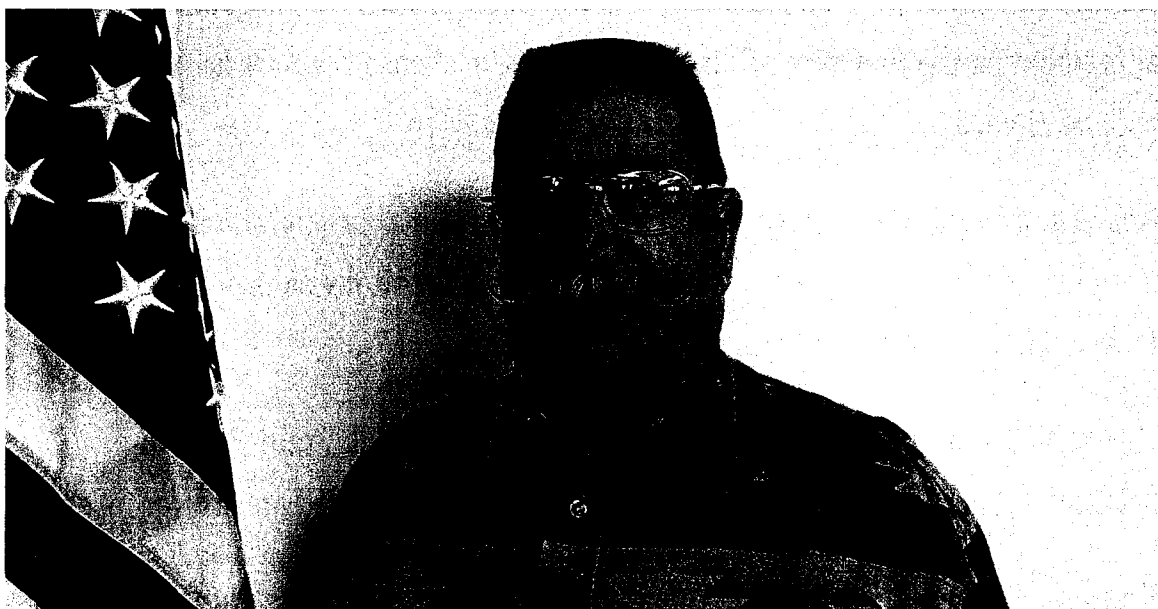


# Fmr. Montana American Legion Commander Endorses 'Defend the Guard'

By: Richard Klose 30/03/2023 [View Source](#)



**My fellow Legionnaires-**

**The American Legion was founded by veterans to support other veterans.**

**Amidst four years of trench warfare and a mechanized meat grinder, World War I was called "the war to end all wars." But the founders of the Legion, a couple dozen members of the American Expeditionary Force, knew that would not be the case.**

**So veterans of that first world war advocated for and guarded the interests of the boys who would become the veterans of the second world war. Those same boys**

**then shouldered responsibility for those who fought in Korea, and then Vietnam. A duty, sworn in honor and validated by sacrifice, befalls each new generation of veterans to look out for the next.**

**For twenty years our great nation has witnessed a new kind of war; a proclaimed "Global War on Terror," with no geographical, temporal, fiscal, or legal limits. And no accountability by our representatives.**

**Endless war has given our country tens of thousands of veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), men and women who continue to struggle to hold a job, maintain their marriage and friendships, and resist addiction or even thoughts of suicide. As an older veteran, who has made the same generational agreement as the founders of the American Legion, those warriors are now in our collective care.**

**One of the Legion's first national commanders, Lieutenant General Hanford MacNider, said a century ago, "I am...unwilling to commit my sons or any American's sons to the policing of the rest of the world."**

**This month, our current national commander, Vincent Troila, said "A strong national defense is an original pillar of The American Legion. 'Forever war' is not."**

**That's consistency, based on the principles of Americanism, constitutionalism, and compassion for our men and women in uniform.**

**And that is why I am endorsing the Defend the Guard Act as a necessary repair to a broken foreign policy that has strayed too far from the intentions of our Founding Fathers and left our soldiers without respite.**

**This legislation, if passed in Montana, would prohibit the deployment of the Montana National Guard into active combat without a declaration of war by the U.S. Congress.**

**When I first learned of this movement, I was hesitant. I initially opposed it. Is this**

**the correct direction for America's veterans, and the American Legion? But after thoughtful contemplation, research, and considerable thought, I am convinced of Defend the Guard's efficacy.**

**This bill is grounded in Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution. And as long as Washington DC lacks the stomach to do what is necessary and follow the law, then the obligation falls to the sovereign states. That is federalism, and that is how our system of government was intended to function.**

**The National Guard, like all soldiers, takes an oath to uphold the U.S. Constitution, defend our nation, and obey our commander in chief. That same commander in chief, and every member of Congress, takes the same oath swearing that a vote will be held and war declared before deploying the National Guard and the rest of the Armed Forces into combat.**

**For the rule of law and the liberty of our citizens to be preserved under a republican form of government, Congress and the executive can no longer shirk their sacred duty. War must be declared before the Montana National Guard is sent to fight in any foreign war beyond the United States territory.**

**This legislative session, a Defend the Guard Act was introduced in Montana, H.B. 527. It passed committee, but unfortunately lost on the floor of the House of Representatives in a 60-40 vote.**

**I understand the same bill is being reintroduced, this time in the Montana Senate and with a provision that clarifies that training out of the country is still allowed and required under Title 32. The senate bill was assigned a new bill number S.B. 560.**

**As the former state commander of the Montana American Legion, I believe the Defend the Guard Act aligns with the principles of the Legion and the U.S. Constitution. And I hope that the commitment made by our National Guard is respected and the bill successfully passed into law.**

**We can show our support by doing three things:**

- 1. Sign the petition below. The petition will be presented to members of the Montana Senate.**
- 2. Show up to support the Defend the Montana Guard Act, S.B. 560, Friday at 3 pm in State Administration. I'll be there in support. I'm calling on others to stand up too.**
- 3. Call your senator and express your support as an American veteran and a Member of the American Legion for the Defend The Guard bill.**

**We are the largest and most prominent veteran organization in the world. We owe the next generation of veterans the same organized effort to protect them as we had from the veterans before us. Call (406) 444-4800 to leave a message in support with the State Administration committee.**

**Veterans Strengthening America!**

**Sincerely yours,**

**Richard Klose**

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