



Manuel Schneidmiller Post 154

Rathdrum Idaho

Volume 1 Issue #7

August 2015

Important: Please make a note that the Post 154 email is now rathdrum154@gmail.com

Commander's Comments:

Hello everyone in the Legion family.

What a great month, hot summer days, lots of parades and events. I want to say thank you to everyone for really making Post 154 the best Post in Idaho. Please check out the new flag box in downtown Rathdrum. It is fantastic. Thank you Mike! I am in the second week of North Idaho Legion Baseball. Fun in the sun between the lines. Have a great August see you at the general membership meeting. - Dee Sasse, Commander

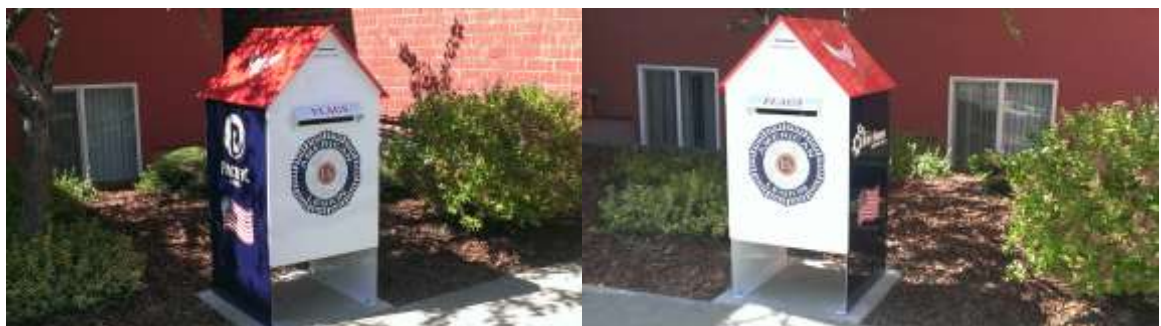
1st Vice-Commander:

Membership is doing very well as we stand at 63 members.

Our flag collection box is complete and is located in front of city hall. Many thanks go out to Bay Shores Systems Inc for manufacturing and painting the box, and to Pacific Steel for providing the steel, and to the city of Rathdrum Parks and Recreation Department for getting it installed. For God and country. - Mike Warren, 1st Vice-Commander



Left, Jeff Broadhead & Mike Warren with the newly installed flag box in front of City Hall in Rathdrum.



Legislative Chairman:

Issues of Local, State and National importance:

Veterans Home for N. Idaho: We continue to work with the Idaho Division of Veterans Services to speed up their application for a new Veterans Home to be located on a site that has been donated in Post Falls. Representatives will be in Post Falls to review the site in the first week of August.

NATIONAL ISSUES:

VA REFORM: We continue to support key reforms that are essential for building a healthy and robust VA health care system for the 21st Century. Congress must commit to provide the VA the resources it needs to modernize, rebuild and sustain its internal capacity to provide timely, high-quality health care. To better serve veterans, VA needs to restructure and consolidate all non-VA care programs into a single integrated Extended Care Network. VA must also realign and expand its health care services to meet the diverse needs of all generations of veterans, beginning with establishing new urgent care centers out in the community, and continue its extended operating hours. Finally, VA must reform its management culture through increased transparency and accountability.

[H.R. 341](#): On January 14, 2015, Representative Ken Calvert introduced H.R. 341, a bill to require states to recognize the military experience of veterans when issuing licenses and credentials to veterans.

[Military and Veteran Caregiver Services Improvement Act of 2015](#)

On April 23, 2015, Senator Murray introduced S. 1085, the Military and Veteran Caregiver Services Improvement Act of 2015, and Representative Langevin introduced a similar bill in the House, H.R. 1969. This important measure would extend to all veterans with a serious service-connected injury or illness eligibility to participate in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) program of comprehensive assistance to family caregivers of such veterans.

H.R. 303: On January 13, 2015, Rep. Gus Bilirakis (FL) introduced H.R. 303, the Retired Pay Restoration Act. This bill would end the unfair policy of forcing many military longevity retirees to forfeit some of their retired pay in order to receive equal amounts of disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The effect of this policy means military retirees are paying for their own disability with their military retired pay.

[Women Veterans Access to Quality Care Act](#) :

Senators Dean Heller and Patty Murray recently co-introduced S. 471, the Women Veterans Access to Quality Care Act. This bill is consistent with DAV's 2014 report, Women Veterans: the Long Journey Home; thus, the bill carries DAV's full support. The bill is also consistent with DAV National Resolution No. 040, passed by the delegates to our most recent National Convention.

The bill would improve VA facilities to better accommodate the needs of women veterans; would hold VA medical facility directors accountable to new performance measures focused on women veterans' needs; and, would ensure availability of obstetricians and gynecologists in all VA medical centers, among other provisions.

H.R. 969, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2015, was introduced on February 3, 2015, by Representative Christopher Gibson (NY). This bill would amend title 38, United States Code, to expand the presumptions for service connection relating to the exposure to herbicides containing dioxin, including Agent Orange. This legislation would extend existing eligibility to certain veterans who served in the vicinity of the Republic of Vietnam, including the inland waterways, ports, harbors, and waters offshore or territorial seas of such Republic, as well as the airspace above. – Len Crosby, Legislative Chairman

Finance Officer: This month was amazing! We had an unexpected and very welcome donation from the Schneidmiller Family Foundation which dramatically increased our balance sheet. We also completed a very successful gun raffle which brought in more than \$3,500. A BIG THANK YOU to all of those members who coordinated the selling of raffle tickets and made this project a great success, especially Bryan Bledsoe and Charlie Till.

The Executive Committee agreed to invest a substantial portion of the Schneidmiller gift in prudent, safe and insured bank CD's. A portion of the donation will be invested in a more liquid money market account, to enable the Post to meet unforeseen expenses.

We should end the month of July with about six months of operating expenses in our bank account, which is an amazing accomplishment for a newly established Post.

In the past six months, the Post has contributed more than \$300 to local charitable organizations and more than \$300 to support youth activities. Additionally many of our members have contributed hundreds of hours of their time and talent to support local veterans, our Community and our youth.

As we closed out the month of June, we also filed a report with the City of Rathdrum detailing how we have used their generous "startup" contribution to acquire capital items needed to establish and operate our Post. – Len Crosby, Finance Officer

Chaplain's Pew:

Inspiring words for August? Our country needs your prayers....ask for healing....ask for help....ask for comfort for our fallen comrades, past and present....we need God in our country and in our everyday lives.

Enjoy the beautiful days of summer. If you know a Post member who needs a visit, a card, a phone call of encouragement or comfort, please contact me.

Your Chaplain, sitting in the pews. – Paula Atwood, Chaplain

Sick Call & Taps:

Margaret Ogram is recovering from a serious concussion she sustained in a fall. Al Ogram is also under the weather. Please keep them in your thoughts.

Memories of My Service

Oops, there's nothing here this month. If you miss the stories, send me one of yours for next month; rathdrum154@gmail.com

Volunteer of the Month

Each month the Executive Committee will select a member as Volunteer of the Month. The VOM will be someone who has shown themselves to be dedicated to the principals of the American Legion and Post 154, veterans and their families, and the community. They will have gone beyond their "job description" as a member and will be recognized at the membership meeting, in the newsletter (here) and on the website [here](#).

The Volunteer of the Month for July is Jean Bledsoe, Newsletter Editor & Webmaster. I am honored by the Executive Committee's acknowledgement of my efforts. Thank you.

Medal of Honor Highway

The Medal of Honor Highway dedication took place in St Maries for Highway 3. The joint Honor Guard consisting of Post 154 and Post 143 members participated in the ceremony (Hal Donahue, Harold Markiewicz, Terrin Drapeau and Bryan Bledsoe). One of our other members, Lew Allert, represented DAV Fort Sherman Chapter #9 by bringing their flag and participating in the ceremony.

It was the epitome of small town Americana celebrating the 13 individuals who were in some way connected with North Idaho that had received the Medal of Honor dating from the Civil War up to present times. Three are connected to St Maries; Lloyd G McCarter, Pappy Boyington and Vernon Baker.

St Maries Community Band & Choir played and sang patriotic songs. The Marine Corps League posted colors, an invocation was given and Ron Derrick, American Legion Department Commander, gave the POW/MIA Ceremony in a dramatic and powerful way, explaining the significance of each article as it was placed on the table.

Post 25 Commander Jim Shubert gave a welcome to the 300 to 400 people assembled in the bleachers. His Post deserves great credit for the honor they gave to these brave military men.

Keynote speaker was Medal of Honor recipient Lt. Thomas Norris of Hayden. He gave a talk that was inclusive of all Medal of Honor recipients when he said that they were doing their job and did what needed to be done at the time with no thought of recognition or awards. Most received the award many years later and in many instances posthumously.

Coeur d'Alene Tribal elder and veteran, Calvin Nomi, gave a Smudge Blessing that was significant and meaningful. I doubt that any who attended will forget it. The tribal drum group Rose Creek played a ceremonial tribute to the National Anthem. Nomi then presented to Lt. Norris a handmade Tribal Warrior belt to honor his service and sacrifice. He had a bucket with earth and he asked each veteran to come up when the ceremony was over and take a handful, return it to the bucket and it would be spread from one end of the Highway 3 to the other. A long line of veterans came forward and paid their respects to Lt. Norris and Calvin Nomi.

Afterwards the Honor Guard was invited to have lunch and spend time with some of the dignitaries. Medal of Honor winner Thomas Norris sat at the table with our Honor Guard. It was something that none of us will forget.

It was a privilege to have been invited to attend and to participate in this great event celebrating our real American heroes. It was one of those feel good days. From our Post I saw Paula and Dale Atwood, and Lew and Carla Allert.

As we were driving back on Highway 3 we found Department Commander Ron Derrick along the side of the road assisting a stranded dad and his kids. They had run out of gas and had no money to buy any. Ron had gone to a gas station and gotten them some gas and his wife had given them some food. Once the car was started he filled up their tank at the gas station. He was a Good Samaritan and a Department Commander we can all be proud of. – Bryan Bledsoe, Adjutant

To view the ceremony through pictures, click here <http://goo.gl/RnMGUg> for the Photo Gallery.



Service Officer:

Veterans Choice Program:
Access health care closer to home

It has been explained to me that the Fee Basis program does not exist anymore and has been totally replaced by the Veterans Choice Program. It seems they are trying hard to make it work, but it is being applied to the letter of the law. In the west it is administered by Tri-West, a contractor. My personal experience with them has been positive.

The following FQA's will help you understand this new VA program:
If you are in doubt about your eligibility status please call the Choice Program Call Center at 866-606-8198.

Q: How can I confirm if I am eligible for the Choice Program?

A: Call the Choice Program Call Center at 866-606-8198 for more information.

Q: What happens once I have been determined as eligible?

A: Call the Choice Program Call Center at 866-606-8198 to set up an appointment.

Q: Can I call my non-VA doctor to make an appointment?

A: No, please call the Choice Program call center at 866-606-8198 to verify eligibility and make your appointment.

Q: How is the 40 mile calculation made?

A: This calculation is based on the distance from your permanent residence (or an active temporary address) to the closest VA facility-- including Community-Based Outpatient Clinics and VA Medical Centers.

Q: If I am eligible for the Choice Program, can I receive Beneficiary Travel for travel to appointments with a Choice provider?

A: Yes, the Choice Act does provide the ability to pay for travel to the Choice preferred provider for Veterans who are eligible for Beneficiary Travel. However, the Choice Act did not provide any new Beneficiary Travel eligibility.

Q: I didn't get my Choice Card, what do I do?

A: You do not need your Choice Card to access the Choice Program. If you didn't receive a Choice Card, simply call 866-606-8198 to find out if you are eligible and to make an appointment.

Q: How do I get my prescription filled if I use the Choice Program?

A: The Choice Program non-VA Provider will issue a prescription with up to a 14 day supply of a National Formulary drug. You may have the 14 day supply prescription filled at any non-VA pharmacy of your choosing and may submit a request for reimbursement to VA. For prescriptions needed past 14 days, please follow standard procedures to fill a prescription at the VA pharmacy.

Q: If I use the Choice Program, does that affect my VA health care?

A: No, not at all. You do not have to choose between the two—the Choice Program is here to make it easier to access the care you need, close to home. .

Q: Is Emergency care covered by the Choice Program?

A: No, emergency care is not covered under the Choice Program. All care under the Choice Program is required to be preauthorized. VA has other options for you if you require emergency care. Please contact your local VA medical facility for more information.

Q: I live in Alaska/Hawaii, am I automatically eligible for the Choice Program?

A: Yes.

(Continued below)

Service Officer (cont.):

Q: I live in New Hampshire, am I automatically eligible for the Choice Program?

A: If you live more than 20 miles from the White River Junction VA, you are eligible. If you live less than 20 miles from the White River Junction VA you are not eligible, based on the distance criteria.

Q: If I do not qualify for the Veterans Choice Program, are there other options I can use to access non-VA health care?

A: Yes, there are other non-VA care programs you may be able to use. Each program has its own eligibility requirements. Talk to your VA medical provider or click here for more details about these programs.

Q: My non-VA doctor is not part of the Choice Program, can he/she join?

A: Yes. VA is actively seeking to expand its network of community providers. Your doctor can call 866-606-8198 to learn more about the Veterans Choice Program and to become an approved Choice provider. If your preferred provider is not available under the Program, we will recommend other providers in your area. Your doctor can find more information here: <http://goo.gl/iQrlsl>

Q: Am I responsible for my private insurance deductible if I get care through the Choice Program?

A: Yes, if you are receiving non-service connected care. Your private health insurance will be the primary payer for non-service connected care and you may be responsible for the health insurance deductibles cost-shares. If you are receiving service connected care, you will not be responsible for your deductible as VA is primarily responsible for service connected care received through the Choice Program.

Q: What about VA copayments? Will they be collected by the community provider?

A: VA copays will be billed by VA after the appointment. If you currently pay VA copayments you will be subject to the same copayment requirements under the Choice Program. Your VA copay will be determined by VA after the care is provided.

Q: What if I don't have a VA copayment?

A: If you are VA copayment exempt then you will not be required to make the VA copayment under the Choice Program.

Q: Am I responsible for Medicare, Medicaid or TRICARE cost-shares?

A: No, these plans are not considered Other Health Insurance for purposes of the Choice Program. You will not be billed by the VCP provider for any of the cost-shares associated with these plans.

Fall 2014 Veterans Survey:

During his recent time in Idaho, Senator Crapo met with hundreds of veterans and veterans' advocacy groups throughout the state, asking Idaho's veterans community to provide feedback about the quality of service and care they receive through the VA. More than 1,000 Idahoans took the time to share their unique experiences. Take the 2015 Veterans Survey: <http://goo.gl/k8TnlR>

View the results. Results can be accessed from this page: <http://goo.gl/3MtO5U> - Charlie Till, Service Officer

Editor's Bit of Trivia: You may have notice a few odd looking hyperlinks such as this: <http://goo.gl/iQrlsl> within this newsletter. These are shortened URLs and are very handy when you have something like this <http://www.crapo.senate.gov/contact/vetsurvey/survey2015.cfm> to fit in. Here's how to do this nifty trick: go to <https://goo.gl/> (the URL for Google URL Shortener) and follow the easy directions.

The following is a list of Post 154 committees, the chairman of each, and members who have signed on to help. If you would like to have a more active role in your organization, help vets and families, and generally feel really good about your volunteerism, contact the chairman and help out. For contact information, email us here: rathdrum154@gmail.com To find out more about a committee, follow this link: <http://goo.gl/5bgJvn> then go to Article VII.

Americanism

Chair – Mike Warren
Members – Todd Halverson, Ruth Aresvik

Ceremonial

Chair – Margaret Ogram
Members – Helen Kinder

Children and Youth

Chair – Jeff Broadhead
Members -
Baseball – Dee Sasse
Oratorical – Al Ogram, Margaret Ogram, Len Crosby

Economic

Chair – Len Crosby
Members -
ESGR – Al Ogram, Margaret Ogram

Finance

Chair – Len Crosby
Members – Mike Warren

Graves and Registration

Chair – Paula Atwood
Members

House and Entertainment

Chair - None
Members

Veteran Affairs and Rehabilitation

Chair – Charlie Till
Members

Visiting or VAVS

Chair – Paula Atwood
Members -

Technology & Communication

Chair – Jean Bledsoe
Members

Refreshments for Meetings

Chair - None
Members – Ruth Aresik

Honor Guard

Chair – Tod Halverson
Members – Bryan Bledsoe, Al Ogram, Margaret Ogram, Len Crosby

Mark Your Calendar for August 2015

August 5th [NW Guardian Riders Steak & Bake](#) 5:00 PM
August 12th [Executive Committee Meeting](#) 6:00 PM
August 22nd [NW Guardian Riders Customer Appreciation BBQ](#) 1:00 PM
August 26th [Membership Meeting](#) 6:00 PM

Honor Guard

The Post 154 and Post 143 combined Honor Guard Squad provides honors for veterans at the end of their lives. It also assists the regular military in rendering military honors at memorial services for our fellow veterans. The squad also performs at various functions such as Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Flag Day and other special occasions, parades and patriotic events.

In July your Honor Guard participated in two funerals, four community parades, the Medal of Honor Highway dedication in St. Maries and the opening of the American Legion Baseball Tournament in Coeur d'Alene.

As you are all aware the military has gone through cutbacks in recent years and it is our job to help fill in for those regular military units who would normally perform funeral honors but can no longer do so. Without groups like ours continuing, our veterans will not receive the military honors that they have earned and deserve. Anyone interested in joining the Honor Guard should be willing to give a small amount of their personal time to training and taking part in the various ceremonies. We try to keep the close order drill very simple and basic so that it should be easy for anyone to learn.

Once you take part in a memorial service you will come away feeling a great deal of pride for the service you have rendered. We all feel that we get more out of it than what we put into it. We help to not only render the honors that are due our fellow veterans but we help the family of that veteran to bring closure and peace to everyone they have left behind.

If you would like to find out more or become a part of the group please call Todd Halvorson at (509) 953-0885.
– Bryan Bledsoe, Adjutant & Honor Guard Member



Combined Honor Guard at the opening of the American Legion Baseball Tournament in Coeur d'Alene. F to B: Hal Donahue, Terrin Drapeau, Harold Markiewicz, Bryan Bledsoe, & Bill Grinder

Photo to right show Honor Guard preparing for the Rathdrum Parade to begin. Left to right back: Harold Markiewicz, Todd Halvorson, Bruce Taylor, Front: Margaret Ogram, Al Ogram, Len Crosby, Hal Donahue and Bryan Bledsoe



Members of the Post 154 & 143 combined Honor Guard at the dedication of the Medal of Honor Highway. LT to RT: Hal Donahue, Harold Markiewicz, and Bryan Bledsoe.



The following 4 pages contain information on upcoming events in support of veterans and

POW★MIA

National Day of Remembrance

Spaghetti Meatball Dinner

September 18, 2015

Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

Arrive promptly, doors close during ceremony

Christ The King Lutheran Church

1700 Pennsylvania Avenue, Coeur d'Alene, ID



* Remembrance Ceremony
* Speaker: Vietnam POW
Fred McMurray

Benefitting:

- ★ **Inland Northwest Honor Flight**
- ★ **Newby-Ginnings**

Tickets go on sale August 15 @ \$12.00 per person

Additional donations accepted

Tickets available at: Army Surplus, 1620 N. Gov't Way, CDA, 667-6829

Newby-Ginnings, 147 E. Aqua Circle, Dalton Gardens, 660-4601

Or call 208-777-9684, 208-773-8982

open to the public. Please consider supporting them and put them on your calendar now.

VETERANS FUNDRAISER

**Sponsored by your:
Northwest Guardian
Riders**

Steak & Bake Dinner

5:00-7:30 p.m.

AUGUST 5th, 2015

SEPTEMBER 2nd, 2015

OCTOBER 7th, 2015

Menu includes:

- ✓ 9 oz. top sirloin steak
- ✓ Salad
- ✓ Baked potato
- ✓ Dessert

Please call ahead
on the day of the
fundraiser for:

- ✓ To-go orders
- ✓ To reserve a steak.
- ✓ Contact:
Aloma
Cardoza at:
208-667-
4488/wc1mom
@aol.com

- **CJ'S Lounge: 14853 W. Hwy. 53, Rathdrum**
- ***Proceeds benefit: Veterans in need, Toys for Tots, Disabled Veterans, Diabetes Ride, local food banks/veterans groups, and many more local worthy causes! Visa/MC accepted.**

*Dinner donation:

\$10.50 per person



Thank you for your support!

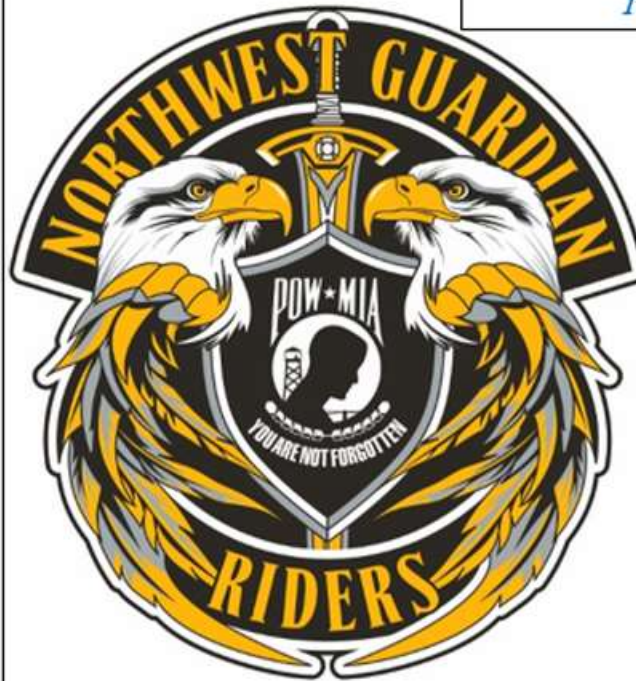
Northwest Guardian Riders

2nd Annual Customer Appreciation BBQ

August 22, 2015

1-6 p.m.

Join us for a fun afternoon with family, friends and your Northwest Guardian Riders community supporters! We are able to raise funds for our local Veterans & charities through your continued support. And we **THANK YOU!**



Location:

CJS Lounge in Rathdrum, Id.

Any questions?

Please contact your Northwest Guardian Riders at: 208-667-4488.

- o Accepting raffle & auction items!

We will be providing:

- BBQ pork sandwiches, beef franks, cheeseburgers, salads, chips, dip & all the fixings!
- Live Music! "The Wilsons" are performing from 3-6 p.m.
- Silent Auction & Raffle.

o We accept Visa & M/C

GODBLESTHEUSA.GODBLESTHEMENANDWOMENWHOSERVE.GODBLESSOURVETERANS.GODBLESSYOU.



Saturday, October 3, 2015

6:00 PM



INLAND NORTHWEST HONOR FLIGHT

FUNDRAISER EXTRAVAGANZA

DINNER, DANCE & AUCTION

SPOKANE VALLEY EVENT CENTER

10514 E. SPRAGUE AVE., SPOKANE VALLEY, WA 99206

Please help send our Veterans to Washington, D.C.

to be honored for their service

and to visit the memorials erected in their honor.

For tickets, donations, or to volunteer,
Please contact Barb Nelson, 208-262-8055.

\$50 Single Ticket \$400 Table for 8
Sponsorship Tables (for 8) receive special seating and perks:
\$2,500, \$2,000, \$1,500, \$1,000

Our event needs: Cash donations, silent auction items, oral auction items,
and volunteers to sell tickets, volunteers to help at our October 3 event.

Inland Northwest Honor Flight is a 501c (3) non-profit organization.
Receipts will be provided for all contributions.