



Department Commander Ken Simon

Here we are about to begin Spring District Meetings, gear up for American Legion Boys and Auxiliary Girls State, and continue working membership to get as many Legionnaires renewed. I wasn't sure if I was going to be able to make any visits during the month due to the weather and roads.

My wife and I travelled to Helena Jan 27th in order to testify at the Capitol on the 28th and 29th. On Tuesday the 28th I attended a hearing to Provide Funding for Suicide Prevention, a Bill that was sponsored by Mike Yakawich of Billings. My reason for supporting this Bill is that it will be another means of support for veterans dealing with PTSD and Suicide. And I also talked about my own personal experience as a Law Enforcement Officer.

On January 29th I testified before the Senate Committee regarding MVAD Funding. I talked about the support that the veterans in Eastern Montana receive from MVAD by relating what there is for support. In regards to VSO's, Veterans Cemetery, and Veterans Clinic I told the Committee that there was only ONE to cover all of Eastern Montana and those were situated in Miles City in the Western end of Eastern Montana. To be precise they 211 miles and 4 hours and 44 minutes driving time away, and that is on a good day. Over four hundred miles round trip and nine hours plus depending what one has to take care of! I further indicated that there are Veterans in Eastern Montana that travel

to North Dakota because there are VA facilities that are only about ninety miles away. And I know some of those Veterans personally! Why do they go to North Dakota, because instead of driving over two hundred and almost five hours, it is only hour and a half and ninety miles! And because there is nothing in the far Eastern side of the state like you have over in the West! Those veterans did their jobs and served just like those on the West side of Montana, and yet they don't have any facilities within a short drive for their care!

In February my wife and I travelled back to Helena to attend the AL Boys & Auxiliary Girls State fund raising banquet at the Delta Colonial Hotel on the evening of the 12th. Several Senators and interested people were invited to attend and listen to Legionnaires talk about the program and also be part of an auction to raise funds for the ALBS & AAGS program. The program was emceed by Jenifer Dalrymple. She talked about the programs, the auction, and then introduced the two guest speakers, Alice Vetz, a 2024 attendee of the American Legion Auxiliary program conducted on Fort Harrison in June of last year. Her talk was about her experience as a delegate and what it meant to her as well as the friendships she formed during the week-long class. Tim Fox, the Department Judge Advocate General and former Attorney General for the State of Montana gave a speech about the history of the American Legion Boys State program, that he was a graduate and what it meant

to him. He also talked about the support that the American Legion has provided over the seventy some

years of existence. Several Montanan's have attended the program over the years and have become Local, State, and National representatives, Governors, and been successful in their chosen careers. At the National level graduates of American Legion Boys State have gone on to become Presidents, Astronauts, Military Leaders, Senators, civic leaders, and successful athletes. Bill Clinton, Mike Huckabee, Gen Wesley Clark, Bruce Babbitt was the Gov of Arizona and Sec of the Interior 1993 – 2001, Jonathan Shapiro Emmy Award Winning Producer/Writer "Boston Legal" and Boys Nation President 1980, Dr Grant Comer – Retina Eye Surgeon, Max Baucus of Montana – U S Senator/ U S Ambassador to China (Boys Nation), Steve Daines – US Congressman, Michael Jordan – Professional Athlete, and Bruce Springsteen – Professional Musician. This mention of the men who attended American Legion Boys State contains more or less what Tim Fox discussed in his talk.

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Department Adjutant

Duane Cunningham

Greetings fellow Legionnaires, a new legislative year in Montana kicked off and as always Veteran issues were at the forefront of legislation that is being brought forward in a very busy 90 days. The first bill that the American Legion testified on was Senate Bill SB-59, which flew through both houses and was unanimously supported by both the House and Senate. SB-59 was an act establishing the Staff Sergeant Arthur J. Rambo Memorial Bridge. A Soldier and Vietnam Veteran, Arthur was drafted into the Vietnam War from Libby Montana, arriving in Vietnam in August 1969. On November 26, 1969, his unit came under attack, and Staff Sergeant Arthur J Rambo worked heroically under fire to save his crew members and their military assets. He sustained fatal injuries and was awarded the Silver Star. The Libby community came together to ask that we honor the sacrifice and admirable life of Staff Sergeant Arthur J Rambo. The bridge spanning the Kootenai River in Libby, Montana, on highway 37 is now dedicated to Staff Sergeant Arthur J Rambo.

House Bills HB-66, HB-72 and HB-81 were the next bills that the American Legion of Montana has testified on in support of. These bills are still in progress and working their way through both the House and Senate. A brief description is below.

HB-66 - Adopt the most recent federal military codes and regulations passed since the last legislative session.

HB-72 – An act revising Enlisted Militia Compensation for State Active Duty and removing the 15-day limitation on

compensation.

HB-81 - Revise the current law to change supervision of the Montana Veterans’ Affairs Division Administrator from the Governor to the Adjutant General.

Next up is a bill that the American Legion supports and has focused its efforts on the last few years, veteran suicide prevention. SB-95 is an act allocating money for suicide prevention efforts. The next two bills relating to Veterans were as follows:

HB-5 – is a Long-Range Building proposal for funding for an Internment Processing Facility (\$1.925m) - to accommodate the families of the deceased, an area for the military honors group to meet and stay warm, and some administrative offices. This was originally planned to be from a grant from the VA Federal National Cemetery Administration, but cutbacks precluded structures being included in the grant.

HB-307 – Generally, revise laws related to licensing donations for disabled veterans.

The next two bills are probably the two biggest pieces of legislation regarding Veterans currently before us.

SB-93 – Is in regard to revising the rules on Military Retired Pay and State income tax. The bill is to clean up some of the wording currently in the law to allow for more retirees to be able to claim the benefit and to draw military retirees to the state when they retire. It also removes the 10 year sunset clause.

HB-404 - The next big bill before us is HB-404 “The Defend the Guard Act” The American Legion is opposed to this bill as it has the potential for severe consequences regarding the funding and supply of the MTNG if it is passed. The preface

of the Bill is a wish of all Military Veterans, that is if Congress is going to send Active Duty, Guard



or Reserve troops into harms way, that a declaration of War be issued. This Bill would give the Governor the ability to withhold the National Guard from being activated without this declaration. Some things to consider:

- Montana could lose its national guard as we know it. The Montana National Guard is a primary Ready Reserve component of the U.S. Armed forces. If the Department of Defense cannot rely on the Montana National Guard to deploy overseas in support of lawful military operations it could pull the Montana National Guard’s federal recognition or, at the least, our funding, equipment, and infrastructure, leading to the loss of thousands of jobs, over \$200 million in income, and countless dollars in equipment.
- Montana will not have the resources currently provided by the DoD to respond to domestic emergencies. The Montana National Guard will be unable to respond to floods, fires, and other emergencies. Federal equipment such as

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How do I contact my State Senator and Representative?
 See below links to communicate with your Legislators

- Participate Montana Legislature Site – [Participate – Montana Legislature](#)
- You will need to establish an account in “Participate” to email your legislator
- Who Is My Legislator? – [Districts – Montana Legislature](#)
- Click magnifying glass in upper right corner of map, then enter address
- Or, leave a message: 406.444.4800

Roger A. Hagan (Legislative Committee Chairman, MT Department of the American Legion)
 117 Gerber Road, Great Falls, MT 59405, Cell (406) 459-0773

Join Us in Tampa Bay for the 106th National Convention

The American Legion’s 106th National Convention will take place from August 22–28, 2025, in sunny Tampa, Florida. This annual event is an incredible opportunity for members to engage in the business of The American Legion, connect with fellow Legionnaires from across the country, and celebrate our shared mission of service to veterans, their families, and our communities.

Montana delegates will stay at the Hyatt Place Downtown Tampa, located at 325 N. Florida Ave., just 13 blocks from the Tampa Convention Center. Shuttle services will be available between the hotel and the convention venue for your convenience. Delegates are required to stay at the designated convention hotel. Room rates start at \$131 per night for double occupancy, with additional charges for triple and quad occupancies. Please note that valet parking is \$29 per day, with no self-parking options available.

Members interested in attending must request registration forms from Department Headquarters by emailing amlegmtsec@gmail.com. Completed forms must be submitted at the Department Convention in Helena, scheduled for June 20–22, 2025. All convention registrations are due prior to the Department Convention, with deposits required by July 1.

If you plan to attend the prestigious National Commander’s Banquet, make sure to submit your \$70 payment by March 20, 2025. This non-refundable payment ensures your seat at one of the convention’s highlight events. Banquet tickets are only non-refundable, so we encourage early reservations to secure your attendance. Details about the entertainment for the banquet will be announced soon. The National Convention promises to be an exciting and memorable experience for all attendees. Don’t miss this opportunity to represent Montana and contribute to the important work of The American Legion.

For more information, contact Department Headquarters or visit the American Legion’s National Convention website.

Make Your Voice Heard: Attend the Spring District Meetings

As spring approaches, so do the American Legion Spring District Meetings—a vital opportunity for every Legionnaire to stay informed, get involved, and make an impact. These meetings are more than just routine gatherings; they are where important updates, program changes, and decisions that affect your post and fellow veterans are discussed.

Your presence at these meetings ensures that your post is well-represented and that you bring back valuable information to share with your fellow members. This is also a critical time for leadership, as many district officer positions will be up for election. If you or someone you know is interested in stepping up to serve, now is the time to learn more about the roles and responsibilities.

Don’t miss this chance to engage with Legion leadership, connect with fellow members, and help shape the future of the American Legion in Montana. Check the travel schedule, mark your calendar, and make plans to attend your District Meeting. If you have questions about running for a district office, reach out for more information—we need dedicated members like you to help lead us forward!

We look forward to seeing you there!



**SPRING DISTRICT MEETING
SCHEDULE**

SAT MARCH 1	DISTRICT 8	GERALDINE
SUN MARCH 2	DISTRICT 3	CONRAD
SAT MARCH 8	DISTRICT 2	BIG SANDY
SAT MARCH 8	DISTRICT 10	GLENDAVE
SUN MARCH 9	DISTRICT 1	WOLF POINT
SAT MARCH 15	DISTRICT 5	MISSOULA
SUN MARCH 16	DISTRICT 4	EUREKA
SAT MARCH 22	DISTRICT 11	LAUREL (117)
SAT MARCH 29	DEPT. ORATORY	HELENA
SUN MARCH 30	DISTRICT 6	ANACONDA
SAT APRIL 5	DISTRICT 7	LIVINGSTON
SUN APRIL 6	DISTRICT 9	HARLOWTON
SAT APRIL 12	ALR COLLEGE	HELENA
SUN APRIL 13	PALM SUNDAY	

A Thank You From Glen Sharbono

I would like to thank everyone across the Department of Montana for the cards, prayers, and all the wonderful words of comfort and inspiration that I have received since the passing of my wife Lorie.

It truly shows how much family “American Legion Family” really is. That includes the American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of The American Legion and The American Legion Riders.

Again, thank you and God bless.

Sincerely

Glen Sharbono

ANEC/PDC

Vice Commander

Kim Kay

Sometimes, I'm on the road like everyone else, just going from town to town for appointments, visiting, shopping, etc...,but in this case,I'm on the road for two reasons.

I was accepted to attend a veterans skiing weekend in February with Dream Adaptive. It's a time to connect with other veterans doing what we like. There are other programs for veterans with Dream Adaptive like summer sports, snowboarding, snowshoeing, etc... Look up Dream Adaptive online if you're interested. There are other programs available for veterans in MT to spend time with comrades such as with Veterans Centers. (they have events every winter and summer). Why do I bring this up? We as veterans are really good at helping our friends, other veterans, and family but we are terrible at helping or taking care of ourselves. If I didn't make a point of doing something fun to destress, I'd put it off and keep putting it off until I become crabby. No one wants to see me crabby. Be The One - helping our fellow vets would be harder to do if we don't take care of ourselves first. With our own mental health in a good place we can do Buddy Checks with our friends, fellow vets, and even someone you're acquainted with who just seems down in the dumps. We can listen with our full attention and we can offer sound advice.

The other reason that I'm on the road is for the Funeral of Lori Noble, PDC Glen Sharbono's wife. She always had a ready smile, kind words, and listened when someone talked to her. She will be greatly missed by her husband, family, our Legion Family, and her friends. I first met Lori back in 2014 when I was the Women Veterans Coordinator. She wasn't a veteran but she related very well with us at our Recognition Luncheons and I considered her my friend. Life is short and when a person you know passes away you realize just how short it is. I understand how short life can be as well as you and know that putting off a phone call or an email isn't a good idea as you may not get that second chance.

Also, I want to touch on membership. I want to thank all Legion members who have already turned your membership in for 2025. With your diligence we have made it to 80.64 % as of today with National. We need to remind those who haven't paid to pay their dues before next week when we have a 90 % target to make. Don't sit by and wait for a phone call, take the initiative and pay now before your membership expires and your membership years are deleted. If you are having financial hardships, call your post Commander or Adjutant and make some arrangement so you're not delinquent. Remember, I may be the membership chair but membership is every Legionnaires responsibility. Thank you for all you do, and have a great week.

Chaplain's Corner

As we step into the month of February, we are reminded of the importance of service, sacrifice, and the enduring values that guide us as members of The American Legion. February is a time of reflection, unity, and renewal of our commitment to the four pillars that define our mission: Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation:

This month, as we celebrate National Salute to Veteran Patients Week, we are called to remember and support our fellow veterans who are receiving care in VA hospitals and facilities. Let us take time to visit, send a note of encouragement, or simply offer a prayer for their healing and well-being. Our duty is not only to honor their past service but to stand by them in their present needs. "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." – Galatians 6:2

National Security:

February also brings Presidents' Day, a moment to reflect on the sacrifices made to preserve our nation's freedoms. As Legionnaires, we continue to support a strong national defense and advocate for policies that ensure the safety of our military personnel and their families. Let us remain vigilant in our prayers and actions, offering support to those who serve and their loved ones. "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you." – Deuteronomy 31:6

Americanism:

The values of patriotism and civic responsibility shine brightly in February, a month that includes the observance of Black History Month. This is a time to recognize the contributions of African American veterans and citizens who have played pivotal roles in shaping our nation. Let us embody the principles of unity, respect, and service, strengthening our communities through acts of kindness and dedication. "Let all that you do be done in love." – 1 Corinthians 16:14

Children & Youth:

As we focus on the future of our nation, let us renew our commitment to the well-being of our children and youth. Whether through mentorship, scholarship programs, or community service, we have the opportunity to guide and uplift the next generation. Let us be beacons of hope, ensuring that all young people have the support and encouragement they need to succeed. "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it." – Proverbs 22:6

In this month of love and remembrance, may we carry the spirit of service in our hearts, always mindful of the sacrifices made for our freedom and the responsibilities we hold as members of The American Legion family.

May God bless you and continue to guide us in our mission of service.

WORKING FOR ALL LEGIONNAIRES

Hello, fellow Legionnaires! My name is Irene Dickerson, and I am running for Vice Commander of the American Legion Department of Montana. I'm a retired Army officer with 30 years of active duty and Reserve service, including deployments to Iraq, Kuwait, and Afghanistan, retiring in 2013. I've been a Legion member since 2014, serving as Adjutant for Post 524 in Texas and currently as District 10 Commander in Southeast Montana. I also serve as the Dean of Montana American Legion College and the Department's Woman Veterans Coordinator.

I am committed to growing the American Legion College, increasing female veteran involvement, and expanding Montana's membership through training, outreach, and community engagement. My leadership philosophy is rooted in teamwork, open-mindedness, and problem-solving, with a focus on ensuring The American Legion remains impactful and relevant.

I look forward to working with you to strengthen our mission.



Lowell Long, Alternate NEC

He has served in the following leadership positions in the American Legion and SAL. Post 48 Commander and Adjutant, District 2 Commander and Adjutant, North Central Zone Commander, Department Vice Commander, Department Commander, Squadron 48 Adjutant, North Central Zone Commander, Detachment Commander, and SAL Alternate NEC.

He has served on many Department and National Committees including Boys State Committee, Oratorical Scholarship Committee, the Centennial Committee, the Conventional Armed Forces Committee at National and the Membership Training and Development Committee for the Sons of the American Legion at National.

I look forward to continuing to serve the Department of Montana and represent our Department at the National Level. Please Vote for Lowell Long for Alternate NEC at our Department Convention this June in Helena.

Greetings fellow Legionnaires! Many of you know me, but for those that do not my name is Andrew Rice and I am currently serving as the North Central Zone Commander. During the fall conference I officially announced my campaign to run for Department Vice Commander. First, I will start with a little history about me. I am 39 years old and served a total of 8 years in the US Army and Army National Guard. During that span I deployed to Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom 5-7. Early into my military career, my father, Hal Rice, was insistent that I join the American Legion and I have now been a member of this great organization for 21 years. Over the course of my time in the American Legion I have served and am currently serving as the Post 102 commander in Geraldine. I have also been the district 8 commander before moving into the zone commander position for my respective area. Each position I have held has been greatly enjoyable and a fulfilling experience and I have also been at the forefront of our push to be more visible in the public and helping the department to implement some of the ideas that have been put forth. Other positions I currently have are the Squadron 102 commander in Geraldine and I am also serving as the Detachment Commander for the SAL.

Now a bit about my reasoning to want to run for the Department Vice Commander position. Many talks have been had about wanting to infuse some youth into the organization and I find myself in a unique position that I can relate to our existing membership in many ways but also understand the mentality of the younger veterans across the state and some of the things they are looking for. During my time manning booths at the fairs and talking to veterans in public I have been able to recruit and have meaningful talks with many of the veterans from Malmstrom Air Force Base and other communities. Much of this falls into my vision for the American Legion and it falls into just three words: Unity, Family and Mission. Unity in that we work together to reach our goals. Family that we work together across the board. The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion, and the Legion Riders are the family and as a family we are so much stronger together. As we know, family does not always agree with each other but we can always work out our differences to focus on the third word; mission. The mission is always to be there for our veterans. Whether they are a member or not, we are there for our veterans. For me this is an amazing organization to belong to and I end this with my solemn promise to give this organization and our members and veterans my absolute full effort and attention to keep it as strong and amazing as possible.



PDC Richard A. Klose Sr. for NEC

Fellow Legionnaires,
I am honored to announce my candidacy for National Executive Committeeman (NEC) to represent Montana at the National NEC meetings.

As a proud resident of Laurel in south-central Montana, I am centrally located and well-positioned to travel throughout the state, assisting the Department wherever and whenever needed.

With my experience as a member of the National Membership and Post Activities (M&PA) Committee, I have gained valuable insight into the workings and responsibilities at the National level. This experience has prepared me to effectively advocate for Montana’s interests and contribute to the success of our Legion programs.

I humbly ask for your support and your vote at our 2025 Department Convention. Together, we can strengthen our mission and ensure Montana’s voice is heard.

Post 42: Nine years as the finance officer for both the bar and the post, to include during Covid and the \$100,000 renovation project, after our Post experienced a significant flooding event. **Currently the Post Commander.**

District 6: Adjutant for two years and then Vice Commander assisting the Commander and then stepping into the Commander role a few months early due to his illness and resignation.

Zone (Western): Currently in this position

Department: Sergeant at Arms, Flag Alliance Chair, Americanism Chair

Training: TAL Basic, National AL College, MT Legion College graduate and instructor, graduate of Wisconsin AL College,

American Legion Family affiliations: American Legion Auxiliary Montana Girls State full-time nurse for five years, **currently Unit 42 Sergeant at Arms**, Unit 42 Vice President, Charter member and Sergeant at Arms of American Legion Riders Chapter 2

Additional AL volunteerism: Department Oratorical, Dept. Essay evaluator, AL baseball (Helena), Post 42 and Unit 42 activities and projects

Canada Bellevue Branch 19 member, and ANAVICUS (Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans in Canada United States, AL **Womens Honor Society 20&4** State President and **National Cadre**, 40&8 - Chef de Gare, Grand Chef de Gare and Cheminot

“Life is forever changing”

I’m 110% ready for our next change



15-year member

Jeff Nelson

I am running for the position of Alternate NEC and would like your support. My background includes 2 years as Montana Dept. Commander, serving through the covid years, Named Commander of the year by National as the highest ranking Commander for surpassing goal in membership 2019, Being Montana SAL Commander the following year, Having attended 14 National conventions and meeting many delegates from all areas of the United States and served on numerous committees with them.

I feel it is a time for trust and transparency from our leaders and am asking your support in seeking this position.



Raymond Read, Department Historian

I am announcing my candidacy for re-election as the Department Historian for the year 2025-2026, This would be my 22nd year in that elected position. Previous position I have held. Past Commander of American Legion Post 2, Department Shooting Sports Chair, Department Homeless Veterans chair, 100 Anniversary Committee Chair and Department Adjutant 2001-2003. I have been a continuous member of the American Legion since 1983.

“Inspire, Train, Learn”

VOTE

Glen Sharbono

**National Executive Committee
2025-2027**

- Post Adjutant 2014-2025
- Post Vice Commander 2015-2017
- Post Commander 2018-2021/2022-2025
- American Legion Family Ribbon
- Post Excellence Award
- Post and District Oratory Chairman
- District Vice Commander/Adjutant
- Merv Gunderson Award
- District Commander
- 2017 Graduate American Legion Basic Training
- 2017 Graduate of Montana Legion College
- 2017 Graduate of The National American Legion College
- Dean of The Montana Legion College
- Department Vice Commander
- Department Commander



Glen Sharbono



Alternate NEC Member currently serving since 2023 and trained to be your next National Executive Committee Member!



THE AUXILIARY SERVICE STAR



Lorie Ann Noble Sharbono, age 63, passed away on Friday, January 31, 2025, at her residence. Lorie was born in Ronan, Montana on August 26, 1961, at Saint Luke Hospital, the daughter of Jerry and Irene Noble on August 26, 1961.

She graduated from Ronan High School in 1980. After high school Lorie worked at several different places along the way, some of those were Service Inc on Main Street of Ronan, R&R Drug Store on Main Street, the Ronan Bank, now named Glacier Bank, The Valley Bank and then Retired from there to care for and accompany her husband. While in High School, Lorie worked for the Ronan Police Department as a dispatcher and didn't realize that at the time she was working with Glen's mother.

Lorie and Glen celebrated their 30th Anniversary on the third of September. Over the last ten years or so they became heavily involved in the American Legion and its Auxiliary. Lorie founded the local Auxiliary Unit for Ronan and was its longtime President. Her main goals were helping Veterans like her husband Glen as they traveled across the state of Montana promoting the organization's membership and programs. She poured her heart into helping build up the newly acquired North Crow Club House which is now the new Ronan American Legion Post #138 and Unit #138 home. As the Auxiliary President Lorie helped the Unit and Post earn 7 Legion Family ribbons for exceeding 100% membership and promoting their programs. Her biggest efforts were the American Legion Auxiliary Girls State and the High School Constitutional Oratory contest. She served as a runner and guardian of the contestants for the Oratory contest. Lorie always looked forward to the new group of young people that would come to participate in the programs. Lorie served several years as and was currently the Department Sergeant at Arms for the State of Montana's Department Auxiliary. Some of the personal accomplishments she was most proud of was scoring 100% on the American Legion Basic Training Course, and graduating from the Department of Montana Legion College that her husband Glen was the instructor for as well as the Dean of the College.

Lorie had a very infectious smile and could quickly touch the lives of anyone she met. So much so, that the Women Veterans of the Department of Montana made her an Honorary Woman Veteran. She was considered by The Veterans Honor Guard to be their Historian photographer and mascot.

She was preceded in death by her mother Irene.

She is survived by her father Jerry Noble, sister Sandy Noble, a stepson from a previous marriage John Harmon, four stepsons through her husband Glen, Shawn, Jesse, Dusty and Kirby, as well as 10 step grandchildren, and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins and countless friends. Lorie retained her maiden name to honor her father who had no sons.

ALA Department of Montana NEC

Yvonne Kostelecky

Hello to my fellow Montana Auxiliary members, Well the Groundhog said 6 more weeks of Winter but we all know no matter what Mother Nature is going to do what she wants. And looking out my window she is definitely off of her meds because when I talk to my daughter and granddaughter in Wyoming they are having 50 and 60 degree weather while I am shoveling snow and dealing with single degree temps that are not including windchills. So I am definitely counting the days until I see green grass. This month has started off with great sorrow after losing our dear dear friend and ALA Department of Montana Sgt of Arms, Lorie Noble. I feel so very very blessed to have been able to call her my friend but also one of my officers when I was Department President. She always greeted me with a smile and a hug. So please keep Glen, her husband, and their family including her Dad, Jerry and her family in your thoughts and prayers. Remember to reach out to your local VA and your local Veterans during the month of February with maybe Valentines Cards or maybe you can see if they are in need of anything. It is the month of love and we do love our Veterans. Have any of you or are any of you giving or sending our 1st Responders or any deployed servicemen or women anything during the month of February? I had Renee send out the information about Honoring any Servicemen or Women in your area if you have one that you would like to put in for the honor let me know. Well my wonderful friends please stay safe during these cold Winter days maybe check in you local Veterans to see if they are doing ok. Winter can be a very lonely cold time of the year and it can be very depressing if you never hear from anyone.

You all are in my thoughts and prayers.

God Bless America, God Bless Our Veterans, and God Bless All of You,

Love always,
Yvonne



Boys & Girls State 2025!



Dates: June 8-14, 2025
Location: Carroll College in Helena, MT
Apply Online:

<http://mtlegion.org/americanlegionboysstate.html>



Points of Contact

Duane Cunningham, 406-465-1451, deptmtadjutant@gmail.com
Kathy Long, 24bluejay@gmail.com



Brooklyn 14.0 Pro Tandem Pedal Kayak (PK14) Gray Camo Valued at \$3695.00

2-BKC KP224 86" Kayak Paddles 2 Piece Heavy Duty Light Weight Paddle with Anti-Slip Grips \$100.00



2 -Upright Aluminum Kayak Seats \$299.98



Room for Two: The spacious 14-foot hull provides plenty of space for a pair of paddlers and has a stunning 670-pound total weight capacity

Easy Cruising: Can support a built-in trolling motor making cruising effortless, while a hand-operated super wide rudder makes control precise and responsive with a better turning radius

Cargo Capacity: Not only can Brooklyn 14.0 Pro pedal Tandem Kayak take the weight, but it can store your stuff in a pair of sealed hatches or in a rear cargo recess - as well as a new storage area near the seats for any quick grabs, like lures, bait, etc.

Superior Stability: The 14-foot long, 34-inch wide hull creates a platform so stable you can stand for casting and that won't tip even in rough water

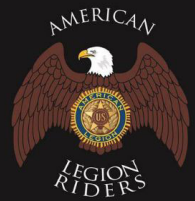
Easy Transport: Along with the side grips, the Pro yaks have new molded carry handles in front and rear of the kayak

2-BKC UH-PKDRIVE Kayak Pedal Drive Supports PK11, PK12, PK13 OR PK14 \$1195.00





AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS



Brian Carpenter

ALR Director

Greetings Legion Family! As we are well into the frigid part of winter, I'm sure everyone is day dreaming of warmer months and open roads.

ALR COLLEGE

Those of you who attended Fall Conference and/or Legion College should remember being introduced to Ken "Lucky" Nadeau and Ken George. If Both of these men were national level instructors who came to the Legion College. After having conversations with Lucky and Ken, they revealed that they enjoyed Montana and would absolutely come and put on an American Legion Riders College. This College would specifically be about all things Legion Riders. How start a chapter, how to keep/manage a chapter, how to increase membership, riding etiquette, etc. etc.

Well guess what!?! For the first time, the Department of Montana Legion Riders will be hosting an ALR College APRIL 12th, 2025. This Legion Riders College is open to all Legion Family members, not just Legion Riders. This means that Post and District Commanders who have chapters or ones that don't but are interested, are strongly suggested to attend. Again, this college is open to ALL Legion Family members.

In addition to Lucky Nadeau, who is the National Legacy Run Road Captain, Lucky is scheduled to bring in with him, the New Mexico ALR Chaplain, and the New Mexico Judge Advocate. This is very exciting to

have three Department and National level representatives with a wealth of knowledge and experience pertaining to the Legion Riders. As always, there is registration and meal fees associated with this event. The link for those forms is provided here: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1jTSP-yE-TXMFf8zIpGhPcOKJGlcDfOaCgxx-fREqcRNAM/edit>

SOP CHANGES

The Department of Montana Legion Riders have recently made a few changes to the Department SOP. These changes came about during the monthly Director's Zoom meetings that the Chapter Directors from across the Department have been conducting since last fall. These changes have helped clarify some vague sections of the SOP, as well as helped establish a department committee comprised of the Current Chapter Directors. This committee will be looking to elect officers for things like Department level fundraisers and motorcycle runs. A new change also clarifies that any money raised at the chapter level stays within the chapter account. Any money raised at a department level function stay at the department level. An example of a department level function would be raising money to donate to the National Legacy Run Fundraiser by hosting a department wide ride and donating to the National program. That is why there will be a need to elect department level officers and to also stay in line with other departments doing this very thing. The Department ALR Director will remain on the DEC, and liaison with the



board about department ALR status and events.

One of the more important changes to the SOP came about from a chapter who had many Auxiliary members who were either instrumental in the formation of, or founding members of that chapter. The initially SOP stated that Auxiliary members could not be Chapter Directors. Through discussions and a subsequent vote, the Directors deemed that was unfair and that it need to be changed. Now, the new changed state that an Auxiliary member may now serve as Director at the chapter level only and get the recognition they will deserve. The reason an Auxiliary member may not be appointed to the Department Director's position is because the Department Director's position on the DEC carries a vote. An Auxiliary member can not carry a vote on the DEC.

To review the most recent updated SOP, click on the link here: Stay warm out there,



AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS



Veterans Meat Pantry American Legion Riders Post 16

Steve Smith

In the spring of 2019 the American Legion Riders Post 16 Veterans Meat Pantry opened up its doors, or freezers so to speak, in Lewistown Mt. The organization first started out as mainly a delivery service for any veteran, or spouse of a veteran, in the Central MT area that needed meat. Meat was given out in relatively decent quantities, normally ten packages (around fifteen lbs), to any veteran that would call. Quite frequently a neighbor or family friend would call on behalf of the veteran for the delivery. The meat mainly came from donations by area hunters through two local processing plants.

The program immediately took off. Our stocks of meat during the hunting season were filling up faster than we could get it out. We started doing giveaway nights in conjunction with deliveries when we picked up a lot of meat from the processor. More freezers were purchased to handle the capacity while still trying to get meat “out the door” to any veteran that needed it. Our goal has always been to have empty freezers by the end of summer. In 2022 we started a ham and potato giveaway for easter.

Since then we have only grown in scale. Giveaway events are held monthly at the American Legion Post 16 Club in Lewistown. These events are open to any veteran, spouse of a veteran, or anyone that is willing to take the bag to them. We still do deliveries to anyone that calls. There is a network of nurses, delivery drivers, and friends/family that pickup meat for veterans in the outlying communities. Donations from local ranchers have increased in scale to account for close to half of the meat received. During 2024 we distributed over 4,500 lbs of commercially processed meat and 50 hams, with very mini-

mal overhead costs paid for by the riders. Our fundraising efforts have been able to cover any processing costs needed.

Overall the program has been a resounding success. Lewistown has a significant population of aging veterans and this is their main way of getting meat for the household. Many of them are homebound and these deliveries give them a chance for a little storytelling and interaction. We also give out many bags simply in appreciation of the veterans service. Anyone that has served is welcome to a bag.

The Veterans Meat Pantry has grown to be our Chapter’s most successful program. The scale of the program is ever increasing with the generous donations of our Central Montana community. The pantry also provides our most prevalent means of outreach. In Central Montana, when you say American Legion Riders, people think of the Veterans Meat Pantry.

Steve Smith

Chapter 16 Sergeant at Arms

Veterans Meat Pantry Coordinator





SONS OF THE AMERICAN LEGION



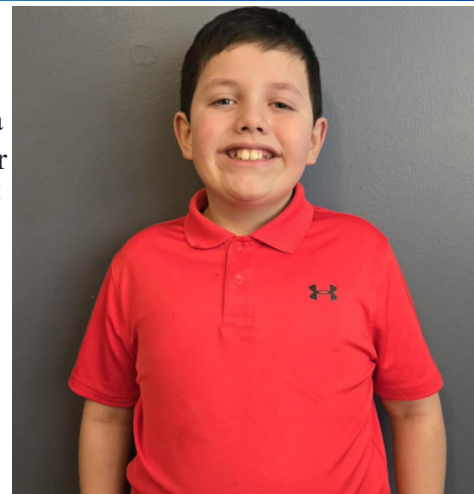
SAL Havre Squadron #11 Historian Report

Barrett Morkeberg

Here in Havre we finally have enough members to come together and get a Sons Of the American Legion Havre Squadron up and running. We had our very first meeting on 01-19-2025. During the second meeting on 2-8-2025 we held the election for the positions of officers. The State Commander of the Sons Of the American Legion Andy Rice did the Initiation Ceremony of the newly elected officers.

Our newest and the youngest elected officer of the Sons Of the American Legion Squadron #11 is Barrett Morkeberg at just 10 years old stepped up to be the historian. When Barrett found out his father joined the SAL and the American Legion Riders he wanted to be part of the SAL also. He wanted to become a big part of helping the community and our veterans.

With the guidance of his father Ray Morkeberg the current Sgt At Arms and other officers of Squadron #11 he is determined to build a base and the confidence to uphold his duties as the Historian of the squadron #11. As a new squadron we look forward to grow and serve our community and caring for our veterans and their families.



Newly elected officers for 2025

- 1.) Commander (Jason Keeling).
- 2.) 1st Vice Commander (Brian Carpenter)
- 3.) 2nd Vice Commander (John Hildebrand)
- 4.) Finance and Adjutant (Les Johnson)
- 5.) Chaplain (Dwight Hauge)
- 6.) Sgt. At Arms (Ray Morkeberg)
- 7.) Historian (Barrett Morkeberg)



The annual event the Sunday of Washington Conference drew nearly 200 Legion Family members, led by the Sons of The American Legion.

The annual wreath laying ceremonies in conjunction with the Washington Conference started as primarily a way for the Sons of The American Legion to honor and remember those veterans who gave their life for the nation's freedom.

It has gradually grown to be a Legion Family event, exemplified by the approximately 200 members of the Legion Family who gathered Feb. 23 to lay wreaths at the memorials on the National Mall and at Arlington National Cemetery.

It's "amazing" to see, said SAL National Commander Joseph Navarreté.

"Seeing our Legion Family coming together and the amount

of people we're seeing (out here), it's truly historic, and it goes to a testament that we need to continue to always remember those who sacrificed the most for us, and why we're in our organization," Navarreté said.

Navarreté was especially appreciative of the dual Legion and SAL members who wore their SAL caps on Sunday. "They sacrificed and they were there and they earned it, and to see them also honoring their why made a big difference. It's all about our heritage," he said.

"It's moving to see the turnout we get on a Sunday," said Detachment of Pennsylvania Alternate NEC Scott Baker.

The contingent of Legion Family, accompanied by recipients of the Samsung American Legion Scholarship, laid wreaths at the World War II Memorial, the Vietnam Memorial, and the Korean War Memorial on the National Mall. They then bused to Arlington National Cemetery.

Department Adjutant

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helicopters, cargo aircraft, vehicles, and more, will be moved to other states along with the associated missions, taken from the Montana National Guard.

- The Montana National Guard is a small fraction of the total U.S. defense force. Of the approximate 3,700 Montana National Guard Soldiers and Airmen are but 17 ten-thousandths of a percent (0.0017%) of the total force. This bill would have had no impact on the Army, Navy or Air Force Reserves in Montana, or active-duty forces at Malmstrom Air Force Base, or Montana citizens serving in the military other than the National Guard of Montana.

- The U.S. Constitution does not allow governors to refuse consent to the use of the militia. The President is the commander in chief of the militia of the several

states when called into the actual service of the United States (Art. II, § 2, c. 1). Congress sets the terms upon which the militia is called into federal service (Art I, § 8, c. 16). Governors only get input because Congress allows it and only on terms which Congress has set, as in 10 USC § 12301.

- The National Guard is federally funded so that the federal government has the National Guard available for federal military priorities. Default status for the National Guard is called federally funded Title 32 status, which sets the terms on which National Guard forces train for war while under the command of a state governor. National Guard forces and officers must be “federally recognized” to receive federal funds. The state can call the National Guard into state service at state expense. If the federal government does not get the benefit of training our National Guard and having it ready for missions, it will not pay for it.

- HB 404 does nothing to limit Congress’ military activities. While the reasoning of ‘no more wars without a congressional declaration’ is well intended, correcting the situation by isolating Montana from defense missions does nothing to change the situation which is rooted at the national level. HB 404 misses its target.

This is one of those Bills that will be contentious and parties on both sides will be very passionate about their personal beliefs. It is important to remember that we are all Veterans, and we need to be respectful to all Veterans regardless of which side of the coin they fall on. All I ask is that if you are going to the Capital to testify in support of this Bill, you do so not as a member of the American Legion, but that of a private citizen. The American Legion of Montana stands in opposition of HB-404.

Till next time, go forth and do great things.

Department Commander

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Some women from various states: Jane Pauley – Broadcast Journalism, Anne Richards – former Gov of Texas, Lynne Cheney – wife of Vice President Richard Cheney, Shirley Ball, 1953 Montana ALA Girls State – appointed by the Clinton Administration to serve on the Farm Service Organization, and Taylor Fenner - attorney practicing Veterans Affairs Disability Law in Troy, Mich., and is accredited through the VA. Unfortunately, I was unable to find much history that listed the many women who have attended the Auxiliary Girls State Programs nationwide.

Feb 13, I accompanied Dept Adjutant Duane Cunningham, Brian Carpenter, Dept ALR Director, and SAL Det Cmdr. Andi Rice to Lewistown to visit Post 16s Thursday Night Post Meeting.

On Feb 15th my wife and I drove to Chinook for a Veterans Program at the Senior Citizens Center where I was invited by Past Dept Cmdr. Lowell Long as one of three guest speakers. My brief talk was “What It was Like to Be a Soldier.” I gave an overview of my seven years of service on

Active Duty with the various units and Posts I was assigned to. The one thing that I related that stuck out was my six months as the Division Commanders jeep driver in the 2nd Infantry Division in Korea. MG G H Woodward was the officer who won the release of the Pueblo crew from the North Koreans. After my talk I thought about another interesting tidbit was while I was serving with an Air Defense Artillery Brigade at The Presidio of San Francisco, California. There was a Sergeant Major in the S3 Staff section that I came to know and learned from him that he had survived the Bataan Death March. He was a young Filipino soldier that was captured by the Japanese and related what he the other captured soldiers endured. Some of those who were in attendance besides my wife, Kathy Long – Past Auxiliary Dept President, Jed Damson – District 3 Cmdr., and Dept ALR Director Brian Carpenter. We enjoyed a good lunch served by the Senior Citizen staff, following the program. With this cold weather upon us and the below zero temperatures, please stay Safe while you are driving and out and about. Thank You All for what you do for the Veterans of Montana and the Montana Dept of the American Legion

Best Percentage by District

Post 85	Bainville	100.97%
Post 109	Turner	113.27%
Post 69	Galata	105.26%
Post 426	Lakeside	143.40%
Post 125	Drummond	100.00%
Post 42	Townsend	102.34%
Post 19	Big Timber	94.80%
Post 130	Vaughn	97.44%
Post 18	Roundup	104.35%
Post 114	Fairview	92.86%
Post 100	Park City	103.39%

Big K Winners

New Year Michael Morgan

January Timothy Cummins

February ALA Unit 135

580 Tickets
still available

DISTRICT STANDINGS

DISTRICT 2	89.72%	JED DAMSON
DISTRICT 3	86.96%	KEITH STARK
DISTRICT 5	86.50%	ALEX VOGEL
DISTRICT 11	85.99%	RICHARD KLOSE
DISTRICT 4	85.74%	ROBERT LEHMAN
DISTRICT 9	84.66%	DEAN MARTIN
DISTRICT 6	81.68%	DAVE HAULMAN
DISTRICT 10	80.43%	IRENE DICKERSON
DISTRICT 7	80.40%	DAN SMART
DISTRICT 1	77.21%	JERRY DAVENPORT
DISTRICT 8	74.19%	MICHAEL ALLISON



Big K Raffle Form

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Local (circle one) Post/Unit/Squadron # _____

Please send this completed form and your check for \$25.00, made payable to:

The American Legion of Montana

PO Box 155

Fort Harrison, MT 59636

Thank you for supporting The Big K raffle!

STARTING THE NEW YEAR OUT On January 13, 2025, Columbia Falls American Legion Freedom Post 72 Held its annual January family meal to honor four of our Columbia Falls students. The post presented each with a certificate of appreciation and an appreciation coin for their willingness to pitch in and help the post any time they are called upon to help us further our programs. Students front row left to right. Garrett Taylor , Grayson Taylor, Bryton Ceccarelli, American Legion members back row. Left to right. John Taylor S.A.L., Ed Bucher Vice Commander, Bill Rhine Commander, Neal Miller Chaplin.



Honor Guard

Early last spring I started talking about doing an article about our Honor Guard here in Havre, MT. As we all know, time has a way of just slipping by and here it is January of 2025. Our program was established in 1990. I was recruited into the program by our Honor Guard Commander Les Johnson, a longtime member. I believe I have been a part of the program now for almost 4 years. It is quite an honor serving this program and to give the service members who now have passed on one final salute and farewell.

In 2023 our program completed 49 services and last year we 21. The Legion has 8 members, Sons has 2, and the VFW has 8 members. Not all can make it every time so it’s nice to have so many on hand to call.

The American Legion Honor Guard provides military funeral honors for veterans and retirees who served in the United States military. The honor guard’s services include playing Taps, folding and presenting the American flag, and providing a color guard.

When attending a funeral, you can expect the following to happen.

A bugler plays Taps, or a recording is played if a bugler is not available

Two or more uniformed service members fold and present the American flag to the family

The honor guard may provide a color guard

A rifle squad may provide a gun salute for certain veterans

All eligible veterans, including military retirees, Service members killed on active duty, and Medal of Honor recipients.

The next of kin or another appropriate individual must request the funeral honors. They do so by requesting it through their funeral director. Les Johnson our Commander works closely with all the Directors & Clergy in our community to ensure the decedent, family and friends are treated with the upmost respect.

Thank you to our members and the Havre community.



Bob Brewer

Commander

American Legion Havre Post 11

