



Manuel Schneidmiller Post 154, Inc.

Rathdrum Idaho

Newsletter

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Post 154 Mission Statement

The American Legion Post 154 is a patriotic veterans organization devoted to mutual helpfulness to support Veterans and the Community at large. We are committed to mentoring and sponsorship of youth programs, advocating patriotism and honor, promoting a strong national security, and continued devotion to our fellow service members, veterans, and their families in our communities. Our success depends entirely on active membership, participation and volunteerism. This organization belongs to the people it serves and the community in which it thrives.

Happy April!



Know any military child you can do something for this month?

Commander's Message:

Winter has ended and Spring has sprung. We changed our clocks to "daylight saving time." In a way, this is like a new year. Now, we have Spring cleaning, grass to mow, shrubs to trim, gardens to plant, - a lot of outdoor stuff and you can as long as you do it in your own yard or close to home due to our home quarantine. Please stay home and safe out there. If you need anything please don't hesitate to contact me. I will do my best to help or find someone who can. Please see the Covid-19 Resource Guide link in this newsletter [\[HERE\]](#) for additional information. The information has been adapted from resources provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and The American Legion National staff.

Well folks it is that time again. The time of the year when members here at Post 154 choose their leadership. It is election time!! We are trying to figure out a process for online/email/snail mail voting if we are not able to meet at the end of the month. If you have an idea, please let us know.

I want to thank our membership commando's Bill and Helen Kinder! They have done an awesome job and we are over our 100% goal for 2020! Great Job! I also want to thank our Easter Bunny Queen Sue Fevold and her Bunny Knight John for putting our annual Easter Egg Hunt together. They worked so many hours on this project to have it be cancelled due to the virus. Thank again for all your dedication and hard work on this project. In addition, the following has also been canceled or postponed.

- Spring District 1 Meeting
- March Post 154 General Membership Meeting
- Spring Area A District 1 and 2 Baseball Meeting
- 2020 American Legion Baseball (postponed)
- 2020 National Oratorical Contest
- 2020 National Boys State

Here is a letter from our Department Commander please take a moment to read it and post the image on your social media page. For God and Country - Dee Sasse, Commander



Dear Idaho Legion Members,

I hope this message finds you, your family and your loved ones safe. As a part of our Legion family, I pray for each of you and your health during these uncertain times.

While we are all following the guidance for physical distancing as recommended, this is NOT the time to be socially disconnected. Many of our members... and perhaps even you... feel anxiety or sadness from being separated from seeing friends, visiting your Post, or perhaps even getting to see your loved ones.

There is something we can do about it. Take five minutes today to call a buddy. Take five minutes and reach out to another Veteran. It's not much time, but it will make a world of difference to another person who needs us.

May I ask you one other favor? Please post this [image](#) to your Facebook page if you have one. If you don't, encourage a family member to post it on your behalf. If you don't want to download the image here, simply go to our Department Facebook page and share the Facebook post to your page.

It's too easy right now for the people who truly need a little support to be forgotten beneath the onslaught of messages about the virus.

I thank you in advance. Please, know we are here for you if there is anything you need.

Sincerely,

Eugene D. Brown, Commander

The American Legion, Department of Idaho

Electronic Meetings:

Editor's Note: Due to the restrictions placed on Post gatherings, Commander Dee Sasse and the members of the Post Executive Committee have been working to come up with a way for us to continue to conduct necessary Post 154 business. To that end, Dee sent out the following email:

"To the members of Post 154 Executive Committee. Our Constitution and Bylaws do not cover electronic meetings, voting and other non-specified electronic messaging. The State/District rules and regulations for the operation of nonprofits do not cover this either. This is where we are today, all the way up to the department. This is what they said today.

1. Our Constitution and Bylaws do not cover electronic meetings or voting.
2. At this time, we are not allowed to conduct meetings larger than ten people.
3. The Dist. C&BY [District Constitution and Bylaws] set dates by which they need to hold elections and make things happen.
4. The State documents that cover incorporated and unincorporated nonprofits do not cover electronic voting or meetings
5. We find ourselves in a time of uncertainty, we must act to take care of our organization.

So, at this time we as the DEC [Department Executive Committee] needs to act and put in place things to allow us to continue to work in this time of separation and staying at home.

So, at this time we as a post must make the same changes. This is what I am proposing. The first one is the department's and the second is mine.

Motion to the Department Executive Committee

To allow the Posts and Districts in the State of Idaho the American Legion to hold electronic meetings and Voting at all levels of the Department of Idaho. This change will be made immediately and the verbiage added to the "New Constitution and Bylaws that are being worked on right now by the committee" This if it passes will allow the Districts to hold their electronic meetings and vote if necessary. The Adjutants will still take notes and record all meetings with the minutes sent out for approval. Once approved the meeting will be official and any business held is legal and binding.

Motion to the Post 154 Executive Committee

To allow American Legion Manual Schneidmiller Post 154 in the State of Idaho the American Legion to hold electronic meetings and Voting at all levels of the post. This change will be made immediately, and the verbiage added to our Constitution and Bylaws This, if it passes, will allow the post to hold their electronic meetings and vote if necessary. The Adjutant will still take notes and record all meetings with the minutes sent out for approval. Once approved the meeting will be official and any business held is legal and binding."

Editor's Note: The verbiage for this new section of the Post Bylaws is still being discussed by the members of the Post Executive Committee. When appropriate wording is agreed upon, an email will be sent out to the membership with that proposed change.

Finance Officer:

The Post received \$1,620.48 in income in February and had \$305.41 in expenses. Major income items were donations, membership and sale of flags and hats. Major expenses were membership expenses, postage and a donation to the Rathdrum Easter Egg Hunt (now canceled).

Our Capital reserves continue to be invested at interest rates in excess of 2% but we will continue to see a decline in these interest rates, so with CD's maturing in June and July we can expect to see a reduction in the earnings we are able to achieve on these CD investments.

Much of our cash is held in restricted accounts for specific programs as I continue to point out in our financial report.

If you have any questions regarding the Post Finances, since we will not be meeting until we get the all clear on health issues, please don't hesitate to contact me via e-mail (crosbylenmary@frontier.com) or give me a call (208/651-0697). - Len Crosby, Finance Officer

Legislative Chairman:

Property Tax Assistance for Disabled Veterans: This afternoon (3/25/20), the Governor signed House Bill 552 extending property tax reduction assistance to Veterans who are both 100% disabled (per VA) AND Veterans who are less than 100% disabled, but determine by VA to be unemployable.

The Bill is retroactive to 1/1/2020, so it will provide assistance for this year's property taxes.

Veterans who meet the bill's criteria will have the property tax on the single family home that they occupy by \$1,320 each year. Once qualified, the Veteran's surviving spouse will continue to receive the property tax reduction until the surviving spouse remarries, dies or no longer occupies the home.

Representative Giddings and our own Sen. Don Cheatham co-sponsored this bill and pushed it through the House and Senate against some initial opposition by both the Tax and Revenue Chairs in the State Senate and House. Thanks to everyone who stayed with us and contacted their Senators and Representatives to assist in letting them know how important this bill was to about 1,000 of our State's Veterans. HUGE Bravo Zulu's to the state officers of the American Legion, to DAV Chapter 9 in N. Idaho and the Boise and State officers of the Military Order of the Purple Heart who called, wrote letters, sent e-mails and even attended Committee meetings in Boise to help us bring this important issue to our Legislators.

Get your letters from VA showing you have been determined to be unemployable and get them to our County Assessor's office to insure you get this credit. The first installment of property taxes is due and payable in June, and you want to insure you get the documentation to the proper official to insure that you receive this benefit.

Congress Agrees Upon A Fiscal Stimulus Package:

After several weeks of tense negotiations, Congress put aside its political differences and agreed upon legislation to provide close to \$2 trillion of fiscal stimulus. Although the bill has not officially passed or been signed by the President yet, all of that should be completed the end of the week.

What Does The Legislation Include?

All of the details have not been released yet, but here are the major categories that have been identified so far.

- \$300 billion of cash payments to lower income individuals
- \$1,200 checks
- \$367 billion of loans to small businesses which can be converted to grants if the businesses use the funds to maintain their payroll.
- \$200 billion expanded unemployment insurance for 4 months (cont. below)

- Covers 100% of lost wages for 4 months.
- \$100 billion of new funding to the healthcare system
- \$150 billion in aid to state and local governments

The rest of the legislation provides funding to the lending programs that the Federal Reserve announced earlier in the week which will provide additional liquidity to the economy.

The Treasury will use \$500 billion from their Exchange Stabilization Fund to provide loans to hard hit industries.

The remainder is to provide additional funding to the Federal Reserve's new lending facilities to support loans to most of the consumer loan categories (i.e. student loans, credit card loans, automobile loans, etc.) as well as direct lending to businesses.

Analysis from an independent research firm (Capital Economics) estimates that this will allow the Federal Reserve to lend more than \$4 trillion to consumers and businesses.

SUMMARY

Congress has finally rolled out a "shock and awe" fiscal response to the damage being caused by the actions taken by federal, state and local governments to battle the COVID-19 disease. How quickly all this stimulus can be rolled out remains to be seen.

Progress is being made as we all work to get through this issue. We all need to understand that this stimulus will not occur instantly. Congress has reached an agreement. The Senate is expected to pass the legislation today and then the House will take up the bill. With the initial jobless claims report coming out tomorrow and everyone knowing that it will show large job losses, the House will be under pressure not to play around with the bill and simply get it passed. Once both houses pass the bill, the President will then sign it. It will then have to follow the process to implement the programs and distribute the funds. Even though this may seem frustrating to some, the important message is that help the way. The damage cannot be magically wiped away, but this legislation is critical in helping businesses stay open and individuals to not have their financial position permanently damaged. Patience will be key.

Continue to expect dramatic headlines as economic data starts to show us the damage that has been done. As you see those headlines, remember that Congress and the Federal Reserve have taken action to address this. It may sound cliché, but, if you are going to look in the economic "rear view mirror" (i.e. data releases) you should also be looking ahead to see what the actions by Congress and the Federal Reserve will do for you, your business and the economy.

The Market and the Economy: We have seen the values of our retirement investments and other investments whipsawed over the past four weeks. In total trillions of dollars in potential value has been lost. That being said: REMEMBER: you only have a loss if you panic and sell or liquidate your investments. You may have a potential loss on paper, but that loss only becomes a true loss if you sell into the current down market.

Look for the wild fluctuations that we have seen in the last month to continue as the economic impact of the Corona 19 Virus wash through our economy - probably for the next six months or possibly longer...

BUT remember:

The impact of this is temporary.

We will come up with a cure or a vaccine to defeat this serious virus.

The underlying support for our economy remains strong and things WILL RECOVER.

We may have a short recession, but the amount of federal stimulus being injected into the economy will ultimately have an inflationary impact which could increase the interest rate on your savings, CD's, and money market accounts.

Stay calm, stay safe and take care of one another. - Len Crosby, Legislative Officer

Service Officer:

Hoping April finds all of you in a safe and healthy space. This is the time for smart (un)action and warrior ways to combat the virus war. Let's take care of ourselves and our community. Speaking of which...Community Care is the replacement for the Choice Program (all existing referrals will expire in June for the Choice Program). The biggest problem Community Care has is reaching Veterans who screen calls and don't answer the phone, let their mail stack up or read their mail and don't respond to it within 14 days. They ask that everyone program VA Community Care phone number into their phone, which is 509-484-7969. That way when they call you will know who is calling and answer the call. They receive and make thousands of calls each month so help them out. Another way to reach them is through My HealtheVet Secure Messaging. The requirement for using Community Care is as follows: Primary Care - more than 20 day wait for appointment or more than 30-minute drive. Specialty Care - greater than 28 days wait for appointment or more than 60-minute drive. However, you may not be able to get an appointment that quickly outside the VA system and they have been tracking wait times for primary care and specialty care which they have a very good idea of what the wait times in the community are now. They gave an example of getting an appointment outside of the VA system for a neurologist in the Spokane area is 6 months to a year. They might be able to get an appointment in 54 days in Seattle or Portland and if you are eligible for travel reimbursement VA can pay transportation, motels, etc. They will give this information to you upfront so you can make an informed decision. This is a recent addition to their service. - Ruth Aresvik, Service Officer



This Is No April Fool's Day Joke!

Our Post 154 membership drive is still behind, as we have 17 members who have not yet renewed for 2020. One thing to keep in mind is your continuous years (CY) as a member of the American Legion. If you have five years or more, you are eligible for the Continuous Years Award, which includes a certificate and a "Star Patch" for each five-year interval.

We have members with one to forty-five years of continuous service. The basic problem with (CY) is that as of the end of May, National begins a new year and if dues are not paid by then you must start your CY again at one year. Even if you only have 1 year right now, and if you wish to continue to be a member of the American Legion Post 154, I urge you to send in your annual dues as soon as possible to avoid losing these years. (check your ID card) Our American Legion dues are \$45.00 annually, out of this, we receive \$7.50, while National get \$18.50 and Department \$19.00. Please take the time to send in your renewal check and information to:

American Legion Post 154
PO Box 1116, Rathdrum, ID 83858
Or On-line at: legion.org

Thank you

Bill Kinder Post 154 1st Vice Commander, Membership Chairman



Chaplain's Pew:

An Easter Prayer By Fr. Larry Snyder

Good and gracious God,
Our most glorious Creator,
As we greet the signs in nature around us:
Of Spring once again regaling us in bloom,
In the songs of returning birds and fields soon to be
planted,
We give you praise for an even greater sign of new life: the
resurrection of your Son,
Our Lord Jesus Christ, that we especially celebrate at this
time.
The sadness and despair of his death has given way to the
bright promise of immortality.
For the Resurrection is our guarantee that justice will
triumph over treason, Light will overcome darkness, and
love will conquer death.

Submitted by Helen Kinder, Chaplain

As we celebrate, we also dare to ask for your grace that we
may live the promise given to us,
By imitating the life of Jesus in reaching out to the poor, the
marginalized, the least among us,
As we strive to be neighbor to all those we meet,
We ask your special blessings each and every day on our
President.
Working with him may we strive to make this great country
of ours a beacon of hope and justice in a world hungry for
peace and so in need of your love.
We praise you in this Easter season. Change our lives,
change our hearts to be messengers of Easter joy and hope.
We make our prayer through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord forever.



Gold Star Spouses Day on April 5 honors the surviving loved ones of military service members killed in the line of duty.

The day is a time of remembrance for the spouses and their families and a time of recognition of their sacrifices. Many communities and organizations hold events showing support for Gold Star families on this day. Through ceremonies, teas, memorial races, and luncheons, they honor and remember fallen warriors.

The loss of our service members extends beyond the battlefield. They leave behind grieving wives and husbands who become members of an exclusive community no one asks to join. As a nation, our support, understanding, and respect are the least we can provide in return.

A Healthier You: from The People's Pharmacy



Hydroxychloroquine Update and BCG Vaccine vs. the Coronavirus

How effective is the old malaria drug HCQ against the coronavirus? Data are trickling in, but it's very early days. When it was announced last week that hydroxychloroquine might offer some benefit against COVID-19, many people got excited. We've been told that there are no effective treatments against this virus, so any glimmer of hope spurred tremendous interest. Here is a hydroxychloroquine update.

We will also share some insights into a century-old vaccine called BCG. It was developed to prevent tuberculosis. More recently it has become a key immunotherapy treatment for bladder cancer. Now health care workers in Australia and the Netherlands are getting it in the hopes of preventing or managing the coronavirus.

Hydroxychloroquine Update: Good News & Bad News:

The good news is that this drug has been used for 65 years.

Plaquenil (hydroxychloroquine or HCQ for short) was first approved in 1955. Doctors have been prescribing it to treat malaria, lupus and rheumatoid arthritis for many decades. It is also affordable, unlike many newer high-tech antiviral drugs.

[Read this article](#)



From the Post 154 Nominating Committee:

As you read in the Commanders message, a plan is not yet in place for how elections will be held in April. However, there is a slate of nominees being put forward by the Nominating Committee. Those nominees are listed below.

Slate of Nominees for 2020 Post 154 Election

Commander: Dee Sasse

1st Vice-Commander: Bill Kinder

2nd Vice-Commander: Bob Flowers

Adjutant: Bryan Bledsoe

Service Officer: Ruth Aresvik

Finance Officer: Len Crosby

Historian: Lonnie Morse

Chaplain: Helen Kinder

Judge Advocate: Bill Richardson

Sergeant-At-Arms: Todd Halvorson

Training Officer: Jean Bledsoe

3-Year Committeeperson: Craig King

2-Year Committeeperson: Mike McPhail

1-Year Committeeperson: Rich Hannah

All these positions are still open to other nominations. If you have an interest in running for office, please send an email to the Nominating Committee at rathdrumpost154@gmail.com. You can find the job descriptions for these positions by clicking [HERE](#) and scrolling down to Article IV in the Bylaws.



Faces of AGENT ORANGE

Joe Ingino

By Jim Belshaw

Joe Ingino said. "I never put two and two together," It took a long time before he could do the math, and even after the metaphorical numbers in his Agent Orange equation added up, he still had difficulty talking about it. He does to this day.

"Talking about it now, you just get choked up," he said. "Sometimes you want to punch something, you know? You just keep blaming yourself. I went to two Agent Orange town hall meetings and listened to other fathers talking about their children, and it just gets very emotional. It's very difficult to listen to them and then to speak about your own children. It's very hard."

Joe served with the First Infantry Division in 1969-70. In 1971, he met the woman who was to be his wife. In 1972, they married. His wife would suffer through several miscarriages, but eventually they had six children, one of whom lived for only a brief time.

"My wife carried our daughter for seven months, and something happened that caused the baby to break away from her," he said. "She lived for a day and a half, maybe two days. Then she died."

One year later, another daughter, Katie, was born. At birth, she was diagnosed with an "imperforate anus" and scoliosis. A specialist performed emergency surgery that saved her life; several months later a second surgery came. The physicians wanted to move her to another hospital for the initial surgery,

the same hospital in which Joe's daughter had died the year before. He couldn't bring himself to take another infant through those hospital doors. A different hospital was chosen.

In the course of Katie's hospitalizations, a physician showed Joe pictures of his daughter's spine. "It looked like a bag of bones," he said. "It was just a whole thing of bones, and none of them were together or connected." Read the full story [HERE](#).



*Joe Ingino, 1968,
Fort Mead, Maryland*



*The Ingino Children
(l to r, back to front
Annamarie, Joseph Jr.,
Stephanie, Lisa, and Katie*

Toxic Exposure in the Military:

Bombs in Your Backyard

by Lena Groeger, Ryann Grochowski Jones & Abrahm Lustgarten, November 30, 2017

“The military spends more than a billion dollars a year to clean up sites its operations have contaminated with toxic waste and explosives. These sites exist in every state in the country. Some are located near schools, residential neighborhoods, rivers and lakes. A full map of these sites has never been made public – until now.”

Editor’s note: This is the second article about the toxic contamination sites that has been published in our post newsletters. I decided to visit this again because of a relatively new interactive map which provides links to sites in every state with in-depth information about each. To see the map, click [HERE](#).



VA is a Last Line of Defense in the US against National Medical Emergencies like Pandemics From Connectingvets.radio.com

As reported by Abbie Bennett March 11 for ConnectingVetsRadio.com, the VA cares for 9 million veterans across 141 medical centers and more than 1,000 clinics nationwide. But it's also expected to serve as a last line of defense in national medical emergencies. Many may not know that VA--the largest single healthcare provider in the United States--is expected to play a major role in national emergency medical response, including for pandemics. That role is one of VA's four core missions as a federal agency. VA's large national scope gives it the reach, and federal authority gives it the ability to respond in ways private healthcare systems can't.

[Read More...](#)



AMERICAN LEGION POST 154 POPPY'S PROJECT FOR 2020

I don't know when we will have another meeting so here is the signup sheet as of Saturday, March 28th. Please choose an open slot and call me at 208-777-5157 or email at lionlonnie@gmail.com and I will add you to the list. Thank you. Lonnie Morse, Chairman.

FRIDAY, MAY 8th

0900-1300 Ruth Aresvik
0900-1300 open

SUPER-1 IN ATHOL

1300-1700 open
1300-1700 Lonnie More

WALMART IN HAYDEN

0900-1300 Door-1 Leo Calhoun 1300-1700 Door-1 Bill Richardson
0900-1300 Door-1 Helen Calhoun 1300-1700 Door-1 Teresa Richardson

0900-1300 Door-2 open
0900-1300 Door-2 open

1300-1700 Door-2 open
1300-1700 Door-2 open

SATURDAY, MAY 9th

0900-1300 Todd Halverson
0900-1300 Kelly Halverson

SUPER-1 IN ATHOL

1300-1700 open
1300-1700 open

WALMART IN HAYDEN

0900-1300 Door-1 open
0900-1300 Door-1 open
0900-1300 Door-2 open
0900-1300 Door-2 open

1300-1700 Door-1 open
1300-1700 Door-1 open
1300-1700 Door-2 open
1300-1700 Door-2 open

FRIDAY, MAY 15th

0900-1300 Craig King
0900-1300 Leo & Helen Calhoun

SUPER-1 IN RATHDRUM

1300-1700 Ruth Aresvik
1300-1700 open

SATURDAY, MAY 16th

0900-1300 Bill Kinder
0900-1300 Helen Kinder

SUPER-1 IN RATHDRUM

1300-1700 Craig King
1300-1700 open

SUPER-1 IN Post Falls

0900-1300 Bob Flowers
0900-1300 Bob's wife

1300-1700 Bob Flowers
1300-1700 Lonnie Morse

FRIDAY, MAY 22th

0900-1300 Helen Calhoun
0900-1300 Leo Calhoun

ACE HARDWARE IN RATHDRUM

1300-1700 Bryan Bledsoe
1300-1700 Jean Bledsoe

BI-MART IN RATHDRUM

0900-1300 Craig King
0900-1300 Paula Atwood

1300-1700 open
1300-1700 open

SATURDAY, MAY 23rd

0900-1300 Rich Hannah
0900-1300 Angela Hannah

ACE HARDWARE IN RATHDRUM

1300-1700 Mike McPhail
1300-1700 Sharron McPhail

BI-MART IN RATHDRUM

0900-1300 Mike McPhail
0900-1300 Sharron McPhail

1300-1700 Craig King
1300-1700 open

Mark Your Calendar:

April 1st Children & Youth Month

April 5th Palm Sunday

April 5th Gold Star Spouses Day

April 6th 1917 US entered WWII

April 9th Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting @ 6 pm Lions Club? TBD

April 9th National Former Prisoners of War Recognition Day

April 10th Good Friday

April 11th Passover

April 12th Easter Sunday

April 15th American Legion Legacy Scholarship applications due to National Headquarters

April 23rd Post 154 Monthly Membership Meeting & Potluck? TBD Watch for email



National Earth Day
www.NationalDayCalendar.com

April 22
#EarthDay

NATIONAL
DAY
CALENDAR

Bits & Pieces

- [Here](#) is a site developed by a 17-year-old on Mercer Island that tracks and constantly updates the coronavirus cases all over the world, by country, and in the US, by state.
- The American Legion's official training program for officers, members, Legion College applicants and those who simply want to expand their knowledge of the nation's largest veterans service organization is now available online.

Already taken the old course? The American Legion Extension Institute has been rewritten, updated, streamlined and enhanced with videos, digital photos, clickable links, a historical timeline and additional features. The program should take less than two hours to complete. It is divided into six sections, with a quiz at the end of each one, followed by a final exam. Here is the link to the online Basic Training: <https://www.legion.org/alei>

- Volunteer Hours: Your volunteerism is so important! Please report it. We just need the number of hours in each category - Service to Veterans, Service to Community, Service to Youth, & Honor Guard. You can send it to crosbylenmary@frontier.com. Thank you.
- Veterans' Help Net is the website for the group that is seeking to inform veterans and their families about benefits and how to get them. They assemble the material for The Veterans' Chronicle, which is published in the Spokesman-Review on the 3rd Friday of each month, and for the Veterans' Press, published in the Coeur d'Alene Press monthly. Here is the link: <http://veteranshelpnet.com/>

QUARANTINE TRIBUTE CONTEST

In recognition of
Vietnam Veterans,
join our Quarantine Tribute
by posting your
photos, poems,
artwork, and
music.



Brighten Someone's Day by Joining our Facebook Contest.

Facebook Posting Instructions:

1. Anything you wish to share, write it as if it was a regular Facebook post
2. Before hitting "post" add the hashtag **#VietnamVeteransDay**. To do this, hit the pound sign on your keyboard and type out VietnamVeteransDay next to the pound sign with no spaces in between.
3. After you have added the hashtag and the poem, picture, or story you wish to share, hit post.
4. You can click on the hashtag and view what others are sharing using the same hashtag.

[Visit VVA's Facebook Page...](#)

Bill to Provide Service Dogs for Veterans with PTSD Passes House Unanimously



Bear, service dog, shakes the hand of a U.S. Navy veteran prior to the start of their 4 Paws 2 Freedom program graduation March 22, 2019 at Beale Air Force Base, California. (U.S. Air Force/Staff Sgt. Alexandre Montes)

7 Feb 2020

Military.com | By [Dorothy Mills-Gregg](#)

A decade-long effort to have the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) provide service dogs to veterans with [mental health](#) issues passed a major hurdle with House passage Wednesday.

The Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers, or [PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act](#), would have the VA create a 5-year pilot to give grants to one or more organizations to train and provide service dogs to veterans with [post-traumatic stress](#) and other post-[deployment](#) mental health issues.

While the VA has been studying the use of service dogs for mental health treatment, it currently only covers service dogs for use in mobility issues.

The bipartisan bill was introduced by Rep. Steve Stivers, R-Ohio, who has served in Iraq in the Ohio [Army National Guard](#).

"A soldier under my command during Operation Iraqi Freedom recently told me what his service dog means to him: he was able to fly on a plane for the first time in 10 years and he took his fiancée to dinner," Stivers said in [a statement](#) when H.R. 4305 was introduced. "That is the impact this bill can have on the lives of our veterans."

Related: [Bill Would Cover Cost of Service Dogs for Veterans with PTSD](#)

Lawmakers have long been exploring different ways to combat veterans' mental health issues. Statistics show [about 20 veterans](#) die by suicide every day.

"The process of obtaining a service dog is lengthy and costly, a cost that is out of reach for many veterans," Dr. Robin Ganzert, American Humane president, said in a news release. "This is long overdue."

Congress previously mandated that VA [study](#) the use of service dogs for [PTSD](#) and other mental health problems in 2010. But the pilot was suspended twice when two service dogs bit children and some dogs experienced health issues.

The VA has since restarted the study, and the first report on whether service dogs or emotional support dogs help veterans with PTSD will be released this summer. Six months later, the second part will show if the kind of dog factored into "health economics savings" such as reduced hospital stays or reliance on medication.

The bill now goes to the Senate, which has several of its own related bills.

-- Dorothy Mills-Gregg can be reached at dorothy.mills-gregg@military.com. Follow her on Twitter at [@DMillsGregg](#).



...and here's a recipe from scratch – or if you want an easier version just use a yellow cake mix in place of the cake ingredients.

Pineapple Upside-Down Cake

Butter and brown sugar topped with pineapple and maraschino cherries form the decadent topping on this classic pineapple upside-down cake.

Prep Time **30 minutes** - Total Time **2 hours** - Servings **12**

Ingredients:

Topping

1/3 cup butter

3/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar

12 slices pineapple, well-drained

1 (10-ounce) jar maraschino cherries, stems removed

Cake

2 cups all-purpose flour

1 tablespoon baking powder

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 cup firmly packed brown sugar

2/3 cup butter, softened

3 large eggs

2 1/2 teaspoons vanilla

3/4 cup milk

Directions:

1. Heat oven to 350°F.
Melt 1/3 cup butter in 9x13-inch ungreased baking pan in oven. Stir in 3/4 cup brown sugar. Spread mixture evenly in pan.
2. Arrange 12 pineapple slices on top. Place cherry in center and between each pineapple slice, if desired.
3. Combine flour, baking powder and salt in bowl; set aside.
4. Combine 1 cup brown sugar and 2/3 cup butter in bowl; beat at medium speed, scraping bowl often, until creamy. Continue beating, adding eggs 1 at a time, until well mixed. Stir in vanilla. Gradually add flour mixture alternately with milk, beating at low speed and scraping bowl often after each addition.
5. Gently spread batter over pineapple. Bake 35-40 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Loosen sides of cake from pan by running knife around inside of pan. Invert cake onto serving platter; let stand 5 minutes. Remove pan. Cool completely.