



Manuel Schneidmiller Post 154, Inc.

Rathdrum Idaho Newsletter

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Mailing Address: PO Box 1116, Rathdrum ID

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



Manuel Schneidmiller 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:

Winter is nearly over, and I thought we had gotten through it without too much cold weather. Well, this week defiantly showed us! The daylight is coming back fast, we're not out of it yet but at least we have some more sun and the good prospect of the summer and better weather bringing more outdoor goings-on.

We have gotten a lot of new members so please continue to work on the Commander's Project. (The Basic Training Program). I really would like to see a majority of our members do this program. It is so worth it. I also wanted to mention that if you have any questions about training, Jean Bledsoe is our Training Officer. She is doing a fantastic job so when you see here tell her "Thank you"!

The January membership meeting was well attended with a super yummy potluck. Please consider coming and enjoying the food, comradery, friendship and fun at our February meeting.

Also, we passed our 2023 budget and started making plans for the up-and-coming year. One of the new and exciting events that will be going on this spring is a Gun Raffle, so far, we have a new 12-gauge AR-Style Shotgun and a new black power rifle. I hope we get some more gun donations or maybe a dinner gift card so we can sell a lot of tickets. Thanks for your support!

God bless you and your families. God bless our troops and God bless America. – Dee Sasse, Commander

OPTIMIST DAY | February 2nd

Confident people look to the future with hope, and on Optimist Day we celebrate the volunteers who share their enthusiasm, skills, and talent to make that tomorrow a vibrant and peaceful one. On the first Thursday in February, recognize an optimist whose endeavors have made a difference in your community.

Optimist Day recognizes the volunteers and the youth who support their communities in many different ways. Every day, our growing communities rely on the ingenuity and energy of the next generation to be an integral part of our neighborhoods, schools, and towns. These young volunteers and the mentors who guide them connect them to the greater world around us. Their stewardship creates a hopeful future for us all. See page 10 for some further inspiration.

2023 Poppy Information



The letters have been written and delivered to the Super-1's in Rathdrum and Athol. After last year's success on Thursday (\$919), we will do Thursday again. I have also added Thursday to the Athol store.

So keep open the following dates so, you too, can join in the fun and camaraderie and the thrill of meeting people and listening to their stories: Thursday - May 25th, Friday-May 26th and Saturday-May 27th. The signup sheet has been made and will be passed out at a later date. Let's set our goal at \$6,000.

All I am waiting for now is the go ahead from the stores. - Lonnie Morse, Poppy Chairman

Finance Officer:

December 2022 Finance Officer Report: We are closing the books of our fiscal year 2022. As we do so, the Post is in good financial condition. As of the end of the year, we a checking account balance of \$7,215.85 and an additional \$576.31 in our Money Market account.

The majority of our assets and reserves are invested in Certificates of Deposit, because we can earn much greater interest on those than we can on deposit accounts. As we closed out the year, we had a total of 5 Certificates of Deposit totaling \$74,012.76. All of our CD's have 12 month to 18 month maturities and are "laddered" so we have a CD maturing in each of the four quarters of 2024. Interest rates range from a low of 0.40% for our CD opened in February of 2022 to 4.00% for a CD opened in December of 2022.

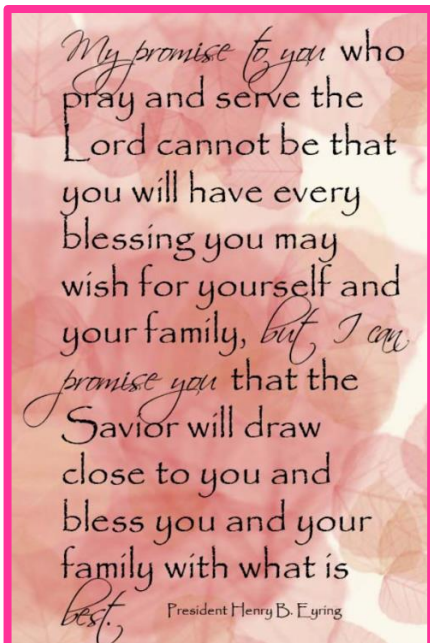
As CD's mature, they will be reinvested at today's higher interest rates. Assuming that all of our CD's were earning 4% we would have annual income from interest of \$2,960.

During the month of December 2022, Post 154 received income of \$\$410.80 and had expenses of \$\$547.50. Net loss for the month of December was \$136. Income was from donations to our Honor Guard (\$300), Membership renewals (\$90); Sale of one Legion hat (\$20) and interest income of \$0.80.

Expenses were for the purchase of postal stamps prior to the rates increasing (\$360), membership renewal expenses (\$112.50), and Honor Guard expenses (\$75.00) – Honor Guard also raises its own funds from donations from family members for whom Military Honors are provided at a Veteran's funeral.

We always have greater expenses in the first quarter, as we renew our P.O. Box, our insurance, our website, make our annual donation to the Lions, and numerous other one-time expenses. Once we have completed that, we need to have a discussion on how we want our new year to go. Do we keep accumulating money and if so, to what goal? Is that goal realistic? If not, how can we use some of our funds to help Veterans and our Community? PLEASE, THINK ABOUT THESE ISSUES. – Len Crosby, Finance Officer

Chaplain's Pew:



Sick Call & Taps:

Helen Kinder, our chaplain, continues to be quite debilitated with vertigo. Please keep her in your prayers.



Service Officer:

Did you know there are two different types of beneficiaries you need to designate and keep up to date if you are a retiree? One is your Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) beneficiary. The other is your beneficiary for Arrears of Pay (AOP), which is the prorated retiree pay from first of the month of death, to date of death, because entitlement to retired pay stops on the date of death.

Each type of beneficiary must be designated separately. And each type of beneficiary needs to be checked regularly to make sure the contact information is up to date. It is also suggested that you limit the number of your APO beneficiaries to avoid delays in payment. Remember that the AOP payment is usually less than one month's pay, and this amount will be divided among all your designated beneficiaries.

Keeping your beneficiary information current will help your loved ones.

Time to check and update your AOP beneficiary? Find out more at: <https://go.usa.gov/xJxd7> or <https://lnkd.in/g-M5GumD>

Service-Connected Disabled Veterans Property Tax Benefit

Between January 2nd and April 15th, disabled Veterans having a rating of 100% service-connected disability, may apply for a \$1,500 property tax benefit. Veterans who qualify, the property taxes on your primary home and up to one acre would be reduced by \$1,500.00. Income is not a factor for qualification. The Veteran must provide a VA letter EACH year, stating the 100% rating and must have this determination prior to January 1st. You may contact the Veteran's Administration (VA), at 1-800-827-1000, each year to acquire a current letter. This benefit can be combined with the Property Tax Reduction (Circuit Breaker) if applicable, however, the combined benefit cannot be more than the actual bill.

Share this information with your friends, family and neighbors! [View a printable brochure here](#) (PDF)

For more information contact the Assessor's Office at 208-446-1500.

Editor's Note: Go to www.va.gov – click on download benefits letters Download Benefit Summary and Service Verification Letter. Your letter that you submit for Kootenai County taxes MUST be dated 2023, so go back on the website after 1 JAN and print it.

ATTENTION!

Scammers are taking advantage of new opportunities to commit fraud. There has been an increase in PACT Act-related phishing emails and calls targeting Veterans to access their PACT Act benefits or submit claims on their behalf. Find a VA accredited representative near you for help filing a claim for free.

- Ruth Aresvik, Service Officer

A Healthier You:

February 14th through the 21st is Alzheimer and Dementia Care Education Week. In the Veteran's Health Library are several articles on dementia care. Here is one you might not think about right away.

Caring for Dementia: Legal and Financial Planning

After a diagnosis of dementia, you may have a lot of questions about finances. Dementia is a long-term illness. This means that costs for managing it are ongoing. The costs are likely to go up over time as you need more care. The sooner you start planning, the easier it will be for you and your family to manage future needs.

Gathering your financial information

The first step in making a financial plan is to gather information such as:

- A list of your assets, such as a home and car
- Copies of deeds and titles
- Statements for bank and investment accounts, debts, loans, and bills
- A list of income, such as pensions and Social Security

Read more [HERE](#)



The Four Chaplains

On Feb. 3, 1943, four Army chaplains – Father John P. Washington, Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, and the Revs. George L. Fox and Clark V. Poling – gave up their life jackets on a sinking Army transport in the North Atlantic so that others might live.

Of the 902 soldiers, Navy armed guard, ship's crew and civilian passengers on board the Dorchester, only 230 survived. They have told us of the chaplains' efforts to restore calm in a hopeless and chaotic situation, and how they were last seen at the ship's stern, arms linked in prayer.

The survivors' testimony and the chaplains' bravery are enshrined at the Chapel of Four Chaplains in the Philadelphia Navy Yard, where the Chapel Memorial Foundation honors acts of selfless service nationwide in memory of the Four Chaplains and crew of USAT Dorchester.

– Louis A. Cavaliere, retired Navy captain and chairman of the Chapel of Four Chaplains, and Christine Beady, the chapel's executive director

Read more about the Four Chaplains [here](#) and [here](#). - Submitted by Helen Kinder, Chaplain



Join Team RWB's Patriotic Old Glory Relay Stretching More than 4,000 Miles

[Team RWB](#), which is focused on enriching the lives of Veterans, is coordinating the Old Glory Relay. Over a 50-day period, supporters will unite to walk, run, push and cycle an American flag more than 4,000 miles from Seattle, Washington, to Atlanta, Georgia.

[SIGN UP](#) [READ MORE](#)

Things to Do to Start the New Year Prepared

1. Clean out your medicine cabinet. Remove expired medications and ones you no longer take. VAMC and CBOC both have disposal options.
2. Clean out your computer. Delete emails you no longer need. Empty your trash and spam. Delete unneeded files! Now, empty your primary trash.
3. Organize your important legal documents: DD214, birth certificate, final will or trust, life insurance policies, marriage certificate, divorce decree, any other documents family members may need when you pass. If you can, scan them into your computer in one file. If you can't do that, put them all together in a safe place and be sure someone knows where they are.
4. Now, make a list of all your passwords and logins, and don't forget the codes to get into your phone and computer. Put them in your document safe place– Submitted by Bob Kernan

Hello from your Kootenai County Veterans Services Office,

It is tax season.... and if you are a veteran recipient of 100% disability, or Individual unemployable (IU), or an un-remarried surviving spouse (living in the same house the veteran was living in at the time of passing and the deceased Vet was 100% or IU) you may be eligible for \$1500 off your property taxes.

So, Veterans and surviving spouses are required to have a **CURRENT VA BENEFIT LETTER** dated Jan 1, 2023 or later for the current tax season. And, this letter, along with an application must be filed at the **County Assessor's Office** by **April 18th**, end of the 2022 tax season. Applications are provided by the Assessor's Office. See the links and contact information below for more details on filing.

<https://www.kcgov.us/838/Veterans-Property-Tax-Benefit>

<https://www.kcgov.us/DocumentCenter/View/9364/VA-Brochure>

County Assessor's Office:

Physical Address

451 Government Way
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

Phone: [208-446-1500](tel:208-446-1500)

Fax: 208-446-1501

Hours

Monday - Friday

9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Mailing Address

P.O. Box 9000
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814

There are several ways to obtain a copy of your current **BENEFIT LETTER:**

- 1) Call the VA customer service number at [1-800-698-2411](tel:1-800-698-2411) and a VA representative can either **email** or **mail** a copy to you
- 2) Or, download a benefit letter from the [VA.Gov](https://www.va.gov/) website, if you have an account. <https://www.va.gov/>. Need help with creating an account, call [1-800-698-2411](tel:1-800-698-2411)
- 3) Or, call my office, [208 446-1098](tel:208-446-1098) or stop by the KC Veterans Services Office and we will order your benefit letter. Ordering can take up to 3 weeks to be mailed to you.

Time is ticking towards April 18th, don't procrastinate in getting your benefit letter and filing it.

Thomas (Tom) Freeman
Veterans Services Officer
Director

120 E. Railroad Avenue
Post Falls, Idaho 83854
Office: (208) 446-1090
FAX: (208) 446-1093

Did you know...?

If you've been married more than once your current spouse will not receive VA benefits if the first spouse is still listed on your will. Be sure to change the beneficiary on all your legal documents so your benefits go to the right person. – Submitted by Bob Kernen, Judge Advocate

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 or by phone at 509-953-0885.

From Dec 22 – Jan 26 and there were 4 ceremonies. 3 US Army, 1 US Navy, 85 volunteer hours performed by 25 volunteers who drove 547 miles.



The following Honor Guard stats for calendar year 2022 were presented at the January Post monthly meeting: Thank you to all the Honor Guard members for making this happen.

The Honor Guard conducted a total of 148 missions;

124 Funerals &

24 Ceremonies (Color Guard, etc.)

Of the 124 Funerals, honors were provided for:

47 Army Vets

40 Navy Vets

23 Air Force Vets

11 Marine Corp Vets &

3 Coast Guard Vets

To accomplish these missions, the Honor Guard team -

Required: 573 (exhausted) Personnel

Consumed: 2,246 Volunteer Hours

Traveled: 11,357 Miles

- Submitted by Ken Johnson, Honor Guard Coordinator

Mark Your Calendar:

February	Americanism Month
February 2 nd	Groundhogs Day & Optimist Day
February 4 th	Area A Oratorical Contest @ Post 143 at 2 pm
February 5 th	Four Chaplains Sunday
February 9th	Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting @ Lions Club 6 pm
February 9 th	National Giving Hearts Day
February 12 th	Super Bowl Sunday - Kick off at 3:30 PM
February 13 th	National Clean Out Your Computer Day
February 14 th	Valentine's Day
February 17 th	National Random Acts of Kindness Day
February 20 th	Presidents Day
February 21 st	Fat Tuesday
February 22 nd	Ash Wednesday
February 23rd	Post 154 General Membership Meeting @ Lions Club 5:30 potluck & 6 pm



Bits & Pieces

- **Republicans named Alabama Rep. Mike Rogers** as chairman of the House Armed Services Committee and Illinois Rep. Mike Bost as chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee as part of their leadership plans for the 118th Congress. Both moves were expected, but the official designation allows both committees to now begin their work. Chamber operations have been stalled for the last week as Republican lawmakers debated who would serve as the next House speaker. [Read More...](#)
- **Veterans Receive Free Emergency Mental Healthcare as of January 17.** As reported January 13 by Svetlana Shkolnikova for *Stars and Stripes*, veterans struggling with suicidal thoughts will now be able to receive free emergency mental healthcare at any VA medical facility or outside provider. The new policy will apply to all veterans in mental health crisis, even if they're among the estimated 9 million former servicemembers who are not using their VA benefits, according to the VA. The effort is part of the department's 10-year strategy to reduce suicide by veterans, who are at a significantly higher suicide risk than the general population. [Read More](#)
- **'Widow's Tax' on Survivors Will Be Completely Gone as of Feb. 1.** Feb. 1 benefits checks won't have the so-called "widow's tax" reducing income for the surviving spouses of military retirees who participate in two programs. Until 2020, survivors couldn't receive the full amount of two survivor benefits at the same time. Under the rule known as the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) "offset," the government reduced payments that were part of that program by the amount of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) that beneficiaries received from the Department of Veterans Affairs. [Read More...](#)
- **Win a \$500 Shopping Spree on ShopVCS.** Get your Valentine's Day shopping done on ShopVCS.com with discounts on diamond jewelry, Phillip's flowers, YETI, Under Armour and more. Plus, new members are automatically entered to win a \$500 account credit when they sign up before Jan. 31 at 11:59 p.m. PT. Other terms and conditions apply.

[SIGN UP FOR FREE](#)

VA to pay for all emergency mental health care.

VA has submitted an [interim final rule](#) to the federal register to establish this authority [under section 201 of the Veterans Comprehensive Prevention, Access to Care, and Treatment \(COMPACT\) Act of 2020](#). The final policy, which took effect on Jan. 17, will allow VA to:

- Provide, pay for or reimburse for treatment of eligible individuals' emergency suicide care, transportation costs, and follow-up care at a VA or non-VA facility for up to 30 days of inpatient care and 90 days of outpatient care.
- Make appropriate referrals for care following the period of emergency suicide care.
- Determine eligibility for other VA services and benefits.
- Refer eligible individuals for appropriate VA programs and benefits following the period of emergency suicide care.

Eligible individuals, regardless of VA enrollment status, are:

- Veterans who were discharged or released from active duty after more than 24 months of active service under conditions other than dishonorable.
- Former members of the armed forces, including reserve service members, who served more than 100 days under a combat exclusion or in support of a contingency operation either directly or by operating an unmanned aerial vehicle from another location who were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.
- Former members of the armed forces who were the victim of a physical assault of a sexual nature, a battery of a sexual nature, or sexual harassment while serving in the armed forces.

Over the past year, VA has announced or continued several additional efforts to end veteran suicide, including establishing 988 (then press 1) as a way for Veterans to quickly connect with caring, qualified crisis support 24/7; proposing a new rule that would reduce or eliminate copayments for Veterans at risk of suicide; conducting an ongoing public outreach effort on firearm suicide prevention and lethal means safety; and leveraging a national Veteran suicide prevention awareness campaign, "Don't Wait. Reach Out."

If you're a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive 24/7 confidential support. You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect. To reach responders, Dial 988 then Press 1, chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or text 838255.



Training Officer:

Because of the length of the meeting in January, training was postponed until the February meeting. It will resume with unit 1 of Organization. The handout will be available at the meeting and in the March newsletter.



Promise Yourself

To be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind

To talk health, happiness and prosperity to every person you meet

To make all your friends feel that there is something in them

To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true

To think only of the best, to work only for the best and to expect only the best

To be just as enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own

To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to the greater achievements of the future

To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile

To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have no time to criticize others

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

- Christian D. Larson



Hi all,

A bit of fun entertainment is coming to town, it's a USO style show.



As the official Idaho stop of their 50-States Tour, Letters From Home will bring back the style of the USO with a high-energy performance featuring Erinn Dearth and Dan Beckmann! This duo has performed over 900 shows across the United States for veterans and their families, and performed at the 75th Anniversary of D-Day in Normandy, France. The show is filled with singing, tap dancing, knee-slapping jokes and audience interaction that make up a spectacular performance geared towards uniting the nation through music.

Kroc Center in CDA - April 12th at 7 PM

Tickets can be purchased at <https://app.arts-people.com/index.php?show=139423>

February is the month of love! But it's not all flowers and romance and candy hearts. Love can be messy and complicated. Confusing emotions indeed – but it keeps us alive and hopeful. Here are a couple of poems I came across in my collection – one in honor of my daughter who celebrates a birthday this month. I caught her napping at her house many years ago, and mama love memories popped up; another from the need to empty and rest my ever revolving brain.....

January 19, 2017

my daughter's bedroom is a fright
I don't know how she sleeps at night
my five foot six inch baby

but I thank God he put her there
her long tan legs and long brown hair
my five foot six inch baby

she'll grow up fast
she'll grow up strong
I'll wake one day
and she'll be gone

she'll start life's journey, come what might
she'll move away, out of my sight.....
but on this night.....
she's my five foot six inch baby.

- Written and submitted by Ruth Aresvik

May 6, 2016

She is his hurricane,
causing destruction with her words.
Words surrounded by words
earth dirt sex aroma
She is unable to condense or control.
She stumbles with the spirit of an avalanche.

He is her meadow,
mild and mellow with his words.
wind warm comfort calm
He is able to glow and dance slow.
He weaves his love with textured tapestry.

She is his hurricane.
He is her meadow.



Make a Difference for Veterans Like You by joining VA's Million Veteran Program



Data from more than 900,000 Veterans in the [Million Veteran Program](#) have supported some of the largest genetic studies to date on PTSD, major depression, heart disease, as well as groundbreaking research in suicide prevention.

[LEARN MORE](#)



US pilot shot down four Soviet MiGs in 30 minutes – and kept it a secret for 50 years

By [Brad Lendon](#), CNN

Updated 8:02 AM EST, Sat January 21, 2023

Seoul, South Korea CNN —

Royce Williams was a real-life “Top Gun” 10 years before Tom Cruise was even born.

On a cold November day in 1952, Williams shot down four Soviet fighter jets – and became a legend no one would hear about for more than 50 years.

The now 97-year-old former naval aviator was presented with the Navy Cross, the service’s second-highest military honor at a ceremony Friday in California.

Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro said on Friday that among the many proposals he has reviewed to upgrade sailors’ awards, Williams’ case “stood out above all others. It was very clear to me that his actions were truly extraordinary and more closely aligned with the criteria describing a higher medal.” “Freedom does not come cheap,” Del Toro said. “It comes through the sacrifice of all those who have and continue to serve in today’s military. Your actions that day kept you free. They kept your shipmates free in Task Force 77. Indeed, they kept all of us free.”

Here’s what Williams did to earn that honor.

Outnumbered and outgunned

On November 18, 1952, Williams was flying the F9F Panther – the US Navy’s first jet fighter – on a mission during the Korean War.

He took off from the aircraft carrier USS Oriskany, which was operating with three other carriers in a task force in the Sea of Japan, also known as the East Sea, 100 miles off the coast of North Korea.

Williams, then age 27, and three other fighter pilots were ordered on a combat air patrol over the most northern part of the Korean Peninsula, near the Yalu River, which separates North Korea from China. To the northeast is Russia, then part of the Soviet Union, which supported North Korea in the conflict.

As the four US Navy jets flew their patrol, the group’s leader suffered mechanical problems and with his wingman, headed back to the task force off the coast.

That left Williams and his wingman alone on the mission.

Then, to their surprise, seven Soviet MiG-15 fighter jets were identified heading toward the US task force.

“They just didn’t come out of Russia and engage us in any way before,” Williams said in a 2021 [interview with the American Veterans Center](#).

Wary commanders in the task force ordered the two US Navy jets to put themselves between the MiGs and the US warships.

While doing this, four of the Soviet MiGs turned toward Williams and opened fire, he recalled.

He said he fired on the tail MiG, which then dropped out of the four-plane Soviet formation, with Williams’ wingman following the Soviet jet down.

At that point, US commanders on the carrier ordered him not to engage the Soviets, he said.

“I said, ‘I am engaged,’” Williams recalled in the interview.

No choice but to fight

Williams said he also knew that because the Soviet jets were faster than his, if he tried to break off they'd catch and kill him.

"At that time the MiG-15 was the best fighter airplane in the world," faster and able to climb and dive quicker than the American jets, he said in the interview.

His plane was suited to air-to-ground combat, not aerial dogfights, he said.

But now he was in one, with not just one, but six Soviet jets as the other three MiGs that broke off earlier returned.

What ensued was more than a half-hour of aerial combat, with Williams constantly turning and weaving – the one area where the F9F could compete with the Soviet aircraft – to not let the superior MiGs get their guns fixed on him.

"I was on automatic, I was doing as trained," he said.

So were the Soviets.

"But on some occasions ... they made mistakes," Williams said.

One flew at him, but then stopped firing and dipped under him. Williams figured its pilot was killed by his gunfire.

And he described how another MiG got right in front of him, he hit it with his gunfire, and it disintegrated, causing Williams to maneuver sharply to avoid the wreckage and its pilot as the plane came apart.

Over the course of the fight, Williams fired all 760 rounds of 20mm cannon shells the F9F carried, according to an account of the engagement from the US Navy Memorial's website.

But the Soviets scored hits on Williams, too, disabling his rudder and wing control surfaces, leaving only the elevators in the rear of the plane viable for him to move the jet up and down.

Luckily, he said, at this point he was heading in the direction of the US task force off the coast. But one of the remaining Soviet jets was still on his tail.

He said he flew in an up-and-down roller coaster pattern, with bullets flying above and below him as he moved, the Soviet pilot trying to get a clear shot.

Williams' wingman rejoined the fight at this point, getting on the Soviet's tail and scaring him off, according to the Navy Memorial account.

But Williams still had some difficult flying to do to get the damaged jet back on board the carrier.

First, with the task force wary of Soviet warplanes possibly attacking it, its heightened air defenses initially thought Williams' F9F was a MiG, and destroyers guarding the American carriers opened fire on him.

Williams said his commander quickly put a stop to that, eliminating one danger.

Still, Williams had to get his jet on the deck on the carrier, something he'd usually do at an airspeed of 105 knots (120 mph). But he already knew if he went lower than 170 knots (195 mph), his aircraft would stall and plunge into the icy sea.

And he couldn't turn to line up with the carrier. So the ship's captain decided to take the extraordinary step of turning the carrier to line up with Williams.

It worked. He slammed onto the deck and caught the third and final arresting wire.

On the deck on the carrier, Navy crew counted 263 holes in Williams' plane. It was in such poor shape, it was pushed off the ship into the sea, according to the Navy Memorial account.

But as the plane disappeared below the waves, something else had to also – the fact that the US-Soviet aerial combat happened at all.

Fear of another world war

News of Williams' heroics went all the way to the top, with then-President Dwight Eisenhower among the senior US officials eager to speak to the pilot, according to the Navy Memorial's website.

“Following the battle, Williams was personally interviewed by several high-ranking Navy admirals, the Secretary of Defense, and also the President, after which he was instructed to not talk about his engagement as officials feared the incident might cause a devastating increase of tensions between the US and Soviet Union, and possibly ignite World War Three,” the website says.

A US Defense Department account of the incident also notes that US forces were trying out new communications intercept equipment that day. It was feared that revealing the Soviet role in the combat would have compromised that US’ advantage.

The records of Williams’ dogfight were promptly classified by US officials and he was sworn to secrecy, meaning it would take more than five decades before his victories could be fully recognized.

In 1953, Williams was awarded a Silver Star, but the citation made no reference to Soviet aircraft, just “enemy” ones. And it only mentioned three kills. The fourth was not known until Russian records were released in the 1990s, the website says.

So it was not until 2002, when the records were declassified, that Williams could even tell those closest to him.

“For the rest of his accomplished Navy career, and for decades after retirement, the details of Williams’ dogfight with Soviet MiGs over North Korea remained a secret,” according to the US Defense Department.

“When he was finally contacted by the government and told his mission was declassified, the first person Williams said he told was his wife.”

In the following years, veterans groups who learned what he did said the Silver Star was insufficient reward for Williams, with some saying he should get the military’s highest award – the Medal of Honor. In December last year, more than 70 years after the Korean War aerial battle, Del Toro said Williams’ Silver Star should be upgraded to the Navy Cross.

California Rep. Darrell Issa, who pushed for Williams to get the upgraded medal, called him “a Top Gun pilot like no other, and an American hero for all time.”

“It is to this day the most unique US-Soviet aerial combat dogfight in the history of the Cold War,” Issa said in a statement.

“The heroism and valor he demonstrated for 35 harrowing minutes 70 years ago in the skies over the North Pacific and the coast of North Korea saved the lives of his fellow pilots, shipmates, and crew. His story is one for the ages, but is now being fully told.”

CNN’s Haley Britzky contributed reporting.

_ Submitted by Ruth Arsvik



Idaho Backcountry Veterans (IBV) is an outdoor nonprofit created for our veterans to enjoy quality hunting, fishing, and other sporting activities.



Every day we hear about new scientific studies that expound the benefits of being in the outdoors. Recently a study found that boreal forests emit a chemical that is beneficial to humans in a measurable way, to the point of even easing depression.

Hunters have known this instinctively for thousands of years. Idaho Backcountry Veterans aims to get as many of our war impacted vets into this serene yet challenging environment as possible. But we need your help.



IDAHO BACKCOUNTRY VETERANS

WE WORK TO CONNECT VETERANS TO IDAHO'S GREAT OUTDOORS BY COORDINATING EVENTS INCLUDING:

- BIG GAME HUNTS/CAMPS
- WATERFOWL HUNTS
- FISHING TRIPS
- FISHING TOURNAMENTS
- SHOOTING EVENTS

CHRIS 'DOC' STOECHNER
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Get Involved...
Want to contribute to what we do at IBV? We accept all major credit cards via charitable PayPal account and Amazon Smile.



We are always looking for new adventures, so if you are an outfitter, travel agent etc that can donate time to creating the environments where our vets heal, please reach out.



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IDAHO BACKCOUNTRY VETERANS

Reconnecting Veterans through Idaho's Great Outdoors

Mother Nature knows how to heal our Warriors. We are just The Guides.



"Creating a Path Onward, that includes PTSD, but is not overcome by it"

[Join Us For An Adult Group Focused on PTSD](#)

[Topic: Explore the Path Ahead](#)

[Join us beginning Spring 2023](#)

[6 weeks building resiliency with the Horses](#)

[This group is for Veteran Adults, 21-91, who want to gain skills in resiliency, following difficult life circumstances or current stressors as they relate to PTSD!](#)

[What is Equine Assisted Psychotherapy?](#)

EAP is a form of Psychotherapy incorporating the Client, Mental Health Professional, Equine Professional and Horses. EAP has proven to have a profound impact on individuals. It addresses a variety of mental health needs including Trauma, PTSD, depression, grief and loss, anxiety, communication issues, emotional and behavioral issues, and relationship challenges.

[Why is this beneficial?](#)

This therapeutic approach assists clients in reconnecting with their emotions and owning their feelings. It is experiential and goal oriented. In a safe environment, clients are provided an opportunity to step into an experience that will help facilitate their ability to "see" their behaviors and how those behaviors impact self and others. All activities are completed on the ground. No horseback riding or knowledge of horses is required.

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