



Manuel Schneidmiller Post 154, Inc.

Rathdrum Idaho

Newsletter

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Happy Valentine's Day!

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's Comments:

Hello American Legion Family,

This time of the year, when many of our Post members are staying home and not venturing out, whether to travel or attend Post activities, we hope every member stays safe. Say a prayer for our members that are ill. Hopefully, vaccines will be available for all soon and the Post can resume its normal activities, being a place for veterans and their families to feel safe and secure and able to participate in the good deeds the American Legion stands for.

Members, please renew your membership now as every little bit helps. American Legion Post 154 continues to support many of the Legion programs such as Boy's State, community events and veteran services and veterans in need. The Post 154 family can be counted on to contribute to these Programs only with your support.

We know the email announcements the post is sending have not reached everyone. If you have an email address and would like to receive the Post email for up-to-date announcements, send a current email address to the Post at: Rathdrum154@gmail.com. Our goal is to have as many members possible signed up to receive and read our monthly newsletter and receive important information.

In closing, remember our spring events are coming up quickly and our outdoor events so we are going forward in planning them. First up will be the Easter Egg Hunt. Next, will be the Poppy Program at the local grocery stores and then Memorial Day. Please plan on helping with these events in order for them to be a success. I hope I can count on you! For God and Country. - Dee Sasse, Commander



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Francis Gasbarre

Yesterday, today, and tomorrow
Through times of strife and sorrow.
And times of pride and glory
We were, are, . and we'll be The United States of America!
A land of many wonders
Of every race and creed
Where fate is based on choice
And we are free to choose
To rise above the ways
That bind the human will
To the chains of tyranny!
To the bonds of Bigotry!
To the trials of anarchy!
We were, are, . and we'll be The United States of America!

About the author:

Francis Gasbarre: I am happy to be one of us.

Submitted by Dee Sasse, Commander

Editor's Note: This poem was submitted by Legion member Francis Gasbarre, to The American Legion national site on the forum, "In Your Own Words". Here the Legion provides a place for members to submit a memoir, poem, photo, video, book or link to another site. Do you have something to submit? [Here is the link.](#)

Finance Officer:

During the month of January, the Post incurred \$950.40 in expenses. The majority of these expenses were for membership renewals sent to National. Other expenses included \$199.00 for annual website renewal, \$130 for renewal of our Post Office box and \$296 transferred to IVAL for the Veterans Home in Post Falls. Income totaled \$289.00. The majority of this income came from member renewals – \$180.00. We also received a \$50 dollar donation to the Honor Guard and sold a flag for \$59.00.

Our net loss for the month of January was (\$661.40). Having a large loss in January and February is not unusual because a lot of our annual expenses, including memberships, insurance, etc. come in the first two or three months of the year.

The Executive Committee appointed a three-person Audit Committee to review the financial accounts, books and reports of the Post. That Committee will meet in early February and report to the membership at the February membership meeting. Thank you Bryan, Sharron and Bob for stepping up to be part of this Committee.

Once the Audit has been completed and confirmed, the Finance Officer will prepare the Post's IRS tax return for 2020 and send out our annual contribution to the Lions Club to thank them for the use of their excellent facility. We will also send our annual letter to the Schneidmiller family (family of our namesake Marine Col. Manuel Schneidmiller) telling them of our accomplishments over the past year.

Len Crosby, Financial Officer



Legislative Chairman:

Congress put a bow on its final legislative package with only days left in 2020, championing a record number of bills representing hundreds of provisions, to provide economic and health care relief for veterans and their families.

Legislation signed into law Jan. 5, 2021 provides transitioning service members and veterans, their family members, caregivers, and survivors some additional and unexpected benefits thanks to the hard work of Congress.

The House and Senate veterans' affairs committees recognized the difficulties and uncertainties placed on the uniformed services and veteran communities because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Legion and other veterans service organizations worked hard on these bills, some of which have taken years to get passed.

Here is a brief summary of the bills that were passed in 2020:

- [H.R. 2385](#), **Veterans Legacy Program** (Public Law No: 116-107, Jan. 17, 2020). Permits the VA to establish a grant program to conduct cemetery research and produce educational materials for the Veterans Legacy Program, which commemorates our nation's veterans through the discovery and sharing of their stories.
- [S. 3503](#), **Veterans Education Programs** (Public Law No: 116-128, Mar. 21, 2020). Directs the VA to treat certain programs of education that have been converted to distance learning because of emergencies and health-related situations in the same manner as programs of education pursued at educational institutions.
- [H.R. 6322](#), **Student Veterans Coronavirus Response Act of 2020** (Public Law No: 116-140, Apr. 28, 2020). Provides a variety of education programs and assistance for veterans during the covered period from March 1 to Dec. 21, 2020, as a result of the pandemic. (cont. below)

- [H.R. 3504](#), **Ryan Kules and Paul Benne Specialty Adaptive Housing Improvement Act of 2019** (Public Law No: 116-154, Aug. 8, 2020). Provides improvements to VA's adaptive housing and educational assistance programs.
- [H.R. 886](#), **Veteran Treatment Court Coordination Action of 2019** (Public Law No: 116-153, Aug. 8, 2020). Establishes grants and technical assistance for state, local, and tribal governments to develop and maintain veterans' treatment court programs to help veterans charged with nonviolent crimes receive the help and the benefits they need.
- [S. 785](#), **Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019** (Public Law No: 116-171, Oct. 17, 2020). Improves mental health care and suicide prevention programs in the VA.
- [H.R. 2372](#), **Veterans' Care Quality Transparency Act** (Public Law No: 116-177, Oct. 20, 2020). Requires the comptroller general to assess the effectiveness of all agreements the VA has entered into, including non-VA organizations related to suicide prevention and mental health services.
- [H.R. 1812](#), **Vet Center Eligibility Expansion Act** (Public Law No: 116-177, Oct. 20, 2020). Requires the VA to expand readjustment counseling and mental health services through its Vet Center Program.
- [H.R. 2359](#), **Whole Veteran Act** (Public Law No: 116-185, Oct. 30, 2020). Requires the VA to submit a report to Congress on advancing its whole health initiative to transform the veterans' health care system.
- [S. 3587](#), **VA Website Accessibility Act of 2019** (Public Law No: 116-213, Dec. 4, 2020). Requires VA to study and report on the VA website's accessibility to individuals with disabilities.
- [H.R. 8247](#), **Veterans Comprehensive, Prevention, Access to Care, and Treatment (COMPACT) Act of 2020** (Public Law No: 116-214, Dec. 5, 2020). Enhances transition assistance services and suicide prevention programs and improves care and services for women veterans.
- [H.R. 7105](#), **Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020** (Signed into law Jan. 5, 2021). Provides the VA more flexibility in caring for homeless veterans during a covered public health emergency and directs the agency to carry out a retraining assistance program for unemployed veterans, among other improvements.
- [H.R. 8354](#), **Service members and Veterans Initiative Act of 2020** (Signed into law Jan. 5). Establishes the Service members and Veterans Initiative within the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department.

These new laws ushered in an array of new benefits in some critical areas:

COVID-19 Relief

- Hiring of new VA health care staff
- Increase in overtime pay, equipment, and supplies for health care workers
- Funding for care and services for homeless veterans
- Increase in telehealth services
- Stimulus payments, unemployment assistance, deferment of student loans, and other economic assistance
- Presumption of service connection for COVID-19 for service members
- Oversight for State Veterans Homes regarding COVID-19 infections, response capacity, and staffing levels (cont. below)

Suicide Prevention and Behavioral Health

- Furnish, reimburse, or pay for emergent suicide care, including transportation costs, at a VA or non-VA facility for certain veterans who are in an acute suicidal crisis
- Establish a program for the education and training of caregivers and family members of veterans with mental health disorders
- Establish a task force on outdoor recreation for veterans to make recommendations regarding the use of public lands or other outdoor spaces for medical treatment and therapy for certain veterans
- Seek to contact certain veterans who have not recently received care to encourage them to receive comprehensive physical, mental health, eye, and audiological examinations through the VA
- Align the medical research community and accelerate the development of more individualized and precise post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury therapies
- Improve collaboration between DoD and the VA on mental health research, transition assistance programs, and clinical and nonclinical mental health initiatives.
- Expand physical access points for veterans seeking to use VA telehealth and virtual care offerings
- Study and invest in innovative and alternative treatment options like yoga; meditation; and recreational, animal, and agricultural-related therapies
- Create a new pilot program to extend VA's reach into the community, expand its programming through nonprofits, and improve interventions to protect against veteran suicide

Women Veterans

- Require the VA to cover the cost of emergency transportation of newborns
- Create an Office of Women's Health
- Offer child care program assistance for certain veterans
- Study infertility services (furnished by the VA)
- Provide staffing for women's health primary care providers at medical facilities
- Address the needs of women veterans, especially those experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity
- Prepare an annual report on the use of VA health care by women veterans

VA Claims and Benefits

- Require a Government Accountability Office (GAO) briefing and report on repealing the manifestation period for presumptions of service connection for certain diseases associated with exposure to herbicide agents
- Require public access to Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs), the form VA uses for compensation and pension exams

Survivor Benefits

- Expand eligibility for the Fry Scholarship to children of certain deceased members of the armed forces
- Lower from 57 to 55 years, the age at which a surviving spouse may still receive Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits at the point of remarriage

Student Veteran Benefits

- Increase funding for the VET-TEC program
- Extend protections for veteran GI Bill students if COVID-19 negatively impacts their studies
- Refund of GI Bill benefits for students hurt by school closure

Protections and Legal Support

- Expand Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) protections for reserve component members on state active-duty orders and Service members Civil Relief Act (SCRA) protections to Coast Guard members for stop-movement orders (cont. below)

- Increase support from the Justice Department through the Service members and Veterans Initiative within the Civil Rights Division
- Establish grants for veterans' treatment courts at state, local, and tribal levels to support veterans facing non-violent legal challenges (This ensures these programs will connect veterans with the support and resources unique to their needs.)
- Len Crosby, Legislative Chairman



Chaplain's Pew:

BLESS OUR VETERANS PRAYER

Mighty God, thank you that you can satisfy our every desire and need. Hear our prayer of thanks for our veterans who made great sacrifices on our behalf. We ask that you would bless them and meet all their needs. We pray you would give them peace when they suffer from past trauma. We acknowledge the debt of gratitude that we owe them for the freedom of our country. Lord, bless them and keep them, make your face shine upon them. Turn your face toward them and give them peace. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen.



Submitted by Helen Kinder, Chaplain

Sick Call & Taps

The following all have or have had COVID:

Bob Kernen was hospitalized.

Larry & Char Carstensen...Larry was hospitalized.

Bob & Leona Flowers

Ron & Susan Kemper

Sandy Williams wife of member Tim Williams.

Thomas Barney hospitalized for 5 weeks.

Chris Arnold- Hospital x2 weeks. Improving

Lonnie Morse also after getting over COVID had a complete shoulder replacement on Dec 18th. Doing well now. Just limited movement.

Tom Peterson battled a serious case of covid in December, then his wife Gina broke her leg which required surgery and has put her in a wheelchair.

As far as I have been informed, we have thus far had 13 members and/or spouses who have had COVID. In addition...

Karen Imle, wife of member Robert is undergoing cancer therapy.

Reinhold Dauer's wife Erica had heart surgery. She is now in rehab, but no visitors are allowed. as been transferred to Rehabilitation Hospital of the Northwest. 3372 East Jenalan - Post Falls ID 83854. Reinhold is unable to see her due to COVID. I'm certain a few cards would cheer her up.

If you know of any members or spouse who are ill let me know. I will call them, send a card or help in anyway we as a Legion can. I can be reached by email thru the Legion at:

Rathdrum154@gmail.com. Please remember them all in your prayers. Wishing them all a return to good health. – Helen Kinder, Chaplain



DORCHESTER CHAPLAINS:

**Lieutenant George Fox, Lieutenant Alexander D. Goode,
Lieutenant Clark V. Poling, Lieutenant John P. Washington,
1943**

The **Four Chaplains** were four United States Army chaplains who gave their lives to save other soldiers during the sinking of the USAT *Dorchester* during World War II. They helped other soldiers board lifeboats and gave up their own life jackets when the supply ran out; 230 of the 904 men aboard the ship were rescued. Life jackets offered little protection from hypothermia which killed most men in the water. Water temperature was 34 °F (1 °C) and air temperature was 36 °F (2 °C). By the time additional rescue ships arrived "...hundreds of dead bodies were seen floating on the water, kept up by their life jackets."

The chaplains, who all held the rank of lieutenant, were the Methodist [Reverend George L. Fox](#), the Jewish Rabbi [Alexander D. Goode](#), the Roman Catholic Priest [John P. Washington](#) and the Reformed Church in America Reverend [Clark V. Poling](#). They were sailing on the USAT *Dorchester* troop transport on February 3, 1943, when the vessel, travelling in convoy, was torpedoed by the German submarine *U-223* in the North Atlantic. As the vessel sank, the four chaplains calmed the frightened soldiers and sailors, aided in the evacuation of the ship, and helped guide wounded men to safety. The chaplains also gave up their own life jackets.

As I swam away from the ship, I looked back. The flares had lighted everything. The bow came up high and she slid under. The last thing I saw, the Four Chaplains were up there praying for the safety of the men. They had done everything they could. I did not see them again. They themselves did not have a chance without their life jackets.—Grady Clark, survivor

On December 19, 1944, all four chaplains were posthumously awarded the Purple Heart and the Distinguished Service Cross. The Four Chaplains' Medal was established by act of Congress on July 14, 1960, and was presented posthumously to their next of kin by Secretary of the Army Wilber M. Brucker at Ft. Myer, Virginia on January 18, 1961.

The chaplains were also honored with a stamp, issued in 1948 and by an act of Congress designating February 3 as "Four Chaplains Day."

Goode, Poling and Washington had served as leaders in the Boy Scouts of America.

—from Wikipedia

Chaplains Fox, Goode, Poling, and Washington responded to a high calling from God to represent his love among men of war. On the day they died, they personified the words of Jesus found in John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends."

—from Holy Women, Holy Men



George L. Fox




Alexander D Goode



Clark V. Poling



Service Officer:

Hello folks and welcome to February. The month of love .  Also more winter. And getting ready to file taxes. Almost makes you ill, right? Do you need some medication? If you do.....

You can fill prescriptions by a non-VA community provider only if you meet all the requirements listed below.

All of these must be true:

- You're enrolled in VA health care
- You have an assigned VA primary care provider
- You've given your VA provider your medical records from your non-VA provider
- Your VA provider agrees with the prescription

So that's enough about medication. Unless you have an earache, or some such issue. Yes, ears can be an issue. What? WHAT? Could you please repeat that??

You may be eligible to order hearing aid batteries and accessories from the VA if you meet all of the requirements listed below.

All of these must be true:

You're enrolled in VA health care, **and**

You're registered as a patient at a VA medical center, **and**

Your VA audiologist has prescribed hearing aids or other hearing assistive devices.

Option 1: Order online

Note: You can only order hearing aid batteries and accessories online if you've ordered these items from us within the past **2 years**.

Option 2: Order by phone

Call our VA Denver Logistics Center (DLC) at [303-273-6200](tel:303-273-6200). Customer service representatives are available Monday through Friday, 6:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. MST.

If you're only ordering hearing aid batteries, select 1 for the Automated Battery Reorder System. Enter your Social Security number and zip code when prompted. Then, select the authorized batteries you need to order.

If you're ordering batteries and other accessories (like hearing aid wax guards), select 2 to connect with a customer service representative.

To connect with an operator, select 0.

Option 3: Order by mail

Fill out a Veteran's Request for Batteries and Accessories (VA Form 2346a) card. If you're ordering hearing aid wax guards, please write down the type of guard if you have that information from your audiologist.

You should have received a VA Form 2346a in the box with your last order.

[Download VA Form 2346a \(PDF\)](#)

Mail the completed form to:

VA Denver Logistics Center

P O Box 25166

Denver CO 80225-0166

- Ruth Aresvik, Service Officer



Many of you may have recently received a letter, like I did, from Representative Russ Fulcher, Idaho Republican Congressman for the First District. If you did not, please allow me to share a small part. First, I felt grateful to receive such a letter, simply based on the fact that one of our lawmakers took the time to DO IT. Secondly, Representative Fulcher said "I am so proud of my dedicated casework team that has been at the forefront of helping Idahoans cut through red tape and resolve issues with federal agencies. If you do not receive a timely response from a federal agency or if you feel you have been treated unfairly - please contact us, we are here to go to bat for you".

You might wish to "follow" him on Facebook or sign up for his email newsletter at fulcher.house.gov/newsletter-subscriptions.

His local contact information is:

1250 W Ironwood Drive, Suite 200
Coeur d'Alene ID 83814
208-667-0127

- Ruth Aresvik, Service Officer



1st Vice-Commander:

2020: The Year That Wasn't???

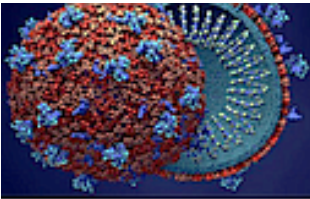
There were many good things supposed to happen for our Rathdrum Post 154 in 2020, but COVID-19 got in the way of most of them. The Easter Egg Hunt had to be cancelled in April, the Poppy sales in May were cancelled, Rathdrum Days, and parade cancelled in July. Membership meetings were cancelled from March through December, except our June meeting. Our annual Christmas Party ended up on the short list as well. Yikes!!! So many great events gone.

Yet, we were able to keep a few events on the agenda with our Virtual Memorial Day Ceremony at Pinegrove Cemetery in May, our Flag Retirement Ceremony and grommet cutting events in June. We were able to complete two "Buddy Checks" in 2020, from which there were many positive feedbacks. In September, we adopted a classroom at Twin Lakes Elementary. We gave a \$100.00 and a plaque to Ms. Deanna Watson's 5th grade class. During October, we bought flags for the city of Rathdrum to fly on the 41/53 bridge. Looked good., Also for National First Responders Day we gave a gift card to Rathdrum Police, Kootenai Sheriffs, Northern Lakes Fire/EMT's, and State Police. November produced our virtual Veterans Recognition Event in which we honored Women in the Service, as well as all veterans. In December, the Wreaths Across America Ceremony was held at Pinegrove Cemetery with over 200 wreaths being placed on veteran's graves. Also, we were able to produce a video wishing all a Merry Christmas.

Throughout the year our Post 154 Honor Guard responded to a number of events including the Memorial Day Service, the Veterans Recognition event and Wreaths Across America, as well as providing for veteran funeral services.

Even with all of the distractions, and cancellations, I do believe Post 154 has achieved quite a lot during the year that wasn't. - Bill Kinder, 1st Vice-Commander

If you are still trying to find covid-19 vaccine, here is some information from the Panhandle Health District.



COVID-19 VACCINE: Enrolled Vaccine Providers

Panhandle Health District - Kootenai, Benewah, & Shoshone Counties

Call 877-415-5225 to schedule an appointment

Kootenai Health - Kootenai County

Register at www.kh.org/covid-19/covid-19-vaccine/

Northwest Specialty Hospital - Kootenai County

Register at www.northwestspecialtyhospital.com

Heritage Health - Kootenai & Shoshone Counties

Register at www.myheritagehealth.org

Bonner General Health - Bonner County

Register at www.bonnergeneral.org/covid19-coronavirus/.

Kaniksu Health Services - Bonner & Boundary Counties

Register at www.kaniksuhealthservices.org/covid-19-vaccination.html

Medicine Man Pharmacy - Boundary County

Register at www.medmanbf.com

Appointments may fill quickly! It is recommended to check back each week. Thank you for your patience.

Instructions for Attending a Vaccine Clinic

- Masks must be worn upon entering.
- Bring a photo ID and proof of employment if your priority group is based on where you work.
- Do not attend a clinic if you are currently infected with COVID-19.
- Please do not schedule multiple appointments for one individual, duplicate appointments may be cancelled.
- It is recommended to be vaccinated in the county you reside.
- Only the person receiving the vaccine is allowed to enter the facility, unless the individual requires a caregiver to accompany them.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Panhandle Health District

Please note that this list of COVID-19 vaccine enrolled healthcare partners is subject to change.

01/28/2021



Panhandle Health District

Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Panhandle Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Katherine Hoyer

January 29, 2021

208-415-5108

North Idaho Moving Forward with Vaccine Phases

Idaho Panhandle — Beginning in February, the panhandle area is prepared to begin scheduling appointments and vaccinating individuals who are 65 years of age and older. Among the counties that the Panhandle Health District (PHD) serves, including, Kootenai, Bonner, Benewah, Boundary, and Shoshone, 11,588 first doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been administered thus far to those who are in the first phases of Idaho's vaccine rollout, including medical and healthcare workers, K-12 school employees, childcare workers, first responders, and correctional and detention facility staff.

"We know the 65 and older population have been eager to receive the vaccine," said Don Duffy, Health Services Administrator at PHD. "We also know that this is a large portion of our population and it will take time and effort to administer vaccines to everyone who would like to receive it. We are grateful to have our partners assisting us in this effort."

The health district will receive 2,800 doses of COVID-19 vaccine this week and that will increase to 3,800 next week and the weeks thereafter. Doses will be evenly distributed to each county based on population.

Information on where to find vaccine clinics in each county can be [found here](#). Registration will begin in February. **These are not walk-in clinics, all vaccines are given by appointment only.** The enrolled vaccine providers do ask that the public register in the county that they reside and only register an individual at one vaccine clinic. Registrations at multiple sites or on multiple days may be cancelled. Currently the vaccine clinics are available to those who are in the Phase 1a and the top priority groups in the Phase 1b categories of the vaccine distribution plan.

Phase 1a includes:

- Hospital staff essential for care of COVID-19 patients
- Long-term care facility residents and staff (vaccine administration provided through the Pharmacy Partnership Program)
- Outpatient & Inpatient clinic/medical staff who are unable to telework
- Home healthcare providers
- Emergency Medical Services
- Dentists, dental hygienists, and dental assistants
- Pharmacists, pharmacy techs, and pharmacy aides
- Emergency management response workers
- Coroners

(cont. below)

- First Responders
- School Nurses

Those eligible to receive the vaccine in Phase 1b include:

- Pre-K-12 School Employees
- Childcare Workers
- Correctional & Detention Facility Staff
- **Adults age 65 and older (*beginning February*)**

If you have questions about COVID-19 in our area, call PHD's COVID-19 hotline Monday – Friday, 8am-5pm, 877-415-5225.

Panhandle Health District provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play. The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services. Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.

###



Sometimes you have to admit



that it's time to retire

Thank you to Len Crosby, for this bit of humor.

RENEWAL REMINDER

We still have a number of members who have not yet renewed for 2021. Please get your dues in as soon as you can, so that National does not consider you a suspended member. Thank you.

Our membership today is at 127 paid members with six new transfers from Idaho Department Post 85. We are at 95% of our goal for the year. This is well done Post 154. Let us keep on track with this.

New to the Post 154 family are transfers Walter Hardy, Herman Mollenkopf, Paul Sullivan, Jim VanVoorhis, Brennan Wildermuth, and Edward Wilson. Please make them welcome when we get to see them at our meetings when they resume. (soon I hope) - Bill Kinder, 1st Vice-Commander, Membership Chairman

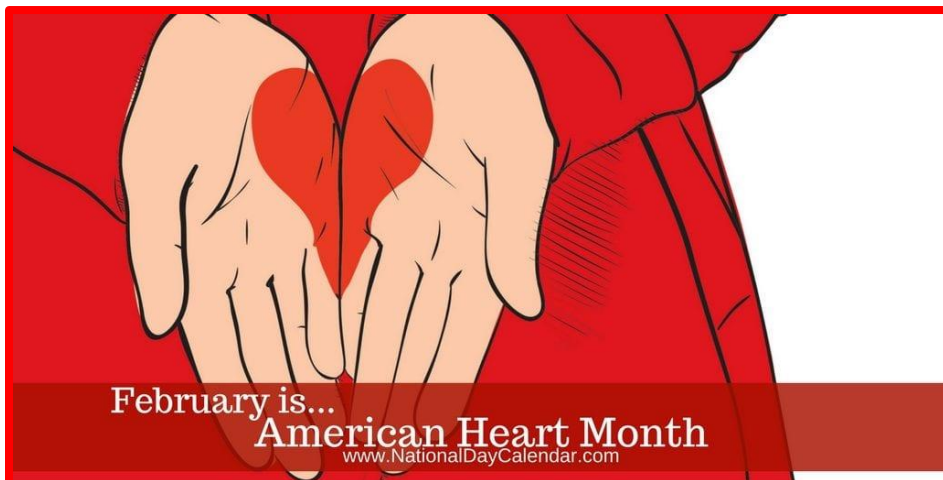
Did you know...?

In a new study, Veterans with Agent Orange exposure were nearly twice as likely to be diagnosed with dementia, even after adjusting for the competing risk of death, demographic variables, and other medical and psychiatric diseases. To read the article, go to page 15.

Post 154 Honor Guard:

For those of you not aware, our Post has an Honor Guard. They march in parades, present the colors at ceremonies, and most importantly, provide a rifle salute to honor Veterans at their funerals. Each month there will be an account of the honors given by the men and women in our Honor Guard. However, more members are always needed to serve in this capacity. If you are interested in participating in this very fulfilling activity, contact Harold Markiewitz at 208-691-3039.

Todd Halvorson reported that the Honor Guard participated in rifle salutes and Taps at two veterans' memorial ceremonies this past month. An Army veteran and a Navy veteran were honored.



February is...
American Heart Month
www.NationalDayCalendar.com

American Heart Month isn't just for lovers. February also reminds us to take care of our heart and consider our risk factors. Believe it or not, heart disease can happen at any age. Some risk factors for heart disease and stroke are preventable. Read the article on page 19 of this newsletter for more.

Bits & Pieces

- If you get medical care from the VA and pay copays, the rates are changing for 2021. Follow this [link](#) to see the new rates.
- January's membership meeting was successfully held virtually over ZOOM. If you would like to know what business was conducted, you'll find the meeting minutes [HERE](#).
- [Here's why](#) you'll still need a mask after you are vaccinated.
- Post 154 member Bob Granger owns a pontoon boat which he uses to fish on CDA and Pend Oreille Lakes. Starting this spring, he would like to invite disabled veterans to join him for some free fishing. You can contact him here to schedule a fishing trip. 208-819-1405 or bigbob442000@yahoo.com
- Rep. Mark Takano: How the New Congress & Administration Can Restore Faith in the VA. In a January 26 OpEd appearing in *Military Times*, Rep. Mark Takano, Chair of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, writes: "The last four years have been tumultuous for the VA. Read the full article [HERE](#)
- Arlington National Cemetery announces Tomb of the Unknown Soldier centennial commemoration yearlong program of events. Check out this [LINK](#).
- Are you a registered user of national American Legion web resources, such as MyLegion.org, Baseball.legion.org, Legiontown.org or Legion.org? And are you tired of having to log in with your username and password each time you access the individual sites? Good news – a single sign-on is here! Follow this [LINK](#) for details.
- Veterans in the 117th Congress, By the Numbers. As reported December 28th by Leo Shane III for *Military Times*, when elected officials gathered on Capitol Hill to formally convene the 117th Congress on Jan. 3, they did so with 91 veterans among their ranks, the lowest total since at least World War II. Read the story [HERE](#)
- And now, 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: <mailto:crosbylenmary@frontier.com>



Hungry for some delicious soup? Try this **Simple Taco Soup** recipe on page 20.

Training Officer:

If you were not able to attend last week's ZOOM membership meeting, you missed the introduction to The American Legion's Basic Training. The American Legion places great value on the education of its members and we are encouraging all our members to spend a couple of hours to take this free online course. It does not have to be completed in one sitting. You can do it in sections. Here is the introduction:

Basic Training Introduction

The American Legion's official training program for officers, members, Legion College applicants and those who simply want to expand their knowledge of the nation's largest veterans service organization is now available online.

The American Legion Extension Institute has been rewritten, updated, streamlined and enhanced with videos, digital photos, clickable links, a historical timeline and additional features. The program should take less than two hours to complete. It is divided into six sections, with a quiz at the end of each one, followed by a final exam.

Topics



History & Organization

Learn why and how The American Legion came into existence after World War I.

Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

The foremost pillar of American Legion service, learn the ways in which the organization is dedicated to compassionate care, timely delivery of benefits, career development and other areas of advocacy for those who have served in uniform.



National Security

Outlined here is The American Legion's position on a strong, well-equipped and effectively deployed U.S. military, including a decent quality of life for those now in uniform and retirees of the Armed Forces.

(continued below)

Americanism

This pillar of American Legion service is filled with respect for the nation that those in the military swore with their lives to defend, from proper treatment of the U.S. flag to voter education to youth programs that make life-changing differences.



Children & Youth

The American Legion's long-held position that "every child deserves a square deal" is explained here, to include such programs and efforts as the Child Welfare Foundation, the Family Support Network, Temporary Financial Assistance and other initiatives that aim to help children and youth follow their dreams, no matter their circumstances.

Course Conclusion

See how all the pieces of American Legion service and advocacy fit together to best serve our nation and learn where other committees and commissions play vital roles.



Final Exam

Take an online test to see how well you understand the nation's largest veterans service organization.



[Here is the link](#) to The American Legion's
Basic Training



Now gentlemen, how
convenient is *that*?
(Did you get the hint?)

Membership Meetings

The Post Executive Committee has decided for the foreseeable future, to hold virtual meetings over the ZOOM platform. All members who have an email account will receive a message from bohannah1@gmail.com with the subject line reading, "Invitation: Post 154 Membership Meeting". This email will arrive a few day prior to the meeting. If you are new to ZOOM, instructions for using it can be found [HERE](#).

Mark Your Calendar:

Legion Americanism Month

National Heart Month

Black History Month

February 2nd Ground Hog Day – Winter or Spring?

February 7th Four Chaplains Sunday

February 8th National Clean Out Your Computer Day

February 11th Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting – Virtually through ZOOM*

February 14th Valentine's Day

February 15th President's Day

February 17th Ash Wednesday

February 19th National Caregivers Day – third Friday in February

February 23rd National Dog Biscuit Day – Find a recipe for dog treats on page 21

February 24th Start of Operation Desert Storm (1991)

February 25th Post 154 General Membership Meeting – Virtually through ZOOM*

February 28th End of Operation Desert Storm (1991)

* Find more ZOOM information [HERE](#).



We might need one of these! Even if we enjoy them virtually.



New Agent Orange Study

Agent Orange Exposure and Dementia Diagnosis in US Veterans of the Vietnam Era

Steven Martinez, BS; Kristine Yaffe, MD; Yixia Li, MPH; Amy L. Byers, PhD, MPH; Carrie B. Peltz, PhD; Deborah E. Barnes, PhD, MPH

IMPORTANCE Agent Orange is a powerful herbicide that contains dioxin and was used during the Vietnam War. Although prior studies have found that Agent Orange exposure is associated with increased risk of a wide range of conditions, including neurologic disorders (eg, Parkinson disease), metabolic disorders (eg, type 2 diabetes), and systemic amyloidosis, the association between Agent Orange and dementia remains unclear.

OBJECTIVE To examine the association between Agent Orange exposure and incident dementia diagnosis in US veterans of the Vietnam era.

DESIGN, SETTING, AND PARTICIPANTS This cohort study included Veterans Health Administration data from October 1, 2001, and September 30, 2015, with up to 14 years of follow-up. Analyses were performed from July 2018 to October 2020. A 2% random sample of US veterans of the Vietnam era who received inpatient or outpatient Veterans Health Administration care, excluding those with dementia at baseline, those without follow-up visits, and those with unclear Agent Orange exposure status.

EXPOSURES Presumed Agent Orange exposure documented in electronic health record.

MAIN OUTCOMES AND MEASURES Fine-Gray competing risk models were used to compare the time to dementia diagnosis (with age as the time scale) for veterans with vs without presumed Agent Orange exposure (as per medical records), adjusting for demographic variables and medical and psychiatric comorbidities. **RESULTS** The total sample was 511 189 individuals; after exclusions, 316 351 were included in analyses. Veterans were mostly male (n = 309 889 [98.0%]) and had a mean (SD) age of 62 (6.6) years; 38 121 (12.1%) had presumed Agent Orange exposure. Prevalence of most conditions, including Parkinson disease, diabetes, and amyloidosis, was similar at baseline among veterans with and without Agent Orange exposure. After adjusting for demographic variables and comorbidities, veterans exposed to Agent Orange were nearly twice as likely as those not exposed to receive a dementia diagnosis over a mean (SD) of 5.5 (3.8) years of follow-up (1918 of 38 121 [5.0%] vs 6886 of 278 230 [2.5%]; adjusted hazard ratio: 1.68 [95% CI, 1.59-1.77]). Veterans with Agent Orange exposure developed dementia at a mean of 1.25 years earlier (at a mean [SD] age of 67.5 [7.0] vs 68.8 [8.0] years).

CONCLUSIONS AND RELEVANCE Veterans with Agent Orange exposure were nearly twice as likely to be diagnosed with dementia, even after adjusting for the competing risk of death, demographic variables, and medical and psychiatric comorbidities. Additional studies are needed to examine potential mechanisms underlying the association between Agent Orange exposure and dementia.

Read the full article [HERE](#)

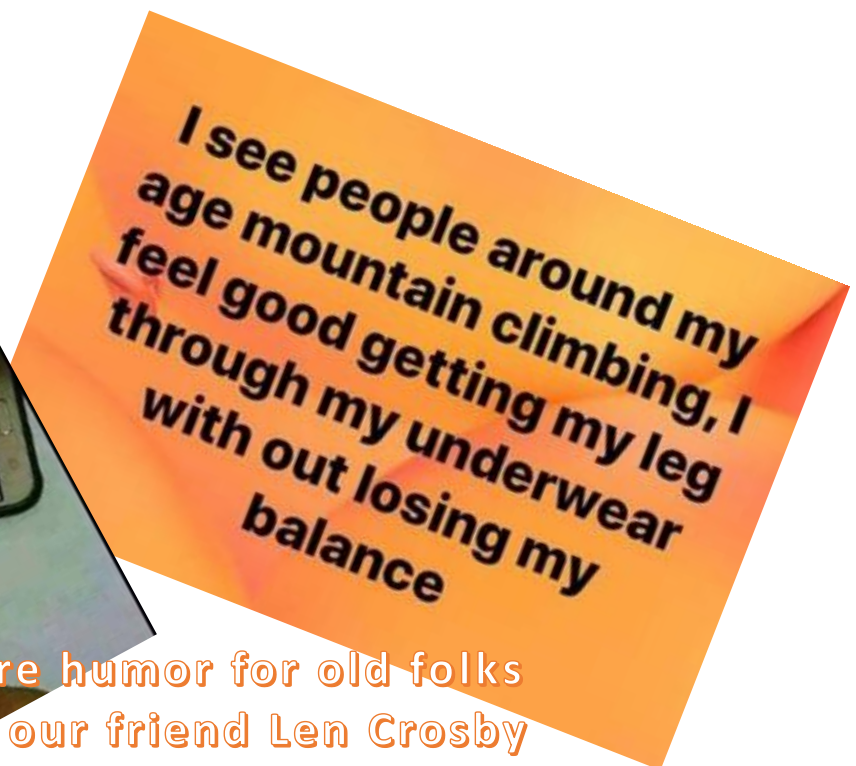
How To Observe National Heart Day

Visit www.millionhearts.hhs.gov learn more about the risks and how to prevent heart disease and stroke. Use #AmericanHeartMonth to share on social media. Here are a few signs the CDC says you may be at risk for heart disease.

1. **High blood pressure.** There are millions of people in the United States who have high blood pressure, and millions of them are as young as in their 40s and 50s. If you are one of them, make sure to have it under control.
2. **High cholesterol, diabetes, and obesity** are all conditions that can increase your risk for heart disease. If you fall into this category, work on eating healthy and getting some physical activity in a few times a week.
3. **Smoking cigarettes.** Over 35 million adults in America are smokers and thousands of young people are picking up the habit daily. If you're a smoker, do your best to quit or cut down. It's what's best for your health.

So, if you want to stay on top of your health and try to avoid the risk of heart disease, there are a few things you can do. Don't smoke, and if you're already a smoker, do your best to quit. Click [here](#) for options for help. The next step you can take is managing any conditions you may have such as high blood pressure and cholesterol. Take your medication as prescribed by your doctor. Next, make heart-healthy diet decisions. Eat whole foods that are low in trans-fat, saturated fat, sodium, and added sugar. A good rule of thumb is to fill half your plate with fruits and vegetables. Finally, get moving! Living a sedentary lifestyle will put you at a much greater risk for heart disease. Try to get in at least 20 minutes of physical activity 4-5 days a week, then build from there!

This article is shared with thanks from <https://nationaldaycalendar.com>



...more humor for old folks
from our friend Len Crosby



Simple Taco Soup

Prep/Total Time: 25 min.

Makes 8 servings (about 2 quarts)

Ingredients

2 pounds ground beef
1 envelope taco seasoning
1-1/2 cups water
1 can (16 ounces) mild chili beans, undrained
1 can (15-1/4 ounces) whole kernel corn, drained
1 can (15 ounces) pinto beans, rinsed and drained
1 can (14-1/2 ounces) stewed tomatoes
1 can (10 ounces) diced tomato with green chiles
1 can (4 ounces) chopped green chiles, optional
1 envelope ranch salad dressing mix

Directions

In a Dutch oven, cook beef over medium heat until no longer pink, breaking it into crumbles; drain. Add taco seasoning and mix well. Stir in the remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, for 15 minutes or until heated through, stirring occasionally. Top with your choice of chopped onion, tortilla chips, grated cheese, sour cream, guacamole, and fresh chopped tomato.



Bacon-Flavored Dog Biscuits

Prep: 20 mins

Cook: 40 mins

Total: 1 hr

Servings: 25

Ingredients

2 eggs
1 cup milk
½ cup water
1 teaspoon salt
10 tablespoons bacon fat, melted
5 cups whole wheat flour

Directions

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Lightly grease a cookie sheet.

Beat eggs in a large bowl. Stir in milk, water, salt, and bacon fat until well blended. Gradually stir in flour to make a stiff dough. Pinch off pieces of the dough and roll into 2 inch balls. Place on prepared baking sheet.

Bake in preheated oven for 35 to 40 minutes. Cool on racks. Store in a covered container in the refrigerator.