



# Manuel Schneidmiller Post 154, Inc. Rathdrum Idaho Newsletter

Volume 7 Issue #2

February 2022

Email: [rathdrum154@gmail.com](mailto:rathdrum154@gmail.com)

Website: [Rathdrumpost154.org](http://Rathdrumpost154.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RathdrumAmericanLegion>

Mailing Address: PO Box 1116, Rathdrum ID

Meeting at: Lions Club 16114 N. Meyer Rd Rathdrum - Editor: Jean Bledsoe



**February is American Heart Month.**

**Learn how to recognize heart disease and risks on page 15.**

#### 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:

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, with the new strains of Covid being less deadly that soon 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 remember as of February 1st, you must have your 2022 membership renewed. I don't want you to lose your continuous year status. Please renew now. American Legion Post 154 continues to support as many of the Legion programs as we can, such as Boy's State, Veteran services and veterans in need. Because of your membership these great programs can continue into the future.

What is the main purpose of The American Legion? It is the nation's largest wartime veterans service organization, committed to mentoring youth and sponsorship of wholesome programs in our communities, advocating patriotism and honor, promoting strong national security, and continued devotion to our fellow service members and veterans. We can't do this without our members volunteering. Also, not only is volunteering a great way to help the post, it also is good for the people who share their time and knowledge with us. According to AmeriCorps, some of those benefits are:

1. Volunteering Builds Community - You make connections with the people you are helping, and you cultivate friendships with other volunteers.
2. Ends Loneliness - Loneliness and social isolation are two of the most severe epidemics in the world today. The simplest way to reverse this. Volunteer!
3. Promotes Longevity - While everyone benefits from a little boost in physical health better, long-term volunteers have longer lives, less disease, and overall health.

What does Potluck mean? It's hard to trace the potluck back to a specific source, but it's fair to say the term was used in the Middle Ages to describe an impromptu meal served to unexpected guests or travelers. Such a drop-in at the dinner hour would get "the luck of the pot" whatever food was left over or kept on the simmer. Sometimes a potluck referred to a one-pot communal meal in which every cook brought something to add, rather like a "stone soup". It wasn't until the late 19th and early 20th century in America that the idea of a meal where everyone brings a prepared dish to share took hold. If all goes well this month we will have in-person meetings and our fantastic potluck meal.

I hope to see you at our next meeting! For God and Country - Dee Sasse, Commander



## Finance Officer:

During the month of January, the Post had income of \$155.00 (primarily income from membership renewals plus one hat sale).

Expenses for the month were \$273.00 (P.O. Box Renewal was \$198 and the balance of the expenses were associated with membership renewals).

Operating loss for January was \$118. We always have an outflow of funds in the first two months of the year as we pay for renewals of our mailbox, insurance, Chamber dues, our website, annual donation to the Lions Club for the use of the building, and other annual renewals.

Our 2022 Operating Budget has been prepared and approved by the Executive Committee. If you have any questions or ideas for raising money, or expenses you feel we should consider PLEASE contact me (208-651-0697 or [crosbylenmary@frontier.com](mailto:crosbylenmary@frontier.com)) or contact one of the Post Officers. We would especially appreciate your ideas regarding possible sources for income or grant opportunities.

Included in our Budget for this year, is a specific fund set aside to our "Building Fund". In prior years, we have earmarked our reserves for that purpose, but we have decided to set up a specific fund for constructing our own building someday. If you wish to make a donation to the Legion you may want to have that specifically earmarked for a program that we run each year (e.g.: Honor Guard, Flag Education, Classroom Sponsorship, Boys and Girls State), the Legion Building Fund or an event we sponsor (Easter Egg Hunt, Sports Team Sponsorship, etc.). Your donation will be segregated from the Legion's operating account and used to support the purpose you designate. Your donation will be acknowledged by a letter and is deductible on your State and Federal taxes. - Len Crosby, Finance Officer



Welcome to February, I can't believe we are a month into the new year! There are a number of members who still need to pay their dues for 2022. We did not meet our goal to receive the membership bonus(\$400), from the Department of Idaho as we only had 135 renewals by the end of January. We needed 142. I have sent reminders out, and I do thank those who have returned their payment for 2022. If you have not yet renewed for 2022, Please do so as soon as you can.

Remember that your dues are a means of support for our post activities. Keep in mind, that the post only receives \$7.50 of the \$45.00 dues payment. I know this is not a large amount to work with but it does go a long way, especially when we have other fundraising activities throughout the year.

To renew your membership online go to [legion.org/renew](http://legion.org/renew), click on pay with a credit card. This is the quickest way to renew. You will be processed within 24 hours. To pay by check you may send to: American Legion Post 154, PO Box 1116, Rathdrum, Idaho 83858. This process takes a minimum of nine days.

Thank you so much.

Bill Kinder, 1st Vice Commander & Membership Chairman

208-661-6850, [wakinder74@gmail.com](mailto:wakinder74@gmail.com)

## Legislative Chairman:

**VA Disability Payments for Veterans increase on January 1, 2022:** VA disability payments for Veterans with service-connected disabilities will increase significantly in January 2022. Here are the new VA disability monthly payments based on the VA's determination of a Veteran's percentage disability, and on the Veterans number of dependents:

Percentage	Rate
10%	\$152.64
20%	\$301.74

30% – 60% Without Children				
Dependent Status	30%	40%	50%	60%
Veteran Alone	\$467.39	\$673.28	\$958.44	\$1,214.03
Veteran with Spouse Only	\$522.39	\$747.28	\$1050.44	\$1,325.03
Veteran with Spouse & One Parent	\$566.39	\$806.28	\$1,124.44	\$1,414.03
Veteran with Spouse and Two Parents	\$610.39	\$865.28	\$1,198.44	\$1,503.03
Veteran with One Parent	\$511.39	\$732.28	\$1,032.44	\$1,303.03
Veteran with Two Parents	\$555.39	\$791.28	\$1,106.44	\$1,392.03
<b>Additional</b> for A/A spouse	\$51.00	\$68.00	\$86.00	\$102.00

70% – 100% Without Children				
Dependent Status	70%	80%	90%	100%
Veteran Alone	\$1,529.95	\$1,778.43	\$1,998.52	\$3,332.06
Veteran with Spouse Only	\$1,659.95	\$1,926.43	\$2,165.52	\$3,517.8

(cont. below)

**Social Security monthly checks will increase on January 1, 2022:** Social Security beneficiaries will see a **5.9%** increase to their monthly checks in 2022. That's much more than the 1.3% adjustment made for 2021, and the largest increase since a 7.4% boost in the 1980s. Unfortunately, that increase will be partially offset by increases in the cost of Medicare insurance. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has released projections for average basic monthly premiums for standard Medicare Part D coverage in 2022, which the agency expects will be about **\$33**, a 4.9% increase from the \$31.47 average premium in 2021. Medicare Part B standard premium for 2022 is expected to be **\$158.50/month** (\$148.50 for 2021). The Medicare 2022 part B yearly deductible is expected to increase \$14 to \$217. Part D - 2022 The Medicare 2022 Part D deductible is also expected to increase.

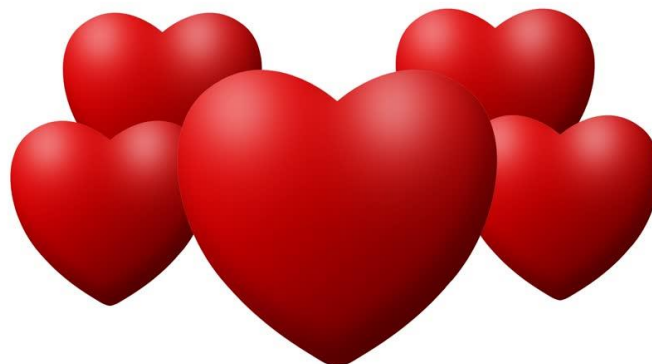
**National Defense Authorization Act:** Due to the hard work and dedicated advocacy of the Legion, many provisions supporting service members, veterans, and their families were passed in the [National Defense Authorization Act \(NDAA\) for Fiscal Year 2022](#). Set forth below are a few provisions that could affect you or a serving member of your family. The NDAA contains over 700 provisions, including several pieces of Legion supported legislation added as amendments:

- **Military Pay Raise.** Service members received a 2.7 percent increase in basic pay for calendar year 2022. This raise is the product of the automatic annual statutory calculation that is aligned to the Employment Cost Index.
- **Military Justice Reform** (Subtitles D and E). Sexual assault and harassment in the military are pervasive issues affecting an alarming number of service members, past and present. Provisions within these subtitles represent substantive changes in how the military handles these cases, including sexual assault investigations that will now be fully independent of chains of command.
- The **National Global War on Terrorism Memorial** (Sec. 6605). This authorizes a Global War on Terrorism memorial to be constructed on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The memorial for America's longest running war will be rightly placed among the war memorials of past generations so that future generations will always remember.
- **Updates and Preservation of Memorials to Chaplains at Arlington National Cemetery** (Sec. 584). This legislation authorizes needed updates and corrections to the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish chaplain memorials located at Arlington National Cemetery. Updates will include the addition of chaplains who have died in service to our nation as far back as World War II.
- The **Alexander Lofgren Veterans in Parks (VIP) Act** (Sec. 641). This legislation will provide free lifetime access to national parks and public lands that honor service members, veterans, and Gold Star families. The National Park Service offered free access through their annual America the Beautiful pass, but this law now creates an enduring lifetime benefit.
- **Improvement of Postpartum Care for Members of the Military and Dependents** (Sec. 707). This will improve postpartum care by creating clinical practice guidelines for postpartum care in military medical treatment facilities. Pelvic health assessment and treatment, and screening for postpartum depression will be addressed.
- **Pilot Program on Assistance for Mental Health Appointment Scheduling at Military Medical Treatment Facilities** (Sec. 734). This establishes a pilot program to assist in scheduling mental health appointments to create a warm handoff and eliminate the barrier to gaps between appointments to ensure participants have continuity of mental health treatment. (cont. below)



- **Afghanistan War Commission Act of 2021** (Sec. 1094). This act establishes a commission charged with investigating all aspects of United States' activities in Afghanistan from June 1, 2001, through August 30, 2021. Points of emphasis will include but not be limited to United States policy objectives, efficacy of efforts, intelligence activities, and circumstances leading to the downfall of the Afghanistan National Defense Security Forces. The commission's final report will be released to the public.
- **Basic Needs Allowance for Members on Active Service in the Armed Forces** (Sec. 601). Food insecurity among military families is a critical issue impacting an estimated 160,000 troops. The newly created Basic Needs Allowance will bring relief to many active duty families by helping to ensure yearly gross household income is equivalent to 130 percent of the federal poverty guidelines as set by the Department of Health and Human Services.
- **Study on Employment of Military Spouses** (Sec. 567). Gainful employment for military spouses can be challenging for a variety of reasons including frequent relocations, licensure challenges, and child care access. This study directs a thorough evaluation of barriers leading to spouse unemployment and underemployment, as well as the identification of policy solutions.
- **Equal Incentive Pay for Members of the Reserve Components of the Armed Forces** (Sec. 602). Recent wars and contingencies have highlighted disparities between the entitlements and benefits received by members of the active and reserve components. This policy change ensures incentive pay parity between members of the National Guard and Reserve, and those on active duty.
- **Standardization of Department of Defense Definitions for Terms Related to Suicide** (Sec. 726). Consistent suicide-related definitions and data collection are key to fully understanding suicide within the ranks. This provision will ensure core definitions and related data collection methods are established and standardized across the Department of Defense (DOD).
- **GAO Biennial Study on Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record Program** (Sec. 741). This legislation directs regular studies and reporting by the Government Accountability Office on the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record (ILER) program. As a vital component of DOD and Department of Veterans Affairs' efforts to align health care with individuals' unique exposures during service, these studies will help ensure the ILER program is functioning as intended.
- **Feasibility Study on Establishment of Housing History for Members of the Armed Forces** (Sec 526). Veteran success after service is in part determined by having reliable housing. However, not all transitioning service members (TSMs) leave service with verifiable housing histories if they have lived only in government-provided housing. Born out of a VFW-SVA Legislative Fellow proposal, this study will determine the feasibility of providing TSMs with a housing history form that can demonstrate their reliability as tenants to prospective civilian landlords.

- Len Crosby, Legislative Chairman



## Chaplain's Pew:

### *7 Prayers for February*

- ♥ *May your finances multiply.*
- ♥ *May your health improve*
- ♥ *May your friends be blessed.*
- ♥ *May your family be loved.*
- ♥ *May your pain be less.*
- ♥ *May your worries disappear.*
- ♥ *May God bless you. Amen*

- Submitted by Helen Kinder, Chaplain



## Sick Call & Taps:

I have sent many cards recently.

Get well cards went out to:

Marilyn Fisher- surgery  
John Fisher- surgery  
Chris Arnold - hospital  
Lew Allert - hospital  
Paula Atwood- injury from fall  
Susan Kemper- surgery  
Leona Flowers - surgery

Prayers to each for Peace and comfort and continued healing.

Sympathy card to Char Carstensen who recently lost her husband Legion member Larry Carstensen. May he Rest in Peace. Love and prayers to Char.

If anyone knows of a Legion member or family member who is ill or in need, please let me know so I can make contact or send a card. Reach Helen Kinder at:

[hlkinder41@gmail.com](mailto:hlkinder41@gmail.com).

- Helen Kinder, Chaplain

Editor's Note: Helen Kinder is also in need of your prayers as she is again out sick with debilitating vertigo.

## Post 154 Honor Guard:

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

### January 2022

The Honor Guard required 65 total volunteers from the 14 Honor Guard members who spent 232 hours and logged 1146 miles to complete their missions. Due to vacations, illness or injury, and other schedule conflicts, not every Honor Guard member is available for each service. Thus, the need for more members.

This month the Honor Guard provided Military Honors for 10 veterans:

6 Army veterans  
1 Marine veteran  
2 Navy veterans  
1 Air Force veteran

Each memorial service or ceremony typically requires between 3 and 8 volunteers. These statistics run monthly from the Membership Meeting a month ago to the last Membership Meeting.

- Bryan Bledsoe, Honor Guard Member

### **Service Officer:**

Do you want to find more information on VA benefits and services? Do you have a question, concern, recommendation, or compliment for VA? Then use the new “[Ask VA](#)” portal!

*What is [Ask VA](#)?*

The [Ask VA online question portal](#), launched on October 18, 2021, was created to provide the Veteran community with an easier, faster and more convenient way to get their questions answered. It replaces VA’s outdated Inquiry Routing & Information System (IRIS) and the GI Bill Help Portal.

*Who Can Access [Ask VA](#)?*

Anyone can access Ask VA to submit a question at any time. Veterans, their families, caregivers, beneficiaries, dependents, or the general public can use Ask VA for specific or broad information on VA benefits and services. Veterans do not have to be enrolled in VA to submit a question. In fact, Ask VA can provide helpful information for Veterans to enroll and begin their VA journey!

*How does [Ask VA](#) Work?*

After a question or comment is submitted, Ask VA routes it to the best subject matter expert to respond. Users can search for answers by category or specific topics, write their specific question in a free-text box, and indicate how they want to be contacted for an answer – via email, phone or secure VA.gov account. Since its launch, customers have used [Ask VA](#) to ask about their VA claim or appeal status and to send in documentation for their GI Bill benefit.

*Use a Secure VA.gov Account to Access all [Ask VA](#) Features*

Anyone can submit a question as a general user with [Ask VA](#) and receive a timely email response. Users also have the option to create or log in to an existing VA.gov account to experience all of [Ask VA](#)’s features. Logging in to VA.gov through a secure authentication process allows our Veteran community to safeguard their personal information, send and receive sensitive information, and easily track their questions and answers. Using [Ask VA](#) through a secure VA.gov account includes additional benefits, like:

- Identifying information will be automatically filled in, saving time;
- Work in progress can be saved to come back to later;
- Users can add more information to a question they’ve already submitted or ask a follow-up question to receive information specific to an existing question;
- Users can receive answers based on preferred method of communication – via email, phone, or secure VA.gov account; and
- Users can track the status, history and answers to previous questions or conversations.

Using [Ask VA](#) by logging in to a secure VA.gov account allows the user to see the history of messages to VA and VA’s answers. This allows the user to refer back to helpful information at any time in a single location, and eliminates the hassle of searching through emails or letters or phone messages to find what they need. And users can be updated via email when VA posts new messages to [Ask VA](#).

*How to Get a Verified VA.gov Account*

To learn more about creating a verified ID.me account, a Premium My HealtheVet account, or a Premium DS Logon account to be able to access all [Ask VA](#)’s features, click on the links below:

- [Learn about verifying your identity and creating an ID.me account](#)
- [Find out how to get a Premium My HealtheVet account](#)
- [Find out how to get a Premium DS Logon account](#)

- Ruth Aresvik, Service Officer



## 2022 Poppy Project:

GREETINGS FABULOUS POST 154 MEMBERS.

I have made changes in our Poppy distribution that will not require so many volunteers and hours. Instead of three weekends we will do one. The stores have been reduced to Super-1 in Athol and Super-1 in Rathdrum. The activity at Rathdrum's Super-1 was high on Thursday last year so that date has been added. The signup sheet is ready so you can pick your dates and times early. We won't make \$6,000 this year but I am anticipating between \$4,000 to \$5,000 based on last year plus the addition of Thursday in Rathdrum. We have also ordered 6,000 poppy's and do not know when they will arrive. - Lonnie Morse, Poppy Chairman



**2022 POPPY PROJECT**  
**Lonnie Morse (208) 777-5157 [lionlonnie@gmail.com](mailto:lionlonnie@gmail.com)**

### RATHDRUM

#### Thursday, May 26, Super-1

0900 – 1300		1300 – 1700	
Bill Kinder	208-772-7736		
Helen Kinder	208-772-7736		

#### Friday, May 27, Super-1

0900 – 1300		1300 – 1700	
Bill Kinder	208-772-7736		
Helen Kinder	208-772-7736		

#### Saturday, May 28, Super-1

0900 – 1300		1300 – 1700	
Bill Kinder	208-772-7736		
Helen Kinder	208-772-7736		

### ATHOL

#### Friday, May 27, Super-1 in Athol

0900 – 1300		1300 – 1700	

#### Saturday, May 28, Super-1 in Athol

0900 – 1300		1300 – 1700	

Contact Lonnie at the number/email above when you've chosen your shift times.

## Training Officer:

Volunteerism is the backbone of The American Legion. This can mean helping with a Post 154 project or event, or it can mean serving on a Post committee or serving in an elected position. This month I have included in the Training article, descriptions of each of the committees. Following that is a list of projects and events. Next month there will be an article on the elected officers' job descriptions - in time for Post elections. If you would like to step up and volunteer (remember, this is not the military), contact a committee chair or officer, or send an email and I will make sure it gets to the right person.

### Post 154 Standing Committees

Are you curious about the programs the Legion supports - or just baffled? Want to dip your toes in the water but don't know where to start? Below you can read about the standing committees that work for the projects and programs of our Post. The chairman is listed with each committee. If you find something that piques your interest, give a shout out (figuratively speaking) to the chairman. There's room for everyone here and every little bit is appreciated. All these chairmen can be reached by email through [rathdrum154@gmail.com](mailto:rathdrum154@gmail.com)

**Americanism Committee** The Americanism Committee shall be charged with the inspiration of patriotism and good citizenship by arrangements for proper observance of patriotic occasions; encouragement of patriotic and civic phases of instruction in schools; Americanization of aliens; combating anti-American propaganda by education of the general public in American ideals through public forums, etc., and activities for community and civic betterment. **Chairman Bill Kinder**

**Ceremonials Committee** The principal duty of the Ceremonials Committee is to insure all new members are properly welcomed to the Post. The committee also concerns itself with proper presentation of other rituals outlined in the Manual of Ceremonies, including but not limited to burial detail and the wearing of Legion regalia, installation of Post Officers and Committeepersons, and preparation for and representation at parades and other public events. The Second Vice-Commander shall be the chairperson of this committee. **Chairman 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander (vacant)**

**Children and Youth Committee** Shall be charged with aid and service to children of veterans, cooperating with other established agencies in the community; laboring for the betterment of child conditions and in coordinating services and agencies in the community for the above purposes. To act as an intermediary for the needy child of a veteran in obtaining the fulfillment of the Legion's pledge that "no child of a war veteran shall be in need of the necessities of life" and "a square deal for every child". **Chairman (vacant)**

**Economic Committee** The economic committee is primarily concerned with the local employment programs, Veteran's preference, government employment and re-employment rights as well as programs that promote and help veterans with self-employment and entrepreneurship. **Chairman Len Crosby**

**Finance Committee** The Finance Committee shall be charged with the administration of financial policies, preparation of budget recommendations and supervision of receiving, disbursing and accounting of all Post funds. The committee is also responsible for recommending financial/strategic goals, long range financial plans that support the mission, of the Post. The Post Finance Officer shall be the chairperson of the Post Finance Committee and appoint or employ an annual impartial auditor of the Post finances and inventory. Auditor to be approved by the Executive Committee. **Chairman Len Crosby (cont. below)**

**Graves Registration and Memorial Committee** The duties of this committee involve recording of grave sites and complete information on veteran's burial in cemeteries assigned to the Post. Special assistance can be given the Service Officer in providing flags, headstones or proper interment in National Cemeteries. The Post Chaplain is the chairperson and Post Historian shall be a member of the Graves Registration and Memorial Committee. **Chairman Helen Kinder**

**House and Entertainment Committee** Such committee shall be responsible for planning and executing all Post social activities for the year, including but not limited to dances, entertainment, musicians, and decorations. This committee shall make recommendations to the Post Commander and Post Executive Committee on all matters pertaining to house rules, ceremonies and events. The chairman of the House and Entertainment Committee shall, develop and maintain a master event calendar for the Post. **Chairman (Vacant)**

**Legislative Committee** The Legislative Committee promotes the Legion's official legislative mandates, disseminates monthly legislative updates, organizes and promotes proactive grassroots lobbying activities, and establishes and maintains liaisons with elected officials and their staffs. **Chairman Len Crosby**

**Membership Committee** The Membership Committee shall have charge of all matters pertaining to the membership of the Post, including the enlistment and training of new Post members, training of committee members, reinstatements, and eligibility of members. The chairperson of said committee shall appoint and train, in accordance with prescribed American Legion standards, such teams as necessary to perform this vital mission. The First Vice-Commander shall be the chairperson of this committee. **Chairman Bil Kinder**

**Public Relations Committee** The Public Relations Committee elevates awareness in the veteran community and the community at large of the Legion's advocacy of veteran issues, national security, Americanism, and children and youth. The committee is responsible for the Post newsletter, media announcements and social media. **Chairman Jean Bledsoe**

**Sons of the American Legion Committee** This committee supervises the Sons of the American Legion squadron in its organization, activities, and recreational and educational programs. **No Post squadron at this time.**

**Veterans' Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee** The Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee shall be vested with responsibility for aid and service to all needy veterans and their families, and children of veterans. This committee shall assist the Post Service Officer as required and shall conduct all matters pertaining to service to and the welfare of comrades through educational efforts/programs concerning the rights and benefits for all veterans, and their dependents as granted them by law, and involve itself in matters pertaining to comrades in their prosecution of claims against the United States and state governments, employment of veterans programs, veterans' burial rights, and other privileges as appropriate. The Post Service Officer shall serve as chairperson of this committee. **Chairman Ruth Aresvik**

**Visiting or VAVS Committee** This committee is charged with visiting and comforting members and their families when sick or bereaved, and with visiting service personnel and ex-service personnel in hospitals. Post Chaplain is the chairperson of this committee. **Chairman Helen Kinder**

**Technology** This committee will help develop and maintain the website and future technological advances that would benefit the Post membership. **Chairman Jean Bledsoe**

**Projects and events which Post 154 sponsors or participates in:**

- |                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Honor Guard         | Flag Retirement        |
| Easter Egg Hunt     | Rathdrum Days          |
| Buddy Checks        | Trunk or Treat         |
| Poppy Project       | Veterans' Recognition  |
| Memorial Day        | Wreaths Across America |
| School Flag Program |                        |

Here are just a couple of examples of the good our volunteers do. During Buddy Checks in October and November one of the callers found a Post member in Rathdrum who'd been plowed in and couldn't dig out. Our usual Post resource for this kind of problem was unavailable, so a call was made to Eric Singer and it was taken care of by our friends at Rathdrum Park and Rec.

A second member contacted during Budy Checks had been hospitalized and couldn't pay January's rent. That rent payment was facilitated through another member's involvement in Stand Down.

Below is an accounting of members' volunteer hour for 2021.

Category	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	HRS YTD
Vets Service	480	410	520	526	557	560	604	632	687	640	787	724	7127
Svc to Community	174	172	185	187	180	195	182	196	192	185	200	320	2368
Svc to Youth	60	52	62	75	85	78	72	68	88	87	98	78	903
Honor Guard	88	78	91	108	127	135	150	198	187	190	170	158	1680
<b>TOTALS:</b>	802	712	858	896	949	968	1008	1094	1154	1102	1255	1280	<b>12078</b>

Thanks to Len Crosby for compiling the volunteer hours for our membership. I strongly suspect this is not a full accounting as not everyone remembers to turn in their hours each month - me included. (Sorry Len.)

- Jean Bledsoe, Training Officer



**Beginning Dec. 23, 2021**, Americans will be able to renew their tourist passports using a new online pilot program that the government plans to roll out fully during 2022.

According to a [press release from the Department of Defense](#) posted on Dec. 21, federal government employees, military members and their family members will be able to use the online renewal system before it is released to the general public.

## Bits & Pieces

- ♥ The Department of Veterans Affairs is planning to expand several programs that allow senior veterans to age in their homes or live in home-like settings as alternatives to elder care facilities. Read more [HERE](#).
- ♥ Free At-home COVID Tests for Veterans? Lawmakers Want VA To Make That a Thing. Read more [HERE](#).
- ♥ The state of Idaho provides several veteran benefits. This [PAGE](#) explains them.
- ♥ Military discounts for Valentine's Day. Read [HERE](#).
- ♥ Free and Discounted Tax Preparation for Military Read [HERE](#)
- ♥ NOTICE: Walmart no longer accepts Tricare insurance effective December 15, 2021. If a veteran tries to fill a prescription at Walmart they will be required to pay the full cost of medication up front then seek partial reimbursement from Tricare. The prescriptions will be considered non-network.
- ♥ Also, please remember to send your volunteer hours to Len Crosby so he can compile them. These include hours devoted to Veterans, Youth, Honor Guard and Community. His email is: [crosbylenmary@frontier.com](mailto:crosbylenmary@frontier.com)



## Mark Your Calendar:

February Americanism Month  
February 6<sup>th</sup> - Four Chaplains Sunday  
**February 10<sup>th</sup> - Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting @ 6 PM Rathdrum Lions Club**  
February 14<sup>th</sup> - Valentine's Day  
February 21<sup>st</sup> - President's Day  
February 24<sup>th</sup> - Start of Operation Desert Storm (1991)  
**February 24<sup>th</sup> - Post 154 Membership Meeting and Potluck @ 5:30 PM Rathdrum Lions Club**  
February 28<sup>th</sup> - End of Operation Desert Storm (1991)

## Did you know...?

The VA Medical Center has a Patient Advocate department. Their purpose is to help veterans in the health system with any issues getting the care they deserve. Can't get your medications refilled? Not able to get a timely response from your primary doctor? Not able to get an appointment with a specialist? Unhappy with your treatment from any department? These are just examples of problems the patient advocate will help with. That is their job - strictly helping the veteran navigate the VA medical system. Here's how to contact them:

### Patient Advocates

**Bldg 1, 1st Floor, Room B128**

**509-434-7504**

- Jean Bledsoe

**Pictorial Progress of the North Idaho Veterans' Home:**



Architect's rendering of North Idaho Veterans Home.

The topping out ceremony held on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021.



Pictures taken January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022:



- Submitted by Bryan Bledsoe, Adjutant



**A Healthier You: February is National Heart Month. Below is information you should know.**

**Review these signs for heart disease *risk*:**

- ♥ High blood pressure. Millions of people in the United States have high blood pressure, and millions of them are as young as 40 or 50. If you are one of them, talk to your doctor about ways to control it.
- ♥ 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 a few times a week.
- ♥ Smoking cigarettes. Over 35 million adults in America are smokers, and thousands of young people pick 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.

**Review these symptoms of the primary forms of *heart disease*:**

**Coronary artery disease (progressing to heart attack):**

- ♥ Mild pain or discomfort of the chest
  - ♥ Discomfort in the arms, back, neck, jaw, or stomach
  - ♥ Shortness of breath
  - ♥ Nausea
  - ♥ Lightheadedness, or breaking out in a cold sweat.
- Note that women can experience completely different and individualized symptoms.  
Go [HERE](#) for a short video.

**Congestive Heart Failure or heart valve disease:**

- ♥ Lightheaded, faint, or dizzy feelings
  - ♥ Irregular heartbeat, heart flutter, or chest pains
  - ♥ Shortness of breath after light activity or while lying down
  - ♥ Tiredness, even if they've had plenty of sleep.
- Go [HERE](#) for a short video.

**Irregular Heart Rate and/or Rhythm:**

- ♥ Palpitations or flutter in the chest
  - ♥ Heart racing or pounding
  - ♥ Dizziness, lightheadedness, fainting (syncope)
  - ♥ Abnormally fast or slow heart rate
  - ♥ Shortness of breath
  - ♥ Chest pain.
- Go [HERE](#) for a short video.



If you have risk factors for heart disease, clip this list and tape it inside your medicine or kitchen cabinet.  
- Jean Bledsoe, Editor



## VA Tests New Automated System that Could Speed Up Claims Decisions



Claims piled up at the VA Regional Office in Winston-Salem, N.C., in 2012. (VA Office of Inspector General)

18 Jan 2022

Military.com | By [Patricia Kime](#)

[Department of Veterans Affairs](#) officials are hoping a new automated system that helps render decisions on disability claims will accelerate the process and decrease the backlog of claims applications.

The automated system being considered by the VA has proven to shorten the disability claims review process from 100 days to two under certain circumstances and conditions, according to the agency.

A pilot run of the VA Automated Benefits Delivery System, launched in December, looked at claims filed by veterans seeking upgrades to their disability ratings for hypertension and cut 98 days from the process for those with complete files. VA officials said the program is part of a plan to address 260,000 current disability claims, including 59,000 that are older than 125 days and are considered backlogged.

"We saw an opportunity to look at our traditional disability claims process and see how we can better leverage the data we have ... to introduce business-process automation," explained Rob Reynolds, acting deputy undersecretary for the VA's Office of Automated Benefit Delivery, during a press conference with reporters Tuesday.

The system takes electronic or paper claims and uses algorithms to determine whether the file contains enough data and information to render a decision. It then weighs the information against the rules that govern disability claims and makes a recommendation whether to approve or disapprove the claim.

The system's recommendation is reviewed and validated by a rating veterans service representative. If at any time the system decides that more information is needed -- the veteran needs a comprehensive medical exam or more data is required to render a decision -- the claim is sent to a claims reviewer for traditional processing, Reynolds said.

Read the complete story [HERE](#). - Submitted by Jean Bledsoe, Editor



## Hearts of Bronze at Idaho State Veterans Cemetery

By Ruth Aresvik

Veterans Help Net Correspondent

*The statue, titled "I Will Have Your Back Always," was sculpted by Idaho artist Benjamin Victor.*

We drive slowly, passing the granite markers, firmly uniform in their placement. They remind me of soldiers standing at attention.

As we climb the hill and turn the corner, we are blessed with a magnificent view. Flying free and proud, Old Glory stands guard over the rugged foothills and the 76.5 acres of hallowed ground.

This is the Idaho State Veterans Cemetery in Boise, which opened in 2004 and, to date, is the final resting place for over 10,000 service men and women, including three Medal of Honor veterans. Brandon Titus, a soldier from Boise, killed in the war in Iraq, was the first to be buried at the cemetery.

I was born and raised on a farm in Southern Idaho and have visited the cemetery many times. On this particular visit, I wanted to see the statue that had been unveiled and dedicated in May 2021. Reporting for Channel 2 News in Boise, Trevor Fay interviewed both former Governor Dirk Kempthorne, who spearheaded the project, and sculptor Benjamin Victor. In addition to this work, Victor is the only living sculptor to have three statues on display in the U. S. Capitol Building.

The statue, says Fay, shows a male soldier kneeling in prayer with the dog tags of his comrades in his hands, while a female soldier rests her hand on his back and looks south across the valley, alert for danger. Victor, who works and lives in Boise, says the theme is 'having your back. It took about a year to make the piece. And it's two life-sized figures, so it wasn't a quick process, obviously, and there was a lot of research involved. I used the real uniforms to look at and measure off of to sculpt and make sure everything on the sculpture was accurate.'

The man wears a uniform from the Vietnam War era, while the woman wears clothing from the Gulf War. Both figures of the statue have bronze hearts inside of them. The hearts are filled with soil from the fields of American wars.

As I circle the statue, I notice several pennies have been placed at the feet of the soldiers, indicating that someone (veteran or civilian) has visited this site, or grave. Coins are often left on the headstones – a nickel would signify that the coin-leaver attended boot camp with the veteran. A dime signifies that the coin-leaver served with the veteran in some capacity. A quarter: the visitor was present when the veteran died.

My paperwork is on file and secure at this cemetery. Someday I will be at peace with the wind and the windflowers, overlooking my beautiful Idaho. I take one last look at this Treasure Valley, then turn to the solid bronze soldiers, salute, and place a penny at their feet.

To learn more, visit [www. idaho.veterans.gov/cemetery](http://www.idaho.veterans.gov/cemetery). - Ruth Aresvik/ Veterans Help Net

## STORY OF THE FOUR CHAPLAINS

... a rendezvous with destiny, February 3, 1943, the freighter rose and fell sluggishly at her pier, with the dark waves slapping at her sides. The garish New England night was full of shadows and the sound of winches, screeching cranes, and the shuffling cadence of weary troops. One of the black shadows hung over the stern of the freighter almost obliterating her name ... the DORCHESTER. The vessel was old and small, and only the exigencies of total war had forced her transformation into the troopship. On this night in mid-January, 1943 she was being loaded with troops at the Massachusetts port; her destination hidden in an envelope of secret orders. Soldiers, 904 men in all, tramped through the companion-way down into the bowels of the ship. Naked light bulbs showed them their quarters -- bunks hastily built into the hold, four tiers high, six meager feet of space per man. Among their number walked four chaplains. Their names - Fox, Goode, Poling, and Washington - told nothing. At 0600 the next morning the DORCHESTER cast off her lines and headed out to sea. The men grew tense with fear of the unknown moments ahead, and rumors as to their destination flew across the ship. Only the sky pilot knew they were headed for Greenland. At this period of World War II, allied shipping, under constant attack by wolf packs of Nazi U-boats, were being sunk almost as fast as it could be built. All available destroyers were sent to guard the carriers and battlewagons pounding the Japanese Islands in the far Pacific and the vital convoys to the United Kingdom. For such as the lumbering DORCHESTER, there were only a few Coast Guard cutters and make-do craft for escort. Day became night and night became day as the little convoy followed the course to Greenland. As the month of January ran out, the four chaplains bunked, talked, and worked together, comforting the sick, reassuring the troubled ones, and joined in the singing and daily banter. All admired them, because, while they were men of GOD, they were first of all real men. A mysterious sense of danger was prevalent throughout the ship. On the evening of the second day of the new month one of the three escort's Coast Guard cutters blinked a message across the water: "WE ARE BEING FOLLOWED BY A SUBMARINE." The P.A. System crackled with orders, and the crew jumped to their guns! The DORCHESTER'S engine whined and labored to gain speed but could push the ungainly freighter along at only ten knots. The convoy stopped briefly at St. John's, Newfoundland and then moved on northeastward through the strange whiteness of an Arctic night. On the next morning, February third, the ship's bells sounded one o'clock. They never sounded again. A minute later a torpedo smashed into the DORCHESTER well below the water line amid ship. The torpedo exploded with all its terrific fury in the engine room! Bursting steam lines fatally scalded the engineers and oilers with cruel abandon. The sea rushed into the hole like a tidal wave, drowning a hundred men like rats in a trap. Stark panic whipped across the ship, blotting out in an instant the so-newly acquired training in discipline and survival. Men cursed bitterly and others wept -- as they struggled feverishly with boats and lines. Others rushed below deck in search of forgotten life belts - never to return. Through this scene of terror moved a few strong men, purposeful, calm, and seemingly unafraid. Among these were the four chaplains, rushing everywhere about the ship, in the terror-ridden interior and on the crazily tilted deck, giving some men the strength to live and others the courage to die. Suddenly, the ship shivered and men everywhere cried out - "She's going down! We'll

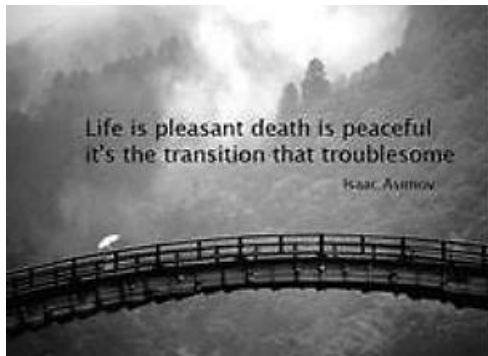
be sucked under!" The chaplains sensed the threat. "Over the side men, make it fast," they cried. The wind tore the words from their lips. "Get away from the ship before it pulls you down!" Men looked at the four chaplains with new wonder, seeking a sign, some symbol to carry with them into the valley of death. One man, more boy than man, made his way to the group at the rail. "Padre, I've lost my life-jacket. I can't swim. I'll..." One of the chaplains tore off his own and put it about the boy's shoulders. "take this. I'm staying. I won't need it." The soldier tied the jacket's strings, mounted the rail, and dipped into the sea - now almost level with the deck. The other chaplains followed without hesitation, with the full realization that there could be no survival in the icy sea without their life jackets. During the last dying moments of the freighter, four chaplains, their crosses on their collars and one with the Tablets of the Law on his, stood with arms linked in devoted prayer as the vessel's bow came up and then slid under the raging surface. Somewhere off in the seething seas four other men escaped the jaws of death, supported by the chaplains' lifejackets. Of the 904 men aboard the DORCHESTER, only 209 survived. Many of these survivors owe their lives to the spiritual courage and supreme sacrifice of the FOUR CHAPLAINS who have passed on a legacy of Brotherhood to all men. Aboard the DORCHESTER were four U.S. Chaplains - Protestant, Catholic, Jewish - who each in his own way answered the call to serve GOD and man. With arms linked, symbolic of their common bond, the FOUR CHAPLAINS remained praying on the deck until it sank into the black waters of everlasting glory.

Rev. George L. Fox - Methodist  
Dr. Alexander Goode - Rabbi (Jewish)  
Rev. Clark V. Poling - Reformed (Dutch)  
Father John P. Washington - Catholic

"Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends."

- Submitted by Helen Kinder, Chaplain





**American Legion Post 143 presents:  
"Live A Good Life, Plan A Good Death"  
by Dr. Neilly Buckalew, MD**

*" I hope I don't leave a mess for my kids to deal with"*

You've lived a good life, but what does it mean to plan a good death? What are the things that we need to know for planning and advanced directive also known as a living will? What's the difference between code status and an advance directive? How do we talk about end-of-life care planning with our family, and why is it important for them to understand our wishes? What are the different powers of attorney that I need to know? How do we even come to know what our wishes are?

These are a few of the areas that we will be discussing together during this interactive workshop "Live a Good Life, Plan a Good Death". We will also specifically look at the VA's version of an advance directive and correct the errors of this form.

Neilly Buckalew, MD will be facilitating this topic for us. Over the years, Dr. B has provided intensive palliative and hospice care to both patients and her family. She has assisted thousands of patients to understand and create advance directives.

"My father, a retired Army Veteran, taught me the most about the importance of planning for a good death, and because of this, he was able to be at home with family and die peacefully. My mother as well. I understood fully what they wanted and was able to support them in their desires to not only live a good life, but to experience a good death.... as any could be."

**Saturday; February 19th ~ 11 am - 1 pm  
American Legion Post 143, 1138 E Poleline Ave, Post Falls,  
208-773-9054**

Dr. B and American Legion Post 143 have partnered for this first in a 3-part series of workshops for our members.

Future subjects to include: "The PT of Living Well" and "Fall Prevention, Can You Pass the Longevity Test?" Healing Heroes OWN is a growing network providing free service and support for veterans and their families.

*There is no charge for these seminars, please call 208-773-9054 to reserve a seat, we look forward to seeing you.*

<https://www.ownyourhealth.global/healingheroes>

Tim Shaw  
Adjutant  
American Legion Post 143





## For Vulnerable People Who Catch COVID, Quick Action and These Treatments Can Help

Health Jan 26, 2022 4:06 PM EST

So you’ve just tested positive for COVID – what now? If you are immunocompromised, older or otherwise vulnerable, you may feel overwhelmed or scared about seeking care in a moment when U.S. case counts remain sky-high and hospitals are at their breaking point.

Omicron’s ability to infect others with rapid speed means that more people in general are more vulnerable to infection, including those whose age or medical conditions make them more at risk for serious outcomes. While omicron appears to cause less severe illness compared to prior variants, models project the country will still see **between 50,000 and 300,000 additional COVID-19 deaths** by early spring. So the talk about “mild infection” may offer little reassurance to individuals and families in those circumstances.

**READ MORE: A doctor’s advice about testing and masks right now**


Several of the outpatient COVID-19 therapeutics are only available to those who are eligible — in many cases, people who are over the age of 65, have relevant underlying medical conditions or who are immunocompromised — and must be administered within a few days after symptom onset, once their infection is confirmed by a positive test. **Qualifying conditions** may include diabetes, chronic lung diseases, heart conditions, sickle cell disease and others. Therapeutics are no substitute for vaccination, doctors emphasize. Generally, if you are unvaccinated, otherwise healthy and experiencing severe symptoms, your main option is to seek emergency care.

In a dream world, every COVID-positive person who is potentially eligible for life-saving treatments would have immediate and easy access to the care that they need, said Dr. Lindsay Petty, an infectious disease physician at Michigan Medicine, part of the University of Michigan.

Right now, that’s not the world we live in. But you’ll never know what options are available until you make a call to a physician and get the ball rolling.

Here’s a look at treatment options for medically vulnerable people and why swift home-testing is so important.

**Outpatient therapies for high-risk COVID-19 patients**



Name of drug	Type	When it should be taken	Treatment length	Efficacy (preventing hospitalization or death)
Paxlovid	Antiviral pill	Within 5 days of symptom onset	5 days	88%
Molnupiravir	Antiviral pill	Within 5 days of symptom onset	5 days	30%
Sotrovimab	Monoclonal antibody infusion	Within 10 days of symptom onset	90 minutes	85%
Remdesivir	Antiviral infusion	Within 7 days of symptom onset	3 days	87%

Source: National Institutes of Health

Graphic by Megan McGrew/PBS NewsHour

### What To Do If You Test Positive

If you or a loved one tests positive for COVID-19, the first thing you should do is call a health care provider, whether that’s your family doctor or your local community health center. If you’re not sure where to start, you can also call your local health department for advice.

Time is of the essence when making that call, because if a COVID-positive person is eligible for treatments like monoclonal antibodies, antiviral pills or other outpatient therapeutics, there’s a time limit on when those can be administered. Read the full story [HERE](#)