



# Manuel Schneidmiller Post 154, Inc. Rathdrum Idaho

Volume 2 Issue #2

February 2016

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**February 2015 was the first issue of our Post 154 newsletter and both the newsletter - and more importantly – our Post, are ONE YEAR OLD!**

Post 154 is one-year-old this month. There were 16 members when National issued a Temporary Charter in January, 2015. The Post ended 2015 with 73 members. So far 67 have renewed their membership and one transferred to a post on Orcas Island. Please ask other veterans if they would like to join with us to promote veteran issues and help in the community.

Members of the Post have been very active in the Community over the past year, having participated in the City's Easter Egg Hunt, the City's Memorial Day ceremony, a Flag Retirement Ceremony held on Flag Day, the Rathdrum Days Parade, Veterans Day ceremonies, sponsored two local soccer teams, established a flag disposal receptacle in front of City Hall, Rathdrum recognition of its oldest and youngest Veterans, and the Wreaths Across America event at Evergreen Cemetery. The Post's Honor Guard has also performed flag retirement ceremonies at several local schools as well as Memorial and Veteran's Day ceremonies at a number of area schools. The Honor Guard participated in many area parades and has been actively involved in a number of events honoring Veterans and their families and Veteran funerals.

According to District Commander David Cooper, the Department Finance Commission is looking for a member from District 1 to serve on the Commission. It gives our District representation. It is a three-year term of office. The Commission meets twice a year, once in Boise at the Mid-Winter Convention and at the Summer Convention in July. If you are interested in serving contact Katrina Bentley for additional information at 208-827-2476. – Bryan Bledsoe, Adjutant

**Editor's Note:** The numbers for our 1<sup>st</sup> year are impressive:

- ★ The Honor Guard participated in 14 funerals, 4 parades, 33 ceremonies, and 9 practices. The number of hours started to be kept with the events on July 4<sup>th</sup>. In only 6 months of records, the combined Honor Guard logged 444 hours – amazing!

Our Post members also participated in:

- ★ 11 Executive Committee Meetings
- ★ 11 Membership Meetings
- ★ 7 Rathdrum City Council, Chamber of Commerce or GEM meetings
- ★ 4 Post 154 sponsored events for, or open to, the community
- ★ 2 Sponsored community sports teams
- ★ 5 District, Area, or Department meetings & events
- ★ We raised \$3911.31 to support the Post and its activities, and we received \$30,356.50 in donations from members, the City of Rathdrum, the community, and the family of Manuel Schneidmiller.

Also, we have many members who are active members of, hold offices, chairmanships, or board positions in other veterans' support organizations such as DAV/DAVA, VFW, DAR, ESGR, Stand Down, church veteran's groups, Newby-ginnings, Kootenai Veterans' Council, NW Guardian Riders, & Legion Riders. This includes monthly meetings, conventions, fund raising efforts, and events – innumerable hours dedicated to veterans and the community!

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## **COMMANDER DEE SASSE'S MESSAGE:**

Good day fellow Legionnaires,

It was a very busy January. Along with getting through the holidays and seeing family I went to the Midwinter Conference in Boise and as always I learned something new, Idaho is number three in the nation for membership. Now, that is quite an accomplishment. The state commander is very pleased and wants all of us to stay committed to making Idaho American Legion the best.

At the Midwinter Conference I went to several meetings which included American Legion Baseball, Legion Riders, Department Executive Committee and the General Session. Each meeting talked about where each program or project was going and its strengths and weaknesses. In addition, each had a plan for the next six months until the summer convention when we can all get together again and talk about our accomplishments. In the General Session meeting many of our District One posts were mentioned and that they are all doing very well. Lots of kudos went to our District Commander David Cooper for all of his hard work in District 1 and the district officers. As always it was great to see old friends and make new ones.

I want to make sure that everyone is aware that elections are coming up in April and there will be several positions open for you to become involved. It does not take that much time out of your life and it is important we get new folks in the leadership positions to help our post grow. Do you need to ask yourself "why should I care if they are having elections at the Post? This is why. This post exists to provide support for veterans, their families and the community. Every day the Post is helping a vet, whether it is providing comradeship, support, political lobbying power, or helping with VA requirements. It takes good leadership and management to make that happen. We are doing it for you, the veteran. I would like for everyone to be open to running for an office. That's all for now, see ya soon at the next General Membership meeting. – Dee Sasse, Commander

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## **2<sup>ND</sup> VICE-COMMANDER MARGARET OGRAM'S MESSAGE:**

We held a joint Post 154, Post 143 and Post 14 Oratorical Contest at Post 143 on January 16th. There were two contestants. The District contest will take place on January 30th at 1:00 p.m. I personally thank Bryan and Jean Bledsoe, Len Crosby and Al Ogram from our Post who helped with the event. Without you it wouldn't have happened!

Three awards were made by ESGR to Coeur d' Alene Charter School supervisors on January 22nd. Six ESGR members attended – three of them (Bryan Bledsoe, Al Ogram and I) were from our Post.

Plans are underway for Stand Down which will be held at the Kootenai County Fairground on May 7th. Most of the service providers from last year plan to participate again this year. The new Crisis Center at Kootenai Hospital will have a booth with maybe four MDs participating. The nurses who cut toe nails last year can't participate this year. I hope to identify another interesting useful group to replace them.

Len Crosby will be updating members on legislative issues at the February meeting. We have decided to have speakers each three months in the future. The next three months will occur in May after our election of officers. - Margaret Ogram, 2nd Vice-Commander

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### FINANCE OFFICER LEN CROSBY'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year. We start the New Year with a solid membership and a solid financial position. Thank you to the audit committee, which reviewed our accounts and found them to be in order. Their work allowed me to complete our tax return, which will be filed by the end of January. We have adopted an aggressive budget for 2016, and will need each member to commit some time to fundraising to enable us to meet the income requirements of the budget. Our progress for 2015 was amazing, both in terms of the growth in our membership, and in terms of what we gave back to the Community. We gave not only in charitable and youth program donations, but also in service hours from several of our members who are actively engaged in other Community organizations, service clubs and programs. Our Post contributed \$212 to the Veteran Home Food Convoy, made \$642 in charitable donations and contributed \$335 to sponsor youth activities and programs. In addition, through our Veteran members, we also contributed more than 3,000 service hours, and our Honor Guard members participated in a substantial number of ceremonies and funerals honoring local Veterans. We need each of you to renew your Commitment to the Legion and to our Community, in 2016. – Len Crosby, Finance Officer

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### SERVICE OFFICER CHARLIE TILL'S MESSAGE

Almost twelve years ago my VA primary care doctor suggested that pool therapy might make my quality of life better. How right he was, in my case working out in the pool has kept me more mobile with less pain. I'm Charlie Till (DAV Chapter 9) and I would love to share my experience with anyone who is interested in feeling better. I have schedules and day passes that KMC has provided for local veterans. These passes allow you to attend a class or workout on your own during an independent period. KMC also has special pricing for veterans. Contact me at [www.dav9.com/#!contact/crdp](http://www.dav9.com/#!contact/crdp). The Aquatic Center is located on the Kootenai Health campus in Coeur d'Alene, click here for more information: <http://goo.gl/4zerZO>

Ken Mandrell working float exercises at the Marion VA Aquatic Therapy pool. Veteran Ken Mandrell had been in for leg and shoulder therapy in the past with VA services, but this time around, he was introduced to a new type of therapy being offered by the [Marion, Illinois, VA](http://www.marion.va.gov).



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#### Therapy That's Worth the Wade

“Doing therapy in the pool is a lot easier than walking with gravity. When I had leg surgery in the past, my legs were bruised and there was a lot more pain,” says Mandrell about his aquatic therapy. Even though he has only been in aquatic therapy for a couple of weeks and is still getting used to it, the benefits of strengthening muscles underwater are evident. For Army Veteran Mandrell, aquatic therapy had been suggested prior to his surgery in efforts to shorten the amount of therapy needed post-surgery.

“In the water, our patients can do exercises that they can’t do on land” explains physical therapist Marsha Capel. “Aquatic therapy can be helpful for Veterans with arthritis, trying to decrease pain and increase their value of life,” says Capel.

When a patient comes in for a physical therapy appointment, they get evaluated and referred to aquatic therapy. They can get aquatic appointments anywhere from 2-3 times a week for 6 weeks and then they get re-evaluated by the physical therapist to see what adjustments need to be made, if any.

“We may be focusing on the patient’s lower back for these exercises but the patient gets help for the arms and legs too, one of the benefits of pool therapy” explains Capel. The same exercises that patients are asked to do on land are better tolerated in the water.

Veterans interested in learning more about aquatic therapy, should ask their physical therapist about the possibilities of including this type of therapy to your treatment.

About the Author: Williams Martinez is a Public Affairs Specialist at Marion VA Medical Center  
- Charlie Till, Service Officer

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### **LEGISLATIVE CHAIRMAN LEN CROSBY’S MESSAGE**

"No man's life, liberty, or property is safe while the legislature is in session." Mark Twain said this many years ago, and it is possibly as true today as it was when they said it.

This is also a national and local election year, so the politicking is about to get steady and shoe-top level. The one silver lining is that our elected officials, who want to become re-elected officials are very approachable and very open to listening to you, so I encourage each of you to interact with those running for office, attend Town Hall meetings that are being held on weekends by our Legislators and educate yourself on issues that are important to our Veterans and our Community. Here is a list of some things you may want to mention in your discussions: Urge your state Legislators to stay current on the State’s application for a Veterans Home in North Idaho, and to support that application.

- Urge our Congressional Delegation to support continued oversight and improvements to the VA healthcare system.
- Urge our State Legislators to continue to provide the support needed improvements to Idaho’s education system, including our Community Colleges which provide excellent job training resources for our Veterans returning to school after serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Urge our State Legislators to either expand Medicaid (under the federal program) or consider the healthcare alternative proposed by Gov. Otter. We have homeless Veterans in our Community that need expanded access to healthcare.

Most of all take the time to exercise the privilege of being able to cast your VOTE in both the Primary and Local Elections (including School Board and School Bond issues) and in the General Election this year. Voter turnout in several of our last elections was below 20%. Voting is a right and a privilege that you gave a part of your life to defend and protect, and it is an insult to our Veterans who gave their all not to take the time to exercise that right in a responsible manner. – Len Crosby, Legislative Chairman

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## CHAPLAIN PAULA ATWOOD'S PEW

Let's Honor the Heroes of our Nation!

The month of February gives us our Presidents' Day. Years ago, we had two holidays (one day established to honor George Washington and one day to honor Abraham Lincoln)....now we have condensed holiday that honors all presidents who have served the United States. However instead of taking time to celebrate the men who helped build our great nation, most of us ignore their individual contributions to simply have a slack day. Hey, a national holiday for whatever reason is a day off work, right? Why do we need to remember you ask? Simple...if we don't study the lessons from our history and teach it to our children, it will be soon forgotten and eventually lost.

Try to take time (a minute or a hour) this year to really commemorate one of your favorite presidents by reading about their accomplishments, their humble beginnings, and their legacy in office. We all need heroes that are worthy of remembrance this month....we need someone we can hold high with pride and honor; someone who we want to not only remember fondly, but emulate their life, and who will inspire us in the future. Happy Valentine's Day and God bless you. Paula Atwood, Chaplain, sitting in the pews

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### Leader Dogs for the Blind is accepting applications for their 2016 Summer Experience Camp.

Do you know any teenagers who are legally blind and could use a week of fun, outdoor activity and friendship this summer? Do you think they would enjoy kayaking, rock wall climbing and tandem biking? How about the challenge of developing new travel skills and stretching their independence? If so, the Leader Dogs for the Blind Summer Experience Camp was designed with them in mind.

The program combines outdoor activities with things exclusively Leader Dog—GPS training and the opportunity to spend time with Leader Dogs in training and guide dog mobility instructors. The combination will help them increase the skills they need to live independently!

Summer Experience Camp is for boys and girls ages 16 and 17 who are legally blind. The program is **completely free** including airfare to Michigan—and everyone receives a free HumanWare Trekker Breeze+ GPS device to keep. Summer Experience Camp is scheduled for June 25—July 2, 2016. Applications are due by April 1, 2016.

For more information and to download an application, go to: <http://goo.gl/IW3wCa> or call the Leader Dogs for the Blind client services department at [888-777-5332](tel:888-777-5332) or Lonnie Morse at [208-777-5157](tel:208-777-5157).



### **Mark Your Calendar: February 2016**

**Tuesday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> - Ground Hogs' Day**

**Saturday, February 6<sup>th</sup> – Area A Oratorical Contest** (Note: This may be canceled as there is only 1 participant)

Location: Post 143, Post Falls Time: 1:00 PM

**Sunday, February 7<sup>th</sup> – Four Chaplains' Sunday**

**Wednesday, February 10<sup>th</sup> - Executive Committee Meeting**

Location: Lions Club Rathdrum Time: 6:00 PM

**Sunday, February 14<sup>th</sup> – Valentine's Day**

**Monday, February 15<sup>th</sup> – Presidents' Day**

**Wednesday, February 24<sup>th</sup> - Membership Meeting**

Location: Lions Club Rathdrum Time: 6:00 PM

**February 24<sup>th</sup> 1991 - Start of Operation Desert Storm**

**Feb 28<sup>th</sup> 1991 - End of Operation Desert Storm**

### **Future Events to Look Forward to:**

**Sunday, March 27<sup>th</sup> – Easter Sunday**

**Saturday – Sunday, April 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> – National American Legion Oratorical Contest**

**Wednesday, April 27<sup>th</sup> – Membership Meeting & Election of Officers**

**Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup> – North Idaho Stand Down**

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## **Memories of My Service**



As a young girl, the framed photos of the USS Pensacola and USS Kennebec in her Pop's farmhouse office were inspiration for Ruth that adventure was out there! Uncle Herb coming to visit in his Navy uniform, bringing gifts and treasures from the Orient, only added to the fascination. Ruth Mary Mogensen was born and raised in southern Idaho, on a farm that produced potatoes, corn sold to Green Giant, milk cows and angus beef cattle. Life was like The Waltons with five sisters, two brothers, assorted farm animals and a sizeable pet cemetery which included Ruthie's two cats, one run over by the milkman truck; another that came too close to the mower while in the hay field.

With no interest in college or getting married after graduation, Ruth signed up under the Cache program with the local Navy recruiter. She took her first airplane ride from Boise to Baltimore in the fall of 1969 and experienced Wave boot camp in Bainbridge. Talk about Girl Power. She remained at Bainbridge for Yeoman school and worked for the instructors during the two week Christmas break. Although Ruth was homesick for Idaho and her family, and had hoped for West Coast orders, her teachers assured her that the new billet she would fill in Washington D.C. would be worthwhile. They were correct.

Life at the women's Tri-Service barracks on Ft. Myer, Virginia, was memorable. While waiting for top secret clearance, Ruth remembers receiving a phone call from home. Mother had serious concerns when Ruth's high school typing teacher had called asking why in the world was the FBI coming to Jerome High School asking all these questions about her daughter?



Ruth worked as a receptionist with general clerical duties in secured spaces for Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Zumwalt, at 5D880 in the Pentagon. She accompanied courier runs to the CIA Headquarters and served as part of the honor guard when Elliott Richardson was installed as Secretary of Defense. Due to many protests and public demonstrations in this Vietnam era, Ruth wore civilian clothes to work more often than not. Other times, she and assorted girlfriends would proudly wear their blues into the nation's capital and sightsee at the Supreme Court, Library of Congress, Smithsonian buildings and the Capitol, or attend plays, ballets and concerts at Ford's Theatre or the Kennedy Center. Ruth's roommate and special buddy, Rita, worked at the State Department for an admiral involved with SALT - Strategic Arms Limitation Talks. On occasion, Rita's boss would allow his "girls" to ride along with him on his jet to the United Nations, or, one day, to MacDill Air Force Base in Florida. Upon landing, the admiral was greeted by the proper authorities.....and the keys to a new red Ford Mustang convertible were handed to the girls for the day. Rough duty!

Aside from the excitement and glamour of serving in the nation's capital, Ruth came away with a love and pride for her country and her fellow service members. Watching the active Old Guard or the Fife and Drum Corps in action was an unforgettable sight. Living next to and having Arlington National Cemetery as her back yard, seeing the Iwo Jima Memorial, or the towering Washington Monument across the Potomac each day on the bus ride to work - these represented the ultimate heartbeat and definition of patriotism.

Ruth's Navy service ended in August 1973; she returned west with her north Idaho Army husband, whom she had met and married earlier that year. Taking advantage of her military service, she took the civil service test and was hired at the local Social Security office. Her career took her from claims development clerk, service representative, claims representative and SSI technical expert when she retired in December 2005.

Ruth lives with second husband Gary; they have two children Veronica and Scott, and one granddaughter Violette. Ruth became a member of Christ the King (circa 1975) when she asked co-worker Nancy (Jane Rhodes daughter) about local Lutheran churches. She currently serves on the military ministry board and is a member of Patience Circle.

Family Navy service includes Pop, two uncles, one aunt, two cousins, and four nephews; two of which are currently active duty - Joel, a Hospital Corpsman HM2 in Okinawa, and Kade, a Naval Nurse Lieutenant JG in San Diego. - Submitted by Ruth Aresvik

Waves of the Navy, there's a ship sailing down the bay,  
And she won't slip into port again until that vict'ry day.  
Carry on for that gallant ship and for ev'ry hero brave,  
Who will find ashore his man-sized chore was done by a Navy Wave  
- LT Betty St. Clair, USNR 1944

Now, see how interesting it is to find out about our members? Who's next? Just send me something – a picture would be nice too – <mailto:rathdrum154@gmail.com> Jean Bledsoe, your Newsletter Editor