



The American Legion
Department of Maine

Department of Maine Capsule History

The American Legion Department of Maine was well represented at St. Louis Caucus.

The founders of the American Legion who met in Paris decided that they would wait until the American Legion idea could be taken stateside to “perfect” the organization. One reason for this was to invite the U.S. Navy and U. S. Marine Corps to be part of the organization as well as other U. S. Army personnel serving stateside. The founders decided to have a caucus in St. Louis, Missouri on May 8-10, 1919, appealing to State Governors to send delegates to the St. Louis Caucus.

There can be no doubt that the State of Maine was well represented in the formation of our beloved American Legion in St. Louis. Major Waldemar P. Adams (54th Coast Artillery Corps, of Portland served on the Finance Committee. He also served as the Chairman for the Committee on Name. The Committee’s initial recommendation for name was as follows: “We, your Committee on Name, unanimously make the following recommendation, that the name of this Organization shall be, ‘The American Legion of World’s War Veterans’.

Sergeant James L. Boyle of Augusta, 54th Coast Artillery Corps, served as the Department of Maine Secretary as well as on the St. Louis Organization Committee and the Committee on Next Meeting. The Committee on Next Meeting initially organized the first convention.

The Founding of the Department of Maine

Maine’s Governor attended the St. Louis Caucus and was accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel Albert Greenlaw of Eastport, Maine, Sergeant James. A. Boyle of Augusta, Maine, Major Robert A. Green of Lewiston, Maine, and Colonel Frank M. Hume of Houlton, Maine. Governor Milliken also sent Major Waldemar P. Adams of Portland, Maine, Sergeant Roy C. Haines of Ellsworth, Maine, Adjutant General George Presson of Farmington, Maine and Captain Arthur Lincoln Robinson of Portland, Maine.

At the St. Louis Caucus, the Maine delegation voted Albert Greenlaw to be the Chairman, James Boyle as Secretary, and Walter Butler as Treasurer. The American Legion Department of Maine was actually born in St. Louis as it was in St. Louis where it was officially recognized by the National office.

Returning back to Maine, Chairman Greenlaw and Secretary Boyle to begin organizing posts in Maine. Secretary Boyle distributed Post Application forms and bulletins. He also collected the .50 cents dues for 1919 and distributed American Legion Buttons. Chairman Greenlaw developed contacts and countersigned the work of the fledgling Department of Maine.

A meeting was held on July 23, 1919 at the Maine State House. The Department of Maine had 25 posts. Eighteen (18) of the twenty-five (25) posts were represented at the meeting. Listed by post number with city or town, these were:

Post 1, Rockland	Post 2, Augusta	Post 3 Calais
Post 4, Gardiner	Post 5, Waterville	Post 6, Hallowell
Post 7, Princeton	Post 8, Cherryfield	Post 9, Machias
Post 10, Livermore Falls	Post 11, Eastport	Post 12, Bangor
Post 13, East Millinocket	Post 14, Fairfield	Post 15, Caribou
Post 16, Skowhegan	Post 17, Portland	Post 18, Vinalhaven
Post 19, Sanford	Post 20, Brunswick	Post 21, Bath
Post 22, Lewiston	Post 23, Woodland	Post 24, Rumford
Post 25, Bar Harbor		

During the meeting, the acceptance and organization of additional posts was addressed. Twenty-five cents was decided upon to be the temporary assessment per capita. The first State Convention was held in Bangor, Maine on September 24, 1919. By the time the Convention rolled around Maine had 54 posts.

At the first Annual State Albert Greenlaw was elected, and subsequently served, as the first Commander for the Department of Maine, American Legion, from 1919-1921. James Boyle was the first Department of Maine Adjutant, serving over 30 years in that position.

Major Roger A. Greene, of Lewiston, 101st Sanitary Train, 26th Infantry Division, served on the Resolutions Committee. Lieutenant Colonel Albert Greenlaw, of Eastport, Headquarters, 26th Infantry Division, Assistant Chief of Staff, served on the Permanent Executive Committee and on the Credentials Committee. Sergeant Roy C. Haines, of Ellsworth, Assistant Chief of Staff, 334th Tank Corp, served on the Advance Committee.

The American Legion Department of Maine's First Convention

The first convention was held at the U. C. T. Hall on 24 September 1919 at the Post Office Square, in Bangor Maine. Headquarters was established at the Bangor House. Each attending post was allowed one delegate, and an alternate, with an additional delegate per 200 members. As a civilian organization, military titles and uniforms were not necessary at meetings and conventions. The 1919 American Legion Maine State Convention Schedule featured Governor Carl Milliken as a speaker.

Sources:

Thanks are extended to Don Hands who was appointed by the Department of Maine to research and develop a history to be utilized during the 100th Anniversary of the Legion. The excerpts used in this capsule are from the Maine Legionnaire Newspaper from May 2018. Most of this information came directly from Department of Maine historical notes and some articles from the Maine Legionnaire. Donald G. Hands, Department of Maine, 100th Anniversary Chairman. Additional research and editing was done by George Robinson, Jr., Department of Maine Historian.