



*Montana
Legionnaire
July*

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

IRENE DICKERSON

Irene Dickerson was elected Department Commander of The American Legion Department of Montana during the 2026 Department Convention, becoming the organization's leader for the 2026–2027 membership year. A dedicated Legionnaire, accomplished military officer, and passionate advocate for veterans, Commander Dickerson brings decades of leadership experience to the Department. Having previously served in leadership roles within The American Legion, she has remained committed to strengthening communication, growing membership, and supporting Posts across Montana. As Department Commander, she looks forward to visiting communities throughout the state, listening to members, and working alongside Legionnaires to ensure every veteran has a strong American Legion home.

Commander Dickerson retired from the United States Army with the rank of Colonel after more than 30 years of distinguished service in the Active Army and Army Reserve. A career logistician, she deployed in support of operations in Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan, where she led soldiers and managed complex logistics missions in challenging environments.

Her commitment to lifelong learning is reflected in her academic achievements. She holds a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Business Administration and has built a career centered on leadership, organizational excellence, and service.

A passionate advocate for veterans and their families, Commander Dickerson is a Paid Up For Life (PUFL) member of The American Legion and a Life Member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). She believes deeply in The American Legion's mission of service to veterans, service members, youth, and communities and is committed to ensuring the organization remains strong for future



generations.

Irene and her husband, Stephen, have been married for more than 31 years. They are proud parents of their son, Nicholas, and grandparents to three grandsons—Derek, Dylan, and Dalton—who live in Texas. Although a native Texan, Irene has embraced life in Montana and enjoys many of the state's outdoor activities, especially snowmobiling and snowshoeing during the winter months.

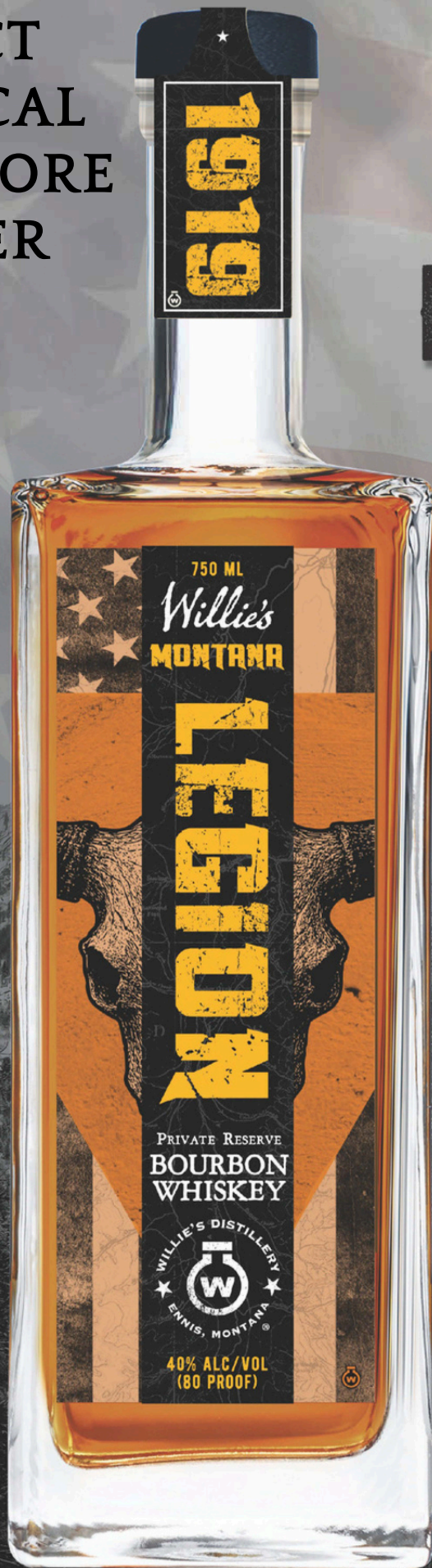
As Department Commander, Irene is committed to leading with integrity, fostering unity, and empowering Posts across Montana to strengthen The American Legion's four pillars of Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth. She is honored to serve the Legion Family and remains dedicated to ensuring that Montana veterans, their families, and their communities continue to receive the support and advocacy they have earned.

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TOWING

The American Legion Department of Montana

CONCLUDES ITS 107TH annual convention

The American Legion Department of Montana proudly concluded its 107th Annual Convention, held June 26–28 in Helena. With representatives from 35 Posts across the state in attendance, Legionnaires came together with a shared commitment to strengthening our organization, supporting Montana's veterans, and planning for the year ahead.

Throughout the three-day convention, delegates conducted the business of the Department by receiving reports from each standing committee, discussing accomplishments from the past year, and identifying priorities for the future. One of the most significant responsibilities of the convention was the consideration of multiple resolutions brought forward by the membership. Delegates engaged in thoughtful discussion and debate before taking action on these important measures. A detailed summary of the resolutions adopted during the convention will be provided in a separate article.

Members also received encouraging updates on several of the Department's flagship programs. The American Legion Boys State program continues to provide outstanding leadership opportunities for Montana's young men, and delegates heard about the program's continued success as well as the vision for its future growth.

The Department's Highway Fatality Marker Program also received positive recognition. This meaningful initiative continues to gain momentum across Montana, increasing public awareness while honoring lives lost on our highways. The growing support and recognition for the program demonstrates the impact it is making in communities throughout the state.

District Commanders reported on a productive year of service, highlighting not only membership growth efforts but also improved communication and collaboration among Posts within their districts. Their dedication has helped strengthen connections throughout the Department and reinforces the importance of working together to serve veterans and our communities.

The Sons of The American Legion Detachment shared an optimistic outlook as newly elected leadership prepares to guide the organization into its next chapter. With fresh ideas and renewed enthusiasm, the Detachment is well positioned to continue expanding its impact while supporting the mission of The American Legion.

The American Legion Riders continue to experience impressive growth across Montana. Members are now preparing for the Department's inaugural Legacy Run this August, an exciting new tradition that will raise funds for the National Veterans & Children Foundation while promoting camaraderie and awareness of the Riders' mission.

During the convention, numerous Posts and individual Legionnaires were recognized for outstanding achievements in membership recruiting, reporting, and overall organizational growth. These awards celebrate the dedication and countless volunteer hours invested by members who continue to strengthen The American Legion across Montana.

While there were many successes to celebrate, one challenge remains clear. Department leadership noted that a significant number of Posts continue to struggle with timely submission of required reports. Accurate and consistent reporting is essential to measuring the impact of our programs, recognizing the work being done across the state, and ensuring effective communication. Addressing this issue will be a priority during the coming year, with additional resources and support aimed at helping every Post meet its reporting responsibilities.

As the 107th Annual Convention came to a close, one message resonated throughout the weekend: The American Legion Department of Montana continues to move forward because of the dedication of its volunteers, the strength of its local Posts, and the shared commitment of members who remain focused on serving veterans, their families, and their communities. The work accomplished in Helena has laid a strong foundation for another successful year of service.

Department Vice Commander Brian Carpenter

Brian Carpenter was elected Department Vice Commander of The American Legion Department of Montana during the 2026 Department Convention. A U.S. Army veteran and dedicated Legionnaire, Carpenter brings a servant's heart, a collaborative leadership style, and an unwavering commitment to strengthening The American Legion's mission across Montana.

A member of American Legion Post 11 in Havre, Carpenter has devoted his time and talents to serving fellow veterans and supporting the mission of The American Legion. Throughout his years of service, he has remained committed to strengthening the organization, encouraging volunteerism, and making a positive impact in communities across Montana.

Prior to his election as Department Vice Commander, Carpenter served as the Director of the Montana American Legion Riders, where he played a pivotal role in expanding the Riders' presence and impact throughout the state. His leadership helped strengthen the Riders program while reinforcing its connection to the Four Pillars of The American Legion. Under his guidance, Riders chapters supported veterans' causes, promoted patriotic events, raised funds for charitable initiatives, and served as visible ambassadors for the organization in communities across Montana.

Carpenter has helped in organizing and supporting numerous community events that honor the sacrifices of America's veterans while building relationships with the public. From coordinating patriotic motorcycle escorts and memorial ceremonies to supporting fundraising efforts and local outreach projects, he has consistently demonstrated a passion for service and a belief that every Legion program has the power to make a difference.



As Department Vice Commander, Carpenter is committed to supporting Posts, strengthening membership, developing future leaders, and ensuring every veteran knows there is a place for them within The American Legion family. He believes the organization's greatest strength lies in its volunteers and in the relationships built through shared service to God, Country, and community.

Brian Carpenter continues to embody the ideals of The American Legion through dedication, and action. Whether visiting Posts across Montana, supporting community service projects, mentoring the next generation of Legion leaders, or standing beside a fellow veteran in need, Brian remains committed to advancing the mission of The American Legion and serving those who have served our nation.

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Meet Your District Team

Eleven Districts. One Mission.

Across Montana, our District Commanders serve as the link between the Department and local Posts. Whether you're looking for guidance on membership, programs, post operations, or simply need another Legionnaire to help navigate a challenge, your District Commander is there to support you. Take a moment to get to know the leaders serving your district—and don't hesitate to reach out when you need assistance.

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Convention Delegates Shape the Future of The American Legion Department of Montana

One of the most important responsibilities of delegates at the Department Convention is considering resolutions that guide the future direction of The American Legion in Montana. This year, delegates debated and adopted a wide range of resolutions addressing national defense, veterans' health care, organizational structure, financial sustainability, and support for our programs.

The actions taken during the 2026 Department Convention will influence not only the coming year, but in many cases will also become resolutions advanced to the National American Legion Convention for consideration.

Resolution 26-01 – National Defense Funding – Passed

Delegates adopted a resolution encouraging Congress to establish a minimum defense budget equal to 5% of the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The resolution recognizes the rapidly changing global security environment, technological advances, Arctic defense concerns, and the need for stable, predictable military funding to ensure America's armed forces remain prepared for future threats.

Resolution 26-02 – Department Per Capita Increase – Passed

After considerable discussion, delegates approved the first Department per capita increase in more than a decade.

Beginning in January 2027, the Department per capita will increase by \$10.00, bringing the Department portion of dues to \$21.50. The increase is intended to provide sustainable funding for Department operations and programs that support veterans, youth, and communities throughout Montana.

Resolution 26-03 – Eliminating Zone Commanders – Failed

Delegates approved a significant organizational modernization by eliminating the Zone Commander position from the Department Constitution and Bylaws.

The resolution recognizes that modern communication tools and the existing responsibilities of District Commanders have made the Zone structure unnecessary. Responsibilities formerly assigned to Zone Commanders will now remain with District Commanders, streamlining leadership while reducing administrative complexity.

Resolution 26-04 – Resolutions Committee Restructuring – Failed

With the elimination of Zone Commanders, delegates also approved changes to how the Resolutions Committee functions.

The duties previously assigned to Zone Commanders will now be performed by graduates of National American Legion College, ensuring that those reviewing resolutions have formal training in leadership, parliamentary procedure, and the legislative process. When necessary, qualified graduates of Montana American Legion College may also be appointed to serve.

Resolution 26-05 – Expanding Access to Novel PTSD Treatments – Passed

Continuing Montana's leadership on veteran mental health, delegates approved a resolution urging Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs to accelerate access to emerging therapies for PTSD, traumatic brain injury, depression, and related conditions.

The resolution supports establishing a VA Office of Novel Therapeutics, creating Centers of Excellence throughout the VA system, eliminating bureaucratic delays between FDA authorization and VA implementation, and ensuring veterans receive timely access to promising new treatments.

Resolution 26-06 – RTM Protocol for Veterans Treatment Courts - Passed

Delegates also supported advocating for state funding to train clinicians in the Reconsolidation of Traumatic Memories (RTM) Protocol, an evidence-based treatment for PTSD.

The resolution specifically focuses on making RTM available through Montana's five Veterans Treatment Courts, improving access to effective care while advancing The American Legion's Be the One initiative to reduce veteran suicide.

Resolution 26-07 – National Vice Commander Recommendation - Passed

Delegates unanimously recommended Past Department Commander Kenneth R. Simon for the office of National Vice Commander for the Western Region.

The resolution recognizes Ken's decades of dedicated service to The American Legion, his military career, his leadership as Department Commander, and his continued service on National committees.

Montana proudly endorses his candidacy to represent the Western Region at the national level.

Resolution 26-08 – Honoring Military Working Dogs - Passed

One of the more unique resolutions adopted this year recognizes the extraordinary service and sacrifice of Military Working Dogs.

The resolution urges federal and state governments to authorize the burial or memorialization of Military Working Dogs in veterans' cemeteries under appropriate guidelines, honoring these canine veterans who have served alongside America's servicemembers in combat, detection, security, and lifesaving missions.

Resolution 26-10 – Review of Department Americanism Programs - Passed

Delegates approved a resolution directing the Department to conduct a comprehensive review of its Americanism programs.

The review will examine the effectiveness, participation, costs, and long-term sustainability of each program to ensure Department resources are invested where they provide the greatest benefit to Montana youth and communities. The results will be presented for discussion at a future Department meeting.

Resolution 26-11 – Improving Financial Transparency - Referred

A resolution submitted by Stevensville Post 94 calls for greater transparency regarding Department finances.

The resolution requests that, following each Department Convention, financial information—including the previous year's expenditures, projected budgets, and the status of Department programs—be published through The Montana Legionnaire so Posts have a clearer understanding of how Department resources are allocated. This proposal reflects a commitment to keeping members informed and strengthening communication throughout the Department.

As always, the resolutions process remains one of the most important ways members shape the future of The American Legion. Whether addressing national priorities, improving veteran care, strengthening governance, or ensuring the long-term success of Department programs, the actions taken by convention delegates demonstrate the Department of Montana's commitment to serving veterans, their families, and our communities for generations to come.



SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION



Meet Your New Sons of The American Legion Detachment Commander: Jerry Collins

The Sons of The American Legion Department of Montana welcomes Jerry L. Collins as the new Detachment Commander, bringing with him years of leadership experience, military service, and a passion for strengthening the future of the Legion Family.

A resident of Great Falls, Jerry is a proud member of American Legion Post 6 and Squadron 6 in Choteau and serves as the Road Captain for the Golden Triangle American Legion Riders. He has been a member of the American Legion Family for 12 continuous years, along with three years of prior membership, and has dedicated himself to serving veterans, their families, and his community.

Jerry's leadership experience spans every level of the organization. In addition to his new role as Detachment Commander, he currently serves as Commander of American Legion Post 6 and has previously served as District 8 Commander. His service to the Legion includes time on the Department of Montana Finance Committee, as Post 6 Service Officer, Post 6 Rodeo Chairman, and as a member of the Post 6 Honor Guard.

Before his continued service within The American Legion, Jerry proudly served 12 years in the United States Army, achieving the rank of Staff Sergeant (E-6). His military career included service as an 11B Infantryman and 19K Tank Crewman, with deployments to Bosnia in support of SFOR 11 and multiple combat deployments to Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom III and Operation New Dawn. Throughout his service, he held leadership positions including Bradley Commander, Truck Commander, and Security Escort Team/Convoy Commander. His distinguished military career earned him numerous awards and decorations, including the Combat Infantryman Badge, Valorous Unit Award, Army Achievement Medal (2nd Award), Iraq Campaign Medal, NATO Medal, and several others recognizing his dedication and service.

Outside of the Legion Family, Jerry is a rancher and owner of Collins Auction Service LLC. His professional background also includes work in concrete finishing, HVAC installation, truck driving, pipe welding, and retail management. He attended Montana State University-Bozeman between deployments and later graduated from the Western College of Auctioneering.

As he begins his term as Detachment Commander, Jerry is focused on building a stronger future for the Sons of The American Legion and the entire Legion Family.

"I accepted this position because I feel like improvement in all aspects of The American Legion, the Sons of The American Legion, and the American Legion Riders is a must," Jerry said. "We need to reach out to younger veterans and get them involved in service organizations. We need to continue rebranding the American Legion and the Sons—not as 'Grandpa's Bar,' but as community organizations that assist veterans in all aspects of life. We achieve that by being service-driven, compassionate, and empowering."

Among his goals for the coming membership year is creating a statewide Sons of The American Legion fundraiser to help offset the costs of sending young men to American Legion Boys State in 2027. Jerry hopes to unite every Squadron in Montana behind a single fundraising effort that is sustainable, innovative, and less labor-intensive than traditional raffles and drawings.

He also plans to begin discussions on establishing district leadership within the Sons of The American Legion in Montana. By creating district-level opportunities and reviewing the Detachment's Standard Operating Procedures and Bylaws, Jerry believes the organization can better develop future leaders and strengthen communication throughout the state.

Jerry believes that while the American Legion Family is built from the grassroots level, effective leadership should inspire from the top down. His vision is one of collaboration, service, and growth as the Sons of The American Legion continues to support veterans, mentor future generations, and strengthen communities across Montana.

Please join us in congratulating Detachment Commander Jerry Collins and wishing him success as he leads the Sons of The American Legion Department of Montana into the coming year.



SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION



Meet Your New Sons of The American Legion Detachment Vice Commander: Derek Manseau

The Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Montana is proud to welcome Derek F. Manseau of Lewistown as its new Detachment Vice Commander. A member of Squadron 16 for the past six years, Derek brings a wealth of leadership experience, a passion for service, and a strong commitment to strengthening the Sons of The American Legion across Montana.

Derek is no stranger to leadership within the American Legion Family. In addition to his new role as Detachment Vice Commander, he currently serves as Secretary for the Department of Montana American Legion Riders, Director of American Legion Riders Chapter 16, Trustee of the Lewistown American Legion Club, and Co-Manager of the Lewistown American Legion Club. His dedication to serving veterans, Legionnaires, and their communities has made him a respected leader throughout the state. Professionally, Derek has been employed by HCR, Inc. in Lewistown since 2012, where he manages projects for international clients spanning Central and South America, Europe, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, Iceland, the Caribbean, and Asia. HCR is recognized as the world leader in re-circulatory air door technology for the commercial refrigerated food industry. Before beginning his career at HCR, Derek spent 16 years working as a meat cutter.

Service has always been an important part of Derek's life. Throughout the years, he has devoted his time to numerous civic and professional organizations, including serving as President of the Montana Meat Processors Association, President of the Lewistown Ice Skating Association, a member of the Montana State University College of Agriculture Advisory Committee, the Lewistown Youth Baseball/Softball Association, and currently as President of the Little Belt Snowmobile Club.

When asked why he accepted the position of Detachment Vice Commander, Derek shared that he believes the Sons of The American Legion in Montana is poised for tremendous growth and opportunity. Through his involvement with Squadron 16, he has experienced firsthand the impact the organization has on veterans and local communities.

Although Derek did not serve in the military himself, both of his grandfathers answered the call to serve our nation. Their legacy inspired his involvement in the Sons of The American Legion and continues to motivate him to honor the sacrifices of all veterans through service and volunteerism.

Looking ahead, Derek's vision for the Detachment is centered on increasing the visibility of the Sons of The American Legion in communities across Montana. He hopes to accomplish this through meaningful community service projects, veteran assistance programs, educational outreach, and initiatives that demonstrate the Sons' ongoing commitment to the Four Pillars of The American Legion.

Please join us in congratulating Derek Manseau on his election as Vice Commander of the Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Montana. We look forward to the leadership, enthusiasm, and dedication he will bring as he helps guide the organization into the future.



SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION



Meet Detachment Adjutant Raymond Morkeberg

Raymond Morkeberg serves as the Detachment Adjutant for the Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Montana, bringing a strong commitment to service, leadership, and youth development to the organization.

A resident of Havre, Montana, Raymond is a member of Havre Squadron #11 and American Legion Riders Chapter #11, where he also serves as Squadron Commander and Chapter Sergeant-at-Arms. In just over three years as a member of the American Legion Family, he has stepped into numerous leadership roles dedicated to strengthening local programs and supporting fellow members. Prior to his current positions, Raymond served as Sergeant-at-Arms for Havre Squadron #11 and Road Captain for American Legion Riders Chapter #11. His willingness to serve wherever needed reflects his belief that strong leadership begins with active participation and a commitment to helping others. Raymond is involved in several key programs and committees, including Children & Youth, Honor Guard, American Legion Riders, and Constitution & Bylaws. He has also completed the American Legion Basic Training Course, reinforcing his commitment to understanding and upholding the organization's mission and structure.

Outside of the Legion Family, Raymond works as a Locomotive Electrician for BNSF Railway. He previously worked for North 40 Outfitters and remains deeply involved in his community through a variety of volunteer efforts. His passion for mentoring young people is evident through his work developing a youth flag etiquette program for Squadron #11, volunteering during school field trips, coaching youth boxing and mixed martial arts, promoting youth physical fitness and weightlifting, providing anti-bullying training, and participating in a fatality marker restoration program. His dedication to growing the organization has also been recognized with a membership recruiting award for bringing five new members into the Sons of The American Legion.

When asked why he accepted the role of Detachment Adjutant, Raymond's answer was straightforward.

"I love helping out with all the organizations and programs that I participate in, and I believe I can do a fantastic job in these positions."

As Squadron Commander, Raymond's priorities include improving communication, increasing membership, and rebuilding programs that strengthen the organization. He plans to reintroduce initiatives such as the Five-Star Program, the Ten Ideals, and educational programs focused on the history of the United States, while continuing to expand opportunities to serve veterans and mentor young people within the community.

As Sergeant-at-Arms for Riders Chapter #11, his focus is maintaining order during meetings and helping ensure the chapter operates efficiently and respectfully. In his statewide role as Detachment Adjutant, Raymond's primary goal is to improve communication throughout the organization while helping ensure the Sons of The American Legion Detachment of Montana operates effectively, professionally, and in accordance with its governing documents. Through his enthusiasm for service, dedication to youth, and commitment to organizational excellence, Raymond Morkeberg is helping build a stronger future for the Sons of The American Legion in Montana.



AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS



Meet Department ALR Director Don "Breakdown" Goodnight

Don "Breakdown" Goodnight serves as the Department Director of the American Legion Riders for the Department of Montana, bringing years of leadership, dedication, and passion for serving veterans to the role. A resident of Corvallis, Montana, Don is a member of Corvallis Post 91 and has proudly been a member of The American Legion for 16 years. Throughout his time in the organization, he has become a respected leader known for his commitment to growing the American Legion Riders and creating meaningful opportunities for veterans. Don served five years in the United States Army as a 15T Blackhawk Crew Chief, attaining the rank of Sergeant. During his military service, he completed two tours in Iraq, experiences that continue to shape his dedication to supporting fellow veterans and strengthening the American Legion Family.

Within The American Legion, Don currently serves as Post Commander and Department American Legion Riders Director. His previous leadership experience includes serving as First Vice Commander, Second Vice Commander, and Post Adjutant, as well as participating on the Department American Legion Riders Legacy Run Committee.

One of Don's greatest accomplishments has been his work building the American Legion Riders program in Montana. He founded the Corvallis American Legion Riders Chapter, where he served as Director for eight years, and has assisted numerous Posts across the state in establishing new Riders chapters. His commitment to veterans extends beyond the motorcycle community through the Corvallis Legion Riders Veterans Bear Hunts, an annual program he founded and continues to organize, providing fully funded hunting opportunities for veterans.

Don is also a member of the Sons of The American Legion and has previously volunteered with another veteran hunting organization dedicated to serving those who have worn the nation's uniform.

Outside of the Legion Family, Don continues to serve his community as the Agriculture Superintendent for the Ravalli County Fair and as Chair of the Ravalli County Fair Commission. He has also devoted many years to mentoring young people, serving as both an Assistant Scoutmaster and Scoutmaster with the Boy Scouts of America.

Before retiring for medical reasons, Don built a diverse career that included working as a log home builder, appliance delivery professional, and over-the-road truck driver.

When asked about his leadership philosophy, Don keeps it simple:

"I strongly believe that a strong leader leads from the front and not the back."

That philosophy is reflected in his decision to accept the role of Department Director.

"I am extremely passionate about the Legion Riders and The American Legion. I love seeing us grow and get bigger."

As he begins his term as Department Director, Don's priorities focus on strengthening the Riders program across Montana. He is committed to ensuring every chapter operates in compliance with Department policies and the Department Standard Operating Procedures while providing the guidance and support chapters need to succeed. He also hopes to increase the number of active American Legion Riders chapters throughout the state, creating more opportunities for veterans to serve their communities, support The American Legion's mission, and enjoy the camaraderie that defines the Riders program.

With a servant's heart, a wealth of leadership experience, and an unwavering commitment to veterans, Don "Breakdown" Goodnight is well prepared to lead the Montana American Legion Riders into another successful year of growth and service.



AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS



Meet the Department ALR Assistant Director: Trevor "Rocket" Barnhart

Trevor "Rocket" Barnhart brings a strong work ethic, military experience, and a passion for service to his role as Assistant Director of the Department American Legion Riders (ALR).

A Billings native and member of American Legion Post 119, Trevor has been a member of The American Legion for four years. In that time, he has become actively involved in leadership at the Post, District, and Department levels. In addition to serving as Department ALR Assistant Director, he is the Director of American Legion Riders Chapter 119, District 11 Commander, and Department ALR Chaplain.

Trevor served 14 years in the United States Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserves as a Combat Engineer and Heavy Construction Equipment Operator. He attained the rank of Sergeant and deployed in support of both Operation Iraqi Freedom II and Operation Iraqi Freedom IV. His service was recognized with numerous military awards, including two Army Achievement Medals, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal with two campaign stars, and the Iraq Campaign Medal.

When he isn't volunteering with The American Legion, Trevor works as an electrician, applying the same dedication and attention to detail that have defined both his military and Legion service.

Trevor approaches leadership with a straightforward philosophy: do the job, give every task your best effort, and never make excuses. He accepted the Assistant Director position with a "next man up" mentality, believing that when the organization calls, it's time to step forward and serve.

Looking ahead to the coming year, Trevor hopes to increase participation in the Montana Legacy Run, help Riders become more familiar with Department Standard Operating Procedures, and encourage greater involvement throughout the Department. His focus is on strengthening the American Legion Riders program while ensuring members have the tools and knowledge they need to continue making a positive impact in their communities.

Please join us in welcoming Trevor "Rocket" Barnhart as Department ALR Assistant Director and thanking him for his continued commitment to The American Legion, the American Legion Riders, and Montana's veterans.

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Fax: (406) 433-1821
highcalibersports@hotmail.com

Montana Legacy Ride: Riding for the Future of Veteran's Families

This year, the Department of Montana American Legion Riders will take to the open road for a mission that reaches far beyond the miles traveled. The inaugural Montana Legacy Ride will bring Legion Riders together from across the state to raise awareness and support for the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund, ensuring that the children of our fallen and 100% disabled post-9/11 veterans have the opportunity to pursue higher education.

In Montana, we understand the importance of taking care of our neighbors, especially those who have sacrificed so much in service to our nation. This ride is not simply about motorcycles, scenic routes, or fellowship. It is about honoring the families who have carried the burden of military service and making sure their children have the resources they need to succeed. Since its creation in 2006, the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund has provided more than \$16 million in scholarships to eligible children of veterans. However, with the rising cost of higher education, the need continues to grow. This year, Montana riders have set a goal of raising more than \$20,000 to support this important mission. When a service member makes the ultimate sacrifice or returns home with a life-altering disability, the impact extends far beyond the individual veteran. Families face challenges that can last a lifetime, and the pursuit of a college education should never become another obstacle.

Through the Legacy Ride, Montana Legion Riders are committed to helping ensure that a veteran's service does not limit their child's opportunities. Every mile ridden and every dollar raised helps provide educational support to the next generation of military families. The Montana Legacy Ride is seeking businesses, organizations, and individuals who want to stand alongside our veterans and their families. Sponsorship support helps make this mission possible while showcasing your commitment to those who have served.

Sponsorship Opportunities

- Directors Circle Sponsor — \$5,000
 - Top-tier logo placement on ride shirts
 - Banner recognition at the final stop
 - Four social media features
 - Recognition on event signage and the Department website
- Road Captain Sponsor — \$2,500
 - Logo placement on ride shirts
 - Event banner recognition
- Recognition in the Department of Montana American Legion newsletter
- Patriot Sponsor — \$1,000
 - Event banner displayed with sponsor and American Legion branding
- Legacy Ride Sponsor — \$25-\$999
 - Recognition in the Department newsletter

Custom in-kind sponsorships including fuel, meals for riders, or raffle items, are also greatly appreciated and will be recognized. Your support is more than a donation. It is a commitment to the children of our nation's heroes and a promise that their parents' service and sacrifice will never be forgotten. The Department of Montana American Legion is a registered 501(c)(19) tax-exempt organization, recognized by the Internal Revenue Service. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.

For more information about sponsorship opportunities or how you can support the Montana Legacy Ride, contact:

Don Goodnight
Montana Legacy Ride Organizer
Department of Montana American Legion Riders
406-360-5275
dpgoodnight.dg@gmail.com

Join us as we ride for a purpose, honor our heroes, and invest in the future of their families.
The road ahead is long—but together, we can make every mile matter.

MONTANA *Legacy*

Run

AFTER PARTY

AT

YOUNG GRIZZLY

Harley-Davidson



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**SHAKEDOWN
COUNTY**



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EST. 1950



AUGUST 16th @ 5 PM

GOOD RIDES. COLD DRINKS. GREAT MUSIC. MONTANA LEGACY.

★ *LET'S KEEP THE LEGACY GOING!* ★



THE AUXILIARY SERVICE STAR



Department of MT President.

Jackie Gangstad

Hello,

I am grateful for being your 26-27 Dept President. I look forward to meeting and working with you.

We have a great team this year to move our programs forward and in the right direction.

The 1st Vice President is Tricia McKinney and 2nd Vice President is Carol Keats.

Please feel free to reach out to any of us to help in any way.

We are doing a fundraiser for ALA Girl State. This is a very important event and we need to raise funds and EVERYBODY needs to help in selling tickets. The drawing will be held in October so there is not much time to sell. The lucky winner will win a guided float trip down the white cliffs on the Missouri River. you and a guest will float 47 miles for 3 days of fun and sun. If you did not pick up tickets at the State Convention, reach out to Leona Somerfeld and she will be happy to send you tickets.

I hope everybody enjoys the rest of the summer

Jackie Gangstad

MT Dept President



Why Accidental Death Insurance Matters for Our Members in 2026 and Beyond

Life moves fast, and none of us expect an accident to change everything in a single moment—but it happens. Across all ages, accidental deaths remain one of the leading causes of loss in the United States, with car crashes consistently among the top contributors. When the unexpected happens, families are often left juggling urgent financial needs like daily living expenses, funeral costs, and the challenges of suddenly losing income.

That's exactly why accidental death insurance continues to be such an important—and practical—option for our Legion Family in 2026 and beyond.

Reliable Protection When Families Need It Most

Accidental death insurance through The Legionnaire Insurance Trust (LIT) provides cash benefits directly to your beneficiaries, regardless of any other insurance you may have. These benefits are designed to help families stay steady during a truly difficult time.

Better yet, this coverage is built with accessibility in mind:

- Guaranteed acceptance for all Legion Family members
- No medical exams or health questions
- 24/7 protection—at home, at work, in your car, or on vacation
- Cash benefits paid directly to your beneficiary

It's a simple way to add an important layer of financial security without jumping through hoops.

Your Coverage Helps Support Veterans, Too

Every time a member enrolls in an LIT program, it does more than protect their family—it strengthens ours. LIT generates valuable non-dues revenue that helps fund critical Department programs and services for veterans. In other words, choosing LIT coverage isn't just a smart personal decision; it directly supports the mission we all care about.

April Spotlight: Accidental Death Insurance

As we highlight this program in April, it's worth taking a moment to review what makes it so impactful:

What It Covers

- Cash benefits paid if a covered accident results in your death
- Guaranteed acceptance for all Legion Family members
- No medical underwriting
- Benefits paid even if you have other insurance

Why It Matters

This is one of the simplest, most flexible ways to strengthen your family's financial safety net. No exams. No complicated applications. Just straightforward, needed protection.

How to Enroll

1. Choose the amount of coverage that fits your family's needs.
2. Enroll easily—no medical questions required.
3. Enjoy quick activation: coverage begins the first day of the month after enrollment and first premium payment.
4. Risk-free review: if you decide within 30 days that the coverage isn't right for you, you can cancel for a full refund (as long as no claims have been made).



FREE RETREAT FOR FEMALE VETERANS HEALING FROM MST

Moral Injury: Healing Military Sexual Trauma (MST)

1 in 3 female veterans have experienced MST. Moral injury may occur when a person experiences betrayal by a trusted person or a person in a position of authority.

Moral injury isn't PTSD but it is related. Moral injury is an invisible wound of the soul that can result in intense shame, agonizing guilt, grief, depression, substance abuse, relationship struggles, anxiety, and suicide.

SOUND LIKE YOU? YOU ARE NOT ALONE. WE CAN HELP.

Join us for a Female only retreat where you will meet other women who have experienced MST and are working through their own healing.

Retreat Location

Boulder Hot Springs, Boulder, MT

July 31- August 2, 2026

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE RETREAT AND TO APPLY, CONTACT US AT:

 **EMAIL** MORALINJURY@VOANR.ORG

 **WEB** VOANR.ORG/SERVICES/MI-RETREATS

SCAN ME



FUNDED BY STAFF SERGEANT PARKER GORDON FOX SUICIDE PREVENTION GRANT



American Legion Department of Montana

Merchandise & Fundraising Order Form

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Order Information

Item	Price	Quantity	Total
Legion Pilsner (Case)	\$45.00	_____	\$_____
2027 Cash Calendar	\$20.00	_____	\$_____
2027 Red Shirt Friday T-Shirt	\$25.00	_____	\$_____
2027 Red Shirt Friday Long Sleeve T-Shirt	\$30.00	_____	\$_____
2027 Red Shirt Friday Crewneck Sweatshirt	\$45.00	_____	\$_____
2027 Red Shirt Friday Hooded Sweatshirt	\$45.00	_____	\$_____

Clothing Sizes (Please indicate quantity of each)

Size	Qty	Size	Qty
Small	_____	2XL	_____
Medium	_____	3XL	_____
Large	_____	4XL	_____
XL	_____	5XL	_____

Total Amount Due

Order Total: \$_____

Delivery & Ordering Information

Legion Pilsner

- ☐ Pick up at the Department Office in Helena
 - ☐ Deliver through my District Commander (when available)
-

Legion Bourbon

The American Legion Bourbon is available through your local Montana liquor store.

If your local store does not have it in stock, please contact the Department Office and we will assist you with obtaining it.

Quantity Requested (optional): _____

Preferred Liquor Store: _____

2027 Red Shirt Friday Apparel

Pre-Orders Now Being Accepted

Payment Information

- ☐ Check Enclosed

Make checks payable to:

American Legion Department of Montana

Questions?

American Legion Department of Montana

PO Box 155

Fort Harrison, MT 59636

Email: amlegmtsec@gmail.com

Thank you for supporting the programs of The American Legion Department of Montana!