on Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation (As Amended)

WHEREAS, Early detection of cancer improves the likelihood of surviving it; and

WHEREAS, Virtually 50,000 Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) enrolled veterans are diagnosed with cancer each year; and

WHEREAS, If VA enrolled veterans were a state in the U.S. it would rank 10th in the nation for cancer diagnoses; and

WHEREAS, Eight cancers were the most frequent among veterans in 2010: prostate, lung, colorectal, melanoma, kidney, bladder, liver and intrahepatic bile duct; and

WHEREAS, All veterans have a 40 percent increased rate of breast cancer; and

WHEREAS, “Beating cancer starts with knowing you have it” and “71% of cancer deaths are caused by cancers not commonly screened for”; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That The American Legion urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to increase cancer screenings including novel screenings; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That The American Legion urge the Department of Veterans Affairs to add liquid biopsies for cancer screening to annual physicals for all veterans with a preference on those with Food and Drug Administration approval.

Resolution No. 4: Energy Independence Origin: Montana Submitted by: Convention Committee on National Security (As Amended)

WHEREAS, The United States has fossil fuel (coal and oil) energy sources capable of sustaining a growing economy for at least 200 years; and

WHEREAS, Status of energy independence was recently achieved; and

WHEREAS, Our national energy capability exceeded the combined capability of the Middle East and Russia combined; and

WHEREAS, National policies were established to protect the world climate against climate change; and

WHEREAS, The climate change concerns resulted in actions to modify our national energy independence; and

WHEREAS, The surrender of national energy independence has resulted in our energy needs for both civil and military purposes dependent upon foreign, often unfriendly, sources; and

WHEREAS, Energy resources are a key component of our economy which in turn is directly related to military capability; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 30, 31, September 1, 2022, That, The American Legion immediately contact the House and Senate Committees for National Defense, Energy, and Homeland

Security to advocate for renewal of efforts to attain and retain energy independence; and, be it finally

RESOLVED, That the National Executive Committee instruct the National Security Commission to call for immediate advocacy efforts at the department level seeking support from elected officials, in a manner similar to the previous efforts to encourage protection of our Flag.

There was one other resolution that came from Montana regarding the National Defense budget not being dependent on a federal Continuing Resolution when lawmakers cannot agree on a Federal budget. This resolution was tabled because of its similarity to a previous passed resolution.

Fall brings Fall District meetings and a National Department visit from the new National Commander. The first few weekends of District meetings went smoothly with the new start time and agenda, most meetings were wrapping up just prior to lunch and ran more smoothly and efficiently with the District business being completed prior to any guest speakers. The only snafu to our plans was District 4, when they had a COVID outbreak in Libby 2 days prior to the event and we had to improvise with an impromptu Zoom meeting. There were some technical issues, but once folks figured out the importance of turning their microphone on and off, it went just fine and could be an option in the future if gas and hotel prices continue to rise.

Commander Troiola's visit to Montana was a whirlwind but successful event. The Commander and his Aide arrived in Helena around 10:30 Thursday night and after a quick night's sleep we attended a POW/MIA Remembrance Event in Helena Friday morning. Commander Troiola gave a poignant speech about the day and its true meaning. Upon completion of the reading of the names of Montana's remaining POW/MIA brethren; the day continued with a stop at the State Capital and a visit with Governor Gianforte's Policy Director Glenn Oppel to discuss Montana Veteran specific issues. It was a lively, informative and effective discussion.

After a quick trip through the Montana Historical Society and the Nutter/Shore Trophy Room, it was off to the Veterans Hospital at Fort Harrison for a tour of the facility and a quick lunch with Veterans in the VA canteen. We wrapped up at the VA and then we headed to Three Forks, Montana where Post 93 and Commander Don Carlson hosted a tailgating event prior to Friday nights Class B football game against Whitehall. With around 35 Legion Caps in attendance the National Commander acted as the Honorary Captain and conducted the coin toss. The officiating crew for the game were all Veteran's and Legionnaires. Both the Whitehall and Three Forks fans, school administrators and players thought it was a big deal to have a distinguished guest in attendance; and made the event very memorable. We do need to work on the whole American Legion recognition thing though; one of the captains

asked me after the Commander departed the field if he was a General; I of course responded with a simple “No son, he had bigger dreams than that, he is an Admiral”.

Saturday morning, we took a trip to Dutton, Montana, and the Fall District 8 meeting. The District held a great meeting and the Commander enjoyed meeting the Legionnaires from that area. We stopped in Craig at Izzac’s for a wonderful dinner that night and then put the National Commander on a 6am flight to Kansas. Since the convention, the Commander has been on the road and still had an additional 53 days of travels before he returns to Maine for a well-deserved break. I would like to thank everyone who made the Commanders visit a success. He truly enjoyed the stop.

A quick trip to Indianapolis and Fall Conference was next on the agenda, where National pushed many of the same initiatives that Department has been attempting to bring forward; streamlined District meetings; using technology to enhance and replace unnecessary face to face meetings; and the need to innovate and find ways to bring the Iraq/Afghanistan War Veteran into the American Legion Family. I will end with a quote from the National Judge Advocate that resonated at Fall Conference because we have all heard it before; “We’ve done it this way for years.....”. It is never a proper response; it’s simply admitting you’ve done something wrong for years and it doesn’t make it better; in fact it calls into question even more things.”

God Speed and God Bless the American Legion.

CHAPLAIN

Chaya Semple

Continued serving as Post No. 2 Chaplain and as District 6 Chaplain – attended District 6 Fall Meeting at Post No. 1 in Butte on 9 October. Put on the white hat to give a department chaplain message on the need to notify headquarters of deceased members (and the many reasons why), that am available to support post chaplains, and the need to begin suicide prevention efforts upstream – long before there is a current of crisis Continued to serve as Montana City VFD Chaplain, as a member of Lewis and Clark Critical Incident Stress Management Team and as Character Development Instructor for Lewis and Clark Composite Squadron, Civil Air Patrol. Conducted one veteran interment service at the Montana State Veteran Cemetery.

Continued to make personal contact via phone, send condolence cards, get-well and thinking of you cards to known affected Department personnel and/or their families.

Continued to send chaplain support materials to new chaplains as requested – via email and USPS.

On September 16th was honored to serve as Chaplain for the POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony held at Memorial Park in Helena with National Commander Jim Troiola present.

On September 17th was privileged to participate in the National Chaplain Conference via Microsoft Teams. Continued participating monthly in the Lewis and Clark County Suicide Prevention Task Force meetings and supported the NAMI Walk in Helena at Memorial Park on September 20th.

Submitted two articles to the Legionnaire for publication.

SERVICE OFFICER

Candice Hering

I would like to thank you all for your service in the armed forces and for your membership in the American Legion! My name is Candy Hering and I am the new Department Service Officer for the American Legion Department of Montana. I served overseas in the Marine Corps from 2002 to 2007, and I have been a Veteran's Service Officer with the Montana Veteran's Affairs Division in the Great Falls field office for eight and a half years. I am very thankful for everything these two organizations have done for our veterans, and I thank you all for allowing me to represent you all and our great state!

Since Convention the biggest thing to happen was the signing of the largest VA benefit expansion ever, the PACT (Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxins) ACT of 2022. There is a comprehensive list of newly added presumptive conditions, service locations and dates, and healthcare eligibilities that can be found at the VA.GOV website. In short, here are a few of the highlights:

If you served in VIETNAM, THAILAND, LOAS, CAMBODIA, GUAM, AMERICAN SAMOA, or JOHNSON ATOLL (during specified dates listed on the website) you are now PRESUMED to be exposed to AGENT ORANGE and now qualify for the presumptive conditions associated with that toxin to now include HYPERTENSION and MONOCLONAL GAMMOPATHY OF UNDETERMINED SIGNIFICANCE. All the previous AO presumptive conditions remain.

If you participated in the cleanup of ENEWETAK ATOLL, or B-52 bombers carrying nuclear weapons near PALOMARES SPAIN and THULE AFB GREENLAND, you are presumed exposed to radiation.

If you served in the Gulf War (Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, United Arab Emirates, or the airspace above these locations) or Post 9/11 (AFGHANISTAN, DJBOUTI, EGYPT, JORDAN, LEBANON, SYRIA, UZBEKISTAN, YEMEN or the airspace above) and have any form of BRAIN CANCER, GASTROINTESTINAL CANCER, GLIOBLASTOMA, HEAD CANCER, KIDNEY CANCER, LYMPHATIC CANCER, LYMPHOMA, MELANOMA, NECK CANCER, PANCREATIC CANCER, REPRODUCTIVE CANCER OR RESPIRATORY CANCER, you are now in the presumptive category for service connection.

If you have served in the Gulf War or Post 9/11 and been diagnosed with ASTHMA (diagnosed after service), CHRONIC BRONCHITIS, COPD, CHRONIC RHINITIS, CHRONIC

SINUSITIS, CONSTRICTIVE BRONCHIOLITIS or OBLITERATIVE BRONCHITIS, EMPHYSEMA, GRANULOMATOUS DISEASE, INTERSTITIAL LUNG DISEASE, PLEURITIS, PULMONARY FIBROSIS or SARCOIDOSIS, your illness is now presumptive.

If you think you may be eligible, please contact the field office nearest you right away.

Belgrade: 406-551-7855, Billings: 406-248-8579, Butte: 406-533-0910, Great Falls: 406-452-2265, Havre: 406-265-4225, Helena: 406-495-2080, Kalispell: 406-755-3795, Miles City: 406-232-1203, and Missoula: 406-542-2501

Even if you have filed a claim or tried to enroll in VA healthcare before and were denied, the law has changed now, and you may be eligible.

I attended Department Convention and District meetings in Lewistown and Dutton. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible in the future.

PARLIAMENTARIAN

Josh Clement

Appointed as the new Department Parliamentarian, since taking on the role, I have worked with the Department Adjutant on the Fall Conference script to more closely follow Roberts Rules of Order to ensure proper decorum to the meeting.

FINANCE OFFICER

John Joyce

It has been another good year in the Finance Department. The changes made over the previous year have been good and we are getting a better handle on the budget. The Finance Committee has been more active with the budget than in the past and that has been for the better. We have been more fiscally responsible and have not spent money on some items as we have in the past. Because of the current market situation, it is going to take some time to figure out if what we are doing with Stockman Wealth Management is on the right track. We have lost some money but not to the extent that we were.

The consolidation of checking accounts has made it a lot easier for the Department Adjutant and I to reconcile the books. We have had fewer items to research and books have been balancing each month. We are still working on the "Endowment Funds" to ensure we are getting everything correct with them. There is one CD left at Intrepid Credit Union and it matures in November. Once it does, we will get those funds moved to Stockman Bank.

Erin is working with the Auditor on how to transfer funds from DA Davidson to Stockman Wealth Management in the quick books program and not make it look like we had a huge gain and a huge loss in the same transaction. It could make for challenges when we do our taxes.

As the American Legion – MT, we need to be really cognizant of who you are receiving emails from. I have received several spam/spoofing emails saying they are from the Commander, or the Past Commander, or the Department Adjutant saying they need me to help with direct deposit, go buy gift cards or.... I always look at the return email address before I go any farther and if I can't verify the email, I call and ask the person if they sent me an email or not. Please be careful.

Thanks again for the opportunity to be the Department Finance Officer. Each month, the Department Adjutant and I get together and reconcile the books.

JUDGE ADVOCATE

Tim Fox

Thank you all for selecting me to serve once again as your Department Judge Advocate. So far this year we have seen zero issue that have required my advice or input as everything seems to be running smooth. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if a need does arise.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

Dave Haulman

Report for Fall Convention

A total of \$10.00 was collected for fines and donated to the NEF at the summer convention.

Fines were for excessive/loud talking, failure to properly salute when addressing the Commander from the lectern and not stating American Legion Boys State instead of Boys State.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Jeff Holmes

Congratulations to all of the following winners within their respective divisions. I would also like to thank all of the posts for sponsoring these contests as part of their post objectives. Thank You!

2022 Winners!

High School Essay – 5 submitted

1 st	Ruby Waller @ Twin Bridges HS	Dan Brockman Post # 31
2 nd	Peter Harrington @ Hamilton Home School	Ravalli Post #47, Hamilton
3 rd	Rhett Wolery @ North Star High School	Liberty County Post #88

Junior High School Essay – 6 submitted

1 st	Hazel Sawfer @ Clinton Elementary	Clinton Post #83
2 nd	Haze Hardy @ Sheridan Middle/High School	Anderson-Simpson Post #89
3 rd	Ashley Carpenter @ East Valley Middle School	Lewis & Clark Post #2

Government Survey for Junior High 7th Grade – 3 submitted

1st	Kirsten Miller @ Dutton/Brady School	82%	Dutton Post #64
2nd	Averi Maddox @ Twin Bridges Middle School	60%	Dan Brockman Post #31
3rd	Saqqara Lapp @ Judith Gap Schools	58%	Judith Gap Post #70

Government Survey for Junior High 8th Grade – 4 submitted

1 st	Ashley Carpenter @ East Valley Middle School	100%	Lewis & Clark Post #2
2 nd	James Reedy @ Sheridan Junior High	92%	Anderson-Simpson Post #89
3 rd	Riese Sattoriva @ North Star Schools	70%	Liberty County Post #88

Government Survey for High School Seniors – 4 submitted

1st	Katherine Tucker @ Sheridan High School	90%	Anderson-Simpson Post #89
2nd	John Baringer @ Dutton/Brady High School	90%	Dutton Post #64
3rd	Ethan Wayland @ Twin Bridges High School	77%	Dan Brockman Post #31

Below are the upcoming deadlines for the following programs:

- 7 & 8 Grade Essay Contest must be postmarked by March 15, 2023.
- High School Essay Contest must be postmarked by March 15, 2023.
- Senior Survey must be postmarked by April 1, 2023.
- Junior High Survey must be postmarked by April 1, 2023.

Again, a huge thanks to Bud Redfield, Adjutant in Post #31 and Twin Bridges School Counselor and U.S. History Teacher for volunteering to update and add to our collection of survey tests. Thank you!

Keep up the work with our students and schools. What you do matters!

I work for you, so please let me know what I can do to make your job easier. Congrats to all the winners!

DISTRICT COMMANDERS**DISTRICT 1 - COMMANDER****Joe Yeoman**

I attended the Eastern District A American Legion Baseball Tournament in Billings.
I delivered our Post packets on one day trip around District 1.
The District 1 Fall meeting was in held in Hinsdale at Post #45 with 6 Posts present.
I am encouraging Viet Nam Vets to help younger Veterans through mentorship.
My District Goals are for a successful American Legion Boys State program; a highly attended District Oratorical contest and the continued education of our members.
I hope to deliver any packets from the district meeting to Post not in attendance soon.

DISTRICT 2 - COMMANDER

Jed Damson

Wow this has been a wild and crazy summer between personal vacation and setting up with all the nine posts in district 2 we are looking at a tremendous year with renewals increasing, programs taking affect and in addition to each Post stated goals, we are going to be working to achieve or surpass them. We have Posts participating in some of the programs that American Legion of Montana has put out. American Legion Boys State, American Legion Oratorical, are two of the big ones we are going to implement into each Post, and we are hoping to increase our Sons of the American Legion strength in hopefully all post in the District.

I attended a flag retirement program in Chinook which was very impressive and many flags of the United States of America and POW/MIA and Montana flags we're honored. American Legion Riders Havre has made many runs which I would love to attend but I don't have a motorcycle; but I support and applaud their efforts and fundraisers.

DISTRICT 3 - COMMANDER

Dusty Bailey

Memorial Day weekend I was the keynote speaker at the Post Program; over a 3 day I participated in 13 memorials throughout the area. In June, I led our Post in our annual flag day program. The Post had collected over 130 flags from the locals to be disposed of.

In July, I led the color guard into Marias Fair days parade in Shelby. And again, at the Lewis and Clark days parade in Cut Bank. Helped the Post organize a dinner for the biker ride in Sweet Grass. Led the color guard in Sunburst for town gala days. Again, led the parade for the high school home coming. Later had a September 11 program for locals. Started our bingo nights on Thursday and performed 10 military funerals in the area.

DISTRICT 4 - COMMANDER

Dave Bennett

As I traveled to the various posts in the district, I saw many good things going on. To name a few, car show, color guards, booths at community functions, co-operation between The Legion and other VSO's, scouting, shooting sports, children and youth banquet, parades etc.

On the other hand, I saw a lack of proper decorum. That is to say no missing man ceremony, no reading of the preamble, no swearing in of new members.

The swearing in is not just a welcome it is a pledge or an oath that a Legionnaire takes,

I noticed a lack of blue hats.

Most important of all a VERY lackadaisical approach to membership. The numbers in the weekly report show this quite clearly.

DISTRICT 5 - COMMANDER

Terry Wahl

Here is my report for the last 4 months-

Post 13 St. Regis- Participated in 4th of July Activities, Veteran Assistance, Flag Day.

Post 27 Missoula- District 5/Post Chaplain visited numerous veterans in the hospitals, sent out 11 letters of Condolence. Presented 4 Military Crosses to Post Chaplains. Post 27 rented out the Post Facility to numerous organizations, participated in the 9/11 Ceremony, and provided Color Guard for 4th of July Activities.

Post 68 Missoula- Red Cross Blood Drive, 9/11 Ceremony, Rose Park Cleanup and District 5 Raffle Sales.

Post 94 Stevensville- Hosted the Hospitality room at the Department Convention, Color Guard for 4th of July "Pignic" and Creamery Picnic for City of Stevensville, had annual Duck Race" event and fundraiser, Post Honor Guard for 9/11 Remembrance for the City of Stevensville. Started engagement with the local school district to see how the American Legion can help students. In dialog with Post 91 Corvallis, to try to support each other. Hosting an Eagle Scout Project - upgrading/expanding flag pole display in front of Post Bldg. ATV club "Rovers" conducted tow group rides. Conducted 14' Trailer and various Prizes all donated to the Post. Holds weekly Veterans breakfasts at a local restaurant.

Post 91 Corvallis- Flag Day Activities, Hosted the Annual 4th of July Parade, Legion Riders activities, has a Ham Radio Group, recently started a Fishing Group, had 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony. Worked with the schools on projects.

Post 125 Drummond- Worked with the local High School to raise funds for "Close-Up" trip. Donated \$ 2,500 to help make repairs and upgrades to the Post 125 Rodeo Grounds. Worked with the "Montana Hope Project" and donated \$3,500 to their program. Concluded our Annual Fundraiser Raffle, Provide 9/11 Honor Guard for the Parade in Phillipsburg. Sent 3 Boys & 2 Girls to American Legion Boys State & Girls State. One boy went to Washington, D.C. as the Montana Representative. Honor Guard for Kiwanis Rodeo & had a Float in the Parade. Participated in the "Martel Mud Racing for Suicide Prevention".

Post 124 Florence - Hosted a Memorial Day BBQ, participated in Flag Day, Provided a Color Guard for 4th of July Celebration, assisted needy Veterans with Lawn Maintenance, Housing Projects, Monetary Assistance, Rides, etc. Attended the Ceremony for a World War I

Veteran at St. Mary's Cemetery in Missoula. Attended the 671st Eng Det (Util) Deployment Ceremony in Missoula.

Post 135 Lolo- During the months of July-Sep 2022, Post 135 remained active in Lolo and the surrounding areas through Veterans' support, community service, fund raising and education programs. Published and distributed the "Smoke Signals" newsletter. Veterans' Relief Activities- wood chopping, cleaning, moving assistance and home accessibility projects. Eight "Buddy Checks", Funeral Support, Food Bank Support, Calendar fundraising, Planning for School Essay Contest and Planning for School Community Service award.

Lastly, As District Commander I visited Post 63, 91 and 94.

DISTRICT 6 - COMMANDER

Linda Cousineau

I started out representing District 6 at the Butte Western Zone Baseball Tournament and then attended the regional tournament in Belgrade.

I was a Montana delegate for the American Legion National Convention in Milwaukee.

As District 6 Commander, I put out a membership challenge to all the Posts within District 6.

Currently we are collecting District 6 Posts' scheduled activities for the next 3 months to distribute to all District 6 Posts and to all the other District Commanders to pass down to their members. This will allow us to share information to all Legion members about activities being offered by our posts in District 6.

We are also working on a schedule for visits to all Posts in the up-and-coming months.

We collected and organized information for the very successful District meeting run by our finance officer, Bill White due to lead officer's absences; I was out of state taking care of family issues and Vice Commander Kristian Richardson was absent due to medical appointments. Several Department members were absent due to AL National meeting requirements. Filling in for the Luncheon Guest Speaker was Western Zone Commander Dorothy Goodwin.

DISTRICT 7 - COMMANDER

Dan Smart

District 7 has had a very good and busy summer. As of this report the District stands at 56.82% of goal on membership. We have one post, Ennis Post #65, that is 100% on membership. Congrats to Commander Lee Sargent and his entire membership for making the commitment.

Fall meeting was held at Big timber Post #19 and was attended by 9 of the 11 posts.

There were many ideas shared by each Post Commander who were in attendance on things they had accomplished since the spring meeting in Three Forks Post #93. Spring 2023 meeting will be held at Manhattan Post #87.

I have attended half of the Post's meetings as of this report, with hopefully several more visits before the Fall Conference. Almost all the Posts had an extremely busy summer doing community projects, Legion activities, and being active with the start of the school year in the High schools and Elementary schools within their areas. I am pleased to say that all the Posts have something planned for Veterans Day, whether it is a community event or just a Legion event, and I look forward to their reports at the Spring meeting.

DISTRICT 8 - COMMANDER

Andy Rice

My start as district 8 commander kicked off with a trip to Choteau to assist with the American Legion Rodeo. An event that always draws a crowd, but one thing I would like to note in this report is that a membership table or booth for the Legion family would potentially be a boost to the membership for the Choteau post.

The fall district meeting was an auspicious occasion and was held in Dutton this year with post 64 hosting. We had the distinct pleasure to welcome National Commander Vincent J Troiola as our key note speaker during the lunch hour. His speech covered many aspects of the American Legion but his biggest subject, and I would say his passion, is the prevention of veteran suicide.

With this being early in my tenure as district commander there has been plenty of discussion about things to come. One thing I would like to note, as the district commander, I have been promoting a veteran stand down event. Post 102 in Geraldine has graciously accepted the task of hosting this event and will be held on November 12th, 2022. This event will offer an array of services for veterans and their families. My goal is after this initial event has taken place that another post within district 8 will be willing to take on the arduous task of hosting and putting in the groundwork for another stand down at their respected location. I believe by doing this it will bring many veterans to the event with the potential to up membership for the hosting post and posts in the surrounding area. This is also a potential boon for the SAL and the Auxiliary as well. The goal is to ever expand our membership and a big goal of mine is getting the younger veterans more involved. Hopefully each year a new post will be willing to accept the task of the stand down. I would like to see every post in the district host at least once. As I have stated this could be a boon to membership but also, I believe it could potentially light a fire for some of the posts that are just coasting along.

DISTRICT 9 - COMMANDER

Robert Miller

To use the line from my predecessor “so the adventure begins”, as a newly elected commander for the ninth district. At least I have the former commander’s number on speed dial if I have any questions. I have a total of 25 years in the American Legion. Started in Post #87 in Manhattan, in 2012 became a member of post 62 where I am the present Commander. In the spring of 2020 commander Bruce Luhrsen approached me on becoming his Vice Commander for the District, and I accepted the job. I attended the Department Convention the 16th thru the 19th of June where I was sworn in as the new district commander. I learned a lot at the convention, one of the best things at the convention was when the entire delegation sang Happy Birthday for my birthday.

After returning home I started working on distribution of the Post packets. I was able to hand deliver post packets which gave me a chance to meet with the Post Commanders or Adjutants and talk with them. One thing I have been working on is building the District Programs for the fall and spring meetings and making them computer based so that you just go in and change names and programs are ready to print, this will be something to pass between new District Commanders. I send out District 9 invites to Department and Post leadership by email 30 days before so if changes had to be made, we could make changes and still have time to react. My first District started a little shaky but went off without a hitch. One thing I’m trying to do is help the Post Adjutants to start using MyLegion to do their transmittals and consolidated Post reports. Made sure that if they had problems that I would come to their Post and help them. And we will continue to work membership.

DISTRICT 10 - COMMANDER

Irene Dickerson

Irene has volunteered to fill the vacancy left by Dale Hewitt, following his passing in September. Prior to her start all District 10 packets were delivered to District 10 Posts with the assistance of the District Adjutant Doug Byron and the Zone Commander Ken Simon. All awards that were earned by the District were presented in a timely manner to the recipients. There were some issues with Posts using the incorrect mailing address but that issue was quickly cleared up and they began processing transmittals and getting information resent.

The District had a number of volunteers step up to help get it back up and running and we all look forward to working with the Posts to revitalize the area.

DISTRICT 11 - COMMANDER

Scott Miller

I want to begin with my report by going back to the District 11 Spring meeting with it being held in Laurel and Post 123 hosting and me being the District Commander for the meeting

as the District Vice Commander at the time. The District members elected Ray Southworth from Post 123 as the District Vice Commander. It was a good meeting with many members from several post in attendance along with the Department Commander and other Department Officers.

I attended The American Legion Boys State program as a counselor and it was held at Fort Harrison for the first time, and we began with 52 High School Juniors. I spent hours on zoom calls with parents and other Legionaries as an American Legion Boys State Committee person, and now the lead counselor for the program. It was very rewarding program for both the Legionaries and the young men that attended.

I was not able to attend the Department of Montana American Legion Convention in Missoula this year because of the devastating floods we had in Carbon County. Due to me being a County Commissioner I had to remain in the county and attend to the citizens that were devastated by this flood with the loss of homes and businesses.

In August I attended the American Legion National Convention in Milwaukee with the District Adjutant and we both attended two separate sub-committees for the Department. I was selected to be on the National Guard and Reserve Sub-Committee and Christine was selected to be on the Children and Youth Sub-Committee.

In September, Roberts Montana Volunteers have begun a petition to rename several Montana Highways throughout Carbon County as the "Veterans Memorial Loop", so I have been helping them get this completed through MDOT. We have also now begun a program with five towns in Carbon County putting up Crosses and Dog Tags for Veterans in each town along these highways.

I have attended Post meetings for Post 71, Post 17, Post 4 and Post 123 throughout District 11 and conducted my post evaluation with great results.

I have attended Fall District meetings across the Department with District 9, 7, 1, 10, 6, 5, and 2 over the month of September and October.

I have been going to High Schools across the state recruiting for American Legion Boys State and so far, I have been to 7 schools so hopefully this will bring more young men to our program and help our program overall.

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE CHAIRS

AMERICANISM

Lonnie Johnson

No report submitted.

BASEBALL

Ron Edwards

Our 2022 season almost felt “normal”. Some Covid travel restrictions remained in place, so the Canadian border continued to be an obstacle. Our Canadian AA teams agreed to play all of their conference games on the road in the States. Our class A teams did not travel across the border for conference games. They did travel to the States for our North and West District tournaments. Montana team registration increased from 55 in 2021 to 65 in 2022; classes AA (9 teams), A (30 teams), B (24 teams) and C (2 teams). We welcomed the Sidney Patriots back as a class A team. Plentywood may try again to start a new legion baseball program in 2023.

2022 MONTANA/ALBERTA AMERICAN LEGION TEAMS

CLASS AA

Billings Royals
Billings Scarlets
Bozeman Bucks
Great Falls Chargers
Helena Senators
Kalispell Lakers
Lethbridge Elks
Medicine Hat Moose Monarchs
Missoula Mavericks

CLASS A

Anaconda A's
Belgrade Bandits
Billings Blue Jays
Billings Cardinals
Bitterroot Bucs
Bitterroot Red Sox
Bozeman Bucks A
Butte Miners A
Calgary Strive
Cranbrook Bandits
Dillon Cubs
Gallatin Valley Outlaws

CLASS A

Glacier Twins A
Glasgow Reds
Glendive Blue Devils
Great Falls Chargers A
Havre Northstars
Helena Reps
Kalispell Lakers A
Laurel Dodgers
Lethbridge Miners
Lewistown Redbirds
Libby Loggers
Medicine Hat Knights
Miles City Mavericks
Mission Valley Mariners A
Missoula Mavericks A
Sidney Patriots
Tri-County Cardinals
Vauxhall Spurs

CLASS B

Anaconda A's B
Belgrade Bandits B
Billings Post 4 Blue
Billings Post 4 Red

CLASS B

Bitterroot Bucs B
Bitterroot Red Sox B
Bozeman Bucks B
Butte Muckers B
Clark Fork Valley Riverdogs
Dillon Cubs B
Gallatin Valley Posse
Glasgow Reds B
Glendive Blue Devils B
Great Falls Chargers B
Havre Northstars B
Helena Independents
Kalispell Lakers B
Kootenai Valley Rangers
Lewistown Redbirds B
Miles City Colts
Mission Valley Mariners B
Missoula Mavericks B
Tri-County Cardinals B
Wolf Point Yellow Jackets

CLASS B/C

Bozeman Bucks C
Kalispell Lakers C



2022 CLASS A & AA TOURNAMENTS

The Class A State Tournament was hosted by the Belgrade Bandits. The **BUTTE MINERS** defeated the Billings Cardinals 12-2 to win their first state title since 1953. They went on to represent Montana at the Northwest Class A Regional Tournament (NWCART) in Vernal Utah. They went on to defeat Minico Idaho 4-0 in the Championship game.



The Class AA Tournament was hosted by the Billings Scarlets at Dehler Park in Billings. We had the same matchup in the championship game as we did in 2021 with Helena Senators playing the Billings Royals.

The **BILLINGS ROYALS** won 4-3 to win its first AA state championship since 2003, and its fourth title overall. Helena went on to play in the Championship game at the Region 7 tournament in Gillette, Wyoming. They finished second to the eventual World Series winner, the Idaho Falls Bandits.



2022 District & State Tournament Results

Tournament	Host	Champion	Runner-up
North A District	Havre	Lewistown Redbirds [8]	Havre North Stars [6]
South A District	Butte	Butte Miners [12]	Belgrade Bandits [0]
East A District	Billings Blue Jays	Laurel Dodgers [7]	Billings Cardinals [6]
West A District	Kalispell	Bitterroot Red Sox [13]	Glacier Twins [1]
State A	Belgrade Bandits	Butte Miners [12]	Billings Cardinals [2]
State AA	Billings Scarlets	Billings Royals [4]	Helena Senators [3]

2022 Scholarship and Coach of the Year Winners

Congrats to our Class A our scholarship winners **Xavier Fisher** from the Mission Valley Mariners, and AA scholarship winner **Trysten Mooney** from the Helena Senators.

And to our coaches of the year **Jim LeProwse** from the Butte Miners; and co-coaches of the year for AA **Jon Burnett** from the Helena Senators, **David Swecker** from the Billings Royals, and **Tony Forster** from the Great Falls Chargers.



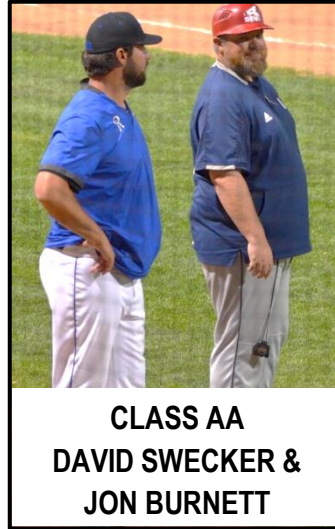
**CLASS A
XAVIER FISHER**



**CLASS AA
TRYSTEN MOONEY**



CLASS A
JIM LEPROWSE



CLASS AA
DAVID SWECKER &
JON BURNETT



CLASS AA
TONY FORSTER

Thanks to Carl Hennell our AA Chairman and District Chairmen Todd Knouse, Dave Bennett and Pete Moe. I also want to thank **Commander Lowell Long** and **Vice Commander Lonnie Johnson** for their support for our American Legion Baseball program. We had a great season. We look forward to another successful season in 2023.

For more baseball news and information please visit www.montanalegionbaseball.org.

SCOUTS BSA

Roger Hancock

Legionnaires, the Methodist Church is leaving Scouting. They will no longer be a Charter Organization Representative (COR). This presents opportunities for your Post or Squadrons to step-in and sponsor a Pack, Troop, Crew, Team, or Post. Please check with your local Scouter to see if that opportunity exists.

This is also the time to start having your scouts thinking about applying for The American Legion of Montana Eagle Scout of the Year (ESOY) award. Qualifications to apply are simple: 1) is an American Legion Post, Sons of The American Legion Squadron, or American Legion Auxiliary Unit sponsoring the scouting unit? 2) Are they a family member of an American Legion, Auxiliary, Sons active member? They only have to qualify under either 1 or 2 to submit an ESOY award form to Department. Please pass this information along to your legionnaires at your meeting and in a newsletter.

Last year I only received one Scouting Post award application form. Please review what your Post and members are doing with scouting. You don't have to sponsor a scouting unit to qualify for an award. This is especially true for small Posts.

AMERICAN LEGION BOYS STATE

Josh Clement

Account	Expense	Income	Explanation
Plaques	\$ 66.00		This price goes high and low based on the year and number of gavels needed.
Store	\$ 459.05	\$ 512.00	Misc food items for the kids
Office Supplies	\$ 125.97		ink poster board and nametags
Counselor Polos	\$ 520.00		This year we did not pay a counselor stipen
Delegate Tshirts	\$ 1,499.90		We do not charge the delegates for tshirts to attend the program
Sleeping Quarter	\$ 4,241.00		We only needed a total of 63 paying delegates to break even on housing classrooms
Classrooms	\$ 1,170.00		
Meals	\$ 13,505.00		
Insurance	\$ 875.00		This is half of what we normally paid
Donations/fines		\$ 1,541.00	
Registration		\$ 19,650.00	Delegate fees
Legion Program Support		\$ 3,766.49	Money budgeted to the program minus Sec of State registration and cost of stationary, checks and background checks
Storage	\$ 582.00		this fee has increased
	\$ 23,043.92	\$ 25,469.49	

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Jed Damson

At this time, we have not had any requests for funds come before us. We are still working on setting the criteria for future disbursements so there is a uniform guide moving forward. This will allow us to help more veteran families.

CONSTITUTION & INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Jared Flammond

No Report Submitted.

CONVENTION 2022

Roger Hancock

Lessons Learned

1. Registration fees need to increase by \$5. Reason: Hotel costs have gone up and we have to adjust.
2. Registration on convention days need to increase another \$5. Reason: Takes member away from participating in meetings to oblige late registrations.
3. Have price list for all (TAL, ALA, SAL, Riders, etc.) so they know the cost if they request the items (projectors, monitors, etc.). Reason: Convention host is not unlimited in funding the convention. They need to make some monies, especially any donated funds which must go to programs.
4. Registration form need to be clear and specific. Reason: Some participants still do not understand that Past Dept Cmdr. BK, Incoming Pres Lunch, and Past Pres Lunch are closed meals and are turned away with no refund.
5. Registration forms need to contain e-mail address of person registering and number of days for response from host post upon receipt. Reason: Cheaper and faster to verify with people what they requested and so people registering when they should receive a response. (Could do this by phone) Had one couple's registration form and check disappear into the USPS void. We lost money on meals, and they lost meals.
6. Registration form needs to state two people max, if more people use multiple forms. Reason: Had forms with 3 or more people and meals did not match number. I had to call to clarify who was going to what meals since we were putting meal tickets on name tags.
7. Keep 3 ringed binders with copies of registration forms and checks. Reason: A few people started to argue that they had purchased additional meals and copies put a quick stop to their arguments.
8. Make it clear to hotel and Legion Family that hotel room rates are only good to certain dates. Legion Family also needs to understand that if they request certain bed accommodation that they may be out of Kings and only Queens are left. Hotel staff don't always explain the reason for no rooms available.
9. Double check spreadsheet registration list with name tags.
10. If using name tags for meal tickets use better colors so letters can be seen in box. Recommend dark colors with white lettering.
11. Have Registration in a controlled area with limited access. We were able to lock the room and leave name tags, registration list, and computer for peace of mind.
12. Have one entrance for meals with people checking meal tickets to ensure no one cheats. Also have any bars in the room with the meals.
13. Personal contact (email or phone) when registration received and entered. Found multiple mistakes on meals and math. We did collect about \$100 from math errors and saved a few people of signing up for meals that were closed to public.

14. Get all the donations you can, it will save you big time in profits.
15. Start asking businesses for sales/donations 1 year in advance. Most businesses plan for limited funds 1 year prior to their business year.

CONVENTION 2023

Department Hosted

Convention 2023 will be held in Lewistown, MT at the Yogo Inn June 22-25. We are working on a number of new ideas to incorporate the American Legion Family as a whole. There will be a golf scramble and a Legion Riders Poker Run Saturday afternoon, cost per person to enter will be \$40. We are looking for volunteers that can help man a registration table and merchandise sales during the Convention and we are still looking for a few people to help us out with planning, if you can follow direction and remain organized, we would love to have you.

CONVENTION 2024

Joe Yeoman

Lodging and operation have been discussed with Glasgow Chamber of commerce and the Cottonwood Inn. A proposed contracted has been made which will be brought to Missoula for discussion. We want to encourage American Legion Members to come Visit an area of Montana that is as beautiful as the Mountains. With a lake of a shoreline of 1800 miles which is longer than California's We need members knowledge!

CONVENTION 2025

Jim Grosset

We are excited to host the 2025 Department Convention, after 20 years. Those that were here in 2005 will remember a great Convention. We expect to surpass that one.

The Convention will take place from June 29th to July the 3rd. We will hold it at the Westin Calgary Downtown. There is plenty to do in downtown Calgary and many good eating and shopping places.

We have talked with the Calgary Stampede Committee, and they have lots of things for us. The Calgary Military Museum will be of interest to all, and we hope to have an event there. The #1 Royal Canadian Legion is just a few blocks from the Hotel.

For those that will be staying the extra day, we will have an entry in the Calgary Stampede Parade. The night before the Parade is "Sneak a Peek" at the Calgary Stampede, and that will be a lot of fun.

We hope that you will have your passport read for a fantastic Convention, see you in 2025

DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE COORDINATOR

Chaya Semple

Our members affected by the June flooding have been working hard to recover. A lot of clean-ups! Stillwater Post was fortunately built to withstand “minor” flooding; however, clean-up was arduous as mud was left behind when the waters receded. Four of five Fromberg Post members temporarily displaced are now back in their homes with the fifth staying with a friend while he undergoes heavy cancer treatment.

Gardiner Post member, Ramon Perez, who lost his family’s home (in a multi-family dwelling) to the Yellowstone River, is rebuilding his family’s new “home” in Gardiner. Ramon’s, thank you letter to Post No. 2 (the post took up a collection to help) reads, “Thank you for your generosity and thoughtfulness during our time of difficulty. As we work on settling into our new normal, I look back and think of the support we received and just how much encouragement it provided my family and me.

Losing our home was difficult to say the least. We were at a loss for where to start after the disaster. Your assistance helped provide us with the stability to focus on rebuilding, and the comfort of knowing that this community stands together in times of need.

I am proud and thankful to be part of an organization whose members would come together to help one of their own the way you all did for me. I do not take this assistance for granted. I will always remember that you thought of us and then acted to help when we were in need.”

Please, step up, and help our members and posts similarly displaced by Hurricane Ian. The National Emergency Fund needs your support to be able to fill grant requests from current Legion members and Sons of The American Legion members. Ramon was out of state, on vacation, staying with family, when the Yellowstone flood disaster occurred and was not eligible for an NEF grant as his immediate housing needs were met. Thankfully, members in this department stepped up to let him know we cared as all they had were 5 days of clothes for a family of four.

Fire Season was relatively mild this year – smoke did not begin to fill the air until mid-August and then was mostly gone from much of the state by mid-September, when it was dispersed by much-needed rains in addition to upper-level atmospheric winds no longer transporting smoke into Montana from other states.

October is National Earthquake Preparedness Month. There is still time for posts to have earthquake drills or spread the word throughout their membership. To register, go to The Great Shakeout website: <https://www.shakeout.org/montana/>
And, it can be added to Consolidated Post Reports!

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

Jeff Nelson

I have travelled to the National Convention In Milwaukee this past August and represented our Department as a delegate and attended a National Security Commission meeting. Nothing was brought up in the subcommittee meeting that I sat in on, so there were no resolutions brought forward that needed to be discussed or reviewed.

After returning to Montana, National Commander Jim Troiola visited Montana and I was able to spend some time with him. The commander was involved in the POW-MIA ceremony in Helena, visited the state capitol, our American Legion Museum next door, Fort Harrison VA health care facility, Attended a high school football game in Three Forks where he flipped the coin to begin the game. The Three Forks Legion post provided an excellent reception at the game and the audience appreciated the visit from the National Commander. The next day we attended a district meeting in Dutton and the commander gave remarks about his platform for the coming year. The next morning, I drove the Commander to the airport and thanked him for coming to Montana. Hopefully he will go back and talk about some of the fond moments experienced here.

I will also be attending the Saskatchewan provincial convention representing Montana along with Commander Lowell Long and Past Commander Glen Sharbono.

FINANCE CHAIRMAN

Demorise Allen

Convention was quite interesting, with much discussion from one end of the budget to the other. The 2023 budget was approved by the finance committee. A few lines do need to be finalized in the next few weeks. Now needs to be passed by the DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

A zoom meeting was arranged for July 8th at 10:00 a.m. I did not get connected as we were at the Browning Pow Wow and Glacier Park. Topic was mostly making sure the budget was in line.

Then there was a zoom meeting held Wednesday 13th July at 7:00 p.m. After much discussion Joe Yoeman moved to transfer all insurance, bank cards, and money accounts to The Stockman Bank. Richard Klose(sitting in for Scott Miller) 2nd, motion passed.

Another special meeting was held in Helena. John Joyce, Duane Cunningham, Erin Carpenter, Scott Miller and Ken Simon were in attendance. Much discussion was had about employee wages/ contracts/ health insurance, office expenses (furniture, computers,) and vehicles. Duane and Erin were given freedom to move forward. Duane has done a lot of investigation

about group health plans. He has solicited and received from our Finance Committee to move forward with the purchasing of a healthcare plan for our employees based on the quotes and after speaking with the Finance Committee we have elected to go with the MT Health Coop Plan with the VSP standard plan and the Delta Dental Premium additions.

One of our last pieces of business was to approve the Call-In list for Fall Conference-approved!

HIGHWAY FATALITY MARKER

Michael Emmett

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Initially, as the FM program representative from Post 119 in Yellowstone County, I was approached by Jim Kelly to see whether I would be interested in being considered for his position as he was retiring from it. I received a confirmation of appointment on 27 June of this year.

Although I would have liked to personally introduce myself at the Fall Conference, prior commitments prevent me from doing so.

I have spent the time since my appointment pouring over Jim's extensive information regarding the program and am still attempting to absorb much of the data.

My other priority has been to reach out to the American Legion posts across Montana. I have attempted to contact as many post commanders/fatality marker representatives as possible in the time since my appointment.

I can only say that I still have much to learn and am humbled at attempting to fill the shoes of such an extraordinary man as Jim Kelly.

CORRESPONDENCE PLUSSES AND MINUSES

Since assuming the chair, I have had limited success in positive contacts with the posts across Montana. To date, only 24 posts have responded to my emails. A 25th post responded that they do not have a program in place. Although I have sent out several sets of email requests over the past months, the results are somewhat disappointing as I have several requests for fatality markers without a representative from those particular areas

The positive feedback that I have received has been uplifting. Several of the posts have demonstrated very positive successes. Along with that, there has been an out-pouring of generosity, sharing materials to those who are short or out of supply. With great individuals, such as these, the program will continue to flourish.

A final point about correspondence. I am continuing to follow Jim Kelly's lead by alerting all posts on a bi-weekly basis (1st and 15th of the month) of fatalities occurring in Montana. This has been received well.

HELP WANTED!

I would have personally liked to reach out at this conference to appeal to all posts to create a fatality marker program. I will be attending the department meeting in Fromberg, Montana, and will be pushing in District 11. If the other 10 districts will commit to do the same, maybe the program can expand as needed.

OTHER GOALS

1. I need to reach out to various agencies, such as the MHP, DOT, etc., for their assistance.
2. Newspaper coverage – in the end, the best free advertising is showing what you've got. I need to do so, and so do the other posts.
3. Co-ordination of resources – let other posts in your area know if you have a treasure trove of posts, crosses, etc.
4. Clean up the markers. I see many markers across the state, while I travel, that need to either get cleaned up or denuded of flowers and other inappropriate devices that are attached to fatality markers. Some just need a shot of fresh paint, others, a lot more. Markers that are left unattended are an eyesore and detract from the program. Sometimes a little sensitivity is necessary, just use common sense.
5. Communicate, communicate, communicate! I have bared my soul to all members by leaving my email, cell phone, and private phone numbers. No excuse to not contact me with a question or a suggestion.
6. A better, more data-driven report next Fall. Not an excuse, but I fell into this in June, and don't have as complete a data flow as I would like.

STATS (as reported)

New crosses erected: 81

Crosses replaced: 96

Crosses cleaned: 89+

The following posts reported:

Post 13

Post 14

Post 15

Post 16

Post 20

Post 23

Post 30

Post 52

Post 62

Post 108

Post 112

Post 119

A big thank you to Jim, Greg, and Monte for all their help in getting me on track!

INSURANCE DIRECTOR

Duane Cunningham

Legion Insurance Trust or “Legion Care” recently lost one of its biggest supporters and a true friend of the American Legion when Howard Bender the program manager passed away unexpectedly a few short weeks before National Convention. His loss continues to be felt throughout the program. Rest in Peace Howard.

The interim Program Manager is Christina Garibay and we have not gotten much information or guidance regarding LIT from her as this is an additional duty. Because of this I have very little to report on; we have received no new disbursements since the last report in June; our next anticipated disbursements will be in April 2023.

We continue to show a decline in policy holders; therefore, we will see a decline in revenue from the insurance programs. The free Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance called Legion Care; is insurance for all Legionnaires. SAL and Auxiliary members are also eligible for the AD & D free insurance.

We everyone needs to be registered for the benefit. Register by going to thelit.com/legioncare2. or you can call 800-235-6943. The Legion Care program will pay you \$1000.00 for a covered accident or, if the accidental loss occurs when on official Legion Family business, Legion Care will cover you for \$5000.00 of AD & D coverage.

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 free products available to them.

LEGION RIDERS

Gil Floyd

In the last year the riders have had multiple fund raisers across the state along with community events to bring awareness to what the riders do for the American Legion. The riders had a state meeting last January and planned one for this next January.

LEGISLATIVE

Roger Hagan

As we close in on the upcoming November election, please engage your local, state and federal candidates to let them know and understand our veteran needs and how your American Legion plays a great part in securing those needs. This report will address our Legion efforts directed toward the 2023 State Legislative Session. Additionally, I will report some activities of our Legislative Liaisons and finally, I will share with you information concerning our Congressional and Governor Liaison duties and the need for another liaison for the newly formed Congressional District #1 (Western district).

The Montana 68th Legislative Session will convene Monday, January 8th, 2023. It is imperative that I repeat my June Convention announcement advising our Department membership that this will be the last session I will represent the American Legion as their lobbyist. I will remain as the Legislative Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman of the National Legislative Commission, with the approval of the current Department Commander and future Commanders who may ask me to serve. Again, it has been my pleasure to represent our membership at Helena for many years and I appreciate the opportunity to do so one last time.

The priority legislative effort for this session will be seeking a state income tax exemption for military pensions. This has been our primary legislative effort for at least 8 sessions (16 years). We have come close a couple of times and hope we can put the ball over the goal line this time. It is important to note when you are talking to your State Representative and Senator that this is not a bill to 'thank us for our service', this is an economic development bill designed to entice military retirees to come to Montana, start a 2nd career or a new business and help solve our employment needs.

Our second effort is to authorize the update of the 2006 Montana Veterans Long Term Health Care Study. The 2006 study was very valuable in many ways, including providing great factual justification for the third veteran's home. This effort will include funding for the study, expanding the study to include projected veteran cemetery needs, and establishing a recurring study every 10 years following the U.S. Census. The data gathered will be used for many veteran initiatives during the next decade.

As usual, we will be engaged with several Department of Military Affairs and Montana Veteran Affairs Division efforts, primarily focused on funding for the upcoming biennium. We ask

that all Montana Legionnaires get with their legislators and let them know you want them to support our veteran and military efforts.

Last month, during our National Commander Troiola's visit, we had the opportunity to meet with Glenn Oppel, Policy Director for Governor Gianforte. Bill White, our Governor Liaison did an excellent job of coordinating the meeting and Commander Troiola remarked that he thought Montana may be the only state with a Department position of Governor Liaison. That was a great compliment, and we had a very productive meeting.

Another of our Liaison's made headlines with our National Legislative Team and I want to personally thank him for his outstanding work. Here is the story:

National Legislative Division Weekly, September 30, 2022, recognizes **Gary White, Montana**

LEGIONNAIRE OF THE WEEK: In an effort to recognize the weekly accomplishments of our Legionnaires, we will spotlight an individual every week. These individuals demonstrate exceptional grassroots activism by meeting with/contacting their Congressional Representative/Senator to advocate for veterans. Efforts like these truly make a difference and give veterans a voice in Congress.

This week, we are excited to recognize **Gary White from the Department of Montana** for meeting with the staff at Sen. Daines' (R-MT) office in Helena. Mr. White discussed the American Legion's Legislative Agenda and specifically mentioned H.R. 6411 – the STRONG Veterans Act. Thank you, Mr. White!

If you have made a grassroots effort and would like to be considered for next week's "Legionnaire of the Week," please fill out the Congressional Contact Report Form [here](#). You can also email me at kisaacson@legion.org.

So, as I indicated in the beginning of my report, we are looking for candidates who are interested in serving as our Congressional Liaison to the new Western District. While we don't know who that Representative will be until after the November 8th Election, we need to plan for filling that position now. So, if you have a relationship with any of the 3 candidates (Zinke, Tranel, Lamb) and are interested in applying for the Legion Legislative Liaison position please read the information below. Then, if you want to be considered, go to the following link and complete the application for our Department Commander to consider: www.votervoice.net/AmericanLegion/Surveys/7867/Respond

For nearly a half-century, American Legion members have served on the organization's National Legislative Council. The council is a 535-member group designated to serve as direct liaisons to every member of the U.S. Congress.

With the midterm elections a month away, The American Legion is beginning the process of rebuilding its National Legislative Council for the 118th Congress. Interested candidates may submit their applications for their departments' consideration. Legionnaires are encouraged to submit their applications before the Nov. 8 election.

Approved in Resolution 45 by the National Executive Committee in 1975, the council's aim is to "propagate an interest in a furtherance of the legislative goals of The American Legion and to serve as a medium for disseminating information and developing an understanding with our elected representatives."

Members of the Legislative Council are relied on to reinforce The American Legion's overall legislative efforts, particularly at times when immediate and personal contact with lawmakers is necessary – typically referred to as "grassroots contact."

They routinely email, write, and/or call lawmakers and their staff regarding veterans legislation. Members should strive to visit the lawmaker's local office at least once per month to discuss issues that will directly impact The American Legion's legislative goals.

Members work to:

- Promote an interest in and a furtherance of The American Legion's legislative goals.
- Serve as a liaison for disseminating information to elected lawmakers and staff.
- Develop and maintain strong working relationships with elected lawmakers and staff.
- Disseminate information on proposed and adopted veterans legislation to posts and members of the Legion within the congressional district.

Position requirements include:

- Current Legionnaire willing to work in concert with The American Legion to achieve its legislative goals.
- Experience working with public relations and/or elected officials is a plus.
- Excellent verbal and written communications skills are necessary.
- Comfortable speaking and making presentations to larger groups.
- Ability to use social media.
- Ability to represent The American Legion and veterans to various groups and organizations.
- Ownership of an email account and internet access is required.
- Personal relationship with the member of Congress to whom they are assigned, senior staffers in their office, or willingness and ability to establish relationships with them.

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

MEMBERSHIP

Lonnie Johnson

No report submitted.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Ken Simon

Last year I discussed several world events that were of concern in regard to National Security and to date at least two of those are still in the forefront. It appears that the Taiwan situation is still one that bears watching, however the Chinese have not really pushed any more than they already had over the past year! And the other event worth watching and that the United States as well as the NATO countries are watching is the Ukrainian and Russian conflict ongoing in the Ukraine!

One new event that really has been present for quite some time is the North Korean regimes leader who has had his military firing missiles either into the waters between Japan and South Korea or into the sea on the eastern side of Japan! This was cause for concern to shipping and any vessel that happened to be in the area when the missiles impacted into the sea! The North Korean leader has indicated that these missile launches are in connection with the American and South Korean joint military exercises being conducted.

I will briefly discuss the Ukrainian / Russian war and what the NATO countries and other Western Nations are doing. As the conflict grew and both sides traded ground, the U.S. and the rest of the NATO countries began to provide military hardware as requested by the Ukrainian government and armed forces. This assistance has helped to tip the balance somewhat to the Ukrainian armed forces and they have retaken ground that Russian forces held after the invasion. Due to the Ukrainian militaries resolve and ability to overcome some of the obstacles, they have defeated a superior force and forced them to retreat leaving military equipment and soldiers behind. In some cases, Russian soldiers surrendered not only themselves but their arms, ammunition, and equipment. This has not come without a cost to the Ukraine in the loss of soldiers and equipment but still their determination and

resolve have overcome those shortfalls. In all of this, the Russian military has committed atrocities against the civilian population in the Ukraine as has the Russian use of missiles and artillery being launched into civilian sections of towns and villages. What the outcome of this war will be is anybody's guess although one thing is certain. The Russian military did NOT roll in and over the Ukrainian military as Putin had planned or thought they would! If the Ukrainian military pulls off a defeat of the Russian army, it will be the biggest loss that Russia has ever suffered! Only time will tell.

When we think about National Security, we need to make sure that we look at what events, trends, or threats could be of dire consequence to our nation if left unchecked. I believe that the ongoing situation on our Nations Southern Border is a threat to our National Security because of the fact that so many illegal immigrants are crossing in so many different locations, that our Border Patrol is unable to cover and apprehend all of them. Bare in mind that there is a Law concerning foreign nationals who want to enter our country. They first must present themselves at a Marked and Manned Border Crossing! Once there they are screened for identification, country of origin, and why they want to enter. I know that I discussed this in last year's National Security Report, however I felt it needed to be brought up due to the number of illegals that have entered since then! Of the thousands that have entered, we as a nation have absolutely no idea who they are, where they came from, and what their true intent is because they crossed illegally into the United States! Think about the consequences that we as a nation could suffer because of the Open Border concept that has been allowed to go on. As a result of the types of people that very well could be here now, we could have something impact our country from within than what occurred on 9/11! One of the really glaring consequences that has reared its head is the homelessness that is occurring across our country and there seems to be no end in sight to it. What about the strain on our law enforcement, community infrastructure, Emergency services, hospitals, clinics, and schools. Who pays for the welfare of the illegal immigrants? What impact will that have on taxes in the communities who have all these homeless folks? While we are a Nation of immigrants, the vast majority of them came here legally and assimilated into and became productive members of society!

One other glaring situation we are facing is the rising cost of living, which includes food, clothing, housing, fuel, rent, mortgages, automobiles, transportation, and other essential services. Our government is concentrating on internal problems and world situations instead of the citizens of our country. What was costing less more than two years ago now cost double and is still rising which in turn creates stress. That stress is boiling over in the form of crime, which is on the rise in all of our major cities across this country. Violence is causing the fabric of our society to begin a downward spiral. People no longer trust their neighbors, city, county, or national government to take care of them. Drugs are running rampant all across the country and is being brought in and distributed mainly from the unsecure southern border. And to top it all off, we are in a recession, and no one seems to know when it will end. More stress! All of this is part of National Security.

One thing that is disturbing is how many of our military service members are getting out which in turn is dropping the number of soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and coast guard personnel left on Active Duty. And this is not only the Active side of the house, but the National Guard and Reserve as well. From: The Heritage Foundation, Heritage Foundation President Kay C. James Annual Index downgrades the Air Force to “weak,” rates Space Force as “weak,” Navy trending in the wrong direction, though improvements have been made by the Marine Corps and Army. According to a release from The Heritage Foundation’s Center for National Defense, the 2022 Index of U.S. Military Strength on Wednesday in conjunction with a keynote address from U.S. Rep. Mike Rogers, ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee. The report exposes the state of the U.S. military and its level of ability to defend American interests. The 2022 Index comes at a critical time as the U.S. military looks toward lean years of funding under the current administration and rising challenges to U.S. military readiness. I read an article recently that discussed the recruiting of young men and women for the Armed Forces and what I read was quite alarming. In researching further, I found also found this in an article from the Heritage Foundation. The military depends on a constant flow of volunteers every year. According to 2017 Pentagon data, 71 per cent of young Americans between 17 and 24 are ineligible to serve in the United States military. Put another way: Over 24 million of the 34 million people of that age group cannot join the armed forces - - even if they wanted to. This is an alarming situation that threatens the country’s fundamental national security. If only 29 per cent of the nation’s young adults are qualified to serve, and if the trend continues, it is inevitable that the U.S. military will suffer from a lack of manpower. A manpower shortage in the United States Armed Forces directly compromises National Security. More recently I read an article that indicated only 25 per cent of the young adults between 17 and 24 are eligible to serve. I checked a site from the Selective Service and found this information: Vietnam War from Aug 1964 to Feb 1973 there were 1,857,304 inductees into the military. Between 1960 and 1968 the number of inductees fluctuated from over 325,000 in 1960 down to around 162,746. In 1968 when I entered military service there were 296,406, compared to only 646 in 1973, when the last man was inducted under Selective Service!

The last aspect I want to mention is very important and that is the Defense Budget. Looking at what is going on with the Ukrainian situation, the present Administration is sending billions of dollars of American Military hardware to support their war effort. Much of what is being provided is resulting in the reduction of military supplies that our nations Armed Forces would need to provide and replenish the needs as a result of combat losses! That includes ammunition for the artillery and missile units, which may take longer to restock due to the lag in being able to obtain components from a foreign supplier and then to produce the finished product. The needs of our military are not being met as times and situations change with regard to technology. The Military Defense Budget of 2022 article by Jim Garamone of DOD News, where Army Gen Mark A. Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told the Senate Armed Services Committee that the fiscal year 2022 budget request strikes a balance between readiness today and future modernization.

The \$715 billion request preserves present readiness, the general said, but it's also a down payment on future readiness. Gen Milley said, and I quote: "It is now that we must set ourselves on a path to modernize the Joint Force and this budget contributes to doing that!" Unquote.

I would like to leave you with this with regard to our Nations National Security. Are you comfortable with the state of our nation in light of what is occurring within the borders of our country? Do you believe that a change needs to take place in one or several areas to change the posture of National Security in the United States? Do you feel more or less safe and secure in your community, State, and Nation?

ORATORICAL

Jeff Holmes

First off, I would like to again congratulate Elizabeth Henslee a student at Gallatin Gateway and sponsored by District #7 work winning the Department Oratorical Contest in March. You made us proud, and we are glad that you decided to further your leadership education through the American Legion Oratorical Program. She did not make it out of the first round at the National Contest in April. Brilee Peters of Harlowton took second place followed by Dillon MacIlwraith of Darby for third followed by Teagan Clement of Helena placing 4th. I would like to thank all posts, districts, and participants for supporting the Oratorical Contest as part of their objectives.

Secondly, again, a huge thank you to Kim Kay Carol McCarty Martin for all her work as the local liaison in Great Falls and for making for our department contest a huge success.

We again used the new format this year, and again it worked great. Obviously, we only had four contestants, so we split the cash awards as follows: 1st - \$360; 2nd - \$255; 3rd - \$230; and 4th - \$205. We were also done by noon and able to save the money budgeted for meals. I am so thankful you approved this change to our oratorical format.

On September 23-25th, I was fortunate enough to attend the annual meeting of American Legion Oratorical Chairpersons of the Annual National Combined Americanism Conference. Part of our business was to consider a resolution to reduce the time to six to eight minutes for the prepared oration, and to reduce the number of assigned topics to two. After some discussion, we voted to not recommend approval of the changes to the National Executive Committee.

Next year's Department Oratorical Contest is scheduled to be held in Belgrade/Bozeman on March 11, 2023. I am still working on a location.

I work for you and try to make your job easier. As always, let me know what I can do to help. We are all in this together.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS & PUBLICATIONS

Christine Miller

Over the year there have been some changes to the PR and Publications Committee. We have made great strides in getting more post involved and submitting articles therefore getting a wider view of what is going on across the state. We changed our ad sales and combined the paper, our convention booklets, and the Big K. Big thank you to the finance committee for helping get these ads sold. This is generating a better result for our sponsors and advertisers.

Considering adding a "name in the ads" in each issue to encourage ad reads looking for the hidden name of a legionnaire a prize would be considered possibly \$25 gift cards. I think this says to our advertisers we want to ensure their ad is being looked at, while we are looking for the needle in the haystack, so to speak. Ad sales offset the cost of publishing and mailing the paper.

We have had a couple snafues with the printer but through diplomacy we have resolved those problems and print quality has improved. I traveled to National convention this year and participated with TALMA which is the media alliance for all publications for the Legion. Being a part of the National media alliance gives us access as well to a wide range of products pre-made for programs.

Our department Facebook posts are up and in real time as activities are happening adding administrators to assist in posting has been a big positive and taken the whole load off a single person.

Another year I look forward to getting out more to visit and encourage others to submit articles and participate, the paper and historian competitions are tangible items that leave a trail for future legionnaire to read and realize all we did for them today so that they could have the tomorrows.

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

Eddy White

Several Detachment Leaders attended registration day for The American Legion Boys State that was hosted at Fort Harrison in June. The presence of them, the ability to be seen and Commander Jeff Nelson able to speak to these young men was of great value to The American Legion and the Sons of The American Legion Program. We hope to continue this relationship with the program in the upcoming years.

The Detachment recognized two Squadrons for the Membership Growth Awards: Belgrade Squadron 20 and Glasgow Squadron 41 from 2021 membership year. For the 2nd year in a row, there were no Individual awards presented for Top Recruiter and SAL American Legion Family Recruiter. The SAL American Legion Family Recruiter award is

available to ALL American Legion Family members. The Post/SAL Adjutant or Aux Secretary just needs to submit the form to the Detachment with the qualifying information.

The Detachment of Montana established new leadership for the 2022-2023 Year. Officers selected were Commander: John Meacham, Vice Commander: Andy Rice (retained), South Central Zone Commander: Dan Smart, Eastern Zone Commander: Joe Yeoman, NEC: Eddy White and Alt-NEC: Larry Steele. Past Commander David Driver conducted the proceedings. I was fulfilling the Detachment Adjutant and have stepped down to focus on NEC duties. Jed Damson has accepted the position as Detachment Adjutant.

We discussed the issue of formalizing Districts in the Detachment. Some clarity was needed regarding establishing them. It was agreed that initially, we will follow the same physical areas as the Department of Montana Districts. With that, some district areas only have 1 Squadron, it was acknowledged that the organization of a district can only be established from those Squadrons within that district if they so choose. Further, more discussion as to hosting of District Meetings, how to organize that and coordinate them. Therefore, this issue still on the table for further discussion at the Detachment Fall Conference meeting and likely over the winter to our 2023 Convention meeting.

This last year, 1 new Squadron was formed. Past Commander Nelson, myself and Commander John Meacham are still working with Posts to establish new Squadrons and are hopeful that we are able to bring more on board.

The final membership numbers for the Detachment are still an issue. Part of the issue is the lack of renewals, and the other part is timely transmittals. A lot of Squadrons are still working out their targets and from what I have seen, it is getting better.

SHOOTING SPORTS

Larry Dobb

Since my report to the Department Convention, not much has happened concerning the Junior Shooting Sports program. As I reported in June, the Department of Montana has at various times had twenty-seven posts that participated in this program. Some sponsored more than one team or individual competitor. In 2019 we had eight posts participate in 2020 only six and in 2021 only four. In the 2021-2022 matches we only had three. There would have been four, but one team waited till the closing day of registration to send it in electronically. It did not arrive at National until after the close of business, so it was not accepted. There have been a number of changes in the registration process, such as a shorter time frame to register, an updated online only registration process and a credit card only option for payment all of which may explain some of those who did not participate in recent years. In addition, the year before last year at least one sponsored team did not complete in time the Risk Management requirements required by the Protecting Young Victims from

Sexual Abuse and Safe Sport Authorization Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-126) which was signed into law in February 2018.

The 2021-2022 competition did produce something I have not seen before. One club, the Gallatin Valley Sharpshooters (Manhattan Post 87) swept the entire competition. They were Montana Team Champions in both the "Sporter" and "Precision" disciplines and a member of each disciplines team won the title of Individual State Champion. I've never heard of such a complete sweep of the awards by an individual team.

The winners were Nicole Berger, Individual State Champion in Sporter discipline and Alison Sutherlin, Individual State Champion in Precision discipline. The members of the State Team Champions in Sporter are Nicole Berger, Natalie Samson, Marlie Sampson and Evan Lubick. The members of the Team Champions in Precision are Allison Sutherlin, Paige Hildebrandt, Ethan Bates and Mariah McPhee. In addition, Allison Sutherlin placed in the top fifteen in the nation in Precision and was selected to compete in the National Championships in Colorado Springs last summer. I do not know where she finished overall, as the website at National only shows the first eight places. But making it to that level is a significant achievement.

I still need to get to the posts to award the medals and certificates. We did not receive the medals from National until the end of June and I have been trying to get something set up at the Posts involved. I was supposed to be at St Regis this evening (19 Oct), but the Posts called to cancel as the coach of the team could only locate one of the team members. This is my highest priority at this time.

If any post is interested in becoming involved with this youth activity, please contact me (rgelar@gmail.com/406-452-2716/406-899-8885).

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

Kate Hahn

The commission met on Saturday the 27th of August and 28th Of August 2022 we had speakers the first day that included Dr. Linda Torres who spoke of Veterans Health care, Rural Health Care and Telehealth and VA Video Connect. There are some interesting points that she brought out and they included the following.

8% of women Veterans use VA Video Connect

Telehealth has increased 3000%

Veterans are not charged data if they use VA Video Connect it is supported by three (3) major carriers, this still doesn't address those without computers, smart phones or those not computer savvy

We were told to let people (Veterans) know you want some service over broadband. The provider can arrange to get you a tablet or a free internet service provider.

Cancer care was another big item covered on Saturday and these big facts were given us:

Veterans diagnosed with cancer is approximated at 43,000 per year and VA is the number one (1) Cancer researcher with the goal to reduce cancer deaths by 50% in the next 25 years

Dr. Torres put up another slide that talked about the Telehealth ATLAS Program which is still in a pilot program which Montana is part of. I was noted that the pilot program in Eureka Montana has provided no accurate data and more research is being done as to why.

The next speaker was a Mr. Robert Burke a VBA spokesman who spoke about the hiring of an additional 5000 by the end of 2022 and an additional 3000 in 2023, under the PAT Act to adjudicate claims. The VBA is expecting that many new claims to be in the system.

Under the PACT ACT's new presumptive. We were asked and then told to tell our fellow Veterans that we **RECOMMEND FILING WITH YOUR VSO NOW AND DO NOT WAIT UNTIL 1 January 2023**

Claims will begin to be adjudicated beginning 1 January 2023. Go to VA.gov/PACT for more information. Surviving spouses, children up to 23 can apply for survivor benefits

VBA has also reinstituted mandatory overtime beginning on 1 September 2022. There are still 170,000 claims pending.

Automation, things may be missed human hands will still need to be involved, Collecting evidence using automation to find evidence key words for more than one condition at a time

Work with VSOs to file burial benefits online-can be granted within minutes It was emphasized again get this word out

Legacy appeals 28,512 still pending Working on Caregiver Programs, Best Practices, and Adjudication.

The afternoon session on Saturday was a breakout session and Ms. Kate Hahn went to the VBA and I did the VHA session

Under the breakout session for the VBA Mr. John Detty that during the Covid shut down exams exploded to 300,000 as of March 21, 2022. Claims were still moving. At this time there are 170,000 claims in the queue at this time and Nothing is guaranteed at this point other than keep the claims moving.

Brown Water Navy to be done by October?????

In the VHA break out session Dr. Torres again talked on two items National Standards Practice. This is criteria for personnel treating Veterans across state line is simplified and standardized which the American Legion has not taken a stand on more information needed and telehealth

Before adjourning for the day the American Legion legislative staff came and talked to us about all the adds about Camp Lejeune and the legion is working on criteria for veterans because there is so much information out there **They recommends that check your sources carefully and make sure that by filing with one of the law firms that you do not lose benefits.**

The VA&R committee finished meeting on 28 August 2022. The final order of business included reviewing total of 19 Resolutions from three different sub committees Veterans Benefits Administration, Veterans Health Administration and National Cemetery of the resolutions for all three sub committees all except one (1) were either sent back or rejected the one that passed with flying colors that the one submitted by the Department of Montana by Elizabeth Cook concerning an additional test for cancer screening.

Please get this information out to your fellow Veterans

VETERANS ECONOMICS/Homeless Veterans Coordinator

Ray Read

The Montana Department's participation in The American Legion's Homeless Veterans Program is now moving into its fifteenth year. Lowell Long, 2022-23 Montana Department Commander, re-appointed me as the Coordinator of the Program as the as the Homeless Veterans Coordinator at the 2022 Department effective July 2022. I respectfully submit the following report of the record to date.

Montana Statistics Related to Homeless Veterans is as follows:

Last reported 2021-Of the 89,275 (down nearly 3,000 previous reporting) veterans recognized and recorded by the VA as being in Montana, 70,333 are indicated as wartime veterans. Breakdown by era is: Gulf War- 35,651; Vietnam- 29,815; Korea-5,485; WW II- 1,559. Peacetime veterans' number 18,943. The ratio of gender is Female veterans 8,906 and Male veterans 80,367. Comment: It is estimated that based on averaging 2.5 members per veteran's household that the total veterans' population including family members is at 223,190+- or nearly 1/4 of the total population of Montana.

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

In the latest Montana Homeless Survey conducted in January 2021 of the total Homeless population in Montana was surveyed at 1,545 Total Household experiencing homelessness is 167 person respondents of which 165 Veterans were identified as to the as to being homeless. This indicates that homelessness among

Montana veterans was up 10.7% of the total homeless of Montana based on the Survey similar to the results from the previous year, This includes incomplete information on rural veterans' homelessness. The 2022 PIT is being processed at will be available later this year.

The following information was provided for the January 2021 Point in Time Survey by Housing & Urban Development conducted in January 2021. 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:

Recommendations for 2022-2023:

1. That the Montana Department of the American Legion continue to develop and conduct its Homeless Veterans strategy in coordination with the National Economics Division of The American Legion, the Veterans Administration of Montana, Federal Housing and Urban Development, the Montana Department of Health and Human Services and the many local service organizations who dedicate resources to reduce and eliminate homelessness in Montana.
2. That the Department of Montana of the American Legion strive to establish volunteer homeless Veteran's coordinators at Post, District and, Zone levels as necessary to interface with the Department on issues and offer solutions of Veterans homelessness. In lieu of dedicated resources the responsibility falls to the post, district, and zone commander by default.
3. That the Department of Montana of the American Legion supports the various Homeless Veterans Stand downs scheduled throughout Montana Some of the current Stand downs should be classified a veterans' resource program rather than a full stand down. Veteran related events have been previously identified as being in Plains, Helena, Missoula, Dillon, Miles City, and Libby, and on the High line of Montana with Havre, Montana as the hub.
4. That those American Legion Posts conducting a Stand down should coordinate and apply utilizing VA Stand Down Notice of Proposed Event Form available online and complete the VA Stand Down After Action Report available online at the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans. Email kmcevilly@nchv.org the website is www.nchv.org. Telephone number is 202-546-1969.

VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – BILLINGS

Sue Davidson

Because of COVID volunteering has been very limited as the VA changes their policies what the American Legion volunteers can do for the veterans that use the Billings CBOC is very limited there are discussions underway to do more for the veterans, but it is a slow process until all the new policies are implemented.

VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – Fort Harrison

Bill White

Since the last report many things have changed and as a result some communications and activities have had to be done different this time around due to COVID-19 and it still remains the same today. Changes in the Volunteer Program are coming as a result of new guidance from the VA on or about 1 Oct 2022 that will affect volunteering at VA facilities. Other changes are job descriptions for coordinators at VA facilities. By doing this it will bring us in line with national and help this department in planning and helping Veterans throughout the state.

Right now without the guidance that comes from the job description and guidance that comes from the Legion VAVS manual (that is now outdated) we who are filling these positions throughout the state are not doing our job effect ably. By next reporting period there should be clear cut instructions from national and our department on how to do this job more effectively.

VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – Miles City

Clancee Collins

The Community Living Center in Miles City reopened for patients on 6 September 2022. They currently have four residents. I talked to the head nurse earlier this month and she filled me in on several topics. First item discussed was access to the Living Center. Visitors may come through the back entrance of the hospital where they will be required to sanitize their hands and to wear a mask while in the center. There is no limit to how many visitors may visit one patient. She also informed me that the new Activities Director was Ann Peterson. I informed the nurse that if she could ask Ann to call me at her earliest convenience to discuss the monetary budget that Custer Post #5 has set aside for the Living Center. As of this writing I have not heard back from the Activities Director.

The nurse informed me that they are currently working on activities for the residents, but nothing has been implemented as of yet. As soon as I here from the Activities Director, I will let her know that Custer Post #5 will budget \$300 to \$500 dollars for the Living Center. This money may be used as needed for essentials for the residents; sweats, coffee, prizes for bingo, and transportation tickets for the residents to be able to travel to doctor

appointments. The monies will be allocated at our Post #5 monthly meeting in January for calendar year 2023.

WOMEN'S VETERANS COORDINATOR

Kara Blom

For the first Women Veteran Symposium I have decided that the event should be a resource fair with guest speakers instead of just guest speakers speaking at veterans for 4 hours. This way the veterans can have face time with the vendors for the resource they need. I would like to have various VA Services attend including Women's Health Care Program, Housing, Behavioral Health, Voc Rehab, GI Bill, and Benefits. I would also like to provide resources for career counselors, small business resources, Support groups/meet ups, gym/fitness services, local veterans' groups, and have someone from the American Legion there to discuss getting involved in the organization. I have had 1 guest speaker accept my invitation to speak. She is a veteran spouse who had breast cancer and due to that decided to get her health in check. She is now a personal trainer, and most of her customers are current military members and veterans. I have one other veteran so far that I would like to speak at the event and need to reach out to her. I would like to do a raffle for attendees as well.

I will need help reaching out to the right people for the VA services. Duane Cunningham and Bill White have offered to help me with that. If anyone knows of support groups, meet ups, veterans' groups, gyms, and small business resources please let me know. I would like to have a decent size pool to reach out to so that we aren't struggling to get vendors to show up. I need a few more ideas for guest speakers. I will also need help with raffle prizes so if anyone has any ideas, they are welcome. Finally, I need help spreading the word that this event is happening.

The goal this year for the symposium is to get women veterans to show up. I want this to be the start of a program that we can do multiple times a year across the state. I think we can do that by having this event go well. For the event to go well we need vendors and attendees.