



Manuel Schneidmiller Post 154, Inc.

Rathdrum Idaho Newsletter

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American Legion 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.

Commander:

Happy April Legion Family!

April is Children and Youth Month. One of the ways that we support our local children and youth is by supporting the Annual Easter Egg Hunt. Once again it will be held at Majestic Park in Rathdrum on Saturday April 16th at 11 a.m. We work with the City of Rathdrum and other local organizations to share the joy of spring and the smiles of children as they hunt for that egg with the "P" for prize on it. I know some of you are saying what does Children and Youth have to do with the American Legion and veterans.

Well, let me tell you why. Since its founding in 1919, The American Legion has been a staunch supporter of children and youth. The National Commission on Children & Youth continues that commitment today, as it seeks to improve the well-being of all children. The key to the future of a free and prosperous country, expressed by every generation of veterans, is held by the children and youth of today. The Legion strongly supports traditional family values, assistance for at-risk children and activities that promote their healthy and wholesome development. While there is no way of knowing what issues will face our youth tomorrow, our survival may well depend on the quality of care, education, and training that we, as parents and citizens, provide for the young people of today. I hope to see you out there.

Spring has sprung... Happy Spring from your commander! Our Membership Committee continue to process a few 2022 renewals, but we typically see New Member requests and Post Transfers after the first of the year. Looking forward, the renewal process for Membership Year 2023 will begin in July of this year. That is when the National Organization send out the first notice to all members in good standing. Follow up notices are then sent out at two-month intervals through May of the Membership Renewal Year (in this case May 2023). It is possible for a paid-up Member to receive a follow up notice. This will depend on when the member has paid and the method of payment. The quickest method to ensure a prompt renewal, is to renew online via credit card! Regardless of the method of your payment, our Post will receive the same percentage of your annual dues. Thanks to all of you and our Membership Committee for working so hard to help us achieve 100 percent membership again this year!

For God and Country - Dee Sasse, Commander Post 154



**Renew Your
Membership
TODAY!!**

We still have 15 members who have not renewed for 2022, out of 162 total. Please renew today by going online to legion.org/renew or sending a check for \$45.00 to American Legion Post 154, PO Box 1116, Rathdrum, ID 83858. If you're not sure if you have paid for 2022, look at the date on your ID card. I do not like seeing our members lose their continuous years of service by not renewing, even if you have 1 year or 10 years' service. - Bill Kinder, 1st Vice Commander, Membership Chairman

Finance Officer:

March Financial Report: During the month of February, Post 154 received income of \$483.01 and had expenses of \$1,551.02. Income was from membership (\$135), donations to our Honor Guard (\$250), Member donations to Boys State and the Veterans Home (\$67.75), and a member donation to the Post (\$30). Expenses were for membership (\$75), Flag purchases (\$276) and bank charges from a hack of our debit card (\$1,199.96) to purchase Apple gift cards. We are working with our bank to protest the charges to our debit card, and the Exec. Committee has applied for a credit card (which is more secure) to replace our debit card.

As of the close of the month, our Post had a net worth of \$65,853.07. Please volunteer to help with our Poppy Distribution which will be limited in scope this year but will still be our Post's major fundraiser.

- Len Crosby, Finance Officer



Legislative Chairman:

VA Proposes Disability Rating Changes: VA has proposed changes to its Schedule for Rating Disabilities for auditory, respiratory, and mental health conditions. These changes would incorporate modern medical data and terminology, allowing veterans to receive disability ratings based on the most current information. Ratings of veterans who currently receive VA disability compensation will not be impacted as a result of these changes. The VFW will carefully review the proposed changes and will submit a public comment to the Federal Register.

Legion Meets with Secretary of Education: The Legion, alongside fellow veteran advocates, met with Department of Education Secretary Dr. Miguel Cardona to discuss education issues facing veterans, service members, and their families. The VFW expressed the need for transparent and accessible data about institutions to facilitate informed decision making. Secretary Cardona relayed his department's dedication to improving higher education accessibility and affordability, as well as improving collaboration with DOD and VA.

Veterans and Eating: Anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating are examples of eating disorders that can be severe and life-threatening. According to a VA study, both men and women veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan are three times more likely to have bulimia than their civilian counterparts. Many veterans' eating disorders stem from maintaining military body composition standards and experiencing trauma such as MST or PTSD. Several options for eating disorder treatment are available at VA, including individual and group therapy, medication, and the VA [Whole Health](#) program.

Legion Supports Toxic Exposure Legislation: The American Legion testified before a joint hearing of the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs. The Legion delivered its top priority of toxic exposure reform, telling Congress to pass comprehensive legislation for veterans who were exposed to toxic chemicals during their time in service. "For generations, veterans have returned home from war with an array of unexplained health conditions and illnesses associated with the toxic exposures and environmental hazards they encountered in service. Today is no different, and toxic exposure has become synonymous with military service. For this reason, the time is now for Congress to change the way veterans receive health care and benefits to help save our lives."

VA Proposes New Presumptive Conditions for Burn Pits: VA is proposing a rule to add nine rare respiratory cancers to the list of presumptive conditions for particulate matter exposure from service in Southwest Asia. The VFW sees this as a step in the right direction to help veterans exposed to burn pits, but remains committed to passing legislation such as the Honoring our PACT Act and the COST of War Act to codify VA's presumptive process. (cont. below)

MARIJUANA from the VA – High Time? Marijuana, still identified as a Schedule I drug under the Controlled Substances Act, is now approved for medicinal use in 37 states and the District of Columbia. For years, veterans have claimed the benefits of marijuana for conditions they suffer—often as a result of military service. Veterans seeking relief for conditions such as chronic pain and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), that may be resistant to more conventional treatments are eager to have additional options that may improve the quality of their lives.

Bipartisan companion bills, H.R. 2916 and S. 1467, the VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act of 2021, would require VA to conduct randomized clinical trials into the effectiveness of cannabis on improving certain health outcomes for veterans with chronic pain and PTSD. Specifically, for veterans diagnosed with chronic pain, the bills would identify the effects of cannabis on osteopathic pain, sleep quality, inflammation, and agitation in addition to the effects on use of alcohol, benzos, and opioids while the trial is ongoing. For veterans diagnosed with PTSD, the study would identify the effects of the trial on measures in standardized PTSD clinical scales, alcohol and benzo use in addition to social functioning, mood, sleep, and suicidal ideation. The trials may also investigate the longer term effects of cannabis on other medical conditions.

Congress passes Government Funding Bill with 3 provisions to help Veterans: The first provision would increase the maximum rate of basic pay for VA nurses and physician assistants, allowing VA to offer more competitive salaries. The second provision would permit VA's National Cemetery Administration to grant individual states the ability to decide who is interred in their state veterans cemeteries and to open their application process, ensuring all National Guard and Reserve members can be buried with fellow service members. The third provision would increase funding for VET TEC from \$45 million to \$125 million to meet the high demand for the program and enable its operation through the end of the fiscal year. The bill now heads to the president for signature.

Women's History Month: Two million women in the United States are veterans, comprising 10 percent of the overall veteran population. America's daughters have served and sacrificed alongside men in the fight to ensure our freedoms. The American Legion salutes these women for their unwavering courage, commitment, and contributions to a grateful nation. [Editor's Note: Women's History Month is March.]

VA Women Veterans Health Podcast: Women veterans have unique health care needs, which is the focus of VA's podcast [She Wears the Boots](#). Reproductive, pelvic, musculoskeletal, and mental health issues, as well as infertility and menopause are among the topics discussed. The podcast also provides information on VA resources and services for women veterans. - Len Crosby, Legislative Chairman



Chaplain's Pew:

Pray this month

Lord God,
We see signs of new life all around us
as the days continue to grow longer.
Thank you for the buds and the blossom;
the grass and the warmth of the sunshine.
May we remember that you have created us and love us,
and even if it doesn't feel like spring sometimes – outside
or in our hearts –
we can find newness of life through your presence.
Please help us to notice the beauty around us:
a child's smile, a work of art, an insect, a friend's embrace.
May we also share beauty and life with those whom we meet.
Help us to glorify you as we promote peace, love and grace.
May we speak truth in love
and forgive those who wrong us, by your strength.
We love you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit!

Amy Boucher Pye



- Helen Kinder, Chaplain



Service Officer:

SAH OR SHA? Here is all you need to know...

Can I get a Specially Adapted Housing grant?

The VA offers housing grants for Veterans and service members with certain service-connected disabilities so they can buy or change a home to meet their needs and live more independently. Changing a home might involve installing ramps or widening doorways. You may be able to get an SAH grant if you're using the grant money to buy, build, or change your permanent home (a home you plan to live in for a long time) and you meet both of these requirements.

Both of these must be true:

- You own or will own the home, **and**
- You have a qualifying service-connected disability

Qualifying service-connected disabilities include:

- The loss, or loss of use, of more than one limb
- The loss, or loss of use, of a lower leg along with the residuals (lasting effects) of an organic (natural) disease or injury
- Blindness in both eyes (with 20/200 visual acuity or less)
- Certain severe burns
- The loss, or loss of use, of one lower extremity (foot or leg) after September 11, 2001, which makes it so you can't balance or walk without the help of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair

Note: Only 120 Veterans and service members each fiscal year (FY) can qualify for a grant based on the loss of one extremity after September 11, 2001, as set by Congress. A fiscal year runs from October 1 through September 30. If you qualify for, but don't receive, a grant in the current fiscal year because the cap has already been reached, you may be able to use this benefit in future years. If you qualify for an SAH grant, you can get up to **\$101,754** for FY 2022. This is the current total maximum amount allowed for SAH grants.

Can I get a Special Home Adaptation (SHA) grant?

You may be able to get an SHA grant if you're using the grant money to buy, build, or change your permanent home (a home you plan to live in for a long time) and you meet both of these requirements.

Both of these must be true:

- You or a family member own or will own the home, **and**
- You have a qualifying service-connected disability

Qualifying service-connected disabilities include:

- The loss, or loss of use, of both hands
- Certain severe burns
- Certain respiratory or breathing injuries

How much funding does an SHA offer?

If you qualify for an SHA grant, you can get up to **\$20,387** for FY 2022. This is the current total maximum amount allowed for SHA grants.

Do I have to use the total grant amount this year?

No. If you're eligible for an SAH or SHA grant, you can use money from your grant up to 6 different times over your lifetime.

Depending on the adaptations you need, and the bid from your builder, you can use as much or as little of your grant as you need this year. If you don't use the full amount, you can use more money from the grant in future years.

We may adjust the total maximum amount each year based on the cost of construction. You may receive up to the current total maximum amount for the last year you use the grant.

[Learn more about how to apply for a housing grant](#) (cont. below)

Grant eligibility for a temporary home

Can I get money to change a family member's home where I'm living?

You may be able to get a Temporary Residence Adaptation (TRA) grant if you meet both of these requirements.

Both of these must be true:

- You qualify for an SAH or SHA grant (see above), **and**
- You're living temporarily in a family member's home that needs changes to meet your needs.
(To use a TRA grant, you don't have to own the house.)

How much funding does a TRA grant offer?

If you qualify for an SAH grant, you can get up to \$40,983 through the TRA grant program for FY 2022.

If you qualify for an SHA grant, you can get up to \$7,318 through the TRA grant program for FY 2022.

How to apply for a disability housing grant

You can apply online right now by going to our eBenefits website.

You'll need to sign in to eBenefits with your **DS Logon** basic or premium account. If you don't have a **DS Logon** account, you can register for one on the site.

Under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, FEMA is providing financial assistance for COVID-19 related funeral expenses incurred on or after January 20, 2020.

Required Documents:

- **Official death certificate** that shows the death occurred in the United States, including the U.S. territories and District of Columbia.
- **If the death certificate was issued between Jan. 20 and May 16, 2020, it must either 1) attribute the death directly or indirectly to COVID-19 or 2) be accompanied by a signed statement from the original certifier of the death certificate or the local medical examiner or coroner from the jurisdiction in which the death occurred listing COVID-19 as a cause or contributing cause of death. This signed statement must provide an additional explanation, or causal pathway, linking the cause of death listed on the death certificate to COVID-19.**
- **If the death certificate occurred on or after May 17, 2020, the death certificate must attribute the death directly or indirectly to COVID-19.**
- **COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Helpline - 844-684-6333**
Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Eastern Tim
- Ruth Aresvik, Service Officer

And to brighten your day - compliments of Ruth.

Morris and his wife Esther went to the state fair every year, and every year Morris would say, 'Esther, I'd really like to ride in that helicopter.'

Esther always replied, 'I know Morris, but that helicopter ride is fifty dollars, and fifty dollars is fifty dollars'

One year Esther and Morris went to the fair, and Morris said, 'Esther, I'm 85 years old. If I don't ride that helicopter, I might never get another chance.'

To this, Esther replied, 'Morris that helicopter ride is fifty dollars, and fifty dollars is fifty dollars.'

The pilot overheard the couple and said, 'Folks, I'll make you a deal. I'll take the both of you for a ride. If you can stay quiet for the entire ride and don't say a word, I won't charge you a penny! But if you say one word it's fifty dollars.'

Morris and Esther agreed and up they went. The pilot did all kinds of fancy maneuvers, but not a word was heard. He did his daredevil tricks over and over again, but still not a word.

When they landed, the pilot turned to Morris and said, 'By golly, I did everything I could to get you to yell out, but you didn't. I'm impressed!'

Morris replied, 'Well, to tell you the truth, I almost said something when Esther fell out, but you know, fifty dollars is fifty dollars!'

Training Officer: April is American Legion Children & Youth Month. The American Legion has been actively involved with children's issues since the early 1920s. In many instances, the American Legion has been the driving force on behalf of children on the federal, state and local levels. In 1938, April was formally designated as Child Welfare Month (now called Children & Youth Month) and has continued on an annual basis. During this special time, we urge each of you to show your community that the American Legion Family is dedicated to America's youth.

Each year the Committee on Children & Youth focuses on three primary areas of concern. They may include:

Child health

- Immunization programs
- School nutrition programs
- Teen pregnancy prevention programs

Child safety

- Child pornography
- Drug abuse prevention
- Drug trafficking
- Alcohol abuse prevention
- Child/sexual abuse and neglect
- Teen suicide prevention

Family support

- National Family Week activities
- Day care safety
- Foster care
- Temporary Financial Assistance
- Missing and exploited children

The American Legion also sponsors a number of programs benefiting children and youth. These programs include:

- **BASEBALL**

American Legion Baseball

More than 3,400 teams and nearly 55,000 youth participate in the program yearly from all 50 states and Canada.

- **BOYS STATE / BOYS NATION**

American Legion Boys Nation

Participants become a part of the most respected and selective educational programs of government instruction for U.S. high school students.

- **JUNIOR SHOOTING SPORTS**

Junior Shooting Sports

This American Legion program is a gun safety and marksmanship program that encompasses the basic elements of safety, education, enjoyment and competition.

- **ORATORICAL CONTEST**

Oratorical Contest

The American Legion Oratorical Contest exists to develop deeper knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school students. (cont. below)

- **SCHOLARSHIPS**

Legacy Scholarship

The American Legion's Legacy Scholarship provides college funding to children of post-9/11 veterans who died on active duty, or those who have a combined VA disability rating of 50 percent or greater. Applications are accepted January 1 to April 1 of each year.

- **SCOUTING**

About Scouting

The American Legion's support for Boy Scouts of America began at the Legion's first national convention in 1919. Today, Legion posts sponsor more than 2,500 Scouting units across the country. This is natural for Legionnaires, who bring their service-learned skills and experiences as veterans to help build character and positive traits in our country's youth. Few other post activities generate more goodwill from the community.

- **YOUTH CADET LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Youth Cadet Law Enforcement

Participants gain first-hand experiences and insight into the operations of law enforcement agencies.

- **YOUTH SUPPORT**

About Youth Support

The American Legion has a proud tradition of supporting our nation's youth. The organization was founded on the principle in 1919, when Children & Youth was declared one of the Legion's four pillars. In the years since, a number of youth-oriented programs have been developed including Temporary Financial Assistance, Family Support Network and child safety and wellbeing programs.

- Jean Bledsoe, Training Officer



Post 154 Honor Guard:

Our Honor Guard is very active. They march in parades, present the colors at ceremonies, and most importantly, provide a rifle salute to honor Veterans at their funerals. However, more members are always needed to serve in this capacity. If you are interested in participating in this very fulfilling activity, contact Todd Halvorson at keltod11@gmail.com or by phone at 509-226-5355.

This month there were five Military Honor ceremonies for 1 Army veteran, 1 Air Force veterans, and 3 Navy veterans. These ceremonies collectively required 20 volunteers who drove 462 miles and spent 103 hours.

The Honor Guard consists of three women and twelve men. They range in age from 52 to 90 years old with an average age of 72 years. Each ceremony draws from the following pool of Post 154 Honor Guard volunteers: Lew Allert, Paula Atwood, Bryan Bledsoe, Jeff Broadhead, Len Crosby, Hal Donahue, Todd Halvorson, Ken Johnson, Bob Kernan, Harold Markiewicz, Kelly McMahan, Roy Murdock, Bud Nutterville, Al Ogram and Margaret Ogram.

If you would like to find out more about volunteering as an Honor Guard member, please contact Todd Halvorson.

Faces of Agent Orange

Deny Until We Die

Agent Orange killed my father. Did it also kill my sisters? Like a detective, I set out to discover the truth.

- Mickey Butts filed 17 February 2022 in [HEALTHCARE](#)

For years, I tried to forget what happened to my family in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. Now all I want to do is remember.

The first to die was my father in 2003 at the age of 59. He was overweight and living in an assisted living center in Houston. Ever since his service in Vietnam, he'd struggled with too many health problems to count. My sister Ami died next in 2010 outside of Memphis, at age 39. We were closer than many siblings. One summer when I was in college at Brown, we shared a basement room in a rambling, vegetarian co-op, where she lived barefoot, an Indian bracelet jingling softly around her ankle as she paced the communal kitchen, cooking the rice she largely subsisted on. Her infectious laughter often shook the walls. But she was paralyzed and unable to breathe when she died, three years after being diagnosed with a merciless neurodegenerative disease called amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

In 2020, I helped bury Ami's twin sister, Missie, amid a plague of coronavirus deaths in the sticky heat of a still summer morning, in a country cemetery amid fragrant oaks and wildflowers in the woods of Central Texas. She died of heart and lung failure at age 49, alone in her apartment in Austin, after a decade-long battle with chronic lung disease, immune system problems, and mental illness that brought her in and out of mental hospitals.

As I watched Missie's ashes being poured into the ground, I led my family in singing the old-time gospel hymn "Nearer, My God, to Thee." Farther than ever from God, I was filled with dark thoughts that grew increasingly loud. I long thought my family's misfortune was unique. But I discovered my family was not alone. In my research, I learned about thousands of other children born with serious health conditions after their parents had served in Vietnam—while siblings like myself who were conceived before the war remained relatively healthy. (cont. below)



THE AUTHOR AND HIS TWO SISTERS.
ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF MICKEY
BUTTS EXCEPT WHERE OTHERWISE
NOTED.

More than 50 years had passed since my father enlisted to serve in Vietnam as a U.S. Army nurse. At that point, three out of five members of my immediate family had died prematurely in middle age, each at the cusp of their next decade. I needed to know why.

To find out why my family members died and I did not, I immersed myself, like a detective, in the science behind one of the most [expensively and diligently studied](#)—and perhaps most willfully obfuscated—environmental disasters in modern history. I discovered the emerging field of epigenetics, which explains how a father’s environmental exposure to toxic chemicals, not just a mother’s, can be transmitted to his children’s genes without ever changing the DNA sequence, with harmful effects to the body flicking on and off like a light switch, altering a host of bodily processes and functions.

I learned that the Vietnamese people, their erstwhile conquerors, and the children on both sides of the conflict born afterward have been collectively stalked by a capricious force that causes random genetic mayhem from birth through midlife and beyond, generation after generation. As with characters in a slow-moving Greek tragedy, a fatal flaw lay not just within the state and society—the flaw of engaging in “forever wars,” with their devastating environmental and social costs. The flaw has spread at the cellular level within the children of war.

My Father’s War

From 1967 to 1969, my father was a captain in the Army, tending to wounded soldiers in the 85th and 67th evacuation hospitals and in POW hospitals in and around Qui Nhon in Central Vietnam. Nurses like him often worked 12-hour shifts, six days a week, preparing up to 20 soldiers an hour for surgery after they had been evacuated in waves of frequently arriving helicopters, often after being horribly disfigured by napalm, land mines, grenades, and small arms. Nurses had to quickly make life-or-death decisions during triage about who could be saved, and who would be made comfortable with pillows and morphine while they were put behind screens to die. In his free time, my father took hundreds of photographs. Their



Author’s father in Vietnam

ordinariness belies the carnage he witnessed during the height of North Vietnam’s Tet Offensive. My father’s photos depict shy Vietnamese children posing on the streets, women in conical straw hats hawking rice and vegetables in village markets, Day-Glo Buddhist cemeteries in the highlands, and sparkling white-sand beaches where soldiers surfed in scenes reminiscent of the Francis Ford Coppola film *Apocalypse Now*.

My father’s photographs also call to mind one of his favorite TV shows, *M*A*S*H*, a comedy that harnessed the antics of doctors and nurses working in a field hospital during the Korean War to help Americans process their lingering despair over losing the Vietnam War. One photo of my father’s shows a grinning man, shirtless and sunning himself on a makeshift lounge chair made out of an Army stretcher while his friend props up his flip-flopped feet on a sandbag that would normally have been stacked around the field hospital’s flimsy walls to shield it from regular mortar fire. [To read more of this story, go here.](#) And be sure to read through *The Toxic Residue of War*.

Good afternoon. My name is Michelle Larson, and I am the new Community Outreach Manager for the Alzheimer's Association in North Idaho, serving our area from Idaho County north to Boundary County. I'm reaching out to our community groups to provide you with some resources that may be helpful to your group and to offer an educational speaker for one of your future meetings.

Our local resources include:

- We host a **caregiver support group** in Coeur d'Alene the 3rd Thursday of each month from 6-7:30 pm. This group is currently being hosted virtually, with a hope of being back together in-person at Lake City Center in March.
- **24/7 helpline 800-272-3900.** This number is open to anyone needing answers to questions or help with situations any time of the day or night. Master level clinicians are available to help families with creating a care plan and to help navigate difficult situations.
- **Free Community Education:** We currently have virtual education scheduled throughout the remainder of January and all of February. I've attached a copy of those schedules for you.
- We also offer education for community groups that I can assist in scheduling. We have 30-60 minute programs that can be conducted on topics like Knowing the 10 Warning Signs; Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body; Understanding Alzheimer's & Dementia; Legal & Financial Planning; Having Dementia Related Conversations; among others. If your group is interested in **hosting free education for your members** during a future gathering, please let me know and I can send you additional information to get that arranged.
- **Community Resource Finder:** alz.org/crf This site helps families find additional resources related to legal, care, living needs and support nearby to their exact location.

If anyone needs additional resources or has any questions, please feel free to reach out anytime to me at our Coeur d'Alene office at 208-666-2996.

**Michelle Larson | Community Outreach Manager | Alzheimer's Association,
North Idaho | Office: 208.666.2996 | mllarson@alz.org | www.alzwa.org**

Did you know...?

Here are a few phone numbers you might need some day:

Appointments with Coeur d Alene CBOC

2177 N Ironwood Center Dr, Coeur d Alene, ID 83815
208-665-1700

Appointments with Primary Care PACT Teams

Main Hospital
509-434-7026

Appointments with Specialty Care Clinics

Bldg 1, 1st Floor
509-434-7050

Office of Community Care (OCC)

Spokane VAMC
509-484-7969



Mark Your Calendar:

April is Children & Youth Month

April 5th - Gold Star Spouses Day

April 6th - US enters WWI (1917)

April 9th - National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day

April 10th - Palm Sunday

April 14th - Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting at Lions Club @ 6 pm

April 15th - Good Friday

April 16th - Passover

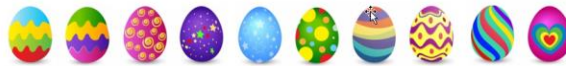
April 16th - Rathdrum Easter Egg Hunt at Majestic Park at 11 AM. Come at 9 for parking and volunteering! Don't be late or you will miss out.

April 17th - Easter

April 22nd - National Earth Day

April 22nd - 83rd National Oratorical Contest [check this link](#) Live streaming will be there.

April 28th - Post 154 Potluck (5:30) and Membership Meeting (6:00) at Lions Club



Bits & Pieces

- **Post 154 in Rathdrum has a good supply of 3x5 US flags** for sale at \$26 each. This the usual size for residential use. If your flag needs replacing, or you need a meaningful gift for someone, call Bryan Bledsoe at 509-990-6739 or email him at bryandbledsoe@gmail.com. Profits from the flag sales help support our flag education program and the free flags we provide to local schools.
- **Vietnam Veterans of America Applauds the VA for Adding Rare Cancers as Presumed Conditions; Calls for the Addition of Widespread Respiratory Diseases/Cancers**
"Vietnam Veterans of America is grateful to the Department of Veterans Affairs for its addition of nine very rare respiratory cancers as presumptive conditions for the purpose of veterans' disability claims," said VVA National President Jack McManus. "These newly proposed conditions are presumed to result from exposure to particulate matter, such as the smoke from burning Kuwaiti oil well fires during the 1991 Gulf War and open-air burn pits used for decades by the military." [Read Entire Press Release...](#)
- **Post 143 in Post Falls is holding a Golf Tournament** at the Links Golf Course on Friday, May 13, 2022. 9am Shotgun start. There will be raffle prizes and a hole in one prize. Post 143 will present a traveling trophy to the winning "Post Legion Team" made up of Legion qualified members. See flyer on page 17 Register your teams at: www.postfallspost143.org or use the form on page 18.
- **As reported March 3 by Patricia Kime for Military Times**, a bill passed by the House on Thursday that would expand benefits for post-9/11 veterans sickened by burn pits and other battlefield pollutants also would affect more than a half-million veterans exposed to Agent Orange. The \$208 billion legislation, which passed the House in a 256-174 vote, faces an uncertain future in the Senate. But it would add hypertension and monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance, or MGUS, to the list of diseases linked to Agent Orange — provisions that would make an estimated 490,000 Vietnam veterans with these illnesses eligible for disability compensation. It also would update the locations where Vietnam-era veterans served that are covered, adding some areas where former service members said toxic herbicides were sprayed or stored. [Read More...](#)
- **Click on this to find [The 5 Most Powerful Armies in the World](#)** (Test yourself first!)
- **Also, please remember** to send your volunteer hours to Len Crosby so he can compile them. These include hours devoted to Veterans, Youth, Honor Guard and Community. His email is: crosbylenmary@frontier.com

One More Day: Idaho American Legion's suicide intervention program

By [Cameran Richardson](#)

JAN 11, 2022



American Legion Department of Idaho Adjutant Abe Abrahamson provided attendees of the department's Mid-Winter Conference in Boise on Jan. 8 with an understanding of how the Department of Idaho's new **One More Day** program works. An example played out in an emotional conversation between Abrahamson and Vice Commander Area B Matt Wrobel, who recently lost his daughter from complications following a car accident.

Abrahamson: "Hey Matt how are you doing today?"

Wrobel: "Eh, you know, just here."

Abrahamson: "What do you mean here?"

Wrobel: "Just trying to make it through the day you know."

Abrahamson: "You have a lot of things going on, and I know life has thrown you some curve balls lately, but are you really doing okay?"

Wrobel: "Yeah not really, I'm just kind of done."

Abrahamson: "Matt, are you thinking about suicide?"

Wrobel: "I have been thinking about it."

Abrahamson: "Do you have a plan?"

Wrobel: "I've been drinking a lot and sometimes I think you know, take a few of these (prescription pills) and drink and not wake up to not have to deal with this anymore."

Abrahamson: "So pills and alcohol would be your way to escape?"

Wrobel: "That would be the easiest way."

Abrahamson: "Matt, you mind if I hang on to those pills? So, I know you're a veteran. I know there is a lot of help out there for veterans. Would you be willing to receive some help?"

Wrobel: "I would think about it. I would at least like to look into it."

Abrahamson: "If I found you a good place to go, Matt, would you go with me today?"

Wrobel: "If you'd take me, I would."

Abrahamson: "I would."

"**One More Day** is a suicide intervention program," Abrahamson said to The American Legion. "It's geared toward reaching veterans at that critical time in their life where they are faced with some serious challenges and sometimes choose the option of suicide. We want to intervene at that time, work with that veteran, basically get them to a better place in their life through camaraderie and brotherhood and friendship."

When a veteran is in crisis, the Department of Idaho's **One More Day** program dispatches a three-person team to where the veteran is. In the scenario above, Abrahamson was the No. 1 person – the one who communicated with the veteran in crisis to identify what is going on in his or her life that got them to contemplating suicide. "Eighty-two percent of veterans that commit suicide do it because of loneliness or loss of self-worth," Abrahamson said.

While this open line of communication is being established, the No. 2 person onsite is making calls to secure treatment for the veteran at one of the 600 treatment facilities in Idaho.

"Our hope and aim at that scene is that we leave with that veteran," Abrahamson said. "We want to take that veteran into some kind of care right then and there. We want to get them out of that crisis and into treatment."

Upon arriving to a treatment facility, the dispatch team asks the veteran to sign a form that gives The American Legion permission to be notified upon his or her discharge from treatment. Once discharged

from the inpatient program, Abrahamson is notified. He then calls the No. 3 person whose role is to make daily, ongoing contact with the veteran.

“Every veteran has something they like to do,” Abrahamson said. “Those inpatient programs are six to eight weeks, so you have a lot of time to learn more about this individual, his likes, dislikes. Reach out to them, find out how they’re doing. Do you need anything? Also, I belong to the Legion and we have this, this and this going on. If you feel like it, please come join us. Give them the opportunity to come down and enjoy some brotherhood, sisterhood, and that camaraderie that The American Legion is known for. To build back up their sense of self-worth and get rid of that sense of loneliness.”

The Department of Idaho’s **One More Day** dispatch teams have assisted four veterans in crisis who are currently seeking treatment. The American Legion spoke to Abrahamson about how these veterans are identified to The American Legion, the training involved for dispatch teams, and the why for **One More Day**.

The American Legion: How are veterans in crisis identified to the Department of Idaho?

Abrahamson: If 911 receives a call from a veteran in crisis, they’ll send the police officers to that location and at the same time they will contact The American Legion dispatch team. We would dispatch our three-person team to that critical incident. Once the law enforcement officers make sure that scene is safe and get the veteran away from a weapon or something he is going to harm himself with, then we are introduced to the vet and our three-person team takes over. (The program works the same if a family member of a veteran calls the dispatch team directly.)

We have worked with the Idaho Sheriff’s Association, Idaho Chief of Police Association, along with the state police to form that trust and respect between the law enforcement and The American Legion, and our dispatch teams, that we can go in and help. Not all of their law enforcement officers are trained in veteran suicide, veteran mental issues. Where when you have an active duty or a veteran, and you’re to talk to a veteran, you automatically have that bond.

TAL: How are the three-person dispatch teams trained?

Abrahamson: All dispatch teams start off by going to ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) taught by LivingWorks. It’s a two-day, 8-hour a day, class. It’s a very intense training about suicide intervention – how to look for signs. It’s not about just showing up to someone’s house on a 911 call, but if you’re at work and somebody shows up who is normally a happy go lucky person but they’re nothing but doom and gloom, it teaches you a way to talk to them and wait for that opportunity to interject, ‘Are you thinking about suicide?’ Put them on the spot. You ask them that question and they have to answer it. And if they answer yes, do you have a plan? If their plan is to leave work and complete suicide, then you need not to let them leave work. We also go to Emotional First Aid training to help law enforcement officers and first responders who have been to a critical scene and witnessed (a suicide). We help those people cope with what they’ve seen.

Our teams are multi-faceted trained. We are here to help the veterans with suicide intervention, but we are also there to support our first responders if something happens the other way.

TAL: How many people are trained in ASIST?

Abrahamson: Right now, we have over 140 people trained in the state of Idaho. We not only work with The American Legion, but we also work with Code 3 to 1 Retired Law Enforcement Officers of Idaho, the Idaho National Alliance for Mental Health, Courageous Survival (mental health resource for veterans and their families), and importantly we work with and invite the Idaho National Guard – air and Army, and the U.S. Air Force – to our (ASIST) training. Because it’s not just veterans committing suicide it’s active duty too, and Guard and reserve. So if we can extend the skills that they need to where they can watch out for their fellow soldiers, battle buddy, whatever you call it, they can be that person that might help their battle buddy in a mental crisis.

TAL: What was one thing from attending ASIST that was an aha moment for you?

Abrahamson: They play a couple of videos. The first video is of someone doing it (suicide intervention) the wrong way. The gentleman that's contemplating suicide makes four or five references or drops little hints that that's what he's thinking about, and the other person doesn't catch on to it. For me when I'm listening to that I'm reflecting on that and thinking back on my life, 'Did I ever do that? Did someone come to me for help, and I didn't see the signs? I didn't catch on?'

TAL: Dispatch teams also take QPR (question, persuade, refer) training. You believe everyone should take it. Why?

Abrahamson: QPR is what we call safe talk. It's a four-hour class. It teaches you what words to say, what words not to say (to a veteran in crisis), how to get that person to open up. You don't say, 'I know what you're feeling.' Because I don't know what you're feeling. Or 'I've been through that don't worry about that.' You just need to communicate with that veteran and show them that you care. Show them that they have somebody there that cares about them at their time of crisis. That's what will end that situation. Or, what if you got a phone call that said, 'Hey, I'm a Marine veteran. I'm sitting here with a gun in my lap. Tell me why I shouldn't kill myself.' You don't say, 'Don't do it.' Give them a reason. If you don't know how to react or respond to that individual, it could end bad. And none of us have that training and that is what (QPR) training is for. We are going to teach QPR to everyone that comes to summer convention. Because we think it's important to help stop the numbers.

TAL: What happens if the veteran in crisis isn't enrolled in the VA to receive mental health treatment?

Abrahamson: Luckily most of the places that we deal with will take our veterans at least for a couple of days. And at that time if they are not enrolled with the VA, we can get our state service officers working on it and communicating with the VA medical center, explain to them that we have a veteran, honorable discharge, who needs help. We try and expedite that service for them. We also have some (treatment) places that donate everything for a veteran. They are of the same mind that we are that if a veteran needs help, we are going to help them. Doesn't matter what it takes, we are going to get it done. And when they are in treatment, we communicate with them through letters of support, asking if there's anything they need.

TAL: The One More Day program is like a buddy check in that you're meeting the needs of veterans by first making contact. Do you agree?

Abrahamson: (The **One More Day** program) is a one-one-one, face to face, heartfelt buddy check. Letting them know that they are cared about and that they belong ... their life is worth something. The life that they had on active duty when they sacrificed their life for this country is worth something to The American Legion.

TAL: What is your why for being an integral part of the Department of Idaho's One More Day program?

Abrahamson: I do the **One More Day** program because I can't imagine what it would feel like for a family that had a veteran that served in the United States military to get home, to survive that, to live through that and to come home and think the only way he can be something or somebody to his family is if he or she took their own life. I can't image that pain that that family would go through. I want to do everything I can to make sure no family in the state of Idaho has to go through that pain. That's why I do it.

ASIST training will soon be offered in North Idaho. A time and place have not yet been decided. However, the plan is to schedule the training soon and it will be in the newsletter when that happens. The normal cost for this 2-day training is \$250. The cost to American Legion members is only \$20. Another benefit of Legion membership. We need these dispatch teams in North Idaho. Please consider signing up when the training is available.

A Healthier You:

Spokane VA had problems with its new electronic health records long before its recent system crash, reports reveal

As reported March 23 by Sara Samora for *Stars and Stripes*, the VA hospital in Spokane, Wash., had numerous complaints, including incorrect patient information and medication orders, long before its new electronic health records system crashed three weeks ago and affected services for hundreds of patients, according to three reports released by the VA inspector general. VA Inspector General Michael J. Missal said in a video last week that his office received wide-ranging complaints to its hotline and from Congress members since the Cerner Electronic Health Record launch at Mann-Grandstaff VA Medical Center in October 2020.

[Read More...](#)



Sick Call:

Bill and Helen Kinder are both still suffering from medical problems and have been unable to be out. Bill is having painful leg issues, and Helen is plagued with severe vertigo. Please keep them both in your prayers and if you can lend them a hand, please do.

HONOR A VETERAN AND HELP THE NEW NORTH IDAHO VETERANS HOME:

The North Idaho Veterans Home is currently under construction on a 7.5-acre site in Post Falls. The Home will be available for occupancy in November of this year. At the entrance of the Home, we are creating a "Flag Walk". You can honor a Veteran (living or passed) or a person currently serving in our Armed Forces, by purchasing a Flag Walk Brick for \$200. The Brick will be inscribed with the Veteran's name, Branch of Service and Dates served or other messages. There are three lines on the Brick, and each line has spaces for only 16 characters. Your Business could purchase a Brick with the Business Name and a message of support for our Veterans. We have a limited number of bricks available. If you want to order one or several bricks, please send the information you want on the Brick and your check to North Idaho Veterans Assistance League, Inc. Post Office Box 187, Post Falls, ID 83877. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact Len Crosby, Treasurer, Idaho Veterans Assistance League at 208-651-0697 or crosbylenmary@frontier.com. THANK YOU!

You will find a form to order bricks to support the new Veterans Home on the following page.

North Idaho Veterans Home

Walk Of Honor & Appreciation Order Form

North Idaho Veterans Assistance League

North Idaho State Veterans Home

P.O. Box 187, Post Falls, ID 83877

Phone (208) 651-0697

www.idahoveteransleague.com



The North Idaho Veterans Assistance League provides support for the North-Idaho Veterans Home through programs such as the "Walk of Honor & Appreciation".

Inscribed Bricks are available to individuals, groups and corporations

REQUESTOR'S INFORMATION for a donation of \$ 200.00 per brick.

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Contact Person _____ Phone _____

Address _____
Street/Mailing Address City State Zip

Requestor's Status Individual Family Business/Corporation Organization

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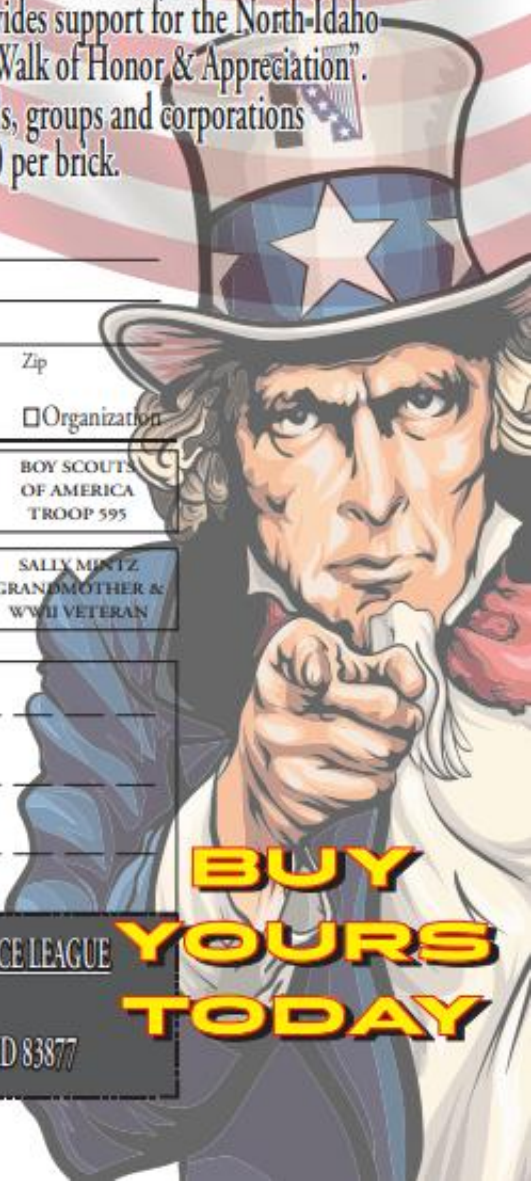
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Examples

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For More Information Contact

NIVSD, 208-964-2819



Thank You to our Proud Sponsors!

Post Falls American Legion Classic Post 143 Golf Tournament

Links Golf Club, Post Falls

10623 N. Chase Road. Post Falls ID, 83854. (208) 777-7611

Friday 13 May 2022, 9 am Shotgun start. 8:00 am registration begins

Four Person Scramble \$75.00 per person

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Registration form below.

Post Falls American Legion Classic Post 143 Golf Tournament

Links Golf Club, Post Falls

**Friday 13 May 2022,
9 am Shotgun start.**

8:00 am registration begins

Four Person Scramble

\$75.00 per person,

\$300.00 per team



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