

ALRA Directors Report for 2015-2016

I attended the ALRA Convention meeting at Post 5 in Seward and found myself in the position as the ALRA Director when Bobby Dunno could not continue as the Director due to other commitments he had.

The first American Legion Rider event I attended as Director was the ROMP at Post 35. The meeting was organized and a learning event not only for myself but for my fellow Riders as this was the first time we met with myself in this position and no one really knew what to expect. But everything ran smoothly and fun was had by all and 35 did a seriously good job hosting the event.

After the ROMP there was several weeks of great riding weather and there were rides planned on the spur of the moment such as "Rides for Pie" which riders from Post 1, 5, 20 and 35 all met at the Hope turnoff on the Seward Highway and rode into Hope to eat pie. Not only did we fill the small café and eat all the pie but we had a great day of riding and camaraderie.

Held various fundraisers in support of the Legacy Run and raised approximately \$20,000.00 more than doubling the previous years sum to a great and worthy cause held dear by all Legion Riders.

Through the past few months I have endeavored to bring the American Legion programs to the Active Duty members of our armed forces. Mainly using the American Legion Riders as a introductory means of enrolling them into the Post and making them active participants in the American Legion. I have also made contacts with the Combat Vets Motorcycle Association of which 90% of them are Active Duty Personnel and have been successful in getting them into the Post, and assisting them in understanding the VA and our American Legion Activities.

Legion Riders in association with the Combats Vets and Arctic Warrior Rodeo Association managed the distribution of over 700 deployment boxes to our troops in South Africa and Iraq. The Arctic Warrior Rodeo Association is all Active Duty/DOD employees who coordinate support functions to troops in and from Alaska. We have begun to form a good relationship with these groups and hope to continue to work with them in the future.

With the help of Gene Franks and Jim Pisa we were able to finally resolve and put to rest the issue and confusion surrounding the American Legion Riders "Association" with the coalition of clubs or COC that was thought to be connecting us with the MC's or Motorcycle Clubs. The American Legion Riders as a Program of the American Legion cannot be associated with a motorcycle club and are strictly forbidden from identifying ourself as such. Having resolved this issue and having no American Legion Riders wearing a coalition patch or identifying themselves as members of a MC we are now clear to ride with organizations such as Police Officers, Firefighters and most importantly Active Duty Military Members.

The ALR participated in 4 honor escorts in the past year and each was a somber and meaningful event.

This year the American Legion Riders Post 1 will have a booth at the Air Show and all rider chapters are invited to attend and participate with distribution of information on the American Legion and Legion Riders. This is going to provide a unique opportunity to access active duty members and allow them to see what the American Legion is about. We also had a discussion about the activities the American Legion Riders have been invited too. So far the biggest event will be the Wounded Heroes escort scheduled in August. The ALRA has been invited to provide escort to motor coaches filled with wounded warriors who are invited to a fishing adventure from the Anchorage Bass Pro Shop to Soldotna. This will be a great opportunity to place the American Legion and the American Legion Riders in the Public eye and we wish to get as big a turn out as possible. The Wounded Heroes event is going to be on August 5th and returning to Anchorage on the 6th with the escort going both ways. On June 2nd to the 5th is the Western District ROMP in Oregon and there will be 5 riders from Alaska attending the event for the first time ever. The ALRA ROMP will be held at Post 1 on June 23-26 and registration forms are available if you have a motorcyclist at your Post who may want to attend please let them know they are welcome to attend and we would be pleased to welcome them to the party.

Respectfully Submitted
For God and Country

Mark Berg