



Manuel Schneidmiller Post 154, Inc.

Rathdrum Idaho

Newsletter

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Meeting at: Lions Club 16114 N. Meyer Rd Rathdrum

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Happy Valentines Day



HERE'S A FUN WAY TO CELEBRATE!

U.S. Air Force Falconaires Big Band



FREE US Airforce Academy Band Performance
North Idaho College
Wednesday, February 20th 7:00 – 8:30pm

FREE Tickets at Eventbrite [Click Here](#)

Boswell Hall - Schuler Performing Arts Center
1000 West Garden Avenue Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

Commander:

Legion Family,

The Post schedule is starting to gear up again beginning in February with our gun raffle. We kept it light during November and December to give our members and all of our volunteers a much-needed break, but many events and fundraisers have been scheduled for the up and coming months. Please keep an eye on the new event/fundraiser board that will be posted in our area at the Lions Club. This should help us keep on track and solicit more members to volunteer for our great events as we can make our 100th anniversary year one to remember.

As the anniversary date quickly approaches, I just wanted to remind everyone why there is an American Legion. The American Legion has led the charge for veteran benefits since the first day it was organized in 1919. A group of twenty officers who served in the American Expeditionary Forces in France during World War I is credited with planning the legion. A.E.F. Headquarters wanted to improve morale. An organization of veterans was proposed. Today this organization is known as the American Legion.

The American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic wartime veteran's organization. It is a community-service organization which now numbers 3 million members - men and women - with nearly 15,000 American Legion posts worldwide. Over the years, the legion has won hundreds of benefits for veterans and produced many important programs for children and youth. Have you heard of the VA? The Legion's efforts resulted in the creation of the U.S. Veterans Bureau which was the forerunner of the Veterans Administration and was a direct result of our World War I founders.

The Legion created the American Legion Baseball program. Today, more than 50 percent of Major League Baseball players are graduates of the program. About 82,000 youths play on Legion-sponsored teams each year.

Have you ever used your G.I. Bill or Servicemen's Readjustment Act? The American Legion drafted this bill which was signed on Jun 22, 1944 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, ushering in monumental changes in U.S. society. Higher education becomes democratized after 8 million veterans go to school on the GI Bill, get better jobs, buy houses in the suburbs and raise families. Then in August of 2017 the American Legion, in concert with others, creates, advocates for and passes the Harry W. Colmery Veterans Education Assistance Act of 2017. Named after the author of the original GI Bill and Past National Commander of The American Legion, the new GI Bill improves upon the great foundation that already existed, removing the burdensome cap to use the education benefit, along with many other great additions to the legislation aimed at improving the lives of veterans and their families. We are the tip of the spear for veterans!

By working together, we can make this the best and most productive year ever. I am proud to belong and work with you all. - Dee Sasse, Commander



Finance Officer:

We ended the year in pretty good financial shape. Our reserves continued to be invested at CD rates, and our bank account is reasonable.

We always have a number of operating expenses in the first quarter: insurance, membership, renewal of the website, renewal of the Post Office box, etc., so I assume that our bank balance will be significantly lower by the end of January. The good news is that we have three potential fundraisers that will all occur in the first half of this year. The big one is our Poppy Distribution program in May, but we also are planning a Gun Raffle for a bit earlier in the year and a possible fundraiser through Panda Express. ALL OF THESE REQUIRE VOLUNTEER ASSISTANCE, so get with the program and make some time to Volunteer for these fundraisers.

If these three programs are successful in the first part of the year, we can rest on our collective laurels for the remainder of the year, knowing that we will have sufficient income to meet our operating expenses for the remainder of 2019.

Thank you for your support. It is such a joy to be part of a Post that has such great support from its members. - Len Crosby, Finance Officer



Legislative Chairman:

End of 115th Congress Legislative Roundup: While the Senate failed to pass the VFW-supported *Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act*, Congress was able to send several American Legion -supported bills to the president before it concluded the 115th Congress. This includes [S. 2248](#), a miniature omnibus package, which improves programs for homelessness veterans, transition assistance, veteran-owned small businesses, student veterans, and also includes the SIT-REP Act, which would protect student veterans from penalties due to delayed GI Bill payments. Congress also passed the American Legion - supported [S. 3777, Forever GI Bill Housing Payment Fulfillment Act of 2018](#), which will require VA to set up a team to plan and schedule dates for when student veterans who were impacted by GI Bill payment problems will receive their corrected housing payments.

[The Forever GI Bill](#), removes the 15-year use-or-lose window for veterans discharged after January 2013, grants full eligibility to all Purple Heart recipients, adds additional months of eligibility for veterans pursuing STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) degrees, and restores benefits to veterans whose schools abruptly closed. The VA MISSION Act expands caregiver benefits to pre-9/11 veterans, consolidates access to private sector doctors into one simplified and improved program. The [VA MISSION Act](#) also improves the VA's ability to hire and retain high quality health care professionals and established a process to evaluate and improve VA facilities across the country. The [Veterans Affairs Accountability and Whistleblower Protection Act](#) improves accountability at the VA and protects the rights of whistleblowers. The [Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act](#) ensures veterans receive faster decisions on their claims appeals, easier to understand rating decisions, new claims resolution options at VA Regional Offices, and hiring more staff to oversee claims appeals.

Between fall 2017 and September 2018, VA surveyed more than 1.6 million veterans regarding their trust of VA health care. Eighty-six percent of veterans indicated they trust VA, which is a 2.4 percent increase. Veterans expressed a concern with access to specialty care, lack of parking and long wait times to receive medications. (cont. below)

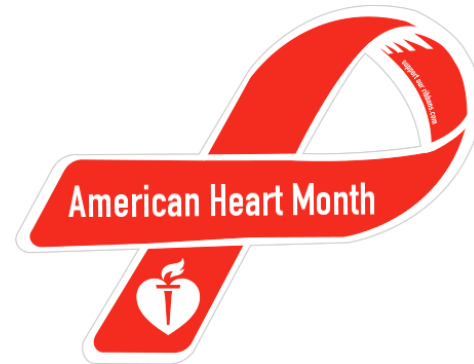
This past week, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) released its annual report which provides an overview of the past year's accomplishments and missions. In FY18, the agency accounted for 203 formerly missing service members, which is the highest yearly total reached to date, and made substantial progress in identifying remains who were previously accounted for as a part of group burials. Broken down by conflict, 10 were accounted for from the Vietnam War, 37 from the Korean War, and 156 from World War II. [Read the report](#). Veterans in 116th Congress: A total of 96 military veterans were recently sworn in as members of the 116th Congress. According to an Army Times article, 19 are serving in the Senate and 77 in the House, for an overall veteran percentage of 17.9 percent. Four decades ago the percentage of military veterans in Congress exceeded 70 percent.

Of the 96 veterans, only 44 ever served in a combat zone during wartime. 28 members belong to a Veterans Service Organization.

Other demographics:

- 48 served in the military after the year 2000;
- 30 are Democrats and 66 are Republicans;
- 19 are first-time lawmakers; and
- 7 are women

Len Crosby – Legislative Officer



A Healthier You: from Diabetes Daily

Complete Guide to Diabetes Friendly Sugar Substitutes



Photo by Adobe Stock Photo

Today, it is easier than ever to cook and bake with sugar substitutes thanks to the wide variety of products available. We no longer have to be tempted by sugar-free treats using sorbitol or maltitol, which are notorious for upsetting one's stomach. Check out the hilarious and horrifying review comments on this Amazon listing for the [maltitol syrup sweetened sugar-free gummy bears](#) to see why the fear is very real.

A quick Google search for "sugar-free desserts" or "low-carb treats" will lead you to sugar substitutes that may be unfamiliar to you. How do they impact blood glucose? Are they easy on one's stomach? Some of these sweeteners have dominated the market for the last few decades, and others have gained popularity and become widely available more recently. Some are sugar alcohols, and some are naturally derived.

We have purposefully excluded popular sugar alternatives like coconut sugar, which still have a substantial impact on blood glucose in order to focus on sweeteners that have traditionally been considered more reliable for people managing diabetes. That said, some of the sweeteners on this list are more diabetes-friendly than others depending on what your personal needs are. Check them out: click on the link below

[A-Z of Diabetes Friendly Sugar Substitutes](#)

Chaplain's Pew:

THE FOUR CHAPLAINS

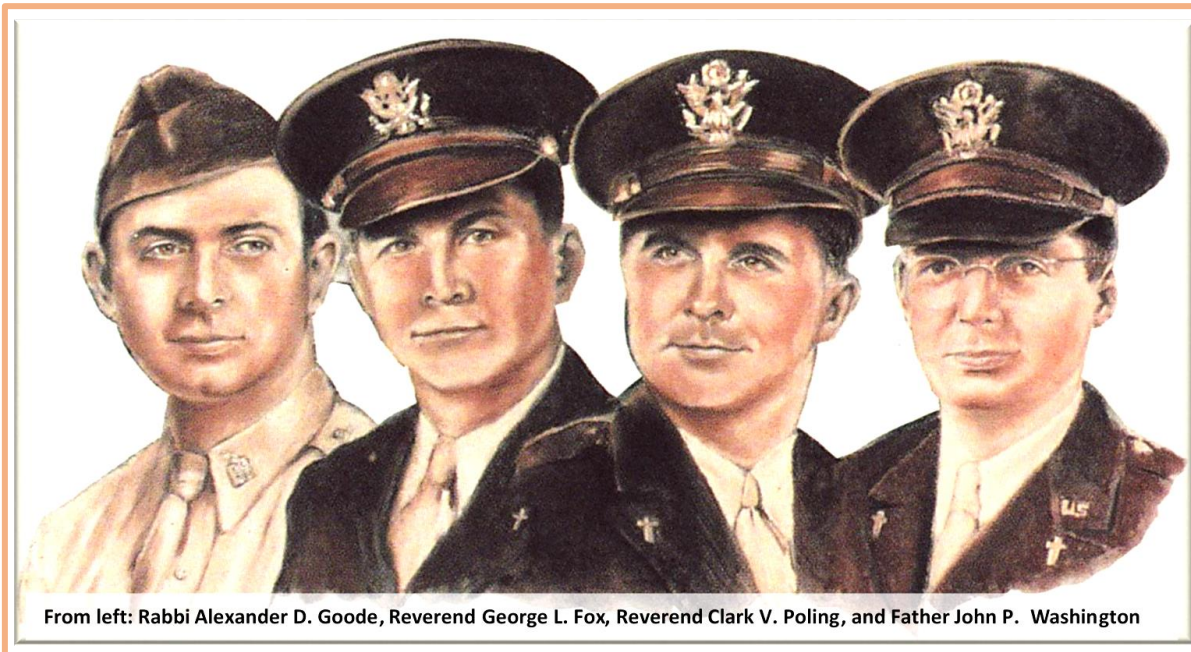
Sunday, February 3rd, will mark the 76th anniversary of the sinking of the United States Army Transport *Dorchester* and the selfless acts of four chaplains aboard.

The *Dorchester* tragically sunk on Feb. 3, 1943, while crossing the North Atlantic, transporting troops to an American base in Greenland. A German U-boat fired a torpedo that struck the *Dorchester*, killing 672 of the 902 officers and enlisted men, merchant seamen and civilian workers aboard. Many of those survivors owe their lives to the courage and leadership exhibited by four chaplains of different faiths, who in sacrificing their lives, created a unique legacy of brotherhood.

As soldiers rushed to lifeboats, Reverend George Fox (Methodist), Jewish Rabbi Alexander Goode, Reverend Clark Poling (Dutch Reformed) and Father John Washington (Roman Catholic) comforted the wounded and directed others to safety. One survivor watched the chaplains distribute life jackets, and when they ran out, they removed theirs and gave them to four young men.

As the *Dorchester* sank, the four chaplains were seen linked arm in arm, praying.

Four Chaplains Day pays tribute to the courageous chaplains and the brave young men who lost their lives on that fateful night. – Helen Kinder, Chaplain



From left: Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, Reverend George L. Fox, Reverend Clark V. Poling, and Father John P. Washington



One witness, Private William B. Bednar, found himself floating in oil-smeared water surrounded by dead bodies and debris. "I could hear men crying, pleading, praying," Bednar recalls. "I could also hear the chaplains preaching courage. Their voices were the only thing that kept me going."

Service Officer:

Hello fellow veterans. Welcome to February - a month for valentines, candy and flowers. My daughter was born on February 12th, sharing a birthday with Abraham Lincoln. My mother and my brother both share a February 14th day of birth. Let us all remember the special sweethearts in our lives.

I've had quite a quandary; a quirky quibbling amid quiet questioning...but I can quickly quantify and quit my quest. For "Q" has arrived!! February is the month for Q! Do you QUALIFY?

State Income Tax Retired Military Pay Benefit Deduction

A veteran or their un-remarried widow, age 65 or older, or disabled and age 62 or older, receiving veteran's retirement benefits, may deduct those benefits. The deductible amount of retirement benefits must be reduced by retirement benefits paid under the Federal Social Security Act or the Tier 1 Federal Railroad Retirement Act. See the [Individual Income Tax Instructions](#) for the maximum amount deductible for a particular year.

Veterans Property Tax Reduction

Effective July 1, 2018, Veterans with a 100-percent service-connected disability may apply to reduce their property taxes by as much as \$1,320. For more information and how to apply for this benefit see the [100% Service-Connected Disabled Veterans Property Tax Benefit](#) brochure on the Idaho State Tax Commission website.

Property Tax Reduction (Circuit Breaker)

Veterans with a 10-percent or greater service-connected disability – or receiving a pension from Veterans Affairs (VA) for a non-service-connected disability – can qualify for the Circuit Breaker when they meet residency and income requirements. See [the 2019 Idaho Property Tax Reduction](#) brochure on the Idaho State Tax Commission website.

The VA provides a home loan guaranty benefit and other housing-related programs to help you buy, build, repair, retain, or adapt a home for your own personal occupancy. VA Home Loans are provided by private lenders, such as banks and mortgage companies. VA guarantees a portion of the loan, enabling the lender to provide you with more favorable terms.

Purchase Loans help you purchase a home at a competitive interest rate often without requiring a down-payment or private mortgage insurance. Cash Out Refinance loans allow you to take cash out of your home equity to take care of concerns like paying off debt, funding school, or making home improvements.

Interest Rate Reduction Refinance Loan (IRRRL): also called the Streamline Refinance Loan can help you obtain a lower interest rate by refinancing your existing VA loan.

Native American Direct Loan (NADL) Program: helps eligible Native American Veterans finance the purchase, construction, or improvement of homes on Federal Trust Land, or reduce the interest rate on a VA loan.

Adapted Housing Grants: help Veterans with a permanent and total service-connected disability purchase or build an adapted home or to modify an existing home to account for their disability.

Other Resources: many states offer resources to Veterans, including property tax reductions to certain Veterans.

[Learn More...](#)

Idaho resident veterans who are 100% disabled with 100% service-related disabilities receive a free campsite while camping within Idaho's State Parks and free day-use access. You can [apply for this benefit](#) today. Website: [Passes, Fees, and Regulations](#) - Ruth Aresvik , Service Officer



Adjutant:

Print Out Your VA Welcome Kit

Whether you're just getting out of the service or you've been a civilian for years now, the VA Welcome Kit can help guide you to the benefits and services you've earned.

Based on where you are in life, your VA benefits and services can support you in different ways. Keep your welcome kit handy so you can turn to it throughout your life—like when it's time to go to school, get a job, buy a house, get health care, retire, or make plans for your care as you age.

Feel free to share this guide with friends or family members who need help with their benefits too. Download your VA Welcome Kit and print out copies for yourself and others:

[Download your VA Welcome Kit in black and white.](#)

[Download your VA Welcome Kit in color.](#)

Explore VA.gov to learn about your benefits

Disability

File a claim for disability compensation for conditions related to your military service and manage your benefits over time.

Health Care

Apply for VA health care, find out how to access services, and manage your health and benefits online.

Education and Training

Apply for and manage your GI Bill and other education benefits to help pay for college and training programs.

Housing Assistance

Find out if you're eligible for VA home loan programs to help you buy, build, repair, or keep a home. If you have a service-connected disability, see if you qualify for a housing grant to help you live more independently.

Careers and Employment

Apply for vocational rehabilitation services, get support for your Veteran-owned small business, and access other career resources.

Life Insurance

Explore VA life insurance options for Veterans, Servicemembers, and families. Manage your policy online, file claims for benefits, and access helpful resources.

Pension

Apply for monthly payments for wartime Veterans and survivors with limited or no income who meet certain age and disability requirements.

Burials and Memorials

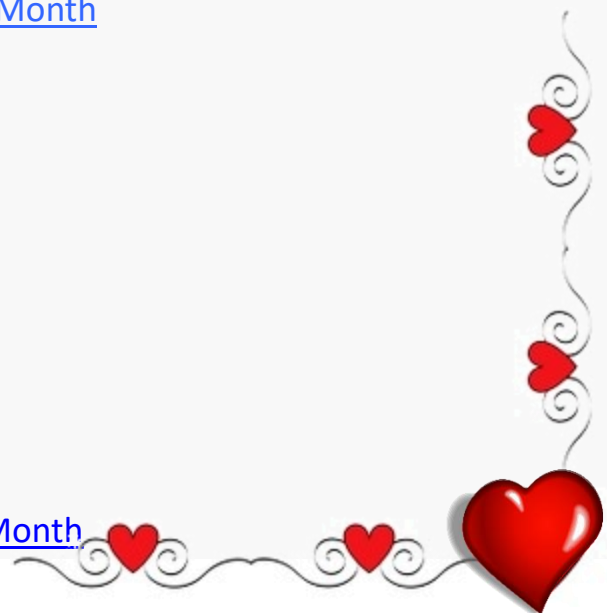
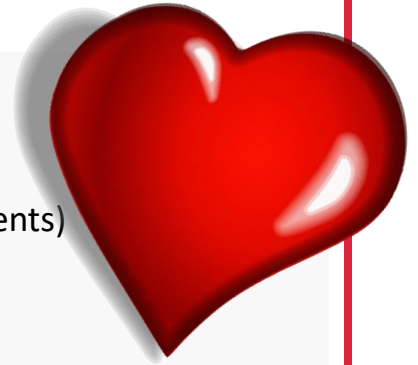
Get help planning a burial in a VA national cemetery, order a headstone or other memorial item to honor a Veteran's service, and apply for survivor and dependent benefits.

Records

Apply for a printed Veteran ID card, get your VA benefit letters and medical records, and learn how to apply for a discharge upgrade. – Submitted by Bryan Bledsoe, Adjutant

February - a great month in my opinion - is:

- ♥ [National Fasting February](#) *
- ♥ [National Self Check Month](#) *
- ♥ [National Enrolled Agents Month](#) * (Tax assistance agents)
- ♥ [Free and Open Source Software Month](#)
- ♥ [American Heart Month](#)
- ♥ [An Affair to Remember Month](#)
- ♥ [Black History Month](#)
- ♥ [Canned Food Month](#)
- ♥ [Creative Romance Month](#)
- ♥ [Great American Pies Month](#)
- ♥ [National Bake for Family Fun Month](#)
- ♥ [National Bird Feeding Month](#)
- ♥ [National Cherry Month](#)
- ♥ [National Children's Dental Health Month](#)
- ♥ [National Grapefruit Month](#)
- ♥ [National Heart Month](#)
- ♥ [National Hot Breakfast Month](#)
- ♥ [National Library Lover's Month](#)
- ♥ [National Snack Food Month](#)
- ♥ [National Weddings Month](#)
- ♥ [National Embroidery Month](#)
- ♥ [Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month](#)



Mark Your Calendar:

February 1st	AL Americanism Month & National Heart Month
February 7th	Lions Back Pack – NEW DAYS Feb 7, Mar 7, Apr 11 & May 9
February 3rd	Four Chaplains Sunday
February 14th	Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting and Valentine's Day & National Organ Donor Day
February 18th	Presidents Day
February 24th–28th	Operation Desert Storm (1991)
February 28th	Post 154 Membership Meeting & Potluck
March 13th	Mayor makes proclamation at Rathdrum City Council for Legion 100 years
March 16th	District 1 Meeting in Sandpoint



Bits & Pieces

- DAV Van contacts for Coeur D'Alene & surrounding area To Spokane VAMC:
All appointments for rides must be made 72 hours in advance. For the schedule or an appointment, Call the DAV Transportation Office at the Spokane VA Medical Center (800) 325-7940.
- Congress has passed and President Trump has signed into law a 2.8% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) effective December 1, 2018, for disability compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, clothing allowance, pension, and certain other related benefits. The percentage is based on the annual the annual Social Security index rate. The COLA will be reflected in checks issued on or about January 1, 2019.
- If you would like to receive the email edition of the quarterly Idaho Division of Veterans Services bulletin full of VA news, contact Jennel Binsky at:
jennel.binsky@veterans.idaho.gov
- Inland Northwest Honor Flight's mission is to transport Inland Northwest war veterans to Washington D.C. to visit those memorials dedicated to honor their service and sacrifices. If you would like to go on an Honor Flight, apply here:
<http://www.inwhonorflight.org/applications/>
- Did you know, even if your sleep apnea is not service connected, you can get access to the VA sleep clinic and get your CPAP supplies too. Have you signed up for VA health care yet? It is so worth it!

Here's a special treat for Valentine's Day:

Cherry Almond Mousse Pie



Total Time

Prep: 25 min. + chilling

Makes

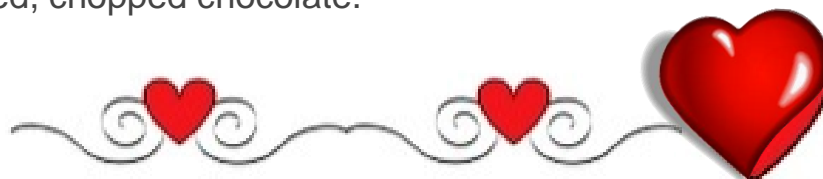
10 servings

Ingredients

- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk, divided
- 1 ounce unsweetened chocolate
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract, divided
- 1 frozen pie shell (9 inches), baked
- 1 jar (10 ounces) maraschino cherries, drained
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup cold water
- 1 package (3.4 ounces) instant vanilla pudding mix
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream, whipped
- 1/2 cup chopped toasted almonds
- Chopped chocolate, optional

Directions

- In a small saucepan over low heat, cook and stir 1/2 cup milk and the chocolate until chocolate is melted and mixture is thickened, about 4 minutes. Stir in 1/4 teaspoon extract. Pour into pie shell; set aside.
- Set aside eight whole cherries for garnish. Chop the remaining cherries; set aside. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese until fluffy. Gradually beat in water and remaining milk. Beat in pudding mix and remaining extract. Fold in whipped cream. Stir in chopped cherries and almonds.
- Pour over pie. Chill 4 hours or until set. Garnish with whole cherries and, if desired, chopped chocolate.



Post 154 will be having a Gun Raffle thanks to the generous donations by members:

1. Dee Sasse donated a Smith & Wesson Governor
2. Larry Carstensen donated a gently used 12-gauge shotgun

Only 1,000 tickets will be printed, and they go on sale in a couple of weeks with drawing to be on April 25th at our monthly Membership Meeting. Contact Bryan Bledsoe if you would like **some** to buy or sell. They are \$5 each or 5 tickets for \$20, 10 tickets for \$40 or 25 tickets for \$100.



AMERICAN LEGION POST 154 2019 RAFFLE FOR LOCAL VETERANS

FIRST PRIZE



Includes installed
CRIMSON TRACE
Red Laser

45 LC

410 Shotshell

45 acp

SMITH & WESSON GOVERNOR

.45 Colt / 45acp / 410 Bore Revolver

SECOND PRIZE

Savage "West Point" 12ga Pump Shotgun
Slightly Used But Well Cared For

RAFFLE DRAWING 25 APRIL

NAME: _____

PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

Tickets \$5 Each or Five For \$20

WHAT ARE CHALLENGE COINS?

We have a new display being put together for Post 154. It is a collection of 'challenge coins' that various Post members have donated. Some may have been carried into combat and show their worn condition, and some are brand new special edition collector items. But whatever their provenance, each and every one is special and will be proudly displayed for all to enjoy.

Did you know that there is a real history behind challenge coins? Yup, it's true. So now there's a good story to write.

Note: This history is surely not a complete, definite, written-in-stone history. You may have heard something close or different depending on your personal experiences, your buddy circle, unit or branch of service. But this is my story and I'm sticking to it. And, no I do not have a personal challenge coin to my name. If you're reading this article, game on.

It is written -- the Challenge Coins origin can be traced back to WWI, when a squadron Lieutenant ordered medallions struck and then presented them to members of his unit. One member, who was known to wear his coin around his neck, was taken captive by a French outpost (after being shot down while evading the German Army.) Believing the airman to be a saboteur, the French sentenced him to be executed. While pleading his case, he presented the medallion with his unit insignia to his French captors, one of which recognized the insignia and gave the airman a bottle of wine before returning him to his unit. It soon became a tradition for coin holders to challenge each other to present their respective coins. Those unable to do so were required to buy the next round of drinks.

Note: During the Vietnam era, this tradition was carried on thru 'bullet clubs'. Combat troops would personalize rounds from their respective weapons and use them in similar fashion to the WWI coins, and no, I do not have a bullet either.

Ever since, the Challenge Coin tradition has been used to set apart members of military units and various organizations.

So, now you've got the history. Did you know there is also a specific etiquette to be followed in holding/using your unit challenge coin -- and it can be very costly. Are you ready now for the 'RULES'???

1. Coins must be carried at all times.
2. The challenge is initiated by drawing the coin and presenting it to either an individual or group.
3. The challenger must clearly state whether the challenge is for one drink or for a round of drinks.
4. If the person challenged fails to produce his/her coin, the challenge must be honored, and drinks must be purchased. Each person may only be challenged once.
5. If everyone in a group that is challenged is able to produce their coin, the challenger must purchase a drink for each coin holder.
6. Never hand over a coin in response to a challenge. Doing so is essentially surrendering ownership of the coin. A coin may be placed on the table for examination, however the examiner is honor bound to return the coin to its previous location.
7. Loss of a coin does not absolve one from the responsibilities of coin ownership. Coins may be replaced, however the original coin number will be forfeit. Yes, some unit coins have numbers.
8. No exceptions may be made to the RULES.
9. Challenge coins may not be altered into other forms -- such as jewelry. Do not drill holes into the coin. Doing so reduces its value by half when presented for challenge.

There you have it -- all the information you need for future engagements.

Respectfully submitted (and a smile on my face) – Paula Atwood



Original USAF Airman's coin