



**Department of Montana
Department Fall Conference
Helena, Montana
October 28-30, 2016
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 the Great Wars;

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

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

To make right the master of might;

To promote peace and goodwill on earth;

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

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



DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Hal Rice

First off I want to thank everyone for a very good 4 months. They have been busy ones. Starting in July I attended a funeral for Past Department Commander Bob Williams in Hobson, later in July I attended the membership conference in Indy, where we discussed long term membership, recruiting and retaining members.

In August I attended the Naval Change of Command at the Reserve Center on Fort Harrison. It was very interesting to watch how the Navy does the change, a lot different than the Army. On the 22nd of August Gary White, Ray Read, Josh Clement and I left Helena in Legion vehicle for National convention in Cincinnati, we spent one night in Hotel on our way. I really enjoyed this convention and some of the Highlights are the election of new officers, participating in the parade, listening to both presidential candidates'. We left Cincinnati late on Sept 1st and I arrived at my home at 11: 15 on Sept. 2nd. Long drive, almost 2000 miles coming back. On Sept 22nd I attended a VA Montana board meeting at the VFW in Great Falls. This was also a very interesting experience. On Oct. 1st I attended District meeting for 3&8 at Conrad and on Oct. 2nd in Turner for District 2. Moving on to Oct 8th, I flew to Indianapolis for National Commanders and Adjutants conference, returning on Oct.11th. This was also very interesting and at times entertaining. Gives one a different perspective on how the American Legion works. On Oct. 21st I will be attending the rededication of the new Medal of Honor sign at the Army Guard and Reserve center in Great Falls. This was on the center on Gore Hill and required congressional approval to put on new building; then on to Fall Conference in Helena.

Again thank you to all. We are on our way to number 1? HELL YEAH

DEPARTMENT VICE-COMMANDER

Larry Dobb

The past three months since the Department Convention in Bozeman have flown by. One week after assuming this office, I attended the funeral of Robert R. "Bob" Williams, Past Department Commander 1970-1971, in Hobson, MT. I accompanied David Driver, Alternate NEC and Hal Rice, Department Commander. Past Department Commander Art Sell and his wife from Big Timber and Don Bost, Commander of Post 16 in Lewistown were also in attendance. The family members I talked with were very pleased at the representation by the American Legion as it had been such a big part of their father's life.

The last week of July, I attended the National Membership Workshop and Long Term Membership Planning Course in Indianapolis. This was my first experience with the American Legion outside the Department, and I would have to describe it as inspirational. There were at least four hundred people present from almost every Department. The attendees were all in key leadership positions and the energy in the room could be felt. I really enjoyed discussing the differences between the Department of Montana and how they operate elsewhere. Many of the ideas on recruiting were excellent and will be used in future articles for the Legionnaire.

Between 26 August and 2 September, I attended the 98th National Convention in Cincinnati, OH. This was my first National Convention and it was a wonderful experience. In addition to being a delegate from Montana, I received a call-in to attend the Aerospace Committee of which I am a member. The Convention drew approximately 16,000 members of the American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of the American Legion. The parade which was made up almost entirely of marching people lasted two hours. All Departments marched in the parade according to their standing nationally based on per cent of membership. Both the Presidential candidates spoke to the general session on different days. While at the Convention, I had the honor to be inducted into ANAVICUS (Army, Navy, and Air Force Veterans in Canada-United States Unit) at a breakfast meeting. I also attended the FODPAL (Foreign and Outlying Departments and Posts of the American Legion) breakfast which comprised Departments such as France, China and the Philippines. While I was aware of ANAVICUS I was previously unaware of FODPAL. I was really impressed with the enthusiasm shown by those attending the Convention and the huge sellout crowds for the banquet and various breakfasts etc. I would love to see the same spirit and support for our Department Convention.

Beginning in Forsyth on September 17 and continuing I have been attending and speaking at the Fall District Meetings. I have been to D-1 in Glasgow, D-4 Columbia Falls, D-5 Missoula, D-3 & 8 in Conrad, D-2 in Turner and last Sunday October 9th in Harlowton for the Zone Meeting of Districts 7, 9 & 11. It has been a great experience meeting fellow Legionnaires from all across Montana. And despite having been born and raised in Montana I have seen areas of the state and been in towns where I have never been before. Traveling to these meetings with other Department officers has allowed me to get to know them much better. Attendance varied greatly.

Some Districts had 75% or more of their Posts represented others only around 30%. I feel the number of Posts that show up is probably more important than the total number of individuals present. The Zone/District Commanders who followed the Officers Guide usually had well organized meetings. Some Commanders seemed unfamiliar with the meeting format, which makes one wonder how local Post meetings are conducted. In the early meetings there was confusion when it came to the format for the luncheon. It was determined that the format for the luncheon had been inadvertently left out of the Department Officers Guide for Zone and District Commanders. This caused real problems for new Commanders. Once this problem was identified and Commanders given the format in advance, things ran much smoother. The final District-6 Meeting is in Butte on October 15th.

Mixed in with traveling to the various District Meetings, I was able to visit many of the Veterans Memorials around the state. They are all worthy of stopping to see, but two that really stood out were the Northeast Montana Veterans Memorial at Ft Peck and the Warrior/Veterans Wall of Remembrance at Eagle Circle, Pablo, MT. We were also able to make a visit to the Montana Veteran's Home in Columbia Falls, tour the facility and visit with a couple of the residents. This was my first visit there and I was impressed. In addition while traveling to the District 4 Meeting in Columbia Falls; I and several other members of ANAVICUS made a stop at Carroll College in Helena to award a scholarship to a very deserving young woman.

The Department is doing quite well in membership. The Department and all Districts made the 55% target for October 12th. But within the Districts, there are seven Posts that are less than half way to where they should be at this time in the membership year, and twenty-nine that are not at 55%. The next target date is November 8th when we should be at 65%.

The only issue that cast a dark cloud over this period was how the Departments 2017 goal was distributed. Although the Departments goal dropped by over 800 to 11000, some Posts saw large increases, while many Posts that are basically dormant got big decreases of anywhere from 20 to 60. Any Post that met or exceeded its goal last year got an increase. Fergus Post 16 got hurt the worst with an increase of over a hundred. This generated a lot of anger and while feelings have cooled, there is still a lot of resentment. Several Post and District Commanders feel they should have had a say in distributing the reduction. I personally feel many of our inactive Posts got rewarded and our most active Posts got punished for working hard last year. My personal opinion is that no Post that met or exceeded their goal should have had an increase. If anything, they also should have benefited from the reduction in the Departments goal. The concept of doing one more than last year is a good idea for those who haven't or can't make their goal, and I'm sure most Post's would like to do so. But, not by making it a hard goal for those Posts who are already making or exceeding their goals despite a shrinking veteran's population in the state. I anticipate future fallout from this issue.

ZONE COMMANDER – SOUTH CENTRAL

Len Albright

As Zone commander I attended the Department Convention in Bozeman (Post 14) at the end of June. I drove Denise Rohan and Jeff Brown from the airport to the convention in the Post 14 1933 Chevy Hack Bus. Also David Driver, Lori Perkio and I took them on a tour of Bozeman, Gallatin Canyon, Yellowstone Park, and the Madison Valley. I attended LEAD Training during the Convention as well.

In February I assisted Post 14 in presenting 4 awards to the Army ROTC Cadets at this year's Cadet's Formal Dining Out. We presented two American Legion Military Excellence and two Scholastic Excellence awards.

A dedication/remembrance ceremony hosted by Post 23 was held in June at the Chico Cemetery. The Ceremony was honoring the four crew members that died after their B47 Bomber crashed into Emigrant Peak. In attendance Post 23, Post 99, Post 118, and I and we observed a fine Honor Guard by Post 23 and speeches by dignitaries from all over the country. The family members were very appreciative of the large turnout of Legionnaires and veterans.

The Memorial Day Parade in Bozeman (Post 14) was another success and I represented the Department by participating in the parade and services at the Cemetery following the parade. Also participated in Post 87's Fall Festival and representing the Department in Manhattan. I participated in over 60 Honor Guards in 2016 including the Caller at District 7 Commander Duane Carlton's Funeral. His Honor Guard was made up of members from different Posts in the District as well as the VFW and Marine Corp League. It was an awesome send off.

October 9th Harlowton Post 15 hosted the Fall District meetings for District 7, 9, and 11 of South Central Zone. The facilities and the hospitality were exceptional for this meeting that was well attended. Erin Carpenter filled in for Gary White and was outstanding in her role for the meeting. Thank you for making it easy on me. Larry Dobb did a fabulous job as well. The meal and the FFA and other volunteers that served all of us were truly awesome. I would like to give special thanks goes to Kenton and Kathryn Barnhart, the Ladies Auxiliary, and Demorise and Fran Allen. It was a fun and informative meeting.

ZONE COMMANDER – WESTERN

Larry Stroklund

As the 2016-17 American Legion year gets underway, the western zone is committed to "Just One More" as a goal for all of our Posts and Districts. My year started off with a recruiting/revitalization effort in Libby Post #97. George Blackard and Jim Lish showed up ahead of schedule and performed admirably. They signed up the whole Army National Guard (ANG) Unit from Libby into the Libby Post. This ANG adopted the Libby Post and joined the Post color guard for the community Nordicfeast parade. The crowd loved it and consequently the Post took first place for the parade.

Our District meetings are now over. I attended District 4 and 5 meetings; however, was unable to attend District 6 due to a death in the family in Ohio. From the results of our meetings, I feel

that it is time to move towards a brown bag lunch and skip the banquet portion of the District meeting. The joint banquet seems to accomplish nothing and only adds confusion and difficulty in finding an adequate facility. We could do it more like the Legion Fall Conference.

I want to thank all of my District commanders and their Post's blue caps for their hard work on membership and community activities. Have a Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas, and a successful New Year. Please do not start kneeling when the National Anthem is played.

ZONE COMMANDER – NORTH CENTRAL

Mike Mehegan

Our joint District meeting of District #3 and #8 was hosted by Post #37 in Conrad on October 1st. District #3 Commander Charlie Coutts and District #8 Commander Kim Kay Mc Carty - Martin did a good job of coordinating and getting a good turnout at the combined meeting. Post #37 along with Pat Becker as event coordinator did a very fine job of providing rooms for the meeting and an excellent meal at a reasonable price. Both District Commanders did an excellent job of running their individual meeting.

District #2 meeting was held October 2nd and was hosted by Big Flat Post #109 Turner. District #2 Commander Lowell Long did an excellent job of coordinating with Post #109 and getting a very good turnout. District Commander Lowell Long ran a very thorough and timely meeting. Post #109 provided excellent facilities and their Auxiliary provided a very tasty and sumptuous banquet. The ladies kept on wanting us to eat more and more.

All the District Commanders are doing an excellent job with membership but as with everything in life it could be better. The District Commanders are there to help you; please ask for their help and expertise. They can't help you if they don't know.

The new Commander of Saco Post #79 asked for District Commander Lowell Long's help and between them they were able to get 6 renewals and 5 new members. In 1 day Post #79 went from 0% membership to 110%. This is the kind of cooperation we need between the Post & Districts.

ZONE COMMANDER – EASTERN

Chelly Harada

(No Report Submitted)

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN (N.E.C.)

Merv Gunderson

(No Report Submitted)

ALTERNATE NATIONAL COMMITTEEMAN (N.E.C.)

David Driver

During the Department Convention I was honored to be the escort for Denise Rohan, the candidate for National Commander. After the Department Convention in Bozeman, I attended a memorial service, in Hobson, Montana, for Past Department Commander and Past NEC Bob Williams. Also in attendance was the Department Commander Hal Rice, Department Vice Commander Larry Dobb, Past Department Commander and Past NEC Art Sell and his wife and Post 16 Commander Don Bost. On the 4th of July I was a guest speaker at a 4th of July celebration in Roundup, Montana, where we recognized the veterans of the Vietnam War and give each a Vietnam War Commemoration pin. This was an outstanding way to spend the 4th and my hat off to Post 18 Commander Brad Marking, Post 18 Adjutant Jay Cota, and the members of Post 18 for all their hard work in putting this event together. On Thursday, 28 July, I attended the opening game of The American Legion Baseball Class A State Tournament in Great Falls. I also attended games 4 and 5 of the Class A State Tournament. On August 4th I was in Laurel, Montana attending the Northwestern Regional American Legion Baseball banquet. On the 5th I was honored to throw out the first pitch of game 2 of the Northwestern Regional Tournament. I attended the 98th National Convention held in Cincinnati, Ohio as Montana's NEC due to the fact that our NEC, Merv Gunderson was still in the VA Rehabilitation Unit in Seattle, Washington. The first thing that I have learned is that you really aren't aware of how much the other person's job is and much more responsibilities they have until you are involved in it. There were 300 resolutions, with legislative intent, adopted at the 98th National Convention which will be passed on to the 115th Congress. Americanism had 26 Resolutions, 1 from the Internal Affairs, National Security had 77 Resolutions, Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitations had 117 Resolutions, and Veterans Employment and Education had 79 Resolutions. I attended the District 10 Fall Meeting in Forsyth and had a very enjoyable evening with Past Department Commanders and Past NECs Bob and Sylvia Beals. While in route to Glasgow for the District 1 meeting, we stopped to see one of the best Veteran Memorials in the state at Fort Peck. The community and veterans have done themselves proud and I highly recommend that if you are in the area, please stop in and see this tribute to the Veterans. **SEE**

ADDENDUM 2

The following weekend I attended District 4's Fall Meeting in Columbia Falls. We visited Post 72's Memorial Wall which they have taken over maintaining from the VFW. We also visited the Montana Veterans' Home in Columbia Falls and visited with Past Department Commander Don Buffington. History of this facility: It was authorized by the Montana Legislative Assembly in 1895; six years after the state joined the Union. The initial purpose of the home was to serve veterans of the Civil War and Indian Wars. Today it is a beautiful facility on a well kept land. The employees are the best and well liked by the veterans living there. Next it was off to Missoula and District 5's Fall Meeting held at Ruby's Inn. The next weekend we headed to my District, District 8, and District 3 meeting in Conrad where I pulled double duty as a member of

District 8 and representing the NEC. Then it was off to Turner for District 2 meeting. Then it was off to Indianapolis for the fall NEC conference. There I got to meet with the leading candidate for National Commander, Denise Rohan from the Department of Wisconsin and Brett Reistad, candidate for National Commander, from the Department of Virginia. We listened to 14 reports and considered and passed 25 resolutions. One resolution, in particular, brought before the National Executive Committee on Wednesday and was sent back for rewriting, brought back on Thursday and passed, I want to bring to the attention of all members of the Department. We are all aware of the disrespect of our National Anthem and our flag by professional sport players. This action is like a disease spreading down to our colleges and high schools. The National Executive Committee passed Resolution No. 16. **SEE ADDENDUM 3**

The National Executive Committee approved the merger of Post 121Whitetail with Post 56 Scobey.

It has been an honor to fill in for our NEC, Merv Gunderson, however, I look forward to his return and I can be placed back in the trunk as his spare tire.

PAST DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Jim Grosset

After my term as your Commander, I had the honor to lead the Department of Montana in the American Legion parade at the Cincinnati Convention. It was very hot and we made it to the end of the parade. I attended both the parade meeting with Commander Rice and then as a delegate to the Constitutional Amendments meeting. It was a great learning experience as your Department Commander and I want to thank all of you for your faith in me.

HISTORIAN

Ray Read

I, as the Department Historian, had the privilege and opportunity to travel the 98th National Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. It was most impressive and educational in all aspects of my position and appointments. I recommend that all Legionnaires attempt to attend. Next year is Reno, Nevada.

I was also able to attend most all of the 2016 Fall Zone/District meetings. This allowed me to get my programs out to the American Legion Post and attending leadership. I appreciate the interest shown by the various attendees to these events. I was also able to look at veteran monuments and commemorations in various communities.

I found throughout Montana that the American Legion is continuing to do what they have done best for 98 years. They are supporting the veterans and their families as best they can, utilizing the Four Pillars of the American Legion's National Program: That is Supporting the many facets of Veterans Affairs; Supporting a Strong National Defense; Supporting viable Americanism programs; and Supporting our Nation's most precious resource our Children and Youth. I

have been able to travel the State, meeting with many seasoned, as well as newer, younger veterans who populate the 129 American Legion Posts, mostly in rural environments, with all the challenges that manifest themselves in the frontier State of Montana.

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

As an American Legionnaire, part of the American Legion family, I am providing the following guidance as a continuing commitment to the duties and responsibilities of the elected position of Department Historian, especially in the continuing formation of the upcoming American Legion Centennial 1919-2019. So this is a repeat worth repeating.

SUBJECT: The Montana Department, the American Legion, Centennial Celebration 1919-2019; the Department 100th Anniversary Committee and the Annual American Legion One Year Narrative and one year History program.

Reference is made to:

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

The Department of Montana, the American Legion, Executive Committee, has established a Department Centennial Committee in accordance with the request of the 100th Anniversary Observance Committee

And the Department Historian has been designated the Department Centennial Chairman.

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

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

“The American Legion wishes to call to the attention of the American People the record of achievements that have been accomplished by The American Legion during the 100 years since its founding, to emphasize the impact the organization has had upon the American society, and the extent of its

contributions in national security and the welfare of military veterans, their families and their communities...

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

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

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

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

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

In less than Two years the American Legion will start the Centennial celebration its 100th National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota to conclude in Indianapolis, Indiana in August 2019. And in less than three years the American Legion will celebrate its 100th Anniversary. Montana’s contributions to the American Legion legacy deserve to be included in the record.

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

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 2017. The Judging will be accomplished in October 2017. Post entries are due at the Montana Department Convention, Billings, Montana at the end of June 2017.

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.mtLegion.org or by mail as necessary. All entries will be judged and the first place winners in either category (narrative or yearbook) will be certified and I will forward them to National Historian for entry in the announced contest for that category. Keep in mind the requirements that have to be met for the National Contest. And I refer you to the most current edition of the Officers Guide for the official rules of the 2016-2017 Legion year, or at the Legion website www.Legion.org.

100 Cities / 100 Memorials

A National Matching Grant Challenge to Preserve WWI Monuments

Go to PROGRAM URL: WW1CC.org/100Memorials. Handout available under separate cover

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT

Gary White

After the Department Convention in Bozeman I prepared for the National Convention in Cincinnati. At the National Convention in Cincinnati, OH I was assigned to the Finance Committee, the major concern was falling revenue due to decreasing membership. The recently passed dues increase has helped, but we must stop the membership decline. I made all Fall District Meetings except the South Central Zone Meeting in Harlowton, where Erin represented me. I missed the meeting due to my attendance at the National Commander's and Adjutants Conference in Indianapolis. District and Post Commanders need to start encouraging attendance from every Post on a regular basis, start when the schedule is published and continue until just days before the start of the meeting. The District commanders also need to make frequent contact with their officers to ensure their presence as well. After the meetings this Fall it is glaringly apparent that the District Commanders need training on the conduct of a District Meeting. I would like to compliment Lowell Long, the District 2 Commander on the professional way he conducted the District 2 Meeting in Turner. The Department is looking for ways to make the meetings more interesting for your members as well, please let us know what you would like changed as well as added. Maybe it is something as simple as doing away with the banquet, or there is a presentation you would like added or deleted. Maybe there is a subject you would like training on that would fit into the District Meeting timeframe. Let's make a renewed effort to encourage attendance at the District Meeting. Most problems with Posts could be solved if the Post would send representatives and officers to District Meetings on a regular basis.

Other activities included visits to Posts in Glendive and Boulder, I continued to work with the Legislative Chairman on Legislative matters and either participated in or attended the State Administration, Veteran Affairs Interim Committee and MVAD Board meetings. Additionally, I visited the Eastern Montana State Cemetery and the Western Montana Cemetery, as well as the

Yellowstone County Veterans Cemetery in Laurel. I attended the AA American Legion Baseball State Tournament in Missoula, the A Tournament in Great Falls and then the Northwest Regional Tournament in Laurel. I would like to commend all the Legionnaires that either participated in the tournaments or attended the games. With other Department officers I attended the funeral of Past Department Finance Officer Mike Susag in Helena. Additionally I attended the POW / MIA in Helena at Memorial Park, visited the State Nursing Home in Columbia Falls and took the Alternate NEC, Department Vice Commander and Historian too many of the veteran monuments in the area of the District Meetings.

On line renewals still continue to be a learning process for all involved, if we could get all the Adjutants and Commanders to attend the District meetings a lot of our problems could be solved. Use of MyLegion.com continues to be a slow process; we gain new Posts using this program at the rate of about 1 a month. We currently have 79 Posts signed up; an increase of 34 from last year, but only about 51 are actively using it. There are way too many Posts not actively using this tool, we must continue to teach and encourage our Posts to sign up for this free program and to actively use it, there are new tools added almost monthly that can help Post Adjutants and Commanders in the operation of their Post. We have 8 Districts signed up but only 4 using it, the other 4 are still registered to old District Commanders.

Department still needs copies of Post Constitutions for the files; there are way too many Posts missing. If the Post does not have a Constitution we suggest that they get one written. We can provide a sample copy to help get them started.

Currently I am maintaining the membership records and finances for Darby Post #38, Philipsburg #33, Boulder #46, Lame Deer #77 and Broadus #128, in the case of Boulder I am also attending their meetings and performing the duties of Adjutant. These Posts are in a caretaker status but need to be looked at seriously about having their charters pulled or continuing in this status.

CHAPLAIN Sam Birky

The past months have included a number of military veteran events and ministries. Each gathering of veterans, their families and community members pays respect to the American tradition of patriots – citizens and warriors.

In July, the Northwest Food Pantry hosted an annual military appreciation day at the Kalispell City Fairgrounds. Many military service providers were present and many veterans and families participated. American Legion Post #137 provided the color guard. As commander of the color guard, it was my privilege to conduct a tribute to the American Flag which included retiring the colors which flies at the fairground's pavilion and a new flag was placed on the flagpole. A tribute was read:

I AM YOUR FLAG

- I was born on June 14, 1777
- I am more than cloth shaped into a design.
- I am the refuge of the world's oppressed people.
- I am the silent sentinel of Freedom.
- I am the emblem of the greatest sovereign nation on earth.
- I am the inspiration for which American Patriots gave their lives and fortunes.
- I have led your sons in to battle from Valley Forge to the blistering desert of the Arabian Peninsula.
- I walked in silence with each of your honored dead to their final resting place beneath the silent white crosses, row upon row.
- I have flown through peace and war, strife and prosperity, and amidst it all I have been respected.

"Old Glory" is my nickname;

- Proudly I wave on high.
- Honor me, respect me and defend me with your lives and fortunes.
- Never let my enemies tear me down from my lofty position lest I never return.
- Keep alight the fires of patriotism; strive earnestly for the spirit of democracy.
- Worship Eternal God and keep his commandments,
- I shall remain the bulwark of peace of freedom for all people.

FOR I AM YOUR FLAG!

September 11th marked the 15th anniversary of the tragic events of 2001. A second tragedy occurred September 11th 2012 in Benghazi Libya in which four Americans lost their lives in the defense of freedom for the twenty plus Americans that were eventually evacuated and now reside in the USA. In honor of the four who have fallen, Doug Averill owner and operator of Flathead Lake Lodge, Bigfork, has erected a striking monument honoring the four on his property. Each year a ceremony is conducted. This year included the Bigfork High School Band and a Bigfork Community choir singing patriotic songs. I had the honor of reading a letter from the mother of one of the fallen US Navy SEALs by the name of Tyrone Woods. As a Legion chaplain, I also shared remarks regarding citizenship and patriotism.

I attended the District #4 meeting in Columbia Falls. The gathering was hosted at the new motel's conference room. Commander Mike Shepherd and the Legionnaires of Columbia Falls Post #72 were gracious hosts.

The weekly visits to the Montana Veterans Home (MVH) are conducted by Legionnaires and good citizens from around the Flathead valley. My role of volunteer chaplain at the MVH continues.

Annual Calendar:

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

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

March - American Legion Birthday; Holy Season

April - Children & Youth Month

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

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

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

August - American Legion National Convention

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

October - Columbus Day

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

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

SERVICE OFFICER

Kelly Ackerman

As the American Legion DSO, I attended the following events:

February 2016 DSO School, Washington DC

February 2016 Washington Conference

July 2016- DSO School in Indianapolis

National Convention, August 2016 in Cincinnati, OH

Fall NEC Meetings, October 2016 in Indianapolis, IN

I hosted American Legion outreach event in Calgary, Canada Sept 23-24, 2016. This event was coordinated by Jim Grosset and his American Legion Post, and the turn-out by American veterans living in Calgary was tremendous! I visited with 24 veterans and family members and provided a briefing to many more. It was a great opportunity to spread the word about VA benefits and to bridge the communication gap for US veterans living in Canada. We are planning to continue this outreach event next year.

All Fall District meetings were attended by MVAD/AL VSO's according to area of jurisdiction with the exception of the District 2 meeting.

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

Our Division is working with D2D, the paperless process which is helping to shorten the wait time for veteran's claims processing.

PARLIAMENTARIAN

George Blackard

We had a great convention in Bozeman last June and the meetings went very well but there is still room for improvement. The basic rule of standing at the podium, saluting the colors, and stating your name before speaking seems to be difficult for some people. We need to do much better at this as it is not just a formality, it is a requirement and it serves a purpose. When you salute the flag you are rendering honor to the flag, when you state your name you are doing so because the person taking the minutes needs to know who is speaking so they can take proper notes for the record. Having said that, whenever you slack off and fail to follow protocol, you are not just saying "I don't care how I look to others" or "I don't care to be professional" you are saying "I don't care how difficult I am making the recorder's job". How would you feel if someone was constantly making your job unnecessarily more difficult?

There was much discussion of reports at the last Department Convention. I would like to remind everyone that your report is your report and once given it MAY NOT be amended after the fact to rebut or respond to someone else's report. That is not what reports are for. If you take exception to something in someone else's report, you should take that up with them personally and preferably with diplomacy.

Our Posts may all run our meetings a little differently and that's okay. It's your Post, run the meeting however you want to. Some Posts have little business to discuss and meetings are more of a social time. Some Posts have a lot of business to discuss and meetings will drag on for hours. When we follow Roberts Rules of Order for our Post meetings we can get more business done in a shorter amount of time which will leave plenty of time for socializing after the meeting. We owe it to our new members to teach them how meetings should be run so that when they attend a department meeting, they recognize what is happening and feel comfortable participating. This will also give them the confidence and the knowledge they need to run your Post meetings once they have moved up to the Post Vice Commander and Post Commander positions. For those who are running meetings today remember, the habits and example you set now are the same thing you are going to see when you are sitting on the other side of the head table. You cannot complain about the way your new Commander runs a meeting if you did not show them how to do it properly when you were Commander.

FINANCE OFFICER

Eddy White

This is my third year as Department Finance Officer. It has been a privilege to spend time to support this effort of reviewing the books and accounts that support the Departments efforts of accomplishing the 4 Pillars of The American Legion. At a minimum, I have met with the Department Adjutant on a monthly basis to reconcile the various accounts that are used.

The reports before you are as of October 8th. On the profit & loss statement for the projected budget income is \$568,255 we are at \$178,395.82 (31.4%). In comparison, we are \$13,642 (7.1%) less than the report made this time last year.

The projected budget expenses are \$426,243.67 and we are at \$143,438.78 (33.65%). There are many more months and pending programs that will occur as we move forward with this budget. However, I do not see or have any concerns since we were at this same percentage a year ago.

2016 Membership revenue is just over 10% higher than it was this time last year. The increased dues have not shown an adverse impact as was thought. We are still behind on the fundraising efforts with the Cash Calendar as expected, but as the year progresses and we get closer to Veterans Day we expect that more attention to the Cash Calendar will pick up.

In summary, we have a few areas that are behind where we were at last year, but our expenses are lower and income was higher, so we are sitting in a good situation going into the mid-fiscal year.

We are still seeing checks still outstanding. Most of these are distribution checks from the Cash Calendar and Big K. Please share with our members that when they get an envelope from The American Legion, please open it. It is not necessarily junk mail. Please continue to be prompt in cashing your checks from the Department.

JUDGE ADVOCATE

Jim Shockley

1. This Report is made to comply with the requirement that the Judge Advocate provide a written report at the Fall Conference, or make an oral one at the Convention.

2. The Post 129 saga continues. Hank Dozeal, the engineer who is helping the Post, has got the steel building up and it is water tight. The inside walls are 90% complete. However, there is much to do; e.g., the wiring is not complete, the plumbing for the restrooms has not been installed. As of 14 October 2016 Mr. Dozeal estimates that the entire building is about 80% complete.

To complete the building more money must be raised; the money to complete the building so that it is functional as a bar and casino must be borrowed in order to receive more money from the insurance company (NOVA). The Post has exceeded its "policy limits" and even an extra \$10,000 for toxic waste cleanup. The policy does provide for an additional \$50,000 to cover upgrades required by the building codes. Since the building was either built in the 1940s, or earlier, the whole building is an upgrade. As an example, the foundation was railroad ties. The matter is complicated by the Post adding about 50% more floor space to the original building.

The problem with getting some, or all of the \$50,000, is that the need for the upgrade must be demonstrated and actually accomplished, when you are out of money that creates a problem. Mr. Dozeal has got contractors to give the Post credit and is arranging for a bank loan to complete the building; when that happens the Post will be reimbursed by NOVA in an amount that is presently being negotiated by myself and Mr. Dozeal.

One of the members of the Post 129 Committee for some reason fears that there is going to be attorneys' fees involved in this matter. No fees have been incurred to date and none are anticipated. I do want to point out that I am not the only lawyer helping Post 129. Two other lawyers have helped the Post a lot by assisting me in dealing with the insurance company. I did not do that type of work and therefore have no experience in that area. Mike Cok of Bozeman has donated I estimate \$2,000 to \$4,000 of his time and saved me many more hours of my own. He also lent his name and stellar reputation to the Post's cause, a small town lawyer from Victor is not impressive to a large insurance company. Jessie Laslovitch, the lead lawyer at the Insurance Commissioner/State Auditor's Office has also been very helpful. I mention these people who have helped in order to share the credit, such as it is, for the legal help the Post has received in some abundance. We should be grateful to them, as we should to Mr. Dozeal without whose help the building would never have gotten off the ground and I mean that literally.

To recap you might want to refresh your memory with this excerpt from my last report:

The Post building burned down on 31 July 2013. The Post bought a prefabricated building delivered in August 2014 and signed a contract with a Texas corporation (Cotton) and paid one third of the price to erect the prefabricated building in advance (\$62,283.31) in October of 2014. Cotton had gotten some permits and paid for some architectural plans, but done nothing on site. Cotton told the Post that the contract notwithstanding it wanted more money or there would be no further work until it was paid more money. In June of 2015 the Post asked the Department for help.

A Committee was formed at the Department level to assist the Post. Hank Dozeal (an engineer) and I volunteered to help. Using the money available Mr. Dozeal got the building up in February and worked out a settlement with Cotton for a refund of a little over \$25,129. I have filed an additional claim with the insurance company for about \$22,000 and there is perhaps as much as \$18,000 available depending on the circumstance after construction is completed. We had pro bono help of several hours from Mike Cok, a well known Bozeman attorney.

The Post was cheated but you cannot litigate in Texas for \$62,000, it would be too costly even if we managed to win in a Texas court.

3. The fallout from the Post 27 litigation (Squadron 27 sued Post 27) was that two former officers of the Sons of the American Legion Squadron 27 converted (civil theft) about \$786. I sued Robert Duffer and Dwaine Coate on behalf of the Squadron and settled for \$661. They did not pay what they promised, but it was close enough. I filed a motion to dismiss with the same formality, much more formal than the pro se litigates customarily do, I would with the District courts with which I am more familiar. The Court refused to file it because of perceived violations of a rule and statute. I am not aware of the problems the Judge or perhaps the clerk, believe exist and am not used to operating off unsigned "sticky notes". But this is a theme in the interaction between the Justice Court of Missoula County and the American Legion and its affiliated Sons of the American Legion. Neither one of the two judges' clerks would accept my filing of the complaint on behalf of the Squadron against Duffer and Coate, saying the other court had to accept filing of its complaint. I just finally picked one of the two judge's clerks, dropped it on the counter and told the clerk that I considered it filed. A while later I got the filed complaint in the mail. The Justice Court of Missoula County is different from any court that I have appeared in the last 40 years and I have not decided how to resolve this problem, but the Squadron has the money, \$661.

4. The small parcel of real estate that the Department "inherited" in Dodson from a disestablished Post has not been transferred to Phillips County. The County is willing to take it, but I conferred with an environmental lawyer who caused me to want to investigate the possibility of some environmental problems. While I believe that I now know how to resolve my concerns, I have not done so. It will take more time, but it seems that the land will be transferred this winter.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

John Kougioulis

I've been newly appointed the Sergeant-at-Arms by Department, therefore I'm learning. I'm a member of Post 42, Broadwater in Townsend; I've been doing some instructions on proper etiquette on running a meeting, starting with "Breaking the Plane" the meaning of, and why members may be "fined" for doing so. I hope to do more teaching in the future and some events. If there is something Department would like for me to do, need to let me know, or if there are problems I need to be aware of.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Jeff Holmes

Below are the deadlines for the following programs:

- 7 & 8 Grade Essay Contest starts Sept 16th and **must be Postmarked** by March 1, 2017.
- High School Essay Contest starts Sept 16th and **must be Postmarked** by March 1, 2017.
- Senior Survey **must be Postmarked** by March 1, 2017.
- Junior High Survey **must be Postmarked** by March 1, 2017.

2016 Award Winners

High School Essay

1 st	Jamie Steers	Fort Benton Post # 26
2 nd	Hailey Kellum	Roundup Post #18
3 rd	Gordon Wallace	Florence Post #134

Junior High School Essay

1 st	Ashleigh Guinnane	Twin Bridges Post # 31
2 nd	Hailey Carpenter	Helena Post #2
3 rd	Annika McLean	Stevensville Post # 94

Government Survey for Seniors

1st	Alice Giem	Twin Bridges Post # 31
2nd	Kage Hansen	Shelby Post # 43
3rd	Madeline Scianna	Belfry Post #84

At the Department Convention in Bozeman, Hailey and Jamie were also the guests of honor and spoke very eloquently at the Children and Youth Luncheon. Thanks to them for that. Speaking of the past Department Convention, the resolution to establish a Government Survey for Junior High School Students passed. A special thanks to Justin Carpenter for doing most of the leg work on this worthwhile endeavor. It is now available to administer. We hope this helps in your recruiting efforts.

Speaking of worthwhile endeavors, a special shout out and huge thanks goes out to Ed Sperry who is the author of a new publication entitled "Your School Board and You: A Guide to incorporate Americanism in Education." It is a guide which contains tools and tips for actively engaging our Posts, community, and school boards through the following: Conduct school board election forums; invite school board candidates to a Post meeting; and encourage our local residents to run for school board elections. Ensure they get to the Post level, and you utilize them. I have a few extra copies if you need one.

DISTRICT COMMANDERS

DISTRICT 1 - COMMANDER

Joe Yeoman

- August 1 I sent out letters to Post Commander with goals and an introduction.
- August 1- Drove to Hinsdale for a meeting, the members would like to change to having only one District meeting in the Spring.
- August 1- Called Albert Fehler in Opheim
- August 9- Went to Opheim for a 6 a.m. breakfast meeting
- August 30- Letter to Posts inviting them to the upcoming District meeting with an agenda
- September 8- Met with Chelly Harada in Wolf Point and attended the Post meeting in Culbertson
- September 13- Met with Eric Nelson in Wolf Point and later attended the meeting in Scobey
- September 18- District Meeting in Glasgow 11 members representing 5 Posts

- October 3- Talked with John Rorvich about Nashua, talked to David Boyd in Poplar about Brockton. Talked to Floyd Kaul of Westby in Plentywood. Attended the Plentywood meeting.

DISTRICT 2 – COMMANDER

Lowell Long

Membership is getting under way in our District. We have several Posts that are doing well at this time. These Posts include Post 79, Saco is at 110%, Post 109, Turner is at 83.33%, Post 48, Chinook is at 76.09%, Post 88, Chester is at 71.79%, Post 57, and Malta is at 70.00%. Havre Post 11, Big Sandy Post 50 and Fort Belknap Post 110 are very close to making the next target. I have tried to contact the Posts that need extra support in getting membership in. Most of these conversations either by phone or e-mail have been productive as shown by our membership numbers. I am still working to contact Post 67 to get their membership numbers moving in the right direction.

I visited with all the Posts in my District right after the convention to deliver the Post packets. The only Post I was not able to actually go to was Big Sandy and Jed Damson assisted me with delivering that packet so that it would get out right away. When visiting with all the Posts, I informed them that I was the new District commander and to add my name to the roster under District commander. I gave them my contact information.

I attended the Warrior Run in Billings on August 21st and walked the 5K with my granddaughter. It was great to support Post 117 as they put on this event.

I attended the funeral of a soldier that I had served with when I was deployed to Iraq, Leona Walls. She was a member of the American Legion Post in Sweet Grass. While there, I was able to share with her family what we had done while in Iraq and they were really glad of my coming.

District 2 held its fall meeting on Sunday October 2, 2016 in Turner, Montana. As always, Post 109 did a great job hosting our meeting. We heard from the Department officers in the morning and they passed out a lot of great information to the Legionnaires in attendance. Membership was discussed by many of the speakers and I addressed it in length in my meeting in the afternoon. I congratulated the Posts that have made the upcoming target already and encouraged the remaining Posts to try to make that target.

I attended the monthly meeting of Post 79 in Saco at the invitation of the new Post Commander. This meeting was a great success as they had many of the current members and 5 that were looking to join but had some questions. At the end of the night, all five joined and it looked like several were going to be active members of the Post. I will be making a visit to the remaining Posts in the next couple months.

DISTRICT 3 - COMMANDER

Charlie Coutts

APRIL

- Spring meeting--Geraldine
- Approached by Patrick Becker to take over as District 3 Commander; I accepted to be nominated to the position.
- Next day mailed DD214 to Gary White.

May

- Went to My Legion--Do Legion course and take test.
- Sent test results to Gary White--Helena.

June

- Legion meeting--Bozeman
- Voted in as District 3 Commander and installed; picked up Post packets for District 3

July

- Delivered Post packets
- Went to Indianapolis for Legion school (District commander school)

Sept

- Get approx. head count for Zone commander for the Fall meeting in Conrad.
- Call Post Commanders for actual head count for the Fall meeting in Conrad.
- Meet District 8 Commander in Conrad to check with Past District 3 Commander to see that everything was ready for Fall meeting.
- Talked with the Post commander-Browning-about re-vitalization.

Oct

- Fall meeting--Conrad.
- Trying to sell Cash Calendar's

DISTRICT 4 - COMMANDER

Jack Fay

I presided over the Spring District #4 meeting which was held in Ronan on April 3rd. The American Legion Post #138 and Auxiliary Unit hosted the meeting.

I attended the Department Convention in Bozeman on June 23rd-26th and also the Lead Training. I distributed the packets to the Posts the week following the Convention.

I presided over the Fall District #4 meeting held in Columbia Falls at the new Cedar Lodge Hotel on September 24th. Columbia Falls did an excellent job hosting the meeting. Polson Post #112 will host the Spring District #4 meeting.

Paradise update: The building is insulated, the plumbing and electricity are in the process of being installed. Paradise has a new Commander, Darin King and Marilyn Bischof is the Adjutant. Hank Dolezal put in many hours and did a very good job toward this project.

I did not get out visiting Posts like I had planned.

On October 10th I attended an achievement banquet in Polson, which was put on by Polson Post #112 and Ronan Post #138. We heard achievements of the students who attended Boys' and Girls' State, Scouting achievers, Oratorical participants and Mariners Baseball players were introduced.

DISTRICT 5 - COMMANDER

Bill Applegate

- 1) Assisted with the District 5 Revitalization in September – went out and talked to members about renewing.
- 2) Conducted the September 25th Fall District 5 meeting held at Ruby's in Missoula
- 3) Went to the American Legion Maverick Baseball playoff games held here in Missoula in September
- 4) Visited Post 13 St Regis & Post 63 Condon

DISTRICT 6 - COMMANDER

Lori Perkio

While attending Department Spring meetings I was invited to accompany American Legion National Leading Candidate for 2019, Denise Rohan and National Headquarters Executive Director, Jeff Brown as they toured Yellowstone National Park. Department of Montana Alternate National Executive Committeeman, David Driver and Gallatin Post 14, Bozeman, Len Albright was a very informative tour guide. If elected, Denise will be the first female American Legion National Commander. I had a great time visiting with her about her journey in The American Legion, and reminiscing about Legion College.

Past Department Commander, Joyce Babcock invited me to assist District 11, Custer Post 5, Miles City, with the Air Guard Yellow Ribbon Program held in Billings on Saturday, July 23, 2016. The Pre deployment group was from the 120th Air Wing and the 30 day Post returnees were with the 219th Red Horse. Red Horse had approximately 200 participants and Air wing had approximately 250 participants (all plus dependents-family). This was a very successful event and I am glad I was able

I was able to attend the meetings of Anderson-Simpson Post 89, Sheridan and Dan Brockman Post 31, Twin Bridges. These Posts do so much in their communities, it's inspiring.

From September 9th through September 13th we had the pleasure of bringing Jim Fielder, American Legion National Headquarters, Membership Division, out of retirement to assist with Post 46 Boulder revitalization. This revitalization resulted in the Post meeting membership goal for 2016-2017. Following a meet and greet on September 13th Bill Hadfield was elected as Post 46 Commander. Next meeting is scheduled for October 18th with yours truly as acting commander, Gary White; Department Adjutant is standing in as Post Adjutant until one can be appointed.

Mining City District 6 met on Saturday, October 15th 10:00 am at the McQueen Club in Butte, District 6 Auxiliary met at the East Side Athletic Club. Department personnel showed up at 8:00 a.m. too bad we didn't have an early bird drawing!!! Silver Bow Post 1, Butte, will host the next District 6 meeting.

DISTRICT 7 - COMMANDER

Randy Kemp

I assumed duty as District 7 Commander when the District 7 Commander passed away. I attended the memorial service for the Duane Carlton. I took inventory of what needed to be done to transition into the Commanders position. The first thing was to gather all District 7 paperwork and files. It was determined that the District 7 bank account did not have any signers except the former Commander and after working with the bank and with the assistance of Zone Commander Len Albright the bank account was transferred into my name along with 2 other signers to preclude anything like this in the future.

My first official act was to set up email accounts for all District 7 Posts to streamline information flow from the Department to all District 7 Posts.

I attended Post 25's meeting in White Sulphur Springs on Tuesday September 13. I observed a very well run meeting which finished with a pot luck dinner and dance in a unique setting. I believe Post 25 is a vibrant Post and will grow in the future. I look forward to attending meetings there again.

I received information that there was a problem with the District meeting on October 8, 2016 in Big Timber at Post 19. The meeting had not been cleared with the Post and the Post had a prior engagement for their building on that date. I worked with District 9 Commander Demorise Allen and Zone Commander Len Albright and changed the District 7 meeting to October 9, 2016 in Harlowton hosted by Post 15. I personally want to thank the Zone Commander, District 9 Commander, Commander Post 15 and the District 9 American Legion Auxiliary for stepping up to the challenge of hosting the meeting.

I attended District 7 meeting in Harlowton and the meeting went very well. District 7 was well attended by the following Posts: Post 14, Post 19, Post 23, Post 25, Post 30, Post 87, and Post 99. We conducted all business required for District 7 and nominated/elected Jim Howe as Vice Commander.

I look forward to working with District 7 Posts and The Auxiliary in the future making the American Legion what it should be in Montana.

DISTRICT 8 - COMMANDER

Kim Kay Carol McCarty Martin

In July I visited each town in District 8 except for Geraldine, giving the Commander or Adjutant the packet for their Post from Convention that contained officer books, renewal cards, and green sheets. I attended a BBQ that I was invited to in Augusta that they held in July at the American Legion Park. It was nice to visit with comrades from the Post.

I attended the Great Falls Stand Down on 29-30 September. I handed out pamphlets and talked to the veterans that stopped by the table.

I called Conrad and talked to Patrick about the facilities for the combined District 3, and 8 Fall District Meeting that would be held on the 1st of October. District 3 Commander Charles Coutts and I talked about the combined meeting and what each of us had to do to be prepared. We made arrangements with Patrick to meet in Conrad on the 21st of September.

Mike Mehegan and I drove to Fort Benton to help District 8 Adjutant with the previous Spring District Commander. We were able to decipher the minutes and have them ready for our Fall Meeting.

On the 21st of September, Keith McIlwien, District 8 Vice-Commander and me met up in Great Falls and drove to Conrad to meet with Charles Coutts and Patrick. We were able to look at both facilities that would house our meetings, both together in the morning and individually in the afternoon. We were all in agreement of what each District meeting would need in regards to setup and how many members from each District would be attending. Then on the 1st of October we went back for our Fall Meeting; everything in the morning meeting with Zone Commander Mike Mehegan and Department Officers went smoothly. We did forget about the Auxiliary meeting in the morning so we were not prepared for that. Needless to say that some of the women from the Auxiliary were not happy with us. We did apologize to them.

I was invited to Vaughn's yearly Chili Cook-off on the 15th of October and arrived just a tad late. They had prepared a white Chili that was delicious along with various beef chilies. Chili # 6 was voted as the overall winner. I was impressed with the Vaughn Post on how well they worked together and worked jointly with their Auxiliary. Their hard work paid off as everyone had a good time, and I was delighted that they invited me.

I will be attending the Fall Department Conference on the 28th -30th of October, and currently, I have nothing else to add to my report.

DISTRICT 9 - COMMANDER

Demorise Allen

At the Spring Meeting of 2016, a replacement District Commander for Larry Dobb who had thrown his hat in for Department Vice Commander was not found so I agreed to step back in. I was installed at the Dept, Convention June 26th.

Larry Dobb, Tom Killham and I collected our Post packets, Lewistown delivered Roy's and I delivered the rest. All packets were out by July 9th.

I made phone contact with all of our Posts. We do only have 9 Posts left after losing Winnett and Lavina the last few years. I have made visitations to Lewistown and Judith Gap. I am going to Hobson Tuesday evening.

After we had succeeded from the ZONE MEETING at our Spring Meeting there was a problem for Districts 7 & 11 finding new dates, locations etc. There was a conflict at Big Timber on the 8th. I suggested they could come to Harlowton and join our District #9 Meeting. I had talked to Post 15 and they said they could handle it. Basically things turned back into a ZONE MEETING. I had been in touch with Zone Commander Len Albright. All was fine; I did request that the afternoon was to be District Meetings only! I think all District Commanders were satisfied with that. The whole event went very well. Harlowton had nice facilities, a nice meal and the Legion/VFW hall was great with all of the history displayed. Our guest Speaker at our banquet, Larry Dobb did a great job.

The morning session went very well. The Dept. representatives did a great job, including Larry Dobb, Lowell Long, Bill White, Sue Foster, Ray Read, Kim Kay and Erin Carpenter. We also had a special visit from our Dept ALA President Jean Bossen. Thanks Madam President!!

I will be in touch with all Posts to get their Oratorical packets to them as soon as possible. As always, to succeed, TIME is the ingredient needed the most!

DISTRICT 10 - COMMANDER

Clancee Collins

At the end of June, I was asked to become District 10 Commander by Department Commander Hal Rice after he learned that the current District 10 Commander had resigned for medical reasons. I voiced my eligibility concerns to Commander Rice because I had major surgery scheduled for the first week in July.

My surgery limited me to travel so I was unable to visit any of my Posts for meetings. I did however contact eight of twelve Posts and talked to either a Commander or Adjutant about membership, eligible transfers from Post 105 and attendance at the upcoming Fall District meeting in Forsyth.

I attended an Adjutant meeting in Glendive with Department Adjutant Gary White, Zone Commander Harada and the Commander and Adjutant of Glendive Post 28. Adjutant White gave me my District 10 paperwork and went over some concerns he had about my District.

In August I wrote a letter to the editor of the Miles City Star newspaper concerning the Veteran's Hospital Administration building. I pointed out the important role that The American Legion had played in donating property for the hospital, community college and the old armory. I also attended a community forum with the Custer County Commissioners concerning the takeover and operation of the building.

I conducted the Fall meeting in Forsyth on September 17th and was a little disappointed in the attendance by my District. I had contacted most of my Posts and had been assured that at least an Adjutant or Commander would be at the meeting to represent their Post. Sylvia Beals from Forsyth Post 39 had graciously agreed to by my District Adjutant and Russ Mann from Custer Post #5 served as my Chaplain. I would like to thank Department Vice Commander Dobb, Department Adjutant White, and Past Department Commander Bob Beals for helping me with guidance in conducting my first District meeting.

In the future I hope to be able to travel to some of my District Posts and introduce myself. I will accentuate the importance of achieving our membership goals and addressing any concerns that may come from my Post Commanders and Adjutants. I would also reiterate to my Posts the importance of American Legion Youth Programs and the role they play in shaping our future community leaders.

I am looking forward to being the guest speaker at the annual Veterans Award repining ceremony at the Miles City VA Living Center on Veterans Day.

DISTRICT 11 - COMMANDER

Richard Klose

After attending the Department of Montana Convention in Bozeman, the focus for me was on the Laurel Post helping get ready for the Northwest Region Class A Baseball Tournament to be held in Laurel. This was the first time that the tournament was held in Laurel.

I was also involved in putting together the Veteran's Day at the fair ceremony in Billings.

In September the Laurel Post did a 9/11 Ceremony and a POW/MIA Ceremony at the Laurel High School. Jim Gunnells a WWII POW was honored at this ceremony. Jim was captured shortly after his B-17 was shot down over northern Germany.

On October 3rd I attended the Hysham Post meeting and dinner.

On October 9th I held the District 11 meeting in Harlowton as part of the South Central Zone meeting with District 7 and 9.

DEPARTMENT COMMITTEE CHAIRS
AMERICANISM

George Blackard

Seeing all of the turmoil recently about people “protesting” this and that, standing on flags, burning flags etc I wanted to reach out to our Montana congressional offices to confirm their positions on protections for the U.S. Flag. The American Legion makes their stance known as the following... ***The American Legion believes The U.S. Constitution should be amended to add the following: "The Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States." The Legion joins all of the states and an overwhelming majority of citizens in declaring that the American flag deserves legal protection from acts of public and intentional acts of physical desecration. In 1989, the U.S. Supreme Court declared flag desecration to be a "right" protected by the First Amendment. The Legion disagreed at the time, and now reaffirms its position that flag desecration is a form of conduct – not speech – that can and should be regulated by law.***

I sent emails to and called all three congressional offices and requested a response to the American Legion’s stance on protections for the U.S. Flag. I have not received a response yet but have been told I will have responses back before Fall Conference so I will share those then.

I am proud to be a part of Andrew Pearson Post 117 and our involvement with the Yellowstone Kelly Interpretive Site soon to be built on the rims overlooking Billings. Post 117 has made an offer that has been accepted, to pay for the flag pole, flag, and lights at the new site. It will be great to look up to the rims and see one more U.S. Flag flying over the city.

With Election Day just a few days away, it is important that we exercise our right to vote. I know that this election cycle has been tedious and some would say downright embarrassing but we mustn’t give up. We the people own this country not the politicians, so make sure you educate yourself the best you can and get out and vote for whichever candidate represents your best interests. You are allowed to wear your uniform (cover) to the polls however you are not allowed to stump for any candidate while wearing it. Always remember that The American Legion is NON-PARTISAN but that does not mean we are non-political.

I challenge all of you to make an extra effort to promote Americanism in your community this year. If you are not sure what all falls under the Americanism Pillar, go to Legion.org and simply type in Americanism in the search box. You will find you have access to the Americanism Manual and lots of other great resources to help explain what programs fall under this category and what you can do to help promote Americanism. Some topics that fall under Americanism are programs included are U.S. Flag protocol, U.S. Flag Protection, Illegal Immigration, Voter Registration and Participation, The Pledge of Allegiance, Establishment Clause Lawsuits. Some programs include American Legion Baseball, Boys Nation and Boys State, The National High School Oratorical Competition, Junior Law Cadet, American Legion Junior Shooting Sports, The American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund. We need to foster Americanism in our country more now than ever and you can play an important role in that.

BASEBALL

George Haegele

We added 6 new teams in 2016. This gives us 64 teams and over 1,000 young men playing Department of Montana American Legion Baseball. This is also the most teams we have had in the 30 years of my involvement on the Baseball Committee.

Ten teams play at the AA level, 32 teams at the A level and 22 teams in Class B. At the present time the Class B teams do not play a conference schedule or Post season games. We anticipate more teams entering this category and this will necessitate coming up with a conference and Post season schedule in the near future.

The Class A Tournament was in Great Falls and the local Committee did a great job putting together a fine tournament. The Bitterroot Red Sox repeated as Class A Champions. They also repeated as Northwest Class A Regional Champions. Congratulations, again, to this terrific group. This Regional Tournament was held in Laurel and hosted by the Laurel Dodgers. From all I have heard, this was one of the finest jobs done by a host community in the many years of this tournament. The Dodgers also took second place to the Red Sox.

The Class AA Tournament was held in Missoula. The host, Mavs, did an outstanding job. I must say, this was one of the best AA Tournaments I have had the pleasure of working. The Billings Scarlets repeated as champions. The Scarlets defeated the Wyoming Champions and then defeated the Oregon Champions. They lost to eventual Champion Washington Post 34 and were then eliminated by Washington Post 7. Washington Post 34 went on to the World Series where they lost all three games in pool play.

This year's World Series had 6 games on live TV (ESPNU). This year's National Champion is Texarkana, Louisiana Post 58. It was an honor to be the Field Manager at the World Series for the fourth year in a row. The Championship game was attended by 8,500 fans. If you ever get a chance to go to Shelby, do so, it is a great experience.

This year's \$1,000.00 Scholarship winners are Class A Jonathan Ringer of the Bitterroot Red Sox and the Class AA winner is Ryan Dorvall of the Helena Senators.

The continued success of your Department Baseball Program is a testimony to the hard work and dedication of Vice Chairmen Duwayne Scott and Gary Parry and District Chairmen Ron Edwards, Ural Wayne Raymond, Jim Monteith, and Pete Moe. Without the continued support of Adjutant Gary White and the Commander, we could not attain the success we are currently enjoying.

BOY SCOUTS

Dick Ellwein

I attended the Sons of The American Legion National Convention; at the Post NEC meeting I was appointed National Chaplain. I also attended the American Legion National Convention. The conventions were held in Cincinnati, Ohio. I read a set of names at a POW-MIA Recognition ceremony in Helena. I attended the Sons of The American Legion Fall NEC conference in Indianapolis, IN as National Chaplain. I will give an update of the Boy Scout Chairman tele-conference held on October 27th at the Fall Conference.

BOYS STATE

Don Jones

(No report submitted)

CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE

Ray Read

Reference is made to:

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

This is the second Fall Conference Report to the Montana Department, The American Legion by the Department Centennial Committee. Some of this is a repeat from the Department Historian Report.

During the 96th Annual Convention the Department Executive Committee addressed the establishment of the Centennial Committee. I was subsequently appointed as the Chair of this Committee. I, in turn choose three Legionnaires to assist me in the development a program to complete the mission of telling Montana's Rich American Legion history. I can be reached at 470 Ronda Road, Helena, MT 59602, Telephone: 406-458-9847/Cell 406-235-0290; email: myfun51@msn.com.

The Committee currently consists of the following Legionnaires:

Joyce Babcock (AC Buckner Post #111), Custer, Montana) P.O. box 21, Custer, Montana 59024, Telephone No. 406-348-2089; email: donandel@midrivers.com

Michael Shepard, (Columbia Falls, Post 72), 351 7th Ave. East N., Columbia Falls, Montana 59912 Telephone No. 406-250-9806; email: michaelshpard7@gmail.com

Lowell Long, (Blaine Post # 48), P.O. Box 1144, Chinook, Montana 59523. Telephone 406-357-2387 email: lowell.long@hotmail.com.

The following are the identified goals and objectives of the 100th Anniversary Centennial Committee at this date. They are subject to review and modification:

1. Plan and conduct a Montana Department Centennial Commemoration for the 2019 Department Convention with interim celebrations in 2017 and 2018.
2. Plan and conduct a robust collection and interpretation of Department History through the eyes of the current 129 Posts, broken down in 11 Districts, 4 command zones, and the Department Executive Committee with emphasis on accomplishments of The American Legion of Montana.
3. Planning for and publishing a Department 100th Anniversary Book, utilizing previously collected history of the various Posts, American Legion auxiliary units, and the squadrons of the Montana Detachment of the American Legion.
4. Surveying the various members of the American Legion Family to identify and quantify various activities to better demonstrate the strengths, lineage and honors of the American Legion of Montana.
5. Engaging the various communities of Montana that have an American Legion Post presence with meaningful dialogue and performance supporting the American Legion Four Pillars.
6. Conducting outreach in those communities that do not have an American Legion presence to bring them into the Centennial activities.
7. Working with the seven Tribal reservations engaging Montana Native American Veterans in meaningful ways.
8. Working closely with the American Legion National Centennial Committee to accomplish the mission as laid in resolution No. 31, Spring 2011, National Executive Committee, Stating,

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

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

9. Inculcate the sense of the importance of participating in the American Legion Centennial to the American Legion Family, American Legion communities, and State of Montana. Specifically:

- Suggested: Identifying Montana Department American Legion Posts who are Centennial Posts (those chartered from August 1919-June 1920).
- Suggested: Identifying those American Legion Posts who 75 years or older; 50 years or older; those 25 years or older and those under 25 years.
- Suggested: Special recognition for those American Legion Posts who maintain a presence in their community/area with a Post home.

10. Build an adequate funding stream for all activities of the above.

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Sharon Doig

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

I received the final TFA for 2015-2016 on June 30th for a single mom with two children in which they received \$1395.

In August I received through email another TFA that is still a work in progress. At the time, the veteran did not have the children living with him, the parents were separated and had not worked it out and remains pending. The investigator was not getting much cooperation with the veteran.

As of October 2, 2016, 2016 I have not received any Temporary Financial Assistance applications.

It is important to stress the application needs to be complete with all the paper work. Be sure you have a current application which I can email to you. It is important the page titled Other Assistance be completely filled out with dates applied for assistance, the status, and the amount approved of if Not Eligible the reason why.

Not only the Creditor Information be filled out, but paper work from the creditor. The checks are two-party with the creditor's name and the veteran.

The Financial Information needs to be completely filled out. The TFA will only cover: shelter, Electricity, gas, water/sewage, food and clothing for the children. Other monthly expenses are included for the total for the month, but the TFA does not cover paying for those. There should

also be a legible copy of the veterans DD 214, birth certificates, marriage certificates, divorce papers which includes who has the custody of the children.

The investigator needs to work with the veteran and just not hand the application to the veteran. Any member of the Post can be an investigator and yes, it can be uncomfortable asking for personal information.

National reviews all applications received before 8 a.m. on Tuesday's or by 8 a.m. on Thursday's. The best way is to email me. If you need to fax the application, you must call me first so I can be home to turn on my fax machine.

When I gave my end of year report, I noticed on the Posts Consolidated Reports so many Posts have nothing listed under Children and Youth. I encourage each Post to support at least one charity or event in this category. Remember, if a member of your Post makes a donation to one or more of National's charities, your Post can take credit for it.

CONSTITUTION & INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Sandy Youngbauer

(No report submitted)

CONVENTION 2017

George Blackard

(No report submitted)

CONVENTION 2018

David Driver

From our last meeting it has been decided that Post 341 will handle the lodging for the Convention. Post 130 will handle the registration requirements to include the registration fees for the Convention and Post 3 will handle the Convention booklet and the finances from the advertisements. Kim Kay McCarty-Martin was selected as Vice Chairperson for the Convention 2018 Committee. As reported in our last report, it looks like the Holiday Inn will be the main venue.

We, Posts 3, 130 and 341 will continue working on bringing you the best Department Convention. Stay tuned to this network for upcoming new developments.

CONVENTION 2019

Jeff Nelson

The 2019 centennial convention is progressing right along. We have contacted KwatapNuk resort in Polson and they would like to host our convention. There are plenty of accommodations

available to meet the needs of the convention. At present we are negotiating terms for the convention with the resort.

We are planning a cruise on Flathead Lake, Thursday evening, with a catered meal aboard the tour boat, Shadow. This will be the 40&8 event and in conjunction with any of their events planned for the evening.

There will be opportunities to visit the Miracle of America museum, and the Polson historical museum, 27 hole golf course, National Bison Range, Kerr dam, gambling casino at the motel, boating on Flathead lake, and much more.

There are also a half a dozen other motels in the Polson area to stay in plus several campgrounds for R'vers.

DEPARTMENT EMERGENCY RESPONSE COORDINATOR

Karen Semple

So far, Montana has been spared a major disaster declaration for any type of disaster occurring since July 1st to the present. Louisiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Florida, Iowa, Hawaii, Georgia, North and South Carolina have all had major disaster declarations – where populations were dislocated due to flooding, hurricanes, landslides, tornadoes or severe storms. Homes and businesses were uninhabitable.

The American Legion National Emergency Fund (NEF) has been a comfort to those Legionnaires and SAL Members displaced by major disasters. Please remember, all “fines” the Sgt-At-Arms collects at Department activities go to the National Emergency Fund, so please pay up generously. You don’t even need to be fined to donate!

Additionally, members can log on to smile.amazon.com to effortlessly donate to the NEF. From their website: “AmazonSmile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you’ll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization. You can choose from nearly one million organizations to support.

To shop at AmazonSmile simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may also want to add a bookmark to smile.amazon.com to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile.”

I logged in and American Legion anything wasn't listed in their go-to list of charities with logos on the page; however, in the box where you can search for a charity, typed in American Legion National...and up popped American Legion National Emergency Fund, which I selected. If you choose to do that, then, American Legion National Emergency Fund will be listed under the Amazon search bar at the top of their webpage every time you sign in at smile.amazon.com – so you can know Amazon will be donating one half of one percent of your purchases to the NEF on your behalf – without any cost at all to you. Please go there and set it up so we can better assist our comrades in need.

As cold temperatures and snow approach, please remember to remind your members to get their winter emergency kit back into their car so it is handy if they need it. It's a lot more comfortable in an emergency with the things you need to stay alive, than without. Go to ready.gov or readyandsafe.mt.gov/Emergency for more information on preparing your Post or yourself for emergencies.

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

Jim Grosset

I have nothing to report as of this date. I look forward to greeting and looking after our Distinguished Guests and making them feel at home, eh.

ENDOWMENT FUND

Jeff Nelson

The endowment committee met at the department convention and talked about getting some exposure in the Legionnaire. The purpose of the endowment fund was set up to help various programs financially as well as veterans themselves. There has not been much activity in the fund for quite some time. There exists a little over \$20,000 in the fund at present and continues to grow a little every year. If any veteran would like to see this program grow they can contribute through a donation or perhaps dedicate an amount in their will. Since the interest accumulated in an endowment fund is the only portion that may be used it needs to grow to a substantial amount.

For more information on contributing to the endowment fund or claiming tax benefits as a contribution please contact me if you have any questions.

FLAG ALLIANCE

Linda Cousineau

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

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

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

Committees: Senate - Judiciary

Latest Action: 07/30/2015 Read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary. ([All Actions](#))

Tracker: This bill has the status Introduced

As of Oct 3, 2016 there has been no movement or change in status of this resolution.

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

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

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

Committees: House - Judiciary

Latest Action: 01/12/2015 Referred to the Subcommittee on the Constitution and Civil Justice. ([All Actions](#))

Tracker: This bill has the status Introduced

As of Oct 3, 2016 Resolution status remains unchanged.

Additionally, there is no MT legislation in 2017 introduced concerning flags.

REMINDER, as a community effort, consider giving a new flag and ‘Thank You for Being a Patriot’ certificate to low income senior citizens, veterans and other individuals in the community who have faithfully displayed the American flag but may need financial assistance to

continue to do so. The certificate should also include directions on where to take their old flag for proper disposal.

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

FINANCE CHAIRMAN
Jeff Nelson

I would like to report on the financial Audit that was done this past year by our accountant Wayne Hintz. Some of the remarks are by Wayne so I don't want to be accused of plagiarism. The audit is conducted according to a Statement of Financial accounting Standards established in 1995. There are three classes of net assets: Unrestricted net assets, temporarily restricted net assets, and permanently restricted net assets. For the years end we had no permanently restricted net assets.

The accounts of the American Legion of Montana are organized on the basis of funds, each of which is considered a separate accounting entity. The operations of each fund are accounted for with a separate accounting entity. The operations of each fund are accounted for with a separate set of self- balancing accounts that comprise its assets, liabilities, net assets, revenues, and expenses as appropriate. The American Legion of Montana's activities are recorded in the following funds.

- 1) The general fund
- 2) Boy's State
- 3) American Legion Baseball

After reviewing the financial statement presented by our accountant it appears we are financially sound and in good graces with the IRS. The office of Wayne Hintz prepared an excellent review of our past years transactions. The programs that we sponsor and provide generate many rewards in the different communities throughout the state.

I encourage each member to partake in the fund raising activities of the department. Through these funds we are able to support the various programs that help the youth in oratorical, boy's state, baseball, essay contest, and so many more.

I would like to thank commander Hal Rice for entrusting me with the chairmanship of the finance committee this next year and will guide the department in the right direction as best as possible.

HEROES TO HOMETOWN COORDINATOR

Josh Clement

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

Currently, the Department has not received any request for support. The Montana National Guard has a few individuals deployed current in low kinetic operations. Navy and Army Reserve units do not have deployments forecasted within the next 6 months. I will continue to reach out to the full time leadership of these two components. My current position allows for me stay abreast with Montana National Guard deployments and planned operations.

Growth in this program needs to focus on ready available ceremonies for our wounded vets as they return to our Great State. Also able to coordinate and facilitate new employment services. Our local community is posed well for job support but I need to ensure resources available throughout the state.

I look forward to support our Department and focusing on our first pillar of The American Legion.

HIGHWAY FATALITY MARKER

John Kougioulis

After Spring Convention, the phone calls increased, I've asked several Posts to remove everything off the fatality markers and Posts they are attached to, in their area. Either they don't "want to offend the family nor friends" of the deceased, or they don't seem to care about this program. Last year I had a phone call from a woman whose son died in traffic accident in a larger town in Montana. She had been told that the year before, by an American Legion Post, they would get a fatality marker put up. When I called the Post in that town, I was told they didn't do the Fatality Marker Program anymore, couldn't get anyone to do the program. There are 3 Posts in that town, I would like to think that they could get together and get a crew to do this program. This woman was in tears because her son was a veteran and couldn't get anyone from a Veterans Organization program to put up a fatality marker for him. So I met with her and put up a fatality marker for her. Post 42 of Townsend supplied the Post. If your Post isn't going to maintain the fatality markers it makes the program look like no-one cares. The DOT will see that the American Legion isn't "living up" to the agreement and shut the program down. I for one would hate to see that happen. I've told another Post to clean up their markers, a year ago, still nothing has happened! It's not that difficult to do, I've done my assigned area plus others, myself. The American Legion needs to show pride in our programs and not do just the programs that "make the Post look good" on paper.

HOMELESS VETERAN COORDINATOR

Ray Read

The Montana Department's participation in The American Legion's Homeless Veterans Program is now moving into its tenth year. Hal Rice, 2016-17 Montana Department Commander, re-appointed me as the Coordinator of the Program as the as the Homeless Veterans Coordinator in July 2016. I respectfully submit the following report of the record to date.

Montana Statistics Related to Homeless Veterans is as follows:

Facts: Last reported 2015 --Of the 99,646 veterans recognized and recorded by the VA as being in Montana, 75,312 are indicated as wartime veterans. Breakdown by era is: Gulf War- 31,210; Vietnam- 35,105; Korea-7,831; WW II-3,987. Peacetime veterans number 24,244. The ratio of gender is Female veterans 8,445 and Male veterans 91,201. Comment: It is estimated that based on averaging 2.5 members per veterans household that the total veterans population including family members is at 249,000+- 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 considered to be at risk or homeless. The definition of homeless as defined by United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is, "Without and abode or home, living with family or relative because they cannot afford or qualify for a home residence, or living in a institutional setting because they cannot qualify or are financially unable to rent or own a home."

In the latest Montana Homeless Survey conducted in January 2016 of the 1,247 Household with 1709 person respondents of which 165 Veterans were identified as to the previous year when 277 had been identified. This indicates that homelessness among Montana veterans was approximately 13% of the total homeless of Montana based on the Survey results. The final 2016 HUD/VA data is not yet available.

The following information was provided for the January 2016 Point in Time Survey by Housing & Urban Development conducted in January 2016. 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.

INSURANCE DIRECTOR

Gary White

We have received no new disbursements since the last report in June; our next anticipated disbursements will be in April 2017. We continue to show a decline in policy holders, therefore

we will see a decline in revenue from the insurance programs. Since the AD & D program has been suspended for new members, we will have a larger decrease than normal. Those who have registered in the past but did not reregister may still do so and never have to register again as long as their American Legion membership is current. Remember you can register online at www.TheLit.com or by calling 800-235-6943. Senior (over 18 years of age) SAL and Auxiliary members are now eligible for the \$1000 AD & D free insurance, as well as the \$5000.00 AD & D insurance if they are on Legion Family business. The LIT hopes to have the AD & D problem with the Montana Auditor (Insurance Commissioner) resolved by March.

We must continue to encourage our members to look at the Legionnaire Insurance Trust programs for their insurance needs. The Trust is constantly updating their programs looking for new and better insurance products for our members. It is not our intent to be selling insurance, but we should be making our members aware of the products available to them.

LEGION RIDERS

Ken McMillon

Since becoming the chair for the Legion Riders, I have been in contact with those that met at Convention. There are some that have been talking about getting another Chapter started in the Great Falls area. We went over all the requirements in starting another Chapter. We will be getting back together this coming fall and see how things are going.

This year I have participated in two poker runs as a support vehicle. I missed the “Remembrance Run” back in August.

LEGISLATIVE

Roger Hagan

The Legislation Committee is gearing up for the upcoming 65th Session of the Montana Legislature. We will have a presence at the legislature, monitoring bills that affect the veterans and military members of Montana. We expect to be working with other veteran and military groups (i.e. VFW, DAV, both National Guard Associations, etc.) as we prepare for the session.

This session promises to be a tough one for anything related to funding/taxes. Because of the difficult economic outlook for our state, any new programs calling for an increase in appropriations or a reduction in revenue will face a strong headwind. However, the American Legion's prior commitment to a tax exemption/reduction for retired military annuities will remain an effort of your Legion membership. While this effort may not be successful this biennium, keeping the issue in front of the legislature is an opportunity we must take.

Additionally, during the session, we will promote the value and importance of our Montana veteran and military community to our newly elected legislators and statewide officials. It should be noted that Montana is ranked 2nd (sometimes 1st) in veterans per capita. We have 100,000+

veterans and 160,000+ veteran dependents in Montana. When you consider those numbers in a state of over 600,000 voters, we could/should have a formidable influence in our state.

On the national scene, our 3 Congressional Liaisons continue to convey our American Legion message to Senator Tester (Merv Gunderson), Senator Daines (George Blackard) and Representative Zinke (Mike Shepard). If you get a chance, thank them for their good work. They have done a wonderful job communicating with staffers and their respective congressman on your behalf. Their work enhances the National American Legion's efforts and we are recognized by our national legislative staff for our proactive efforts.

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

MEMBERSHIP

Elmer Palmer

At the completion of the 2016 Department Convention, my drive home was interrupted by a phone call. Department Adjutant was asking me to attend a funeral in Missoula the latter part of the following week.

I was proud to be able to represent the Department of Montana at the funeral of David Thatcher. David, a longtime resident of Missoula, was the next to the last of the Doolittle Raiders, the elite team that bombed Tokyo on the mainland of Japan. His funeral was attended by the remaining Raider, and included a fly-over by a B-25 Bomber similar to the planes flown by the raiders.

The following weekend I attended the funeral of George Simmons, a World War II soldier. Simmons was a Bataan Death March survivor that later died in a Japanese Prisoner of War Camp in the Philippine Islands. A number of Legionnaires from District 5 escorted the remains from the Montana/Idaho border to the funeral home in Hamilton and many more from across the state attended the service in Corvallis.

The last week of July I accompanied Commander Rice, Vice Commander Dobb and District Commanders Coutts and McCarty-Martin to Indianapolis. I spent my first day at the National Membership and Post Activities Committee and the others and I attended the National Membership Workshop.

The M&PA Committee discussed several issues concerning membership. One outcome of the committee was a procedural change that dictates the allowance of DMS members to count for the membership goal for the Posts will be immediately allotted to the goal for the Post and department. Previously these members were not added to the count until after the May target date. Other actions were looking at the awards program and what awards would encourage recruiting members.

Part of the workshop is an opportunity to meet with National Leading Candidate to discuss the department membership goal for the coming membership year. This year we were asked to suggest a goal for Montana for the 2017 year. We offered a goal of 10,995, and the Leading Candidate offered a goal of 11,000. The leading candidate requested that the goal be shared throughout the department showing growth in each of the Posts of at least one member over last year.

Shortly after the Department Convention George Blackard and Jim Lish conducted Post revitalizations in the area of Libby and Troy, with Zone Commander Larry Stroklund; they worked with the National Guard, obtaining 18 new members.

District 5 conducted a District Revitalization in early September. This resulted in thirty five transfers from the DMS system and Headquarters Post and three new members. Additionally, two DMS paid dues for 2017, and become members. In the time since, at least 5 people have been transferred from the lists that have been left with the local Posts.

District 6 utilized former Assistant Director, Membership, Jim Fiedler to do a Post revitalization with Post 46, Boulder. Jim had worked this area previously, but the Post was reaching a low point again. Working September 9-12, with local help, he located a dozen members, and conducted an informational meeting and a new commander was elected. The Post will grow as the District will be providing guidance to the leadership.

Two District Revitalizations are scheduled for the first weekend of November, one in Great Falls with guidance from Michele Steinmetz on November 4-6 and one in Billings with guidance from George Blackard on November 3-5.

As the 55% target date passed last week, all eleven Districts of the Department of Montana had reached the target. Congratulations to the Zone, District and Post Commanders for your efforts. A couple of these Districts were by a very low margin. Let's all put forth the effort to keep meeting these targets.

NATIONAL SECURITY

Randall Brown

At the Department Convention that was held in Bozeman during the month of June 2016, I gave my written and oral report and chaired the National Security Committee Meeting. During the convention, we heard from Senator Daines and Congressman Zinke who both spoke about some of our current national security issues. Both of these men are very concerned about Islamic terrorism that threatens this nation and the entire world. They realize that the current situation is unacceptable and that current policies are inadequate and change is needed. National and local elections this year will have a huge impact on National Security issues that this nation faces.

Islamic terrorism is the most critical National Security issue that our nation is currently faced with. Recent terrorist attacks in California, Florida, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, France, Germany and other parts of the world that have resulted in hundreds of citizens murdered or seriously injured highlight this serious situation. Adding to this crisis are the murders of many of our nation's police officers. Several black suspects were killed by police officers, that some believed were race related, resulted in a movement of "Black Lives Matters". This movement inspired domestic terrorism and the murders of police officers in Dallas, Baton Rouge and other parts of the country. Because of these acts of terrorism, many Americans no longer feel safe in this country.

In Germany and other parts of Europe, Muslim men, who were recently provided aid after fleeing from the Mid East, have raped and assaulted European women. Al-Qaida inspired Sunni militants, ISIS (known as Islamic State and the Levant), have seized many parts of Iraq and Syria and claim responsibility for these and other attacks which include the bombing of Russian and Egypt airplanes that killed all aboard. These terrorists are responsible for assassinations, beheadings, murders, rapes, thievery and other unspeakable atrocities against innocent civilians. Many of these terrorists and their supporters have been arrested in the United States, France, Belgium, England, Russia and other parts of the world. However, there are still many cells of these terrorists and their supporters entrenched in different countries. ISIS is fighting a large coalition force made up of many countries including the United States. Russia has entered this situation and is assisting the Syrian government. The majority of the US forces and their coalition allies are conducting air strikes on many of the ISIS positions with various degrees of success. The majority of the ground war is being fought with Iraqi and Kurdish Forces and their allies. The US and some of the coalition forces have some Special Forces and other personnel supporting these fighters. Turkey has been fighting the Kurds for over 30 years. A recent terrorist attack in Ankara, Turkey, blamed on Kurdish militants that killed 28 people and wounded dozens more, have complicated the Syrian situation. The Kurdish Forces now include renewed fighting with Turkey. Adding to this crisis was the recent attempted coup of the Turkish government which led to the firing and dismissal of many military leaders and government officials.

The Syrian government has been fighting demonstrators in that country that have been trying to overthrow their regime. Initially, other countries were siding with the demonstrators and wanted that regime ousted. However, since ISIS has taken over many parts of Syria and supported these demonstrators, support for them has diminished. Because of this conflict, thousands of Syrian refugees have fled their country and have been seeking asylum elsewhere. Other countries have welcomed them, however, it has led to some of the Islamic terrorists blending in and taking advantage of this situation. These terrorists then have become involved with attacks on those same countries and cities that have welcomed them, including Germany, Paris and Nice, France. Because of the potential of Islamic terrorists entering this country, there are many Americans that oppose allowing those refugees to come here without a recognition system that would identify possible or known terrorists.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban, al-Qaida and ISIS continue their resistance with military action, suicide attacks and the use of improvised explosive devices. Recently, some of these terrorists have infiltrated the Afghanistan Security Forces and have killed several of our military advisors. Recent negotiations with the Afghanistan President have cleared the way to keep some US troops in that country for an extended period.

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

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

Because of Iran's nuclear program, which western nations believe is enriching uranium for weapons purposes, the current situation in that country is a serious concern. Because the US and several other countries have reached an agreement with Iran concerning its nuclear program, the U.S. recently lifted sanctions which included Iran's ability to sell oil on the world market. Canada has closed its embassy and brought their ambassador home. They have also sent Iran's diplomats back to Iran. Israel considers a nuclear-armed Iran to be a threat because of its missile capabilities and support for anti-Israel militants. Iran has made frequent references by its president to destroy Israel. The US is concerned that Israel might be preparing to attack Iran over its nuclear program. The Republican Senators were opposed to this Iran deal. (The American Legion also opposed this agreement). This issue has resulted in US relations with Israel deteriorating considerably.

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

The situation between the Palestinians and the Israelis is always a national security concern. Almost daily, there are confrontations between Israelis and Palestinians resulting in deaths and injuries to both sides. Currently, the Fatah group controls the West Bank and the Hamas group

has seized control of the Gaza Strip, therefore, splitting the two parties. Israel and other western nations are supporting the Fatah Group, but do not recognize or support the Hamas Group.

In Nigeria, another extremist organization has emerged, called Boko Haram. They have kidnapped children, killed innocent civilians and caused many problems in Nigeria other parts of Africa. Recently, this extremist group has teamed up with ISIS to spread their brand of Islamic rule.

The recent takeover of Crimea by Russia from the Ukraine has caused major concerns from other nations including the United States. Because of this action, sanctions have been placed on Russia by several countries and NATO is beginning to get involved with this situation.

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

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

Currently, our country's economy has stalled, and unemployment rates are rising. Current energy policies are having a negative effect on the coal and oil industry and many miners and oil workers in that industry have lost their jobs. The current administration is drastically reducing our military forces and military capabilities which are adding to unemployment problems and impacting our national security interests. Unfortunately, the country is faced with huge debts that must be eliminated and the majority of employment opportunities are within the service industry. The higher-paying manufacturing jobs continue to be eliminated or exported out of the country. It has become more and more difficult to even buy products that are made in America. One of the reasons that US manufacturing has decreased is because of the many frivolous lawsuits that

end up causing US companies' huge amounts of money. (Examples: Some lunatic murders someone with a gun and the manufacture of that weapon gets sued. A drunken person wrecks their car and the car manufacture is held liable). Unfortunately, these are not isolated incidents and continue at an alarming rate.

Mandatory Federal spending cuts have taken place, which are having huge impacts on national security issues. And, at the same time this administration is giving millions of dollars away in aid to other countries and continues to spend our tax dollars for their perks and benefits. Almost daily, waste fraud and abuse issues are surfacing at all levels of government. These issues are all part of the debt problems that this nation is experiencing. Current policies need to be re-examined and it is evident that changes are needed. The American Legion organization is focusing on resolutions to balance the federal budget with the least amount of impact on our military forces. This country must be extremely pro-active in our search for dangerous Islamic extremists that kill innocent civilians and challenge our way of life. The recent Islamic terrorist attacks are a very serious problem. Cyber attacks on our nation's communications systems must be dealt with. Murders of some of our nation's police officers, and messages to the leaders of this country, confirm that our citizens believe positive changes are overdue and desperately needed.

Besides the threat of terrorism, there are many other national security concerns that affect this country. The United States must be very careful about intervening in pro-reform events taking place in the Middle East and African nations, and to re-examine our foreign aid policies. Our US intelligence programs must be re-evaluated and changes appear to be needed. The things that our nation needs to make top priorities are the total support of the Armed Forces and it's needs, balance the federal budget, encourage US manufacturing in our country, to reduce our dependence on foreign oil (with the exception of Canada) and change our energy policies that are unfavorably affecting our coal and oil industry.

With advances in technology, this country is able to sustain our oil consumption needs; however, this is a two-edged sword because of the higher oil prices involved.

The proposed pipeline from Canada to Houston Oil Refineries would appear to be in the best interests of this country and this project should have been approved. Recently, congress recommended approval for this project but President Obama put his Veto on the bill. Canada has proven to be one of our finest allies. And, we need to secure our borders with Mexico and Canada.

ORATORICAL

Jeff Holmes

First off, I would like to congratulate and thank Michael Fuller of Helena for representing Montana at the National Oratorical Contest. You made us proud, and we are glad that you decided to further your leadership education through the American Legion Oratorical Program. Michael was also one of the guests of honor and spoke very eloquently at the Children and

Youth Luncheon at this past Department Convention in Bozeman. His mother has also agreed to help other contestants prepare for the contest. Let me know if you would like her contact information. She is more than willing to help us and I thank her for that.

I would also like to thank Lewis & Clark Post #2 for sponsoring the Oratorical Contest as part of their Post objectives. I truly believe our new contest format worked to perfection once again. This year, we had 5 quality candidates participating at the department contest. Thanks again also to everyone for making last year's contest a huge success. It was truly a team effort.

I am also disappointed to learn that the Youth Activities Subcommittee recommended rejection on May 2, 2016 to our oratorical resolution we passed at the department convention a couple years ago. Its rejection is based on "potential financial issues which could serve to adversely impact contest integrity." Further alternative options are under consideration at various departments around the country as the idea is sound and would create a great opportunity for our future department winners.

Lastly, just a reminder that our Department Oratorical Contest will be held on Saturday March 11th 2017 at the Helena College of Technology. It is almost a month later compared to the last few years, but the only sports conflict will be that it is the final Saturday of the State Basketball Tournaments which we don't think will cause many conflicts. Combine that with the availability of a quality facility, and on a Saturday vs. a Sunday, and we feel that the drastic changes will help you recruit more candidates. We got to try something, and time will tell I guess. Thanks also to Mr. Dick Ellwein for making the building reservations.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS & PUBLICATIONS

Lori Perkio

How do I submit an article or photo to the Legionnaire?

Next Deadline – January 1, 2017

Preferences:

1. Text – No formatting such as multiple space and tabs to line up text
 - Set one tab (publisher will format to line up paragraphs and columns) PLEASE do not use multiple spaces as All formatting has to be removed before placing into paper
 - Modern formatting is a single space between sentences (after the period of a sentence)
 - Provide Post City as well as Post/Unit number
 - Post, Unit & Department are capitalized
 - It is better if articles/stories are written in third person – unless you're talking about quotes from actual people, of course. There really should never be any "we did this" or "I/we think that" written in the body of a good news story – imagine someone else is telling your story at all times, as though the journalist is telling the reader about someone or something else.
 - Acronyms. Always keep new members informed and familiar with programs. For example: Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS). The first time an acronym is used

in an article use full title followed with acronym in parenthesis, and then following first use the acronym.

- Please keep articles to approximately 300 words per article then EDIT, EDIT, EDIT for punctuation, clarity and repetitive or run on sentences.
- If you are using information in your article from another source be sure to use quotation marks and give credit to the author and/or publication you are taking the information from otherwise this is plagiarizing which has serious legal repercussions.
- DO NOT submit articles in PDF format.
- If you want credit for an article or photo(s), please make sure you let us know.

2. Photos – send as e-mail attachments – Do NOT paste into your document - PLEASE!!

- JPG format, as an attachment
- Default setting on a digital camera is usually set very high. Set to 1200 x 1725 pixels which are ideal for printing 4x6 with desired output resolution of 300 dpi.
- Cell phone photos are many times too poor quality so take your time taking the photo. If the photo is blurry, too far away, tops of heads cut off, shows just the backs of heads we cannot make it look better for you. Send photos in medium resolution.
- Captions should be noted in the e-mail:
Photo# caption which includes Post/ Unit #, Name, City along with the names of those in the photo and what Post/Unit they are members of.
- Don't spend time setting up photos and captions in a Word document – PLEASE
Each time a photo is copied/pasted to edit it loses integrity. Send as an e-mail attachment.
- Do Not embed photos in an e-mail
See above (if embedded in an e-mail the photo has to be copied/pasted into Word, and then copied/pasted into photo editor). Send as an e-mail attachment.

3. News articles

- Sending a hyperlink to an article via e-mail is best (rather than hard-copy to scan)
Helps ensure article can be found (sometimes older articles are archived and cannot be found) and also to give proper credit to the author and newspaper to avoid plagiarizing.

4. Corrections to previously-sent articles

- Send an e-mail with the corrections
Most times the article has already been formatted and grammar-edited, and inserting the correction saves a lot of time in redoing. Edit and spell check your work before you send it the first time.

5. SEND ARTICLES, PHOTOS WITH CAPTIONS TO:

LMTPRPUB@GMAIL.COM

PLEASE SEND SUBMITTALS EARLY!

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

John Pellegrini

I have received notice that the Detachment of Montana has reached the 25% goal for 2017. Let's keep up the good work and see what we can do by December 31, 2016. Renewals are the key to making quotas on time.

I attended the National Convention in Cincinnati in August. Dick Ellwein was appointed National Chaplain of the Sons of the American Legion. He will hold the position until the 2017 Convention in Reno, Nevada.

With all its fund raising abilities for all the American Legion programs, the SAL was a very strong contributor to helping the American Legion hit a high of over \$7,000,000.00, for the Child Welfare fund. American Legion Commander Barnett was very pleased with our efforts.

Getting back to membership, we need new members also.

SHOOTING SPORTS

Ray Read

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

The Basic Marksmanship Course is a comprehensive package for the beginning shooter with little or no marksmanship experience. Gun safety and marksmanship fundamentals are taught through a balanced mix of short lecture and discussion followed by hands-on activities. The cornerstone of the Basic Marksmanship Course is the SHOOTER'S GUIDE TO POSITION AIR RIFLE, now in its third edition. The guide provides a thorough explanation of the essential fundamentals need for success as an entry-level competitive shooter. Another highlight of The American Legion Junior Shooting Sports Program is our annual JUNIOR POSITION AIR RIFLE TOURNAMENT. The tournament begins with Postal matches to determinate state and/or regional champions. The next stage is a Qualification Round (also a Postal match) to determine the shooters who will earn expense paid trips to compete in the National Championship.

More than 1,500 youth participated in The American Legion's 2015-2016 Shooting Sports Postal match competition, but only the top 15 shooters in both the sporter and precision category advanced to the Legion's 26th annual Junior 3-Position Air Rifle National Championships in Colorado. Montana JSSP shooters have placed in both categories:

Elizabeth Lorenz, Seeley, Montana, Hellgate Civilian Jr. Shooters 1, shot No. 2 out of 15 in the Precision competition. Her score was 590 only 5 points out of first place. Lorenz went on to place 3rd out of 15 in the 2016 American Legion JSSP National Championships

Jonna Warnken, Mineral Co. Shooting Sports MT 1 shot 6th out of 15; In the Sporter competition her score is 550 with the top score being 572. Warnken placed 7th out of 15 in the 2016 American Legion JSSP National Championships'

During the competition, the participants in both the Precision and Sporter category shot a .177 caliber air rifle in three positions – prone, standing and kneeling. One competitor in each respective category will win the championship and a \$5,000 scholarship provided by the American Legion and Sons of The American Legion. A \$1,000 scholarship, provided by the American Legion Auxiliary, was awarded to the second-place finisher in each category.

The 1st Precision and Sporter champions travelled to The American Legion's 98th National Convention in Cincinnati from Aug. 26-30, 2016 to be honored alongside other Legion youth program champions.

American Legion Posts & Coaches Notes:

As you are getting started we would strongly recommend that you focus your efforts on the Sporter category. It does not take a lot of money to get started in the Sporter category; the junior athletes do not need any sort of sophisticated shooting clothing like the Precision category does. If you have not already done so we would recommend taking a look at the Civilian Marksmanship Program's WebPages. This will give you a very good background on what is allowed in terms of sporter category rifles, clothing, and additional equipment.⁷ With regards to sporter category rifles, those that have been successful in our National Championship tournament have fired the Daisy 753/853 pneumatic rifle, the Daisy M888 CO2 rifle or the Daisy XS-40 Valiant compressed air rifle. More information about these and other rifles can be obtained from the Daisy WebPages @daisy.ifware.com/cgi-bin/daisy2/products_avanti.html. The CMP has an excellent extended payment program to purchase either the 853 or the M888 rifles. More information can be found at the following website: www.odcmp.com/Services/Programs/Sporter_Air_Rifle.htm.

It is up to you, your finances, and the number of junior athletes you will have as to how many rifles you would want to consider buying. Most teams will have 3 or 4 athletes training on one rifle. Of course this will mean re-adjusting the sights for each of the athletes but this is good training. As you progress and find that you have two or three athletes that are better than the others you may want to consider letting them fire only their particular rifle. If you continue with the program and have some athletes who are interested in continuing in 3-Position competitive shooting now would be the time to consider moving them into the Precision

category. We can provide you with more information if you would like. 2016-17 Awards include:

- (1) Top Individual Precision;
- (2) Top Individual Sporter;
- (3) Top Team Precision;
- (4) Top Team Sporter;
- (5) Participation certificates for individuals and teams;
- (6) Special awards for individual and teams who are chosen to compete national or are ranked nationally i.e. team top five; Sporter and Precision individual).

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

Montana has been involved in the American Legion Junior Air Rifle Shooting Sports Program since its inception some twenty-eight years ago. During this time the program has continued to grow and mature. As of this date there 25 American Legion sponsored Junior Air Rifle Shooting Sports Teams across Montana.

VETERANS AFFAIRS & REHABILITATION

Kelly Ackerman

As the Vice-Chairman of the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission (VA&R), I attended the Washington Conference in February 2016.

I attended the Spring NEC meetings in May 2016 where we discussed resolutions that were to be voted on at the National Convention.

I attended National Convention in Cincinnati, OH from August 25- Sept 1, 2016. I sat on the Resolution Screening Committee as well as serving as the Vice-Chairman of the VA&R Commission. The Commission heard from Robert Reynolds, Deputy Under Secretary for Disability Services and David J. Schulkin, MD, Under Secretary for VA Health. There was an entire day of presentations by various VA managers and program coordinators. An emphasis was put on the Appeals Modernization effort, and pending legislation.

The VA&R Commission had a breakout session with the National Cemetery Committee, Veterans Benefits Committee, and the Health Administration Committee to discuss current resolutions. There were 155 resolutions discussed between the 3 committee's, 2 which were from Montana.

I also attended the Fall NEC meetings October 2016 in Indianapolis. I will be chairing a working group to take current issues within the VA Healthcare system to the Secretary of the VA.

VETERANS ECONOMIC

Byron Erikson

Veteran Employment Services

Because Montana is a “frontier” state Montana is not allocated enough money to place veteran representatives at each state employment office. This is because of a formula adopted by the U.S. Department of Labor that does not consider **service delivery area**. The allocation formula only considers the unemployment rate and number of veterans, of working age, that live in the state. Also, the DVOP/LVER program was suffering financially as it has been flat funded for a number of years. Lately, however, there has been a slight increase that funds another half position. It brings the staffing for the whole state to 7 full time positions. Some are split in half to get more coverage. If costs go up services dramatically drop. This means that over half of the Job Service/Workforce offices do not have a DVOP or LVER (job veteran representatives) to assist veterans.

The DOL/VETS did adopt a practice that promoted the training of a person from Workforce Services offices (about 23 across Montana) not having a trained DVOP/LVER on staff. Therefore, a person from a non-veteran representative staffed office receives training at the National Veterans Training Institute in Denver, Colorado (NVTI) at federal expense. The individual may not be a veteran but at least has knowledge of the needs of veterans. It is commendable that the DOL/VETS now promote the program to assist rural area employment offices.

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

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

There has been an on-going change in how veterans are served at the State Workforce Agencies/Job Services. The DVOP (Disabled Veteran Outreach Program specialist) is limited to

disabled veterans and veterans most in need. The other employment staff assists veterans on a priority basis. There are not LVER (Local Veteran Employment Representative) staffing in the state of Montana. That job had been narrowly focused on doing employer contacts and getting employment opportunities for veterans.

Interestingly enough there is no priority of referral of veterans by the State of Montana employment offices. Their system brings up veterans first on a file search but the process used does not do the work of good priority of referral...in my book. Many larger offices utilize email notifications...not phone calls. Orders are not held to give the veterans time to apply for a job before non-veterans.

There is a belief that FCJL (those who get federal contracts) employers are required to give veteran preference when hiring for federal contract jobs. They are not. They are required to list with local employment offices or other places where veterans may go to find jobs. They also have other specialty employee recruitment requirements that may not be veterans. They can hire whomever they want, despite qualifications, no matter who applies, or their veteran status. No veteran preference; a poorly written law.

The State of Montana's Veteran Preference law lags in practice, and enforcement. The veteran is left to a civil lawsuit at the veterans' expense if harmed. There are examples in the details of this statement. If we want teeth in this law state legislators need to take up the cause and make a state veteran preference law that works.

All in all veterans are being placed in jobs. Only low percentages who want to work are not working. Statistically this means the Montana economy is fairly healthy. Out unemployment rate at 4.5% is still more than it was 6 years ago, however, this varies geographically. It would help to improve our mining and oil industries. They have better paying jobs. Employment does not mean a worker is paid a living wage. Just because veterans can find work the pay in certain areas lags behind the national norm. Montana has a lower rate of unemployment than the nation as a whole. The recession recovery is slow and veterans would benefit from a swifter recovery.

The VA in Montana has a high percentage of veteran employees compared to other regions. The VA in Montana has been directly appointing veterans to employment positions if they are recently separated, 30% or more disabled, or a Chapter 31 (education or retraining for disabled veterans) veteran.

Native American Veterans Focus

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

There is a move by the VA to help train the individual Tribal Veteran Representatives (TVR) in Veteran Service Officer knowledge and duties to help tribal veterans apply for available veteran benefits. I like the thought. Unfortunately, it does not attach any funding to pay the TVR's to do the work. Some TVR's are paid by their tribe, but some are part time volunteers. Perhaps well intended, but not paying for services is ill-conceived. Why is the poorest of the poor expected to do with the least?

Montana Unemployment

Montana unemployment rate September of 2016 is 4.5. The national rate is 5.0
Veteran unemployment in Montana is slightly lower than non-veterans. **See Addendum 1**

VA Benefits for Montana Veterans

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

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

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

Veteran Provider Meetings

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

VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – BILLINGS

Joyce Babcock

In July 2016 I reported 10 hours used as activity as Representative at Billings CBOC.

This included time at a Yellow Ribbon Event with the Guard in Billings.

August time involved with Veterans and the CBOC was 9 hours.

September time is 11 1/2 hours including another Yellow Ribbon Event, delivery of The American Legion National magazines (multiple copies) and coffee for waiting room for total of 11 1/2 hours.

October was 2 trips to Billings CBOC to deliver donated coffee and cookies. (Cookies from Auxiliary) total of 6 hours.

In conclusion this quarter saw 27 1/2 hours given to Billings CBOC.

VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – Fort Harrison

Bill White

1. Attended second and third quarter V.A.V.S. meetings at VA Fort Harrison, MT.
2. Provided service flags for Fort Harrison VA using VAVS funds
3. Continued as an appointed representative to the national VA and R committee
4. Continue working with Adjutant White to ensure that All American Legion Volunteers are registered so that the American Legion gets proper credit
5. Re-appointed to the Veterans Advisory Council at Fort Harrison and Co-Chair and serve as a Veterans Representative and continue to attend called meetings
6. Re-appointed to The Veterans Transportation Committee that over sees the Veterans Transportation System (VTS) system used at VA Fort Harrison as one of the veterans representatives. This system now covers all on Montana and works with patients in parts of Northern Wyoming and Western North Dakota and parts of Eastern Idaho.
7. Worked with Adjutant White to finish the Avenue of Flags with the help of the Montana American Legion and the Fort Harrison Thrift Shop and Post 2 of the American Legion Helena, MT.
8. Attended National VA and R meeting prior to the National Convention in Cincinnati
9. Attended American Legion National Convention as a voting delegate.
10. Continued working with Adjutant White to honor American Legion members for their services as volunteers with certificates and medals
11. Worked with Adjutant Gary White to provide patriotic hats for veterans in the behavioral health program.
12. Attended District meeting invited to as VAVS representative

VA HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER REPRESENTATIVE – Miles City

Clancee Collins

April

- I was selected to become the VA Hospital Volunteer Representative for Miles City after affirmation from then Vice Commander Hal Rice at the District #10 meeting this Spring. This position had been vacant the previous year so I contacted the Activities Director at the living center at my earliest convenience to see if they had any immediate needs. The director informed me that at the present time that the Auxiliary of Custer Post #5 was taking care of Bingo once a month, coffee, personal supplies for the residents and still serving a meal to the residents once a month.
- On April 27th I introduced Custer Post #5 Commander, Mark Ahner and District #10 Commander, Ralph Dukart at the Veteran's Volunteer Award Ceremony held in the Miles City VA hospital auditorium. They presented Custer Post #5 life member Robert "Bob" Crowe with a lifetime volunteer service award from President Barrack Obama.

May

- Custer Post #5 which calls Bingo every Friday purchased a new cordless microphone at the cost of \$25.00 so the residents could better hear the numbers being called.
- I met with the Activities Director the first week in May and she informed me that they needed new magnetic bingo cards for the residents. Custer Post #5 purchased the cards for \$79.95. After receiving the cards the Director realized that they were not suitable for use by the residents and they were donated locally.

June

- I decided to try to meet with the Activities Director at least twice a month during the summer months to address any concerns she might have. She informed me at the beginning of June that sweats had been ordered for the residents and the Auxiliary of Custer Post #5 was in the process of procuring Lazy Susan's and napkin holders for the dining room tables.

July

- I approached Custer Post #5 at their annual budget meeting to step up and do more for the residents at the Miles City facility. After some discussion and a vote they agreed to increase their annual Bingo budget to \$300.00 and allocated another \$500.00 for the living center. The Activities Director had told me the previous week that they had an outstanding bill for \$70.00 which was the cost to tune the facilities piano. I brought this bill to the attention of the budget committee and they immediately voted and approved the payment.

August

- I purchased four pairs of casual shorts to be disbursed to residents of the living center who preferred them over the sweats.

September

- I attended a Friday Bingo session with volunteers from Custer Post #5 and was impressed by how organized and efficient they performed their duties. Winners were awarded a small prize provided by Custer Post #5. Twelve residents were in attendance on this particular day and I was told by the volunteers that this was about average for the weekly event.

October

- I am currently helping the Activities Director with organizing an awards repining ceremony for residents at the facility. I have coordinated with the honor guard of the local VFW and Custer Post #5 for a guest speaker, master of ceremonies, and presenter. The meal will be provided by the Custer Post #5 Auxiliary. The ceremony is scheduled for November 11th at 3:00 p.m.

WAYS & MEANS

Bill Applegate

- 1) Gun Shows – attended several shows and will be going to more as the year goes on. By Helena's Mid Fall Conference, I will have turned in 6 books. There were 4000 ticket printed; which is 267 books; 116 have been distributed, 8 returned.
- 2) Big K – 1000 memberships available at \$25. Drawings for 2016 – 17 start January 16th and there are 6 drawings per year. Budgeted amount - \$1500; actual income - \$1439.50; last year's income - \$2740. Differences from this year to last year - \$1300. Paid to Districts - \$468; Paid to District Aux - \$121.50; Paid to Posts - \$2592.50; Paid to Aux Units - \$680; Paid to SAL - 144.50; Largest amount to a Post - \$272 – Post 2 Helena; Largest amount to a Unit - \$144.50 – Unit 3 Great Falls; Largest amount to a Squadron - \$51 - #30; American Legion Members - 315; A/L Auxiliary members – 82; SAL members – 19; Total members signed up 416 – which leaves 584 memberships left. For every membership \$8.50 is returned to your Post; \$1.50 is returned to the Districts.

WEBMASTER

Kevin Kent

(No report submitted)

WOMEN'S VETERANS COORDINATOR

Kim Kay Carol McCarty Martin

I talked with Jonna Brenton, (women veterans program manager at VA Fort Harrison) in regards to the Women's Health Care Clinic in June 2016. She informed me that the vacant gynecologist position is to be filled in July of this year. I talked to her again in September to find out the status of the VA's hiring of a gyn. The position still has not been filled even though there was a gyn who applied. She informed me that it is cheaper to outsource women's health care than to hire one for Fort Harrison. There is a GYN in Billings who works .3 hours a week. Over a year ago Dr. Magneto had to leave the VA in MT to keep up his Ob/GYN qualifications. A few weeks after he left, VA Fort Harrison started a maternity program for female veterans who were pregnant to streamline their care. The VA in MT really needs to have a GYN to provide the care that is not only needed but also wanted by women veterans.

I attended a symposium in Helena at Carroll College on the 12th of September where I attended 3 breakout sessions. One of the sessions was on VA health care where I asked the Public Affairs Director when VA MT would get a Women's Health Clinic. He replied that MT would not have a clinic as there are not a significant number of females to warrant the cost of making one. I did learn that they could set aside 2 rooms near the rehab wing for a women's clinic. As the population of female veterans increases in MT there is a necessity of health care for women.

On the 13th of September I set up a table at the Helena Stand Down to hand out material for veterans that lists places in MT where they could receive various services. I also compiled the American Legions Women's Healthcare pamphlet and included other information that is useful for females. I talked to all the veterans passing by about the American Legion and the programs we provide and support. I also attended the Great Falls Stand Down on 29-30 September. Again I handed out pamphlets and talked to the veterans that stopped by the table. I acquired a list of 18 female veterans and told them about the Women Veterans Recognition Luncheon that will be in Great Falls in May of 2017.

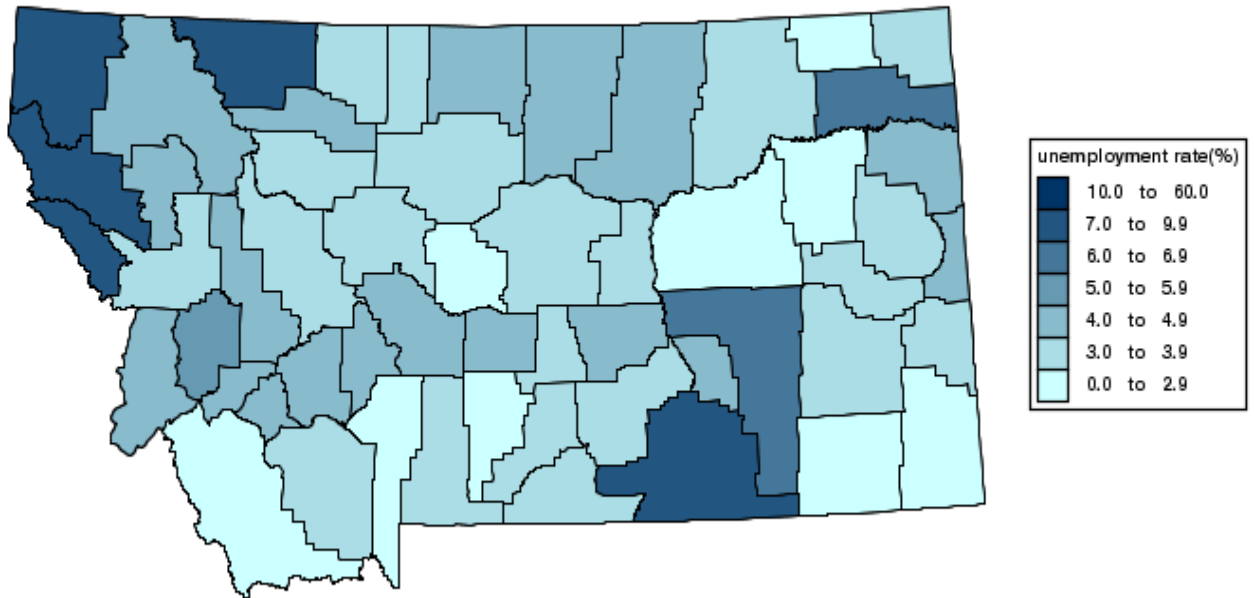
I attended the following Fall District meetings for Districts 10, 4, 5, joint 3 and 8 in Conrad, 2, and joint 7, 9, 11 in Harlowton. I will be attending District 6 and the Fall Conference in Helena. While in Columbia Falls for District 4, I visited the Veterans Home. I talked to two WWII women living there about their experiences in the military. I also talked with the women attending the District meeting about hosting a Women Veterans Recognition Luncheon in May of 2017 where the WWII veterans will be recognized for their service.

When talking at the District meetings, I brought up the fact that women veterans are not easily identified as we do not wear patriotic hats or hats that identify the wearer as a vet. I spoke about WWII women veterans I had met and chatted with in the past year and what they have in common with younger female veterans. Women veterans are still overlooked as they are assumed to be the spouse, parent, or sibling of a veteran and not a veteran in their own right. I also mentioned that Sept is Suicide Prevention Month. In MT there have been 50 suicides of vets as of this Sept. We need to pay attention to our comrades, recognize the signs and provide a kind word or deed that hopefully will let them know they are important and cared about.

ADDENDUM 1:

From Montana at a Glance:

Unemployment rates by county, not seasonally adjusted, Montana August 2016



will appear along with the statistic for that county.

Map Title: Unemployment rates by county, not seasonally adjusted Map Type: Montana county Map Month/Year: August/2016	
County	August 2016
Beaverhead County	2.9
Big Horn County	7.7
Blaine County	4.4

Broadwater County	4.3
Carbon County	3.5
Carter County	2.4
Cascade County	3.8
Chouteau County	3.6
Custer County	3.7
Daniels County	2.3
Dawson County	3.9
Deer Lodge County	4.2
Fallon County	3.1
Fergus County	3.3
Flathead County	4.7
Gallatin County	2.3
Garfield County	2.4
Glacier County	9.0
Golden Valley County	3.2
Granite County	5.5
Hill County	4.9
Jefferson County	4.4
Judith Basin County	2.4
Lake County	4.8

Lewis and Clark County	3.3
Liberty County	3.1
Lincoln County	7.9
Madison County	3.0
McCone County	1.9
Meagher County	4.2
Mineral County	7.1
Missoula County	3.5
Musselshell County	4.3
Park County	3.3
Petroleum County	3.1
Phillips County	4.5
Pondera County	4.7
Powder River County	2.3
Powell County	4.5
Prairie County	3.0
Ravalli County	4.5
Richland County	4.9
Roosevelt County	6.2
Rosebud County	6.8
Sanders County	7.0

Sheridan County	3.2
Silver Bow County	4.3
Stillwater County	3.8
Sweet Grass County	2.9
Teton County	3.5
Toole County	3.3
Treasure County	4.1
Valley County	3.0
Wheatland County	4.9
Wibaux County	4.6
Yellowstone County	3.7

ADDENDUM 2



ADDENDUM 3

Title: Expectations for Rendering Proper Respect When Participating in Programs of The American Legion

RESOLVED, By the National Executive Committee of The American Legion in regular meeting assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, on October 12-13, 2016, That The American Legion expects participants of all its programs to show proper respect to the Flag of the United States, at all times, including during the National Anthem; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the National Organization of The American Legion recommends to departments and Posts that the chairman or director of any American Legion program make clear to all participants in advance of the program that The American Legion has the expectation for rendering proper respect to the Flag of the United States, at all times, including during the National Anthem; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That if any participant of any program of The American Legion cannot or will not live up to this expectation, the individual should not be a participant in American Legion programs; and be it finally

RESOLVED, That if any participant of any national-level program of The American Legion cannot or will not live up to this expectation, the individual will be removed from the program and not be allowed any further participation.