



Stars and Stripes: U.S. Military Newspapers in the Library of Congress

In November 1861, Union troops under General Ulysses S. Grant defeated Confederate forces in Bloomfield, Missouri. On November 9, 1861, the first known edition of a newspaper for the troops was published by soldiers from the 18th and 29th Illinois Volunteers on the Bloomfield Daily Herald's presses. The name given to this newspaper was Stars and Stripes. Although this Bloomfield edition was a one-off, it sparked a tradition of soldiers publishing news for the troops.

Sixteen years later, in October 1877, the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) initiated a new publication, the National Tribune, a newspaper for Civil War Union veterans; later, the banner Stars and Stripes were added to its masthead. When the G.A.R. ceased publication prior to World War I, a private corporation continued to publish the newspaper for veterans of the U.S. armed forces under the same composite name: National Tribune Stars and Stripes (Washington, D.C.). The first official military publication, Stars and Stripes, was published in Paris during World War I (1914-1918) for the American Expeditionary Force (A.E.F.). According to A.E.F. Commander General John J. Pershing, it was intended to provide uncensored news from soldiers, by soldiers, for soldiers. The first weekly edition was published on February 18, 1918, by a staff of eight, and limited to 30,000 copies. Due to its popularity, the circulation increased to over half a million, and the staff grew to 300. The final edition was published on June 13, 1919. On June 14, 1919, immediately after the suspension of the U.S. military's Stars and Stripes, some of its staff members organized a new Washington-based publishing

house, the Stars and Stripes Corporation. It also published a newspaper, Stars and Stripes, which competed with the National Tribune for the veteran market. This new group, however, was unable to sustain steady subscriptions, and in 1926 it merged with the National Tribune.

During World War II (1939-1945), Stars and Stripes was again chosen as the official U.S. military newspaper for Armed Forces personnel stationed overseas. First published in London, it was administered by the Office of War Information in the newly established Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force. Between 1942 and 1945, official editions were published in all European and African theaters of operation, including Italy, Sicily, France, Germany, Egypt, Algeria, and Tunisia. In the Pacific theater, the first edition of Stars and Stripes was published on May 14, 1945, in Honolulu by the Pacific Headquarters. Distribution depended on the availability of air transport, the only effective means of reaching troops on hundreds of Pacific islands and in several Asian countries until the end of the war in September 1945.

Since then, this same Stars and Stripes have published European and Pacific editions for the U.S. Armed Forces. These have included editions for U.S. forces in Korea, both during and after the Korean War (1950-1953), the Vietnam War (1963-1975), and the Persian Gulf War (1991). Currently, it is distributed by the Department of Defense on U.S. military bases both in the United States and overseas. The National Tribune, on the other hand, is still privately published by the Stars and Stripes Omnimedia Corporation and is sold primarily to thousands of U.S. veterans and their extended families nationwide.

Department Commander

Kim Kay C McCarty Martin

I want to thank everyone, especially our Department District Commanders, and our Post Commanders, for all the effort and dedication put forth for Our Department in making our 65% membership target. Your efforts and dedication are greatly appreciated. It was a joint effort, teamwork at its best, that shows we can achieve our goals. It was a great showing of support right before our National Commanders visit to our great state. I also want to thank our Department for keeping us up to date with progress and inspiration. Working together we can accomplish so much and we have proven that if you believe in yourselves you can achieve much. Again, Thank You very much!

For our National Commander's visit to Great Falls this past weekend, plans were reorganized at the last minute because of the Government Shutdown. His visit was based in Great Falls but we took him to Dutton, Fort Benton, Lewistown, and Choteau. Working together, we made his visit memorable. I want to send a hearty Thank You to the following Posts for being such great hosts, working with Department in ensuring our National Commander enjoyed his visit: Post 64 Dutton for National Commander's Breakfast on Saturday, Post 26 for Spaghetti Supper Saturday night, Post 341 for the Breakfast on Sunday, Post 16 Lewistown for Beef Dinner Sunday, and Post 6 Choteau for Supper Sunday night.

Talking about imagining a goal, inspiring each other to believe and achieving a goal, I want to use the example of District 5 hosting a Veterans Day Celebration this past Tuesday in Hamilton. Through one of their district monthly meetings, they decided to

host a Veterans Day Celebration this year. They decided who would do what, pulling together their contacts, and finding a place big enough. The ball started rolling and they found out that they had a lot of local

and veteran support. They sold nearly 600 tickets to the event. This teamwork shows what can be accomplished working together. A great Thank You should be given to District 5 Commander Deb Strickland, Steve Gibbons, Doug Mason, Posts from Hamilton, Corvallis, Stevensville, Lolo, Florance, and Missoula. What a great event I attended and I felt honored to be among so many veterans! I've never seen that many veterans and their spouses together for any event before in Montana. It was awesome!

It's been an eventful November so far and we have Thanksgiving in a few weeks. Don't forget to thank our veterans for their service and remember them every day. Buddy checks are not just for the holidays but every day. Thank you for your service, for your inspiration and dedication to our great organization. If you need anything, let me know, if you want me to visit, give me a call. Happy Thanksgiving to all our Legionnaires and your families.



WHY I'M THANKFUL TO SERVE IN THE AMERICAN LEGION

I serve in the American Legion to honor those who served before me, support my fellow veterans, and strengthen my community and nation through service.

-Irene Dickerson

For the opportunity to support veterans and their families in our communities.

-Eric Beal

I get to meet many good people that are veterans. I work with kids at American Legion Boys State.

-Joe Yeoman



Montana Legion Bourbon: A Tradition of Service in Every Pour

The American Legion of Montana is proud to share some exciting news—a unique partnership with Willie’s Distillery to create the Montana Legion Bourbon label. This collaboration is more than just a new bourbon; it’s a tribute to the values of service, camaraderie, and tradition that define our Legion family.

From the flight line to the pier, from the front gate to the long road home, service members have always known that it’s the little things that carry us through. A laugh with your squad. A letter from home. A weekend stop at the canteen before a barbecue. These simple moments became traditions—and those traditions became the bonds that still connect us today.

Montana Legion Bourbon was crafted with that same respect for detail. Patiently aged and carefully blended, it honors the memories we hold dear while raising a toast to the future. Each sip is a reminder of the friendships we’ve made, the service we’ve given, and the legacy we carry forward.

But the heart of this project is what it gives back. Just as the canteen once built morale and strengthened community, every bottle of Montana Legion Bourbon supports the American Legion of Montana and our programs for Veterans and military families. By raising a glass, you’re also raising up those who served—and ensuring that the mission continues.

This bourbon is more than a drink; it’s a story worth sharing. Be it Soldier, Sailor, Airman, or Marine—raise a glass. Share the story. Carry the legacy forward.

WHY I’M THANKFUL TO SERVE IN THE AMERICAN LEGION

The American Legion has provided me with great sources to keep in touch with Veterans and their families. I hope my efforts are positive for all Montanans! We all seek to continue to serve!

-Ray Read

Service Officer

Eric Beal

Legionnaires....seeking help with understand VA benefits? There are offices across the state that can help you get that knowledge. They can help you with the following and more!

- VA Disability compensation and nonservice connected pension filing
- VA Healthcare enrollment
- VA Education and training
- VA Burial and survivor benefits
- And many other VA and State of Montana veteran benefits

Also there services are free of charge! Below are the office locations and phone numbers

-Belgrade

350 Airport Road (406) 388-4601

-Billings

1500 University Drive (406) 248-8579

-Butte

600 Gilman AVE (406) 533-0910

-Great Falls

104 2nd St South, Ste 200 (406) 452-2265

-Havre

232 1st St. W (406) 265-4225

-Kalispell

2989 Highway 93 N (406) 755-3795

-Miles City

1020 North Haynes (406) 232-1203

-Missoula

1911 Tower Street (406) 542-2501

-Helena (Fort Harrison)

3633 Veterans Drive (406) 495-2082



Montana Legion: Driving for the End Zone in Membership

The whistle has blown, the ball is in play, and the Montana American Legion is on the field with one goal in mind: to be the top Department in the Western Region for membership!

The challenge is tied to one of the greatest rivalries in sports – the Army–Navy Game. Sixteen tickets are on the line, with eight winners each receiving a pair. Montana wants to make sure some of those tickets end up right here in Big Sky Country!

Here's how it works:

- Top Recruiters: From October 1 through November 11, the top three recruiters in the nation (minimum of five new members) will each win two tickets.
- Regional Champions: On the November Target Date (November 13), the top Department in each region will also win two tickets.

That means if Montana wants to claim victory in the West, we have to hit our mark. The goal line is 65% of our membership target – 5,828 members – by November 13.

This is our championship drive, and every Post, Squadron, and Unit can help move the ball down the field. Recruit new members, renew those who haven't yet, and encourage others to be part of the team.

And the fun doesn't stop there – Posts are encouraged to host Army–Navy Game watch parties. A special kit will even be available through Emblem Sales so you can tailgate Legion-style.

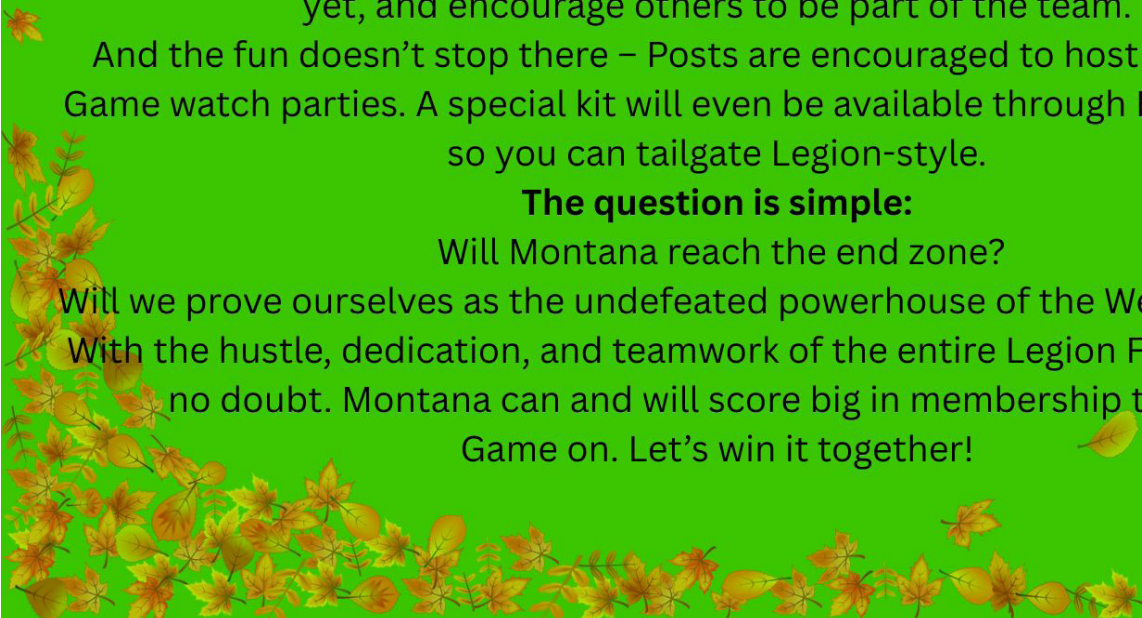
The question is simple:

Will Montana reach the end zone?

Will we prove ourselves as the undefeated powerhouse of the Western Region?

With the hustle, dedication, and teamwork of the entire Legion Family, there's no doubt. Montana can and will score big in membership this fall.

Game on. Let's win it together!



Vice Commander

Irene Dickerson

Membership in The American Legion, Department of Montana, is more than a number—it's a commitment to advocacy, service, and community. Every renewal and new member strengthens our collective voice for Montana veterans and their families.

When you renew or join today, you help the Legion stand strong on issues that matter most—veterans' healthcare, benefits, and national security. Your membership ensures

that Montana's voice is heard in Washington and across the nation.

Here at home, your dues and involvement support programs that make a difference—helping veterans in need, mentoring youth through Boys State and Legion Baseball, and honoring the service of those who came before us.

Now is the time to stay connected and engaged. Together, we can continue to make a lasting impact in our communities and across Big Sky Country.

Join. Renew. Serve. Strengthen Montana's Legion family.

Local Business Steps Up for Community: iFlyBigSky Shows What It Means to Be Montana Strong

When the recent government shutdown left some local families struggling, iFlyBigSky didn't hesitate to lend a hand. The veteran-owned Helena business quietly purchased and delivered Vigilante Pizzas to families in need, reminding us what true Montana neighborliness looks like.

iFlyBigSky isn't just known for their incredible drone photography and videography—they're known for their heart. Owned and operated by local veterans, the company embodies integrity, service, and community pride. Their work captures Montana's beauty from the skies, and their compassion uplifts those on the ground.

As they put it, "That's what Montanans do — we take care of each other."

Thank you, iFlyBigSky, for leading with generosity and reminding us all what it means to be #MontanaStrong.

Helping Veterans Stay Warm: NorthWestern Energy and Montana's LIEAP Program

As Montana braces for colder months, many veterans—especially those living alone or on fixed incomes—face the challenge of keeping homes warm and utility bills manageable. Posts can play a vital role by helping connect veterans to resources like NorthWestern Energy's assistance options and the state's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP).

What the Programs Offer

LIEAP (formerly LIHEAP), administered by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, helps income-eligible households with winter heating costs and emergency furnace repairs. Benefits are applied directly to a household's heating vendor or utility bill, reducing the immediate burden on families.

NorthWestern Energy partners with the state program to ensure qualified customers receive credits or discounts on their energy bills. The company also offers payment arrangements, budget plans, and extended due dates for those who may not qualify for LIEAP but still need help managing seasonal costs.

Who Qualifies

Eligibility is based on household income, size, and heating expenses. Priority is given to homes with elderly residents, individuals with disabilities, or young children. Households already participating in programs such as SNAP or SSI may automatically qualify.

How Posts Can Help

This is a practical area where Legion outreach makes a measurable difference.

- **Host a Winter Check-In:** Schedule short visits or phone calls to check on older or homebound veterans before temperatures drop. Confirm they have working heating systems and know where to get assistance.
- **Provide Application Support:** Set up an afternoon at the Post where members can help each other fill out LIEAP applications or gather necessary documents such as utility bills and income verification.
- **Share Information Early:** Post flyers, social media reminders, or brief mentions at meetings so members and their families know where to go for help before emergencies arise.
- **Coordinate with Local Agencies:** Community Action offices and county veterans' service officers often work directly with the state's energy assistance program. Partnering with them ensures that veterans are connected to the right resources quickly.

This outreach is more than paperwork—it's another way to live the Legion's mission of "mutual helpfulness." By helping veterans secure energy assistance or simply checking in on a neighbor, Posts strengthen their communities and protect those who once served our nation.

Spotlight on Service: Leon Cover – The Steady Hand Behind Post 2

At Post No. 2 in Helena, Adjutant Leon Cover has become a cornerstone of leadership and organization. His journey into The American Legion began in an unexpected way through a simple act of mentorship that would grow into a life-long commitment to veterans.

“While still on active duty, a Legionnaire asked me to mentor his son, who was struggling with alcoholism. Through that experience, I learned what The American Legion was truly about — veterans helping veterans.”

Impressed by the Legion’s impact on the community, Leon joined and soon became a Paid Up for Life member. What began as helping one family evolved into serving countless others through his role in the Legion.

A Legacy That Runs Deep

Leon’s roots in military service run generations deep. His family’s service history traces back to the Indian Wars of the 1870s, continuing through World War I, World War II, and Vietnam. Leon himself served in both Afghanistan and Iraq, and his younger brother also served in Iraq.

“Serving fellow veterans is immensely important to me,” Leon says. “I know the challenges of coming home and reintegrating after conflict. Helping others through that process is something I take to heart.”

The Adjutant’s Role: Quiet Strength

Since joining The American Legion in 2016, Leon has taken on one of the organization’s most essential but demanding roles — Post Adjutant. When the previous Adjutant, a Vietnam-era veteran, stepped down, Leon volunteered to take on the responsibility.

“Adjutants are underappreciated and overworked,” he admits with a smile. “That’s okay — it’s rewarding work that keeps the Post running smoothly.”

Behind the scenes, Leon manages the administrative heartbeat of Post No. 2, from coordinating membership records to ensuring compliance with Legion bylaws. His steady leadership ensures the Post remains efficient, organized, and forward-thinking.

Engaging the Next Generation

One of Leon’s central goals is attracting younger veterans and changing outdated perceptions about the Legion.

“Younger veterans sometimes still see the Legion as just a place to drink and tell war stories,” Leon says. “We need to change that by showing what we actually do — being visible in the community, helping veterans, and leading by example.”

He believes the Legion’s ability to adapt and evolve is key to its future. Younger veterans, he notes, bring modern skills, fresh energy, and a focus on efficiency that can help move the organization forward.

Service Beyond the Post

Post No. 2’s reach into the Helena community is wide and impactful. The Post provides disability claim assistance, supports the Fort Harrison VA Medical Center, sponsors Legion Baseball and Scouting America, and helps local youth attend Boys’ and Girls’ State.

Members also conduct Buddy Checks, attend veterans’ funerals in support of families, and provide emergency aid to veterans in crisis.

“We’ll always be there for any veteran who needs help,” Leon says. “That’s what the Legion is all about.”

Adapting to a New Era of Service

Leon sees today’s veterans facing new challenges — particularly in mental health — and believes The American Legion must lead efforts to destigmatize mental healthcare and advocate for better support systems.

“The nature of warfare has changed,” he explains. “Many of today’s conflicts are low-intensity but carry the same psychological toll. The Legion needs to adapt and lead in supporting veterans with these invisible wounds.”

Carrying the Mission Forward

Looking to the next decade, Leon hopes to see a Legion that reflects all generations of veterans, one that continues evolving to meet new needs while holding fast to its founding principles.

“Helping fellow veterans is important work — and it’s our turn to step up,” Leon emphasizes.

“The older generations supported us while we were in the fight. Now it’s our job to support the next one. Man up and do the job.”

He acknowledges that many younger veterans are busy raising families and building careers, but he’s confident that as life settles, they’ll return to take the reins.

“My generation will carry the Legion forward,” he says. “We just need to make sure it’s strong, relevant, and ready for them.”

Golden Triangle Legion Riders Donation

In our first year as a chapter, the Golden Triangle American Legion Riders raised funds through our raffle to fund programs that help participants in the 8th Judicial Veterans Treatment Court. We donated \$2,000 today. The veteran participants work very hard to overcome the issues that landed them in the legal system. Very proud to help them this year.

Pictured (L to R): Shannon Wilson, Riders Director; Judge Elizabeth Best; Carol Gruwell, Riders Secretary; Tony Figarelle, Rider member; Jerry Collins, Asst. Riders Director; and Bob Bannister, Rider member.



WHY I'M THANKFUL TO SERVE IN THE AMERICAN LEGION

I am thankful to have served in the American Legion of Montana because I am able to continue to serve Veterans all over the State and Nation. My service began almost 40 years ago as a member of the American Legion while my active service began about nine years ago. I am thankful to be able to serve on Funeral Honor Guards, and in any way to help make our American Legion stronger. I am thankful for the ability and chance to meet and interact with other Veterans around the State. Being a part of the American Legion Boys State and seeing the change come over young people within not only a day, but a week is worth the time to be a part of that program. I am thankful because it has been very rewarding in every aspect of my life being able to continue to serve other Veterans. I am thankful for the Veterans that I have met and become friends with, something I would not have been able to do if I had not become a member of the American Legion of Montana. Last but not least, the memories that I have from my visits and travels around Montana and across the Nation as a member of the American Legion of Montana. Thank you to all of you who gave me this opportunity to be able to serve you and others.

-Ken Simon

Department Historian

Ray Read

The American Legion was founded on service, and with more than a century of accomplishments behind us, preserving that story is essential. One of the best ways for local posts to capture and share their legacy is by participating in the annual American Legion History Book Contest.

How Posts Can Participate

Every post in Montana is encouraged to compile and submit a history book for consideration. These histories serve not only as contest entries, but also as valuable archives for future generations of Legionnaires, community members, and historians.

- **Deadline:** All post history books must be submitted to Department Headquarters no later than the Department Convention in Helena, June 2026.
- **Submission:** Histories must be turned in at Department Headquarters to be certified and entered into the contest. Certified books may also be forwarded to the national level for showcase or inclusion in the Legion's permanent archives.

What a Good History Book Should Contain

A strong history book is much more than a scrapbook. It is a complete and readable record of a post's activities, achievements, and impact. Judges look for both thoroughness and storytelling. To be competitive, history books should include the following elements:

- **Cover & Title Page** – Post name and number, location, emblem, and the time period covered.
- **Compiler's Information** – Name and contact information of the historian or compiler.
- **Introduction / Foreword** – A brief narrative of the post's origins, mission, and identity within the community.
- **Table of Contents** – Clearly listing sections with page numbers.
- **Narrative of Activities** – The heart of the book. A chronological or program-based account of the post's activities such as meetings, programs, community service, ceremonies, and membership efforts.
- **Illustrations & Visuals** – Photographs, clippings, programs, and memorabilia, each with clear captions identifying people, places, and events.
- **Appendices** – Supporting material such as financial reports, membership numbers, or consolidated reports.
- **Index** – An alphabetical list of names, places, and subjects to make the book useful as a reference.
- **Consistency & Quality** – Clear writing, organized presentation, accurate facts, sharp images, and attention to detail.

Judging Criteria

Entries are reviewed on several key points:

- Format and required elements
- Comprehensiveness of post programs and activities
- Organization and readability of the narrative
- Quality and identification of illustrations
- Originality and presentation

Accuracy is essential, and factual errors or missing elements can hurt a book's chances.

Tips for Success

- Begin gathering materials early—don't wait until the end of the year.
- Maintain a running file of programs, clippings, and photos.
- Use appendices to keep the narrative clean and easy to read.
- Label every photo and document carefully.
- Balance text and visuals for an engaging presentation.
- Proofread thoroughly before submission.

Department Adjutant

Duane Cunningham

As the year winds down, it's time for Montana Legionnaires to rally together with renewed purpose. The strength of The American Legion has always come from teamwork—veterans supporting veterans, posts supporting their communities, and all of us united in service. Now more than ever, that spirit of teamwork is essential as we push toward our year-end membership and fundraising goals.

Why Teamwork Matters

The Montana American Legion has long proven what can happen when we work together. Whether it's standing up for veterans' benefits in Helena or at the nation's capital, Memorial Day ceremonies in our communities, or simply helping a veteran in need, teamwork is the driving force behind every success. Just like during our military service, no mission is accomplished alone. Each Legionnaire plays a part—recruiting members, volunteering, participating in Department raffles or simply showing up to support post activities.

When Posts work as a team, we build stronger communities, grow membership, and create a lasting impact that extends well beyond our doors. Veterans have always answered the call, by being visible in our community and showing pride in the American Legion and what we do, that attracts membership. In a sense, it breathes a sense of belonging into the community that people want to be a part of.

Membership: The Lifeblood of Our Organization

Membership isn't just a number—it's the foundation that keeps the American Legion strong. Every

new member brings energy, ideas, and a renewed sense of purpose. More members mean more voices advocating for veterans' issues, more volunteers for community projects, and more strength when we speak to state and federal lawmakers.

Here in Montana, where our communities are close-knit and our veterans are proud, membership is what keeps our posts alive and our mission active. It ensures the next generation of veterans has a place to belong, to serve, and to lead. That is the key to retention of our members; we must lead but also must mentor and train so we can step aside and watch as the next leader takes over. We must take from that a sense of pride and accomplishment as we turn over the reigns to the next in line. If every Legionnaire committed to recruiting just one new member before the end of the year, imagine the growth we'd see across our department! Imagine the opportunities that growth would bring to each level of the American Legion.

Engaging Veterans and Increasing Visibility

The best way to attract new members is to be visible and active in the community. Let Montana see what the American Legion does—because when people see us serving, they want to be part of it. Here are a few ways to increase engagement and visibility:

- Host a community open house or veteran appreciation night—invite veterans and their families to see what your post offers.
- Attend local events — set up a booth at fairs, rodeos, sporting events or parades and talk with fel-

low veterans. Regardless of the era of service, every veteran has this in common with each other.

- Partner or volunteer with schools or youth programs to promote Americanism and service.
- Personally reach out to recently discharged veterans or Guard and Reserve members — sometimes all it takes is a sincere invitation.

Remember, many veterans simply need to be asked. A friendly, personal invitation from one Legionnaire to another is often the deciding factor. Offer assistance with getting them into the various benefits that military service provides.

Why Veterans Should Belong

The American Legion is more than just an organization—it's a family. It's a place where veterans find camaraderie, support, and the opportunity to continue serving their communities and each other. Belonging to a Veteran Service Organization like the Legion provides purpose, pride, and the chance to make a difference.

For new generations of veterans, membership offers mentorship, networking, and advocacy for the benefits they've earned. For older veterans, it's a way to share experience, wisdom, and tradition. Together, we preserve our history and shape our future.

Fundraising: Fueling the Mission
Fundraising is vital to sustaining the programs that define who we are—veteran relief, Boys and Girls State, scholarships, youth sports, and community service. For rural Montana posts, local fundraisers and raffles are the backbone of financial support.

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Keeping Their Legacy Alive: How Fundraising and Membership Help Continue the Mission of Past Generations

Every dollar raised and every membership renewed in The American Legion of Montana carries a story one that began more than a century ago with veterans who returned from war determined to serve their communities, advocate for their brothers and sisters in arms, and protect the freedoms they fought for. Today, we are the stewards of that legacy.

When our founders gathered in 1919, they didn't just form a veteran organization they built a movement rooted in service, camaraderie, and civic duty. That same spirit continues to live through the efforts of Montana Legionnaires who rally behind today's needs: ensuring veterans receive proper care, helping military families find stability, and teaching young Americans the values of citizenship and leadership.

Fundraising plays a crucial role in sustaining those programs. Whether it's supporting Boys and Girls State, sponsoring youth sports teams, or contributing to veteran assistance funds, these efforts keep the mission thriving at the local level. Many Posts also lead initiatives such as raffle fundraisers, community breakfasts, and patriotic events not just to raise money, but to raise awareness of the Legion's ongoing purpose.

Membership, too, is an act of legacy. Each renewal or new sign-up represents another voice in our collective effort to advocate for veterans in Helena and Washington, D.C. When we stand together, we are not only honoring the past but shaping the future ensuring that the benefits, rights, and recognition hard-won by earlier generations are never forgotten or taken for granted.

The strength of The American Legion has always come from its people those who believe in something larger than themselves. By supporting fundraising events, volunteering time, or encouraging one more veteran to join, each of us helps carry the torch that was first lit by those who came home from the battlefields of the 20th century.

Their mission is our mission. Their legacy is our responsibility. And through our continued service, we make sure their light never fades.

WHY I'M THANKFUL TO SERVE IN THE AMERICAN LEGION

Family
-Robert Brewer

I am thankful for being a part of the Legion in Montana
because of the chance to help other Veterans
-Trevor Barnhart

Ways to Give Back This Season

Small actions can make a big difference! Here are a few ways to serve others and honor the spirit of the season:

- **Send a Card:** Write a holiday note to a deployed service member or a veteran in a care facility.
 - **Lend a Hand:** Offer to rake leaves, shovel snow, or run errands for an elderly neighbor.
 - **Support a Family:** Donate groceries or gift cards to a local food bank or veteran family in need.
 - **Visit and Listen:** Spend time with someone who might be alone this holiday season your presence can be the best gift.
 - **Volunteer Together:** Get your Post or Auxiliary group to organize a small service project or coat drive.
- Let's show our gratitude through service — the true heart of The American Legion Family.



AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS



Motorcycle Riding Safety

Tony Wagner

For this first safety newsletter, I'll go over general safety for riding alone.

First, make sure of your motorcycle's condition. Tire air pressure is probably the biggest factor, next would be tire condition. This should be checked for every ride. The rapid deflation of a tire is a dangerous event on a motorcycle, especially the front tire. After that there is checking proper shock settings and suspension air pressure, if so equipped. That, followed by belt/chain wear and tension. After that, normal tune ups, once per year, or every 5,000 miles for the bulk of it, see your owner's manual for an accurate list for your machine.

Once on the road, remember defensive driving. Follow traffic laws, leave the proper amount of space between you and the car in front of you. I use the 3 second rule.

Personally, I try and avoid busy intersection where there are no stoplights, and no "chicken lanes". If you are stuck having to cross a busy intersection with no traffic light, remember that your safety is always more important than your schedule.

Learn to look ahead for road hazards, such as "road alleigators" (retreaded tire treads), or dirt/gravel on the road. It's common for dirt and gravel to build up in the middle of an intersection

which you may cross over in a left turn. Both of these hazards are a lot more important on a motor cycle than a car, and we all get used to car safety when we haven't ridden for a while. Often, the biggest safety issue for a motorcycle, is wildlife. A deer jumping out in front of you can ruin your day, and then there's elk! One way that I stay safe is to keep my eyes moving while traveling down the highway. Concentrating only on the road ahead can lead to "highway hypnosis", and leave you inattentive to other upcoming hazards, like deer grazing on the side of the road. If you see a deer, elk, antelope, etc. remember that they are herd animals, and you're not seeing all of them! Should you see one crossing the road, really slow down! Again, they are herd animals and if you are about to drive between the deer you saw, and the deer you don't see, you could be in trouble. Predators will cut off their prey from the rest, so slow down and watch, you'll probably see that some of the deer will panic and want to catch up to the leaders to avoid being preyed on. Of course, that's exactly the wrong thing to do, but it's thousands of years of instinct vs 150 years of motor vehicles. Finally as always, remember to keep the shiny side up, and the greasy side down!

ALR Director

Brian Carpenter

As we close out another busy and productive fall, I want to extend my sincere appreciation to all the Riders who made this year's Fall Conference a success. Your engagement, thoughtful discussion, and dedication to strengthening our program continue to move the Montana ALR forward in meaningful ways.

One of the most important efforts underway is our continued work updating and refining the Standard Operating Procedures. These changes aren't just administrative, they are foundational to ensuring the Montana ALR remains strong, consistent, and well-supported across the state. We have built a document that better reflects our program's mission, aligns with current needs, and sets up every Chapter for long-term success. Thank you to everyone who has contributed feedback and rolled up their sleeves to help us get this right.

Looking ahead, planning has officially begun for both a 2026 ROMP to be hosted by Lewistown Chapter 16 and a 2026 Department Legacy Run, with Corvallis Chapter 91 being the host location. Early conversations have been promising, and we are excited to shape these events that honors our mission while bringing Riders together from across Montana and beyond. More information will be coming as details firm up, but the momentum is already strong.

I also encourage everyone to mark their calendars for the Department Convention in June. It's always one of the best opportunities we have to reconnect, collaborate, and chart the course for the work ahead. I look forward to seeing many of you there and continuing the progress we've made together.

Thank you for all you do, your commitment to veterans, to your communities, and to one another is what keeps this program thriving. Ride safe,



SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

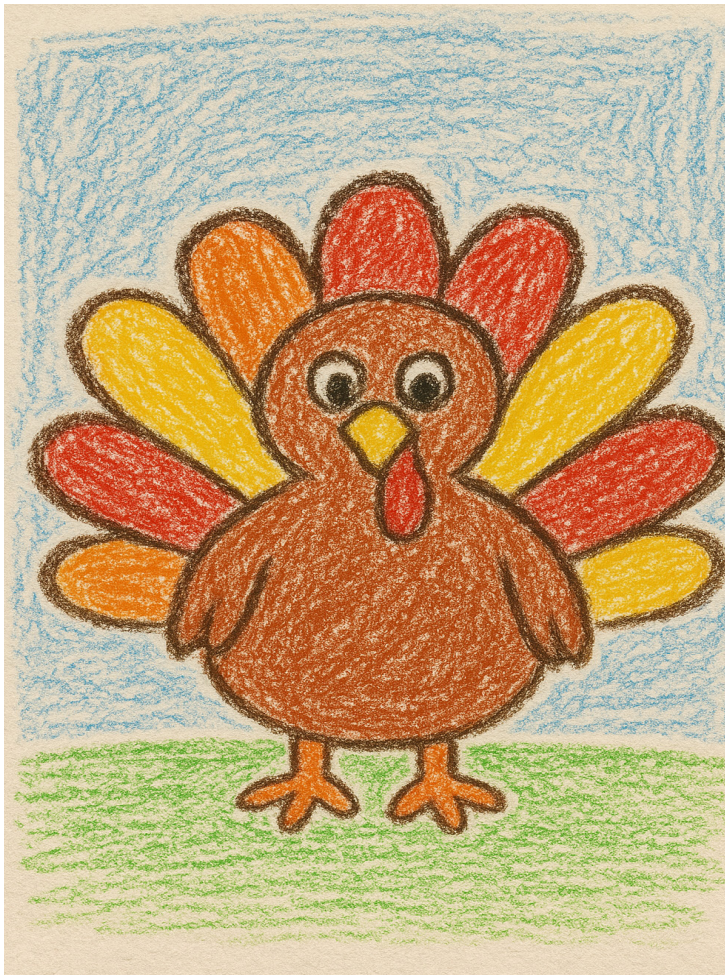


Kids' Art Corner — December Theme!

We're inviting our Montana kids to share their creativity for the December issue of the Montana Legionnaire! This month's theme is "Holiday Cheer & Winter Traditions." Children are welcome to draw anything that celebrates the spirit of the season. A holiday-themed coloring page will also be included for those who prefer to color.

Please email a photo or scan of the artwork to lmtprbub@gmail.com by December 10, 2025. Be sure to include the artist's first name, age, and hometown.

We can't wait to showcase the wonderful artwork from our young Montana creators!





Leona Somerfeld **Department President**

The days are flying by, I hit the ground running to eight of the Fall District meetings and logged over 2200 miles. A lot of information was presented at the meetings and there were many questions which made it worthwhile

interacting with so many Units. I will be at as many Spring District meetings as I can.

My eyes have been opened on how many people do not know the value of an American Legion Auxiliary Unit. Montana has 17 programs to help veterans, military, youth, and communities. We have chairman for each one, we have Zoom meetings every month from our Northwestern Division and National chairman to share ideas and encourage each other to make the best better! We are "A Community of Volunteers Serving Veterans, Military and their Families."

We had a good turnout at Fall Conference and offered ZOOM. We had tight quarters and some audio issues, we have solved those issues for next time. My President's Project, the Grace Home and Grace Haven, were given \$12,000 each to help with a couple of renovation projects, the money came from the Poppy Fund. Thank you. Our four VAVS Directors and their Deputies are getting ready for their busiest time, getting ready for the Christmas Gift Shops. Our units and members have been very generous to our Veterans and their families to make a nice Christmas. I read this is the National 97th year for doing the Gift Shops!

We have a cleaned-up Roster and a Plan of Action in email form. Our Public Relations chairman, Candice Gehring mtalacandice@gmail.com, is working on getting the Plan of Action on our website, montanaauxiliary.com. If you have articles or pictures, please send them to Candice.

The Girls State and Boys State forms are new, hopefully they will be found on our website soon, do not use the old forms. It is still \$300 per delegate. We will have fundraisers to make up the difference. As a reminder, get out and find delegates. Our new Girls State Chairman is Gwen Marshall, let's help her out. Can you help at Girls State, a day, two days or a week? We are looking for counselors, no experience needed, on the job training. Stress to the Junior students the importance of Girls State and the scholarship opportunities available and how prestigious it is on a resume.

Memberships are coming in, let's help our membership chairman, 1st vp Jackie Gangstad, reach some goals set by National. She is here to help and doing a great job. Remember to keep track of your volunteer time, money spent, and activities for our Community Service chairman, 2nd vp Trisha McKinney. Impact Reports are really important.

Be thankful for what we have and all the freedoms that are afforded to us this Thanksgiving. Happy Thanksgiving to you all!





Legion Strong

Yvonne Kostelecky

What does it mean to me to be “Legion Strong”?

To me Legion Strong means to believe that as a Legion, Auxiliary, SAL, and Rider member, we are to work together as 1 big family in every way

to make sure that our Veterans and their families are taken care of in good times and in bad.

We as a Legion Strong family work together as brothers and sisters to make sure our Posts and Units are there for our communities, state, and nation. As always in our preamble we will uphold and defend the Constitution, maintain law and order, foster and perpetuate a 100% Americanism and to never forget our associations from previous wars.

Together we as a Legion Strong Family can accomplish anything.

I’m very proud to be part of the Montana American Legion Strong Family.

Yvonne Kostelecky

Montana ALA Past Department President

Yvonne Kostelecky

Security Chairman

As Security Chairman we are to inform our members on how to support of military families that are serving our country overseas.

I will give suggestions on how our Units/members/Districts can give their support:

- Gift cards for the Veterans Christmas gift shop
- Help Blue Star and Gold Star families- maybe get them a Blue Star or Gold Star Banner for their doors.
- Clipping coupons for the families
- Fill Christmas stockings with: toothpaste, tooth brushes, shaving cream, bar soap, q-tips, decks of cards, card games, granola bars, hard candy, deodorant, socks, chapstick, foot powder
- Remember to Be The One
- Quilts of Valor for Service members
- Wreaths Across America- I think Richard Klose from Laurel has connections on how to get them- You can buy one and put it on a grave of a serviceman or woman maybe a family member
- Donate Blood
- Support POW/MIA and remember to have the POW/MIA table at your meetings
- You can always take the Emergency Preparedness certified training and at www.ready.gov
- They will be doing the Salute to Service members at National again for more information on how to nominate a service member go to <https://member.legionaux.org/salute-to-servicemembers-award-form> Forms and detailed information is on this site.
- Donate to Operation Comfort Warriors you can send checks to:
- Operation Comfort Warriors

Ladies and Gentlemen please remember to send Care packages all year long not just at Christmas, it is very hard for them to be away from their families. But also make sure to take care of the families at home who are waiting for that Serviceman or woman to come home safely.

How Posts Can Update Member Records to Honor Those Who Have Passed

Maintaining accurate records in MyLegion.org is both a mark of respect and a governance best practice. By marking members as deceased when appropriate, your post:

- Ensures the legacy of the member is handled properly and respectfully.
- Keeps membership reports accurate for your post, district, and department.
- Prevents renewal notices or membership mailings from being sent in error.
- Honors the service and memory of every Legionnaire who has passed.

Step-by-Step: Marking a Member as Deceased

1. Log in to MyLegion.org.
2. Navigate to My Groups → View Members and search for the member by name or Member ID.
3. Open the member's record.
4. Go to the Name & Demographics section.
5. Select the checkbox marked Deceased and save the record.
6. Confirm that any committee or commission appointments have been automatically ended.
7. Notify your Department Headquarters if further action or verification is needed.
8. Use the Reports/Labels function to generate a current roster and verify that deceased members are correctly listed.

Tips & Best Practices

- **Timeliness** – As soon as your post is informed of a member's passing, update their record in MyLegion.
- **Verification** – Confirm with a reliable source, such as an obituary or family notification, before updating.

Errors can only be corrected by department staff.

- **Rosters** – Review your post's current roster quarterly to ensure accuracy and identify members who may need status updates.
- **Communication** – Make sure post officers understand this process and share updates promptly.
- **Honor and Memory** – Consider including the member's name, years of service, and contributions in your post newsletter or memorial book.
- **Data Accuracy** – Clean records prevent wasted mailings and ensure accurate delegate strength for conventions and reports.

Updating member records to reflect those who have passed is a small but meaningful task that upholds The American Legion's tradition of honor and respect. It strengthens your post's credibility, improves operational accuracy, and ensures every veteran's legacy is properly recorded. A disciplined approach to record maintenance is one of the most professional ways to continue serving our fellow veterans—both living and remembered.

WHY I'M THANKFUL TO SERVE IN THE AMERICAN LEGION

I am thankful for being a part of the American Legion because I want to continue helping shape our future. In the American Legion, I have been able to assist veterans in many ways within my community. I am able to shape our future by working with our youth in programs such as American Legion Boys State and the Oratorical Scholarship Program. The American Legion continues to offer me the chance to continue serving and helping to make a difference in my community.

-Lowell Long



Spotlight: Tim Fox — A Life of Service Beyond the Office

“Service doesn’t stop when the title changes.”

For Tim Fox, that line isn’t a slogan—it’s the way he’s always tried to live. Whether he’s in a courtroom, a community center, or standing in a packed gym for the Special Olympics, he shows up with the same steady commitment: be there for people, without fanfare.

When he walked onto the gym floor in Helena this spring, microphone in hand, in front of more than 2,000 Special Olympics athletes and supporters, he wasn’t thinking about his old title. He wasn’t “former Attorney General Tim Fox.” He was simply there as a friend.

“I caught up with about 2,000 of my best friends tonight,” he said afterward with a grin. It was clear in his voice that connection—not recognition—is what drives him.

Rooted in Montana Values

Fox was born in Hardin and raised with the kind of small-town Montana values that stick with you for life. He studied at the University of Montana, earning degrees in geology, law, and public administration—an unusual mix that hints at both curiosity and determination.

Before he ever held elected office, he built a career in the law, working as a clerk for the Montana Supreme Court and later practicing in Helena. In 2013, voters chose him as Montana’s 24th Attorney General, a position he held for

two terms.

His time in office was marked by a blend of compassion and action. He strengthened victims’ rights programs, expanded consumer protection efforts, and tackled Montana’s backlog of untested rape kits. His leadership—grounded in civility, even in tense moments—earned respect far beyond the state. During his time as chair of the National Association of Attorneys General, he chose “Transformational Leadership and Civility” as his theme, a philosophy he still carries with him.

Champion for Those Who Serve

Leaving elected office didn’t diminish Fox’s commitment to helping others—it just shifted where he put his energy. Today he serves as Judge Advocate for the American Legion Department of Montana, offering legal guidance and steady support to one of the state’s most trusted veterans’ organizations.

His work helps ensure that the Legion’s mission—serving veterans, their families, and their communities—remains strong.

He also volunteers with the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a Department of Defense program that safeguards the employment rights of service members. Through ESGR, he helps employers understand their responsibilities and their role in supporting citizen-soldiers. It’s

another way he builds connections between service members and the communities they protect.

A Heart for Inclusion

One of the most joyful and enduring parts of Fox’s public life has been his involvement with Special Olympics Montana. Whether he’s carrying the torch, speaking to a stadium full of athletes, or cheering from the sidelines, he shows up with genuine enthusiasm and respect.

He became the first state attorney general in the U.S. to serve on the International Executive Council of the Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR), the global fundraising and awareness effort for Special Olympics. For Fox, that milestone wasn’t about the title—it was about standing behind a mission he believes in.

“Inclusion and respect,” he often says, “are what make our communities stronger.” You can see that belief in how he talks to people, listens to them, and celebrates their wins as if they were his own.

Keeping Montana’s Story Alive

Fox’s love of service also includes a love of Montana itself. As a board member of the Montana Historical Society, he works to help preserve the stories and traditions that shaped the state—from its earliest days to the present. It’s a role that ensures future generations can understand what makes Montana’s people so resilient.

Celebrating the USA 250th through Service, History & Community

In 2026, our nation turns 250 years old. The semiquincentennial marks a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reflect on what built America — and Montana's proud place in that story. From our early frontier towns to the veterans who defended freedom in every era, Montana's spirit of service and community continues to define us.

The American Legion's USA 250 Challenge invites every Legion Family member — veterans, Riders, Auxiliary, and Sons — to honor this anniversary through 250 acts, hours, or miles in three key areas:

- Community Service
- Fitness & Mental Wellness
- Patriotism & Civic Education

It's a simple way for every post, no matter how rural or small, to make our legacy visible across the state.

Montana's Legacy of Service

Our state is built on rural strength and neighborly values. From volunteer firefighters to post chaplains, Montanans show up for each other. The USA 250 Challenge gives us a chance to tell that story — one act of service at a time.

Across the Big Sky, we can:

- Host flag-respect and collection drives to retire 250 worn flags.
- Restore veterans' headstones and memorials, logging 250 hours of care.
- Place wreaths and hold remembrance events at local cemeteries.
- Log 250 miles of rides, walks, or hikes for wellness and camaraderie.
- Reach 250 students through flag education, Boys and Girls State, or classroom talks.

Each effort connects Montana's history with the nation's enduring ideals — liberty, service, and unity.

Building Toward 2026

Posts can combine the USA 250 Challenge with the Montana 250 Commemoration efforts now underway statewide. The Montana 250 Grant Program supports projects that celebrate history, strengthen community, and share our state's stories.

Departments and Posts can:

- Partner with local museums, libraries, and historical societies.
- Collect oral histories from Montana veterans and Gold Star families.
- Apply for grants to preserve memorials or host educational events.
- Coordinate with schools and youth groups for community service challenges.

Every project helps connect Montana's past, present, and future generations.

Take the Challenge

1. Register your post or individual effort for the USA 250 Challenge.
2. Plan 12 signature projects — one each month through July 4, 2026.
3. Document and share your impact stories with the Department and on [Legiontown.org](https://legiontown.org).
4. Honor our Montana legacy — by showing what service looks like in the 21st century.

Together, we'll make sure that when the nation celebrates its 250th birthday, Montana stands tall — proud, patriotic, and united.



The American Legion: Strength in Service, Unity in Purpose

Kim Kay

The American Legion is a National Veterans Service Organization, as a matter of fact, the largest veterans service organization in the United States. Membership nationally is nearly 2 million members with 8,966 members currently in the Montana American Legion. It is estimated that as of 2025, there are 80,000 veterans in Montana, which is the third-largest veteran population on a per capita basis in the United States. There are currently 118 posts in Montana, down from 123 posts 10 years ago. Of course, there were 99,000 veterans in Montana 10 years ago too. Each post must have 10 paying members to keep its charter according to National Constitution and By-laws. Each post has officers according to the Post Constitution and By-laws. We are governed by a set of rules too.

I'm throwing out numbers, statistics that are fact. The American Legion is made up of you, a veteran, in a local post in Montana, and your veteran neighbor, co-worker, or family member just to mention a few possibilities. You are a vital part of your post, whether you are actively involved or not. You have a voice in your community, state and nation by being a member. The more members there are, the greater influence we have in Washington DC. Your voice counts.

When we served in the military, we met many people who came from many walks of life. We joined the military, each for our own reason, we met others who joined, maybe for the same reasons. We learned to work together with our skills as a team to accomplish

our mission. After our day or shift was done, we hung out with our comrades eating, drinking, bowling, etc. We spoke the same language, understood each other, and could identify with each other. We became family. Now, we are in posts, together with other veterans in our communities. We joined The American Legion for many reasons, from wanting to give back, to help other veterans, to continue serving others, because we believe in what The American Legion stands for and its programs. Programs like Temporary Financial Assistance, Legacy scholarships, Oratory Contest, Air Rifle Competition, Boys/Girls State, Funeral Honors, and Be The One (Suicide awareness program). We joined because we care or because someone cared enough to ask.

What does your post do? What do you do as a member? Do you know your posts constitution and by-laws? Your voice counts in your post to make sure it is viable for other veterans in the post and for yourself. Being a responsible Legionnaire, we need to know the rules and job descriptions in our post. We each joined for our own reason, and we have a comradeship we don't have with those who have not served. Just like family, we sometimes disagree with each other and we sometimes make mistakes. We need to work through the problems and keep our posts viable. We need our leadership in the posts to work together too. We need to work cohesively together for each other. Cause believe it or not, WE ARE FAMILY TOO.

Legion Strong

Lowell Long

What does Legion Strong mean? To me it is what makes me want to continue to serve and help others. The American Legion is more than just a Veterans Service Organization where veterans gather to share old stories and enjoy camaraderie. The American Legion from its inception has been about taking care of our veterans, teaching the meaning of what it means to be an American, educating our youth, and promoting a strong National Defense.

I have been fortunate enough to have served in many aspects of the American Legion during my 24 years as a member of this organization from post level to the National level. Each position I held has taught me more about why I continue to serve. I joined the

military because I wanted to serve our country just like my father did before me. I continued because I knew what I was doing was important. I joined the American Legion for the same reason. The mission of the American Legion was important to me so I have continued my service in all the areas I have participated in, whether it was serving in an elected position, assisting our youth as a member of the Oratorical Committee or the American Legion Boys State Committee, or advocating for our veterans during the legislature. I am Legion Strong because I believe in the principles that make the American Legion the voice for our veterans. Over 100 years ago, The American Legion was formed with the same four pillars that we serve under today. I am proud to serve alongside all the members of The American Legion Department of Montana and the Legion as a whole.

American Legion of Montana Launches 2026 Rifle Raffle

The American Legion of Montana is proud to announce the kickoff of the 2026 Rifle Raffle, an exciting opportunity for Montanans to support veterans' programs while entering to win a premier firearm.

This year's grand prize is a Ruger American Gen 2 chambered in 6.5 Creedmoor—a rifle known for its precision, reliability, and quality craftsmanship. Whether you're a hunter, sports shooter, or collector, this firearm is sure to be a prized addition.

Raffle Details:

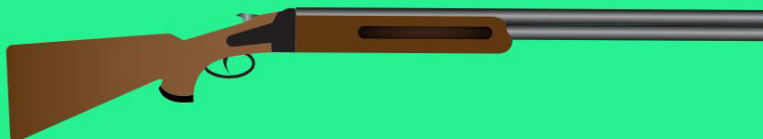
- Tickets: \$20 each or 6 for \$100
- Limited Availability: Only 1,500 tickets will be sold
- Drawing Date: June 28, 2026
- Eligibility: Must be 18 years or older to purchase
- Winner: Need not be present to win
- Prize Pickup: The winner must claim the prize at Mitchell Supply in Great Falls

The American Legion extends its gratitude to Mitchell Supply for generously donating the prize and for their continued support of veterans and their families.

Why It Matters

Every ticket purchased goes beyond the excitement of winning—it fuels the American Legion's mission to support Montana veterans, their families, and local communities. From youth programs to veteran services, raffle proceeds help strengthen the foundation of service that defines the American Legion. Don't miss your chance to win a top-quality rifle while giving back to those who served. Tickets are going fast, and with only 1,500 available, they won't last long!

For ticket information, contact your local American Legion Post or visit the Department of Montana office.



Department Adjutant

continued from page 7

Consider these proven ideas and best practices:

- Gun or hunting raffles – always a favorite in Montana; partner with local sports shops for prizes.
- Community breakfasts, chili feeds, or steak nights – bring people together for food and fellowship.
- 50/50 drawings or themed basket raffles – simple, fun, and easy to organize at any Legion event.
- Sponsor banners or donor boards – showcase local business support in your post hall or at events.
- Participation in Department level raffles or fundraisers – Be active, know what raffles are being conducted at the State level and participate!! Our programs run on the backs of our fundraising. Without your support and promotion of our raffles and fundraising, we can never accomplish the things that we are known for. We need you!

Transparency builds trust—keep your members and community informed on how funds support veterans, youth, and community programs. Be educated on the programs of the American Legion such as Boys and

Girls State, Oratory, Baseball, Scouting and all the other great things we do for our youth. Don't be afraid to use numbers, the overall cost of Boy and Girls State is pushing close to \$70,000 dollars, it takes a lot to make it happen! Let people know the scholarship money they can win at Post, District, Department and National. When people see where their dollars go, and the opportunities that they bring, they're proud to buy a raffle ticket or a cash calendar.

The Road Ahead

As we approach the year's end, let's remember that our success depends on all of us working together. Every phone call, every event, every handshake with a veteran makes a difference. The future of the Montana American Legion depends on the actions we take today—our teamwork, our commitment, and our belief in the mission. Let's close this year strong—recruiting, fundraising, and serving side by side. Together, we honor our past, strengthen our present, and secure the future of The American Legion for generations of Montana veterans to come.

For God and Country—let's finish the year as a team.

WHY I'M THANKFUL TO SERVE IN THE AMERICAN LEGION

In 2005 when I came back from OIF III, I was struggling with PTSD, anger issues and I was drinking too much. I was a hard core soldier and didn't need help with anything that came up with any of those issues. I was on a fast track to prison or a pine box in the ground. I wouldn't have changed anything unless it was something drastic. The Sheriff of our county was a Vietnam Veteran and a member of the American Legion. He "pulled me over" and said "Get in Jerry, we need to talk". This wasn't a stop by a law enforcement officer, it was a stop conducted by a concerned brother in arms. We drove around Choteau and talked about my decisions and how his struggle related to me. We talked about the American Legion and he said that he would like me to come to a meeting. That 30min drive more than likely saved my life and kept me out of jail or prison. I decided to join the legion and serve veterans of my community. I am thankful for the American Legion and people like George Anderson. My service to this community, state and nation is modeled after a 30 min ride with a concerned comrade.

-Jerry Collins

Red Shirt Friday TShirt or Hoodie



Name:		
Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Phone:		

You will not be charged until the shirts have shipped:

Check one:

[illegible]

Expires: ____/____/____

CVV#				
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Send Form To:

American Legion of Montana

PO Box 155

Fort Harrison, MT 59636

amlegmtsec@gmail.com



Big K Cash Raffle: Supporting Montana Veterans in 2026

The American Legion of Montana is excited to announce the launch of the 2026 Big K Cash Raffle, a long-standing tradition that not only brings excitement to our members and supporters but also provides vital funding for the programs that serve Montana's veterans, their families, and our communities.

As the name suggests, only 1,000 tickets are available, making this a limited and highly sought-after opportunity. Each ticket—known as a “Big K”—is just \$25.00, and with that purchase, participants are entered into nine drawings throughout the year.

The raffle kicks off in January with a \$100 New Year Drawing, followed by six \$400 monthly drawings held from January through June. In March, in honor of the American Legion's Birthday, there will be an additional \$500 drawing. The excitement culminates at the Department Convention with the final drawing of \$1,800, a grand prize that brings the year of fundraising to a close.

Beyond the thrill of winning, every ticket purchased helps fund essential Legion programs that support Montana veterans and their families, from advocacy and assistance to community engagement and youth programs. This is more than just a raffle—it's a chance to give back while enjoying the fun and camaraderie that comes with being part of the Legion Family.

Tickets are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and they sell out quickly each year. Those wishing to participate are encouraged to send in the entry form along with payment as soon as possible to secure their spot in the drawings. By purchasing a Big K, you're not only entering to win cash prizes—you're making a direct investment in the strength of our programs and the well-being of veterans across Montana.

For more information or to get your ticket, contact the American Legion of Montana today.

CVEs				
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WHY I'M THANKFUL TO SERVE IN THE AMERICAN LEGION

With a long line of family that have served this country and having served in a combat zone myself, I feel an ingrained need to continue to serve in our communities and state whatever way I can. De Oppresso

Liber!

-Brian Carpenter



Commander Wes Targerson and Roger Rasmussen help fold a 45 star flag that was flown on the SS Klondike at the beginning of the 1900's. The flag will be displayed in a shadow box at the Miracle of Montana museum.

Legion Strong Donald Goodnight

We stand together, not just as individuals, but as a family — a family bound by service, sacrifice, and the love of our country. Each of us has worn the uniform, supported those who have, or carried the torch for those who could not.

Being Legion Strong means more

than pride in our past — it's a promise to our future. It means standing shoulder to shoulder for every veteran, every family, and every community that needs us. It means honoring the fallen by lifting the living.

We are strong because we serve.
We are strong because we care.
We are Legion Strong.

Legion Strong: A Sons Perspective

Derek Manseau

What does "Legion Strong" mean me? That's a simple, and complex question. Of course, membership is the first thing that comes to mind when we discuss the strength of the Legion. Legion, Sons, Auxiliary & Riders members have eclipsed the 1 million mark. With a membership roster of that size, it's easy to say that we are "Legion Strong" because we are a part of the nation's largest veterans service organization. I think the term "Legion Strong" has a much more powerful meaning.

Through my involvement with the American Legion, as a member of the Sons of the American Legion and the American Legion Riders, I see "Legion Strong" on display every day. I have built many deep and meaningful relationships with fellow Legion members. Through these bonds of friendship, I have been fortunate to contribute to the meaningful work to benefit our veterans at a local and statewide level. I am able to be a part of this important mission because my grandfathers honorably served our country. So when I think about "Legion Strong", I think of my family's service, I think of the close friendships I share with fellow Sons and Riders, I think of the impact that the American Legion has on our veterans, and I am grateful every day for the service of all of our veterans so we can all enjoy the freedoms of our great nation.