



**The Pikes Peak Scuttlebutt
July 2026 Newsletter
Pikes Peak Detachment 29
Marine Corps League**

P.O. Box 10536 Colorado Springs, CO 80932-1536
Newsletter Editor Terry Crum
<https://www.pikespeakmcl.org>



2026 Pikes Peak Detachment Officers

Commandant / Quartermaster
Senior Vice Commandant
Junior Vice Commandant
Judge Advocate
Junior Past Commandant
Adjutant

Osa Tuck
Paul Reifke
John Alban
Brandy Bejarano
Jennifer Luckett
Mark Shuster

Paymaster
Chaplain/Web Sgt
Sgt-at-Arms
MCL Aux Pikes Peak Unit
MODD Pound Keeper

Dan Wood
Terry Crum
Scott Douglass
Donna Rae Smith
PDD Russ Miller

Pikes Peaks Det. 29 Monthly Meeting

Saturday, 18 July 2026



Breakfast \$10



Breakfast starts at 0800 Meeting Starts 0900

DAV Chapter 26 6800 Palmer Park Blvd

We meet the third Saturday of every month

Dept. of Colorado Staff Meeting

Hosted by the Home of Heroes Marines Det. 1376

Saturday July 25, 2026



American Legion Post #2

701 W 9th St Pueblo CO 81003

Meet n Greet 1100, Lunch 1200, Staff Meeting 1300

CO Pack Growl shortly after the staff meeting

2026 MCL National Convention

August 10th-14th

WYNDHAM INDIANAPOLIS AIRPORT HOTEL. 2544 Executive Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46241

<https://www.mcleaguelibrary.org/convention/>

2026 Pikes Peak Region Marine Corps Ball at the Hotel Polaris

Tickets Now On Sale



**Celebrating America's 250th Birthday with Pikes Peak Region's
251st Marine Corps Birthday Ball**

Saturday, November 7, 2026

<https://pikespeakmcl.org/2026-ball> for ball ticket purchases.

Guest of Honor: Sgt Maj Mario P. Fields, USMC (Ret)

Commandant Osa Tuck

Upcoming events:

4th of July Parade is in Monument, CO. On Saturday July 4th. Hope to see you there.

August 10th – August 14th Is the MCL/MCLA National Convention. Which will be held in Indianapolis IN. Wyndham Indianapolis Airport Hotel 2544 Executive Dr. Indianapolis, IN 46241.

I want to thank everyone that has turned out for the events the last month or so. All of you make them happen and your help is always greatly appreciated. Thank you!

Wishing all of you a safe and happy 4th of July.

Semper Fi,
Commandant Osa

Quartermaster Osa Tuck

Cash sales will be setup ant the next Detachment meeting.

Coming up on August 21 & 22, the Salute to American Veterans Rally in Cripple Creek. It is a great event to be at. If you can help, please let me know.

I hope to have a shirt solution with in the next week or two. I will keep you posted.

Semper Fi,
Osa

Chaplain Terry Crum

Marine Corps League Family,

Our hearts go out to Christina Aragon and her family over the loss of her son Walter. His passing at such a young age is a tragedy that we all feel.

Lord God, We grieve over the loss of Walter and struggle to understand his passing. Draw him to yourself and give him fullness of life in Christ. May he join all the angels and saints, who know your love and saving will. Amen

Theresa's mother, Frances, passed away peacefully in her home town of Hot Springs, South Dakota recently. Theresa, her sister, Amber, and I were with her when she breathed her final breath. Theresa and I returned home shortly afterwards. We will be returning to South Dakota in about a week to attend Frances' funeral and continue to settle her mom's affairs.

In closing here is the well-known Psalm 23. A very fitting prayer for times of loss of a loved one.

Psalm 23: The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever. Amen

May the Lord continue to bless you and your family,
Terry

Paymaster Dan Wood

Here we go starting out with a whole NEW YEAR. NO, not a Happy New Year, our Detachment year starts 01 August for 2026-2027 dues. Now IF YOU'RE A LIFE MEMBER, please disregard this message, HOWEVER, IF you are NOT a LIFE member then you must pay your next FISCAL year's dues at the July meeting. We don't meet in August as many of the Officers are at the National Convention as this is the year when our illustrious **RUSS MILLER will be sworn in as our National Commandant. Woooooeee!!!**

OK, enough of the funnery. Plain and simple, YOU know if you're a Life member so what you need to do is come to the July meeting, pay your \$36 dues to renew for the next year.

Once again, it **DOES NOT MATTER WHEN YOU LAST PAID YOUR DUES, they ARE DUE AGAIN, NOW!!**

OK, that's it, everyone enjoy a fun filled/blessed 4th of July, our 250th birthday!!!!

Semper Fi,

Dan

VA Community Care contributed more than \$36B to local economies in FY2025

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs today announced it made more than \$36 billion in payments to local healthcare providers across the country in fiscal year 2025 as part of the bipartisan VA MISSION Act.

President Trump signed the MISSION Act in 2018 after it passed Congress with widespread bipartisan support. The law created a benefit that lets eligible Veterans choose care from authorized local, non-VA healthcare providers at VA expense. VA pays for that care under the Veterans Community Care Program, which is the fourth largest healthcare payer program in America and provides healthcare services supporting more than 8.62 million enrolled Veterans.

With the enactment of the bipartisan Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act in 2025, Congress reaffirmed its commitment to Veterans' healthcare choice by requiring VA to ensure that Veterans and their referring clinicians can choose community care without any additional review when it's in the Veteran's best medical interest. Under current law, Veterans can also choose community care in other circumstances, including if their average driving time or wait time exceeds certain thresholds or when they need a service that is not provided by VA.

While community care is an important option for many Veterans, VA is also spending record amounts of funding on direct care — a record high \$101 billion was spent on direct care in FY2025, when VA completed a record high 82,083,918 direct care appointments, up 4.1% from FY 2024.

Federal healthcare payer programs — like the Veterans Community Care Program, Medicare, Medicaid and TRICARE — are critical to the operation of every healthcare system in the country and help ensure patients get the care they need. That is especially true in rural areas, where millions of America's Veterans live. Rural healthcare providers sometimes operate on margins of less than 1%, which means VA community care payments help ensure these providers remain open and able to care for Veterans, their families and others in the community.

Providing Veterans the ability to receive care from non-VA healthcare providers at VA expense has widespread bipartisan support. A [March 2026 survey](#) from Rasmussen Reports found that 90% of likely military voters support the policy.

In FY 2025, the top ten states that benefited from VA community care were:

- Texas, \$3.3 billion
- Florida, \$2.8 billion
- California, \$2.1 billion
- North Carolina, \$1.5 billion
- Ohio, \$1.3 billion
- Tennessee, \$1.2 billion
- Pennsylvania, \$1.1 billion
- Michigan, \$1.0 billion
- Georgia, \$1.0 billion
- Arizona, \$1.0 billion

See the [full list of states here](#).

“When it passed the MISSION Act and the Dole Act, Congress promised all eligible Veterans the ability to choose the healthcare that’s best for them — whether at a VA facility or a community provider. Under President Trump, VA is delivering on that promise each and every day,” said **VA Secretary Doug Collins**. “VA community care is a vital benefit that ensures the health of both Veterans and the local economies where they live.”

Under the second Trump Administration, VA continues to make major improvements in the way care and benefits are being delivered to Veterans:

- VA [opened 36 new health care clinics](#) since January of 2025, expanding access for Veterans around the country.
- The backlog of Veterans waiting for VA benefits is [down 72%](#) since Jan. 20, 2025, after it increased 24% during the Biden Administration. In February, this backlog [fell to less than 100,000 claims](#) for the first time since 2020.
- VA will [spend nearly \\$5 billion in FY2026](#) to modernize, repair and improve health care facilities, the largest non-recurring maintenance investment in VA’s history.
- As of June, VA has enrolled more than 180,000 new Veterans in VA health care in 2026.
- Since Jan. 20, 2025, VA has offered Veterans more than 2.8 million appointments outside of normal operating hours. These early-morning, evening, and weekend appointments are giving Veterans more timely and convenient options for care.
- VA [permanently housed 51,936 homeless Veterans](#) across the country in FY25, the highest total in seven years.



Pikes Peak MCL Auxiliary President Donna Rae Smith

Hello Everyone!

The upcoming schedule is ...

- June 20, 2026 – Monthly meeting. Immediately following the Detachment meeting. Located at the DAV Bingo Hall on the corner of Palmer Park and Peterson.
- July 4, 2026 – Monument 4th of July Parade in Monument, CO. Line up position is #38 Meet at Woodman Valley Chapel – 1681 Wagon Bow Way.
- July 18, 2026 – Monthly meeting following the Detachment meeting. Zoom link invitations will be emailed out.
- August 10 thru August 14, 2026 – MCL & MCLA National Convention. Wyndham Indianapolis Airport Hotel
2544 Executive Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46241
- August 21 & 22, 2026 – Salute to American Veterans Rally – Cripple Creek, CO. The Detachment will have the Cash Sales tent set up. Please volunteer to help.

Thank you everyone for all that you do for our Marines, Veterans, their families and our community! I look forward to seeing you throughout the month.

Thank you,
Donna

MARINE CORPS BALL SILENT AUCTION

Donations are being accepted for the Pikes Peak Region 251st Marine Corps Birthday Ball. If you would like to donate an item, please reach out to a Pikes Peak Unit member. The funds for this go straight into the Ball Fund to help keep the cost of tickets down for MCL members and Active Duty E5 and below.

Thank you,
Donna Rae Smith

WWII/Korean War/Vietnam Luncheon

Monday, July 13, 2026
(the 2nd Monday of every month)

Veterans start arriving at 1030
Guest speaker starts at 1115

Guest Speaker: Khristopher Thomas, Housing First Veterans Case Manager

Stetson Hills I-HOP
Private dining room; 5749 Stetson Hills Blvd, Colorado Springs, CO 80917





Military Order of the Devil Dogs Karnivorous Kanines of Pound 150

The Karnivorous Kanines of Pikes Peak Pound 150 is having a BBQ growl on July 12, 2026, at the Pound Keeper's Doghouse. The growl will commence at 1500 hours and will continue until the last dog leaves the Doghouse.

A paw has been extended with invites to the Home of Heroes Pound, and the word has been sent to all the mongrels in Canon City who are wanting to become pups! Bring your appetite, cover, collar, passport and fees. Dues are also DUE now. If you have not paid your dues, bring 20 Big Bones in order to be current.

The address for the Doghouse will be found on the flyer sent out in email so that we don't expose the leader to extraneous mongrels.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Luckett
Pound Dog Robber
MODD Karnivorous Kanines of Pound 150



Marine Corps History July



Battle of Soissons

On July 18, 1918, the 4th Marine Brigade began an attack near Soissons, France. The attack was part of a World War I three-division counterattack against German forces. The Marines sustained 1,972 casualties in the first two days of the battle

V Amphibious Corps Land on Tinian

On July 24, 1944, the V Amphibious Corps, a formation of the United States Marine Corps composed of the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Marine Divisions, landed on Tinian, in the Mariana Islands during the Marine Corps' Pacific Campaign in World War II.

The following morning, under the command of Major General Harry Schmidt, the 2nd and 4th Marine Divisions began a shoulder-to-shoulder sweep of the island. Organized enemy resistance faded within a week, and on August 1, Major General Schmidt declared the island secure.

General John A. Lejeune Assumes Command of U.S. Army's 2nd Division

On July 28, 1918, United States Marine Corps Brigadier General John A. Lejeune assumed command of the U.S. Army's 2nd Division in France during World War I. Lejeune remained in that capacity until August the following year, at which point the unit was demobilized. Lejeune was the first Marine officer to hold an Army divisional command, and following the armistice that ended the war, he led his division in the march into Germany.



July 4th Parade Monument, CO Saturday, July 4, 2026

The Parade starts at 1000
Staging starts around 0800
Judging starts at 0830



Parade Number #38

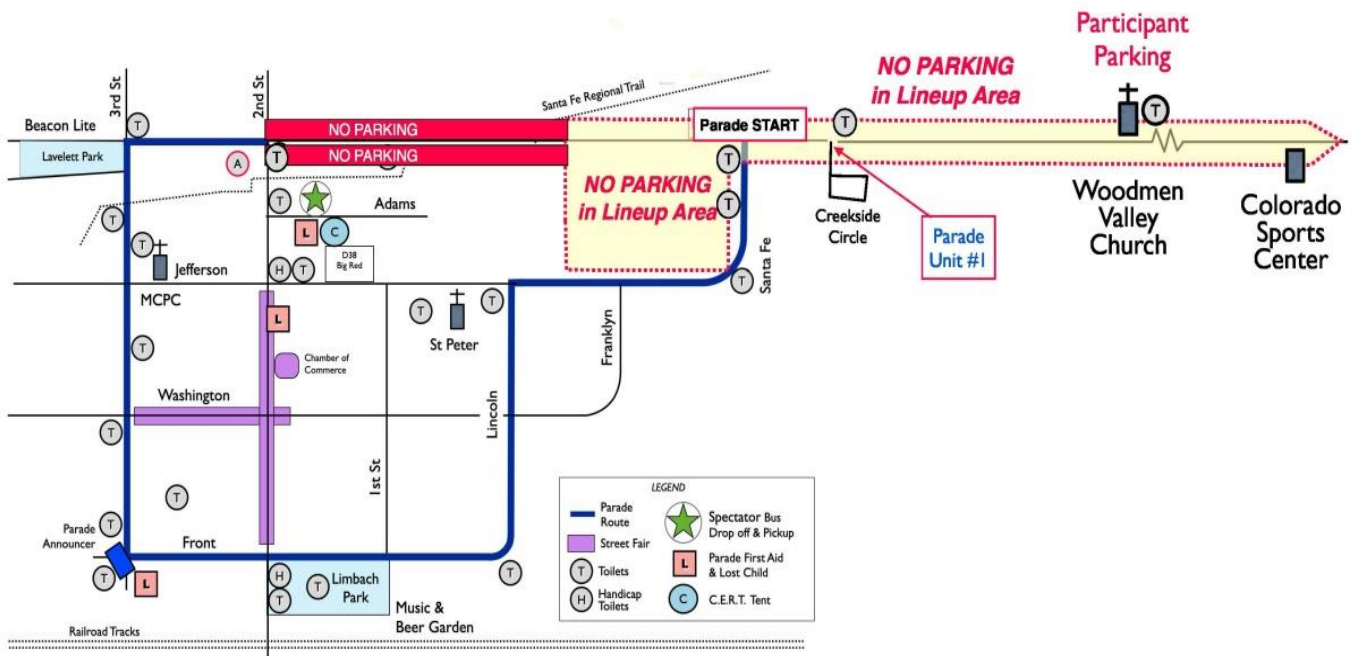
Parking at the Woodman Valley Chapel. 1681 Wagon Bow Way, Monument, CO 80132

Please consider being an ambassador for the Pikes Peak Detachment and show everyone that the most awesome folks around are the U.S. Marines! The Pikes Peak Det. will be in the July 4th parade and we will show all the rest how it is done. We will need plenty of help in order to make it happen. Wear your red, white, and blue patriotic colors. Ooh rah apparel is also good.

We need patriots. We need you! We need motivators to walk the route. To help with the big DI. We need wheel walkers. **We need you!**

Those that wish to attend but cannot walk can join Jim Harper's Military vehicle group. His group is staging at the Woodman Valley Chapel parking lot, but will be leaving there pretty early, 0715-0730, to go to their parade staging spot, #43. Riders are welcome and can join them at staging area #43.

If you parked in the Woodman Chapel parking lot and need a ride back after the parade, a van will be available at Bethesda Gardens Senior Living.



Pikes Peak Detachment Monthly Minutes



Adjutant's Report

TOPIC: Regular Meeting Minutes
LOCATION: DAV 26
Date: 20 June 2026



Mark Shuster
Retired US Marine
Detachment Adjutant
Life Member 59784 / MODD 04-351

Sgt At Arms Scott Douglass secured the room ensuring all present were qualified to be at the regular meeting.

Sgt At Arms Scott Douglass posted the Colors and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

MCL Rocky Mt. Division Chaplain Milt "Doc" Whitaker led the opening prayer.

Commandant Osa Tuck opened the meeting at 0900.

Roll Call of Officers:

Pikes Peak MCL Det 29 Officers		
Commandant	Osa Tuck	Present
Sr. Vice Commandant	Paul Reifke	Present
Jr. Vice Commandant	John Alban	Excused
Judge Advocate	Brandy Bejarano	Excused
Adjutant	Mark Shuster	Present
Paymaster	Dan Wood	Present
Chaplain	Terry Crum	Excused
Sgt At Arms	Scott Douglass	Present
Jr. Past Commandant	Jennifer Lockett	Present
Quartermaster	Osa Tuck	Present
Web Sergeant	Terry Crum	Excused

Recognition of Dignitaries:

- National Sr. Vice Commandant Russ Miller - Present
- MCL Rocky Mt. Division Chaplain Milt "Doc" Whitaker - Present
- MCL Department of Colorado Sr. Vice Commandant Terry Crum – Excused
- MCL Department of Colorado Judge Advocate Jennifer Lockett - Present

Guests:

- There were no guests at the meeting.

Guest Speaker

- Our next guest speaker will be the El Paso County Sheriff, Joe Roybal, at our meeting on Saturday, 18 July 2026. The Sheriff will speak from 0830-0900 and present us with a discussion about the current state of his office. Please remember to come early.

Applications for membership:

- None.

Previous meeting minutes:

- The Commandant entertained a motion to accept the regular meeting minutes for Pikes Peak MCL Det 29 as posted in the newsletter. A motion to accept was made by Donna Rae Smith and the motion was seconded by Steve Lucks . The motion carried and was passed.

Correspondence:

- NSTR

Report of the Paymaster:

- Annual membership dues for all members who are not yet a life member are due next month. Please be sure to pay your dues at the next meeting. The fiscal year starts on 1 August of each year. This will keep you current for 2026-2027.
- Copies of the Detachment financial accounts, membership roster and monthly newsletter were available.
- Membership cards are available for pickup at the meetings. These will not be mailed out due to costs of postage.
- The Commandant entertained a motion to accept the Paymaster report pending audit. A motion to accept was made by Russ Miller and the motion was seconded by Paul Reifke. The motion carried and was passed.

Report of the Chaplain:

- Sick and in distress. Physical and mental needs of our members is important to share with others for support. If you are struggling, please communicate so we can provide you with help.
- This report was given by MCL Rocky Mt. Division Chaplain Milt "Doc" Whitaker.
- Chaplain Terry Crum and Theresa Crum were out of town taking care of Theresa's mother who is in hospice.
- Marine Christina Aragon's son died in a motorcycle accident recently so please send her family prayers.
- Ken Sanquinetti is in the Center at Centennial in room 312 – his condition is stable. He will remain there for some time. If you visit him, he will eat fresh baked cookies!
- John Huntz continues to battle a lot of health issues from his service in Vietnam, police officer and other issues.
- Bonnie Rudolph continues to recover from hip replacement surgery.
- Denise Wickersheim's hip replacement surgery was postponed until the end of the month.
- Mary Shuster had a successful surgery on 3 June 2026 and is recovering well.
- Mark Young continues to recover after a recent stroke.
- Judy Carty in assisted living at Brookdale would love visitors.
- Continued prayers for Terry Baty, Vince Espinoza, Milt "Doc" Whitaker, Fred Smith and Lynn Douglass.
- Please be sure to send all of your thoughts, prayers and positive energy to everyone who needs our support!!

Report of Officers

Commandant Osa Tuck:

- The detachment is registered for the Monument 4th of July parade. We do not have line-up information yet. The information will be emailed out once we have it.
- Thank you to the members who represented the Pikes Peak Detachment and Pikes Peak Unit at Memorial Park for the Memorial Day service and wreath laying. Thank you to Paul and Nancy Reifke for placing the wreaths this year.

Sr. Vice Commandant Paul Reifke:

- Nothing significant to report.

Jr. Vice Commandant John Alban:

- Excused.

Judge Advocate Brandy Bejarano:

- Excused

Jr. Past Commandant Jennifer Lockett:

- Nothing significant to report.

Sgt At Arms Scott Douglass:

- Nothing significant to report.

Adjutant Mark Shuster:

- 37 members were in attendance with no guests.

Quartermaster Osa Tuck:

- Territory Days was busy Saturday & Sunday, but a little slow Monday. Thank you to everyone who came out to help with cash sales, whether setting up, selling or tearing down.
- Cash sales was set up at Main Event for the Thunderbird flyover/air show for the Air Force Academy graduation. Due to the weather, and construction between Scheels & Main Event, attendance was lower than normal. We will try again next year.
- Cripple Creek is August 21st and 22nd. Set up only is the morning of August 20. Sales are open to the public on the 21st and 22nd. If you plan on helping each day and want to stay in Cripple Creek rather than drive home each day, you might want to get your hotel room reservations now, or your camp sight reservations if staying in your RV.

Honor Guard Terry Crum:

- Because Terry was excused, the report was given by Paul Reifke.
- There were three funerals done last week. Services were provided for Marine Preacher Williams a Vietnam Veteran; Marine Darrell Comb a Korean War Veteran and Marine Philip Spencer a Vietnam Veteran.

Web Sergeant Terry Crum:

- Excused.

Toys for Tots Russ Miller:

- Still looking for a warehouse building for the 2026 campaign. Requirement is 10,000 square feet with bathrooms and heat. Please let Russ or Donna know if you hear of any locations interested in helping.
- Members continue to send Russ information about locations. Please include the address to any location you provide because he cannot always figure out the location just from photographs.
- Toys for Tots has started a new National program called “Fishing with a Marine”. Russ is coordinating with local Veterans to support this program locally.

MODD Russ Miller:

- Annual membership dues for all dogs who are not yet a life member are due next month. Please be sure to bring your bones to pay your dues at the next meeting. The fiscal year starts on 1 August of each year. This will keep you current for 2026-2027.
- There will be a growl in July at either Russ’ house or Brandy’s house once their owners let them know which location works best.
- On Saturday, 25 July 2026, there will be a Department Staff meeting followed by a Department Pack growl hosted by the Home of Heroes Pueblo detachment at the American Legion. Social hour begins at 1100, lunch at 1200 and the staff meeting starts at 1300. Everyone is invited to attend the meeting.
- All regular members in good standing, who have been a member of the MCL for at least a year are welcome to join the ‘fun and honor society’ of the Marine Corps League – WOOF WOOF!

MCL Auxiliary

- The bowl-a-thon.
 - Main Event – 1180 Interquest Parkway, Colorado Springs.
 - Sunday, September 20, 2026 – 10:30 am registration. 11:00 am bowling begins.
 - \$15.00 per person registration – pays for 3 games of bowling and shoe rental.
- Items are already being collected for the Marine Corps Ball silent auction. If you have anything to donate, please reach out to a Pikes Peak Auxiliary member. Everything raised from the silent auction goes to the annual Marine Corps Ball fund.

Report of Standing Committees

Budget Donna Rae Smith:

- Donna met with Dan and received a chart of accounts. The two other committee members (John Huntz and Jo Tardiff) are unavailable to meet. We will set up a meeting time once John has recuperated and Jo is back in town.

Scholarship Kittrie Adams:

- Excused.

Marine Corps Ball – Mark Shuster and Donna Rae Smith:

- Mark Shuster
 - The next family night fundraiser is scheduled for Sunday, 26 July 2026 at the Main Event. Please join us from 4:30-7:30 pm. Information will be sent out by email. Thank you Katrina for helping to set up our family night events! We are working on the next event for August.

- Donations are being accepted. The full donation request packages are available – please let Mark know if you know of any local business partner who can support us.
- Donna Rae Smith
 - Hotel update – the 2nd payment was paid on Friday, June 19.
 - Come to the Marine Corps Birthday ball at Hotel Polaris on Saturday, 7 November 2026.
 - Tickets for the ball and room reservations are available on the Pikes Peak Website!!
 - If you have any issues or problems with the rooms please call Donna and not the hotel.

Unfinished Business:

- 2026 Marine Corps League National Convention
 - Monday, Aug 10-14, 2026.
 - Wyndham Indianapolis Airport Hotel – 2544 Executive Drive, Indianapolis, IN 46241
 - Signup sheet is on the table up front. We need to submit the registration no later than the afternoon of July 18, 2026.
- Cash sales was not set up at this meeting to build up stock for the motorcycle rally. There will be cash sales setup for the July meeting. If you need anything please call Osa and he can meet you to help out.

New Business: NSTR

Good of the League:

- Dan presented information about new legislation that is proposing to combine hearing loss and tinnitus to a zero percent rating at the VA. The VA is also proposing to change the ratings for Veterans with sleep apnea who use a CPAP or BIPAP machine or oxygen. These changes are a significant reduction of VA ratings and will make a real difference to the support our Veterans are provided. The bill is HR 9237, and we strongly oppose section 108. The VA is trying to save money to apply it to other places, which is not right. Please call your local representative and let them know you oppose this legislation.
- Russ Miller let everyone know that MCL Associate member Steve Lucks has been appointed as the Department Legislative Officer for the Department of Colorado. This last week he accepted the role as the Division Legislative Officer and is on the National committee.
- Mark Shuster is coordinating the Sherwin-Williams annual Heroes Program that will help paint Karen George's house for free. The pending date is either 1 or 29 August 2026. We will need volunteers to help support the event. More to follow at the next meeting.
- 50/50 – a total of \$144 was collected and \$72 was won by Jack Eusey!

Closing Ceremony:

- Sgt At Arms Scott Douglass retired the Colors.
- MCL Rocky Mt. Division Chaplain Milt "Doc" Whitaker said the closing prayer.
- The Senior Vice Commandant executed the closing actions.
- Commandant Osa Tuck closed the Pikes Peak Detachment 29 meeting at 0945.
- The next meeting will be held on Saturday, 18 July 2026, at 0900.

Very Respectfully Submitted and Semper Fi,

Mark Shuster