



Manuel Schneidmiller Post 154, Inc.

Rathdrum Idaho

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Adjutant's Message:

The political season is upon us and the following was put out by National. It is good for all of us to be aware of these requirements.

The wearing of the cap and usage of The American Legion emblem, facilities and political donations:

According to Article II, Section 2, of the Constitution of The American Legion, "The American Legion shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment." The National Charter, approved by Congress, also stipulates The American Legion as an organization is nonpolitical* which has been interpreted by the National Judge Advocate as "nonpartisan" in modern lingo. Therefore, The American Legion as an organization is prohibited from contributing, helping or endorsing a candidate. However, a member, as a private citizen, and not representing the organization, can employ whatever legal and ethical means to advance his or her candidate.

The Legion cap is considered the official Legion uniform (**see p. 42**). It is not an individual Legion member's decision on the appropriate usage of the cap and emblem. If attending a political event, The American Legion cap, or any clothing with the emblem visible, should be removed so as not to imply endorsement by The American Legion. The problem is the assumption of endorsement by those who see the emblem or name worn at in improper location, such as a partisan rally.

When using post facilities to host candidates, post should remove emblem and Legion flag to avoid any impression of endorsements. Candidates for all parties must be presented equal opportunity at the same time to use the facilities on the same terms and conditions as other competing candidates.

If financial contributions are offered by candidates for political office, campaigns, political action committees or political parties, The American Legion should politely decline. Accepting these contributions may be perfectly legal, but The American Legion must avoid any perception of supporting any candidate or political party.

The American Legion values its independence and effectiveness on veterans' issues. This stance is best maintained by neutrality on individual candidates or political parties. The American Legion by legal definition is non-partisan and supports only issues which impact your Four Pillars.

** This means "non-partisan" in today's society. The American Legion is allowed by Congress to lobby for veterans' benefits and a strong United States of America. (NJA, October 25, 2012)*

- Bryan Bledsoe, Adjutant

Mark Your Calendar:

April 9th – 1-3pm Poppy assembly – see details in Bits & Pieces on page 5

April 13th – 6:30pm Executive Committee Meeting

April 18th – 6-8pm Poppy assembly – see details in Bits & Pieces on page 5

April 25th & 26th Honor Flight – see details in Bits & Pieces on page 5

April 27th – 6:30pm Post 154 General Membership Meeting & **annual election of officers**

2nd Vice-Commander:

- Plans are progressing for Stand Down on May 7th. I now have about 58 service providers signed up. Some are the regulars, and we have other new ones. We'll have haircuts, dentists, vision care, diabetic care, smoking cessation, the Gideon's, Newby-ginnings, legal aid, insurance, burial services. A veterinarian will be there to check out dogs and give shots and food; photos will be taken. We'll have people teaching fly tying; others lining up fishing trips. Bikes will get repaired. The new Crisis Center will have a booth as will With Performance, the new exercise facility for vets. All of these and more!!!! There will more entertainment for children and we will have employers interviewing for jobs. Dee will have a table telling vets about our Post. I hope to see all of you there.
- The big spring job fair will be held at the New Life Church in Post Falls on April 13th from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. I attended last year and was most impressed. There must have been 100 or more companies participating.
- The combined honor guard for Post 154 and Post 143 will do the presentation of colors for the dedication of a bench to Nick Newby at the Medical Lake Cemetery on July 7th.
- Our two oratorical contestants spoke at Post 143's birthday dinner on March 18th. The audience was most impressed. It was a good public contact for the boys and the program. I believe it will inspire more support for the program.
- Newby-ginnings will have an open house and dedication on May 2nd at their new location, in the Jacklin complex building #. The building has been painted and she has beautiful murals at the entrance. I hope that some of our members could attend. See flyer on page 7.

Margaret Ogram, 2nd Vice-Commander

Chaplain's Pew:

In February, at our Post meeting, I shared some of the story of Chaplains in our military history.

Last month was Medal of Honor month.... the highest recognition for heroic service in any American military branch.

"One of the most important things we can do for veterans is to honor the service of those who have gone above and beyond the call of duty". - Defense Secretary Leon Panetta.

I would like to take this time to specifically honor the service of military chaplains...7 who have received the Medal of Honor.

One of these chaplains was Capt Angelo J. Liteky, 199th Infantry Brigade. He received his Medal of Honor for exceptional heroism in Vietnam, Dec 1967. You can find all the specific actions for his citation on the Medal of Honor website...valor.defense.gov.

What makes Capt Liteky different? It is that after his service in Vietnam, Liteky left both the Army and the Catholic priesthood and became a peace activist.

In 1986, he renounced his Medal of Honor by leaving it in an envelope which he placed at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC. The National Park Service recovered Liteky's medal and it is now on display at the Nat'l Museum of American History.

Please take some time to remember a veteran; write a letter, or make a phone call, or make a visit. Each and every one is a hero (with or without a medal) for their faithful service to our United States military force.

If you know of a member who is ill or just needs a friendly visit, please give me a call.

Patently waiting in the pews

P. Atwood, Chaplain, Post 154

Finance Officer:

Let me begin by thanking all of you who have served as Officers of the Post over the past year. Each of you contributed to the success and growth of our Post from its infancy, and we could not have been successful without your time, commitment and your contribution to our Post.

For those of you who are leaving, I hope you have a good rest, and come back to serve again in a year or so. To those who have agreed to run for office again, I thank you for your continuing commitment and support.

Having taken my own straw poll, I found no one willing to take over the “checkbook” and “green eyeshade” duties – (give me a shout if you are out there!), so I offer to continue to act as the Post Finance Officer for a second year. Please remember, however, that comes with the downside of hearing me remind you that we need all sorts of Volunteer help and assistance to continue to grow and be successful, and also hearing me moan and groan when someone suggests that we spend money without having a revenue component to offset that expense.

We continue to be in good financial shape, and have some excellent fundraisers planned for this year (ALL OF WHICH WILL NEED VOLUNTEER HELP!), which should keep us in that outstanding condition.

I have not heard any complaints from the IRS regarding our tax return, so I am hoping that they are well and happy and not looking to fatten their coffers on a small Veterans Service Organization doing good and keeping our weapons at the ready. – Len Crosby, Finance Officer

Legislative Chairman:

Not much happening this session that impacts us. If you live in a home that has a value in excess of \$200,000 you will get a property tax increase after 2017, because of the bill that pegged the homeowner’s exemption at the lower of half of your home’s value or \$100,000. If you are prone to carry a concealed weapon, you will not need to renew your Concealed Carry permit, if you only carry in-State (unless the Governor vetoes the bill that passed).

Our efforts to get the State to submit its application for a new Veterans Home in N. Idaho had a great deal of support. The Jacklin family stepped up and donated additional land allowing us to increase the proposed site to more than 7 acres, and our local Legislators, led by Sen. Bob Nonini, got the full attention of the Idaho Veteran Services Division who have promised to get our application filed with the Veterans Administration by October of this year so we can get on the list for a VA Construction Grant.

It is an election year, so get ready for a lot of politicking both locally, at the state level and nationally, and don’t forget to vote. – Len Crosby, Legislative Chairman

The Rathdrum Easter Egg Hunt this year was a great success. Dee Sasse, Post Commander, would like to thank all who participated and helped with this event.

Service Officer:

Many Vets I talk to have complaints about getting health care on time and then getting the proper follow up. My having VA health care since 1971 has taught me a few things about the system. I try to share my positive experiences with my comrades so they won't enjoy my negative ones.

While reading some VA updates, I received this one about: How simple "life hacks" can make your VA health care system experience positive. This was a pleasant surprise and one worth sharing with you.

(Note: A "life hack" is a tool that makes things easier or a tip that helps you be more productive or get things done. In this article, a Marine Veteran shares the "hacks" he uses to make his experience at VA a positive one.) I have been a VA customer since I left the Marines in 2009 and have had nothing but a fantastic customer experience. So, it pains me to see other Veterans having a rough time. I've always been curious as to why the outspoken majority on social media have complaints instead of praise for VA services. I realize that negative experiences motivate Veterans to post their complaints more so than positive experiences, but I still have to wonder, am I an outlier? A few weeks ago, I saw my primary care physician at the VA. I asked him why he thinks that Veterans have such polarized experiences, even at the same facilities. He told me a story about a Veteran who had a treatable, but life-threatening issue. The Veteran was referred to a specialty clinic, but that clinic never called him to set up an appointment – that clinic messed up.

.) Four months came and went. Instead of calling VA, his primary care physician, nurses or even that clinic to get an appointment, he wrote his congressman. That congressional letter took two more months to route its way back to VA. Six months from the start, that Veteran was finally seen by the specialty clinic. That's when I realized why I have a better experience than others. The VA is not the military; you can't wait around until you are told to do something. You must advocate for yourself. You and I at some point will fall through the cracks. No matter how great an organization is (and I think the VA is pretty great), it will happen. That is reality, but it doesn't have to negatively affect your experience. But it's so much more than being proactive, it's using all of your available resources.

This is what I do to have a great experience with VA.

Schedule your appointments first thing in the morning or right after lunch. You will be seen on time. I remember when I was a kid, the doctor would come in for five minutes and leave. Once, I was so afraid of a needle the doctor spent 15 minutes with me, and he was visibly annoyed. Annoyed because he spent more than five minutes with a single patient. (The calamity!) VA docs are not bound by quotas to see as many patients as possible despite the need. They focus on quality visits. (My last annual checkup was an hour) They tend to run over their scheduled times, often sacrificing their lunch breaks.

Scheduling an appointment first thing in the morning or right away after lunch is one of my tricks to always be seen on time. It also makes it easy for you to be early and on time.

Have a referral to a specialty clinic? Call that clinic yourself to schedule an appointment. If you wait around for the clinic to call you, it may be a few weeks. Sometimes VA will automatically schedule you. (I hate that too.) So don't let it happen in the first place. Ask your physician or nurse for the phone number or location of that clinic and call or go there, tell them you have a referral and set a time that works for you. Ask for an appointment tomorrow. VA reports on a metric that claims majority of Veterans receive their appointments within 14 days of the desired date. I've always been curious to that number because no one ever asks me when I want to come in, rather tell me when I can come in. So, I decided to start asking for an appointment tomorrow, and it almost always works! I routinely will have an appointment within two weeks.

Use My HealthVet secure messenger to talk to your physician.

<https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/anonymous.portal? nfpb=true& nfto=false& pageLabel=mhvHome>

Have a question? Ask. Need a new appointment? Ask. Need to check your appointment schedule? Need to refill a medication? You can literally solve your own problems in a few clicks. This is a game changer if you aren't already using it. Every facility has a My HealthVet coordinator and most staff can help you if you run in to any technical problems. (Continued below)

(cont)

Choose a different VA. [vascheduling: http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp](http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp)

You have the right to go to any VA facility you want to. Yes, it may be more inconvenient, but you have that right. I have a friend who plans a trip home every few months and schedules his appointments all in one day at his hometown VA because he likes it so much.

Walk in to the emergency room if you need anything. If you can't wait, use the VA medical center ER. At the least, they will put in a referral and you can walk to the hospital to be seen. If you have a referral, you can usually talk to the clinic front desk and offer to wait around until a spot opens. I'm not advocating to use this needlessly, but if your condition is getting worse or you feel you need to be seen sooner than your appointment, use the VAMC ER. Please, please, please don't wait around for VA to contact you if you have an urgent need.

Use the kiosks. <http://www.va.gov/HEALTHBENEFITS/access/kiosks.asp>

Don't wait around to check in for your appointment. Use the kiosk and avoid the lines. Every time I'm at VA there is a line at the front desk and a few kiosks open. The kiosk will even tell you if you are in the right area or not.

Prepare and double check. If you are like me, you see your doctor once or twice a year. When I go, I bring a laundry list of issues I want addressed. As you go down your list with your doc, cross them out or write down the clinic he/she is referring you to. Verify at the end of the visit that the physician entered your referrals, mistakes can happen and you want to make sure you catch them before you leave.

Have a problem? Speak up. <http://www.va.gov/health/patientadvocate/>

Every facility has quarterly town hall meetings that you can attend to speak with the leadership. They hold these meetings because they want to hear your feedback. You can also speak with a patient advocate about anything.

The best and quickest way to get a response or a solution is contacting your primary healthcare team via My HealtheVet secure messaging or calling their office. <https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/anonymous.portal?nfpb=true&nfto=false&pageLabel=mhvHome>

- Charlie Till, Service Officer

Bits & Pieces

- Save the date! The Military Ministry of Christ the King Lutheran Church is once again presenting the POW/MIA Remembrances Dinner and Program on Friday, September 16th. Guest speakers will be John and Stacey Holley who wrote the book "Medals, Flags, and Memories". This story is about their son who died in service in Iraq, and the struggle and triumph in receiving his body back to the states in an honorable fashion. More details to come as the date approaches.
- Just a reminder for marking your calendars. We have two dates set for meeting together and making poppies for our upcoming Poppy Project & Fundraiser. Maryellen has graciously invited us to her home: a bit of time to work but also to get acquainted and have some fun together. Dessert and beverage will be provided. Call Maryellen for questions or to RSVP: [208-889-9293](tel:208-889-9293)
Dates and time: April 9 from 1-3pm & April 18 from 6pm-8pm
Place: Maryellen Decker's home, 7072 E Poleline Ave (sw corner of Poleline & Huetter) blue house, south side of road, Post Falls
- Inland Northwest Honor Flight is coming up April 25-26th. This is a wonderful moving experience to welcome the veterans back home the evening of the 26th at the Spokane Airport. For more info, contact Larry Carstensen at 208-777-9684 or lcarsty@yahoo.com

Medical Lake Veterans' Cemetery Internment Requirements:

Here is the latest information on interment requirements for the Veterans' Cemetery in Medical Lake, Washington. It pertains to any veteran who would like to be interred at the Washington State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake, WA (about 35 miles west of Post Falls). The message has a REVISED interment application form, so if you've never filled one out this would be the one to use.

To be interred there, you have to establish eligibility. You do this by filling out an interment application. The most recent form is attached. If you do this BEFORE you die, you do your family a huge favor because all they have to do is set a time and date for your ceremony at the cemetery. They do not have to establish eligibility because you've already done it.

When you fill out this form, you are NOT obligating yourself to be buried there; you're only establishing that you're ELIGIBLE to be buried there. Please notice that you have to provide ALL of your DD-214 Discharge Certificates, not just the most recent one. I can see the reason for doing this, as it would establish what periods of conflict you served in and the character of each discharge. This is very important because it tells the VA what to put on your headstone and whether your character of service would allow you to be buried there. So, for example, if you served in Korea and Vietnam, you would probably have separate discharge certificates. So this would tell the VA to put both "KOREA" and "VIETNAM" on your VA headstone (not just one or the other). Unless they have DD-214's to substantiate this information, they won't do it.

The revised application can be found here:

<http://www-stage.dva.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Interment%20App.pdf>

Article provided by Marilyn Hunt, DAVA Unit 9 Commander

Editor's Note: You may have noticed that this issue of the newsletter is a bit short on human interest stories. You could help resolve this embarrassing condition. Just take a seat at your keyboard and write. You can submit anything of interest to veterans or our members in particular – memories of your time in service, pictures or creative writing, or even upcoming events. Just send them to me at:

<mailto:rathdrum154@gmail.com> Thank you to all who contribute articles to provide news and information for our members. Jean Bledsoe, Editor

WE ARE MOVING!



Directions from Spokane: East on I-90, take Exit 1 Beck Road in Post Falls. Take a right at the light then a left at the end of the road. Follow the road around in front of the Greyhound park then take a right on S. Clearwater Loop then your first right into our parking area. We will be on your left after the Kaniksu Building.

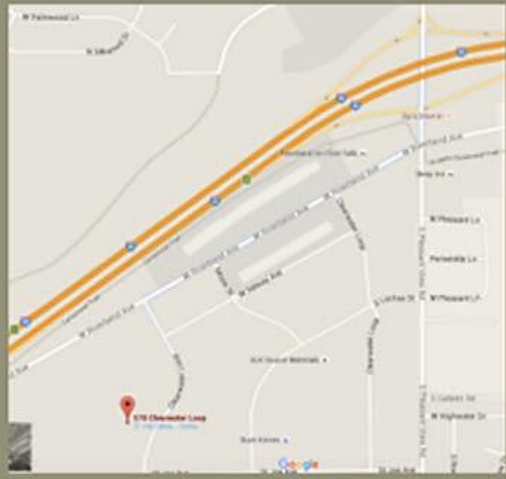
Directions from Coeur d'Alene: West on I-90, take Exit 2 Pleasant View in Post Falls. Take a left at the light then a right on W Riverbend Ave. Take a left on S. Clearwater Loop then your first right into our parking area. We will be on your left after the Kaniksu Building.

GRAND OPENING CEREMONY!

**MONDAY
MAY 2, 2016**

12:00 PM

570 S. Clearwater Loop Unit A
Post Falls, Idaho, 83854
208-610-6996



Lunch graciously provided by Texas Roadhouse!
Posting of the Colors by AL Post 143 Post Falls and Post 154 Rathdrum
Music brought to us by Rock 94.5.
Media coverage provided Dan Kleckner and KHQ News
MC - Lew Allert of the AL Post 154 and the DAV
And more!