



Manuel Schneidmiller Post 154, Inc. Rathdrum Idaho

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Meeting at: Lions Club 16114 N. Meyer Rd Rathdrum

*Here is my wish for a year filled with love,
health, happiness, and prosperity to you all!
Joan Blodsoo, Editor*

Adjutant:

Membership Renewal – Good news is that of our 73 members 64 have renewed prior to the end of the year. If you haven't done so, please do it this month. Renewal rate is \$40 per year. Please ask other veterans to join us. Their membership is important in helping move veteran issues forward.

Emblem sales catalogs are automatically mailed to anyone that purchased from Emblem Sales within the past 3 years. If you haven't bought but would like a catalog just go to www.emblem.legion.org/inforequest.asp and fill out a request online.

The American Legion has a number of centennial stories that are being worked on as it moves toward the 100th birthday in 2019. One that is important is the US Flag because of its unique symbolism and meaning around the world. Legion members are ambassadors and experts on the flag. The Legion's new 112-page book "Indivisible -The Story of Our Flag" gives us the information each of us needs to be an "expert". Let us know before the January 9th if you would like a copy. Just email rathdrum154@gmail.com and it will be included with the order from the Post. The cost is \$10.55 total.

See the flyer on page 6 for Legal and Financial Planning for Alzheimer's that is being held at Post 143 on January 7th.

The last Wednesday of every month there is an opportunity to get free legal advice for veterans and their families. See the flyer on page 7. - Bryan Bledsoe, Adjutant

Finance Officer:

We adopted our FY 2016 operating budget and finished the year with a good balance in our bank and savings accounts. We are doing very well financially, and continue to be successful in securing support from the Community for Veterans programs, and prudent in the utilization of our resources. - Len Crosby, Finance Officer

Veterans' Services:

Happy New Year - may the Holidays bring great happiness to you and yours.

VA recently announced a number of changes to make participation in the Veterans Choice Program easier and more convenient for Veterans who need to use it. The move, which streamlines eligibility requirements, follows feedback from Veterans along with organizations working on their behalf.

I have personally benefited from the Choice Program on four separate occasions and a few of our comrades have also shared their good expectances with me. Of course, some say there are still problems and that's true. Spokane VA, Tri-West and the Private Medical Community are working hard to make Choice work for us. As I have said before, be patient, and always ask for a Reference/Contact number, not just a call back phone number. These Changes can be seen here:

<http://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/24346/va-makes-changes-to-veterans-choice-program/>

Tips for Filing a VA Disability Claim:

Filing a claim for compensation can be a very tedious task indeed. Even if you do complete the online version of the claim at VA's Online Application (VONAPP) website you may find that it takes at least 30 minutes just to fill in all the blanks, gathering the required supporting documentation and submitting it to the VA can take much longer and be an exercise in frustration. Here are a few pointers on how to make the process easier, and how to make sure you get everything right the first time, so you won't have to do it all over again.

<http://www.military.com/military-report/tips-for-filing-a-va-disability-claim.html?ESRC=mr1221.nl>

- Charlie Till, Service Officer

2nd Vice-Commander:

Oratorical Contest: We have one oratorical contestant so far – a student from the Christian Academy in Post Falls. The contest for Posts 154,143, and 14 will be held jointly at Post 143 and coordinated by the Post 154 Oratorical committee. The contest will be held at the American Legion Hall located at 1138 East Poleline Avenue in Post Falls, Idaho on January 16, 2016. The exact time will be provided at a later date. The first place winners will receive \$100.00 and a gold oratorical pin; second place will receive \$50.00 and a silver oratorical pin; third place will receive \$25.00 and a bronze pin. All participants will receive a Certificate of Distinction. The first place winners from each age group will be eligible to compete at the district level.

The District Contest will be held at the American Legion Hall at 1138 East Poleline Avenue in Post Falls, Idaho on January 30, 2016. The exact time will be provided at a later date. The first place winner will receive \$100.00; second place \$50.00 and third place \$25.00. The first place winner will be eligible to compete at the Area level.

The Area Contest will be held in the American Legion Hall at 1138 East Poleline Avenue in Post Falls, Idaho on February 6, 2016. The exact time will be provided later. The first place winner will receive \$100.00 and second place winner \$50.00. The first place winner will be eligible to compete at the state level.

Winners of the Area contest will be reimbursed for travel expenses to the State contest at the rate of \$.20 per mile plus the cost of one night's lodging.

The State contest will be held at American Legion Post 26 at 515 East 2nd South, Mountain Home, Idaho on February 27, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. State winners will receive \$1,000.00 for first place, \$750.00 for second place and \$500.00 for third and fourth places. The first place winner will be eligible to compete at the national level.

Travel expenses for the winners of the State contest will be paid in full. The national contest will be held at the Windham Indianapolis West Hotel, 2544 Executive Drive, Indianapolis, Indiana on April 16 and 17, 2016. National winners will receive scholarships of \$18,000.00, \$16,000.00 and \$14,000. All other participants will receive scholarships of \$1,500.00. – Margaret Ogram, 2nd Vice-Commander

North Idaho Stand Down: I have contacted the new crisis center in Kootenai Hospital for participation in Stand Down. They will have a booth and two doctors participating.

- Margaret Ogram, 2nd Vice-Commander

Legislation:

On December 18, Congress passed and the President signed into law H.R. 2029, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016. This legislation provides the FY (Financial Year) 2016 funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and includes advance appropriations for FY 2017 for most VA health care and mandatory spending programs.

The bill includes almost \$163 billion in total discretionary and mandatory funding for VA for fiscal year 2016. This includes \$91 billion in mandatory funding and \$71 billion in discretionary funding. Unfortunately, although this is a large amount of our tax money, it was much less than the VA had requested...

Advance Appropriations: The bill includes \$63 billion (\$3 billion less than recommended by the Independent Budget (IB)) in fiscal year 2017 advance funding for VA medical care and \$103 billion in fiscal year 2017 advance funding for VA's mandatory programs for compensation and pension.

Medical Programs for FY 2016: The Veterans Health Administration, including its research programs, is funded at \$62 billion (\$2 billion less than recommended by the IB), \$1 billion more than the Administration's requested level and \$5 billion more than fiscal year 2015.

Highlights:

Claims Processing: The bill includes \$2.7 billion (**\$89 million less than recommended** by the IB) for claims processing, \$173 million more than last year's level of \$2.53 billion and \$10 million more than the request.

Construction: Major Construction, \$1.24 billion (**\$686 million less than recommended** by the IB) for major construction projects; for minor construction, \$406 million (**\$169 million less than recommended** by the IB).

Grants for the Construction of State Veterans Homes: \$120 million (**\$80 million less than recommended** by the IB). – Obviously this 40% reduction in what was recommended will delay any funding for our requested grant for a Veterans Home in North Idaho.

Information Technology (IT): The bill provides \$4.1 billion (**\$158 million more than recommended** by the IB) to modernize and sustain VA's information technology systems. In some respects, (especially when compared to the IB), this appropriation is lacking in terms of known and projected needs. However, the overall rate of increase in funding for veterans' programs is welcome.

- Len Crosby, Legislative Chairman

Mark Your Calendar:

December 31st – New Year's Eve

January 1st – New Year's Day

January 13th – Executive Committee Meeting, 6 pm at the Lions Club – open to everyone.

January 16th – Post Oratorical Contest

January 18th – Martin Luther King Day

January 27th – General Membership Meeting, 6 pm at the Lions Club – open to everyone.

January 30th – District Oratorical Contest

February 6th – Area A Oratorical Contest

February 27th – State Oratorical Contest

April 16th & 17th – National Oratorical Contest

Children & Youth Committee:

Boys State: The creation of the Boys State program in 1935 is credited to Hayes Kennedy, who was an instructor at the Loyola University Chicago and Americanism Chairman of the Illinois Department of The American Legion, and Harold Card, the Department Boy Scout Chairman and junior high school instructor. Hayes Kennedy and Harold Card became concerned about the youth attending political indoctrination camps in the late 1930s.

Documentation provided by various Boys State programs across the country refer to these as "Young Pioneer Camps" and alternately describe them as either fascist- or communist-inspired. Since the Young Pioneer Camp was the name of a youth program based in the Soviet Union that made inroads in the U.S. in the early 20th Century, it is likely that these left-wing movements are what Kennedy was responding to, and not the growth of the radical right (i.e., fascism). Kennedy felt that a counter movement must be started among the ranks of the nation's youth to stress the importance and value of a democratic form of government and maintain an effort to preserve and perpetuate it.

The Illinois Department of The American Legion approved Hayes Kennedy's and Harold Card's project and in June 1935, the very first Boys State in the nation was held on the grounds of the Illinois State Fair.

As this program succeeded and spread throughout the United States, the American Legion Auxiliary began providing similar opportunities for girls of high school age. Thus Girls State was founded. The first Girls State was conducted in 1938 and since 1948 has been a regular part of the Auxiliary's better citizenship programs. In Arkansas the Girls State program began in 1942 under the leadership of Maud Crawford, the first woman to practice law in Camden, Arkansas. By 1984, Girls State sessions were held in all fifty states.

- Jeff Broadhead, Children & Youth Chairman

Chaplain's Pew:

My hope and prayer for each of our Post 154 members...

In the coming year may you find;

[happiness](#), use your abilities to solve problems and challenges,

[hope](#), may you always have it, never lose this,

[goals](#), to keep you focus on your dreams,

and, [success](#), by solving your problems, focusing on your goals, and always having hope, good fortune will find you.

Whatever we strive to accomplish in 2016, let us make sure we are doing our best for American Legion Post 154 and keep veterans in our heart and works. Waiting in the pews - Paula Attwood, Post Chaplain

Memories of My Service

This is a story of "you just never know...". I have a sister who lives near Indianapolis and she has a neighbor in his late 70's who is a veteran. This gentleman lives on a very weak edge financially and had to take a part time job at minimum wage – the only place that would hire him - to try to get by from month to month. My sister has had to help him out with food and transportation when his clunker dies and his money is gone.

As she was relating a recent account of his trials and tribulations, and how he couldn't afford his medications to control his diabetes, heart disease, and prostate issues, I asked if he was a Vietnam veteran and in the VA health system. When she asked him, he didn't have any idea what the VA could do for him. I explained what he needed to do, what help he might be eligible for, and how to get started. Since they lived only a few miles away, I suggested they go to the American Legion national office in Indianapolis. My sister, knowing how unreliable his car was and what a procrastinator he was, offered to take him there. They saw the Service Officer and the process was begun.

That was about a year ago. He just received his first check with back pay for 40% disability. This, with his Social Security, provides him with all he needs to live comfortably. The first thing he did was get a better vehicle! One more vet brought into the system.

You never know who you might impact in a positive way just by taking the time to share a little information. What veterans might you know who are still disconnected? Just food for thought. - Jean Bledsoe

Christmas came to Post 154 on December 9th in the form of delicious food, great company, and our own Santa – aka Rod Genter. Those who were able to attend, members, friends, and family, enjoyed wonderful ham, KFC chicken, and turkey, fresh mashed potatoes, salads and home-made dinner rolls, and much more. We finished up with yummy desserts as well. Everyone enjoyed the evening and we decided that Paula had done such an exemplary job organizing the potluck, decorations, and program, that she is now the official “Post 154 Party Planner”! Thank You Paula!



Bits & Pieces

This month, a bit of military history...

January 1st, 1946 – An American soldier accepts the surrender of about 20 Japanese soldiers who only discovered that the war was over by reading it in the newspaper. On the island of Corregidor, located at the mouth of Manila Bay, a lone soldier on detail for the American Graves Registration was busy recording the makeshift graves of American soldiers who had lost their lives fighting the Japanese. He was interrupted when approximately 20 Japanese soldiers approached him-literally waving a white flag. They had been living in an underground tunnel built during the war and learned that their country had already surrendered when one of them ventured out in search of water and found a newspaper announcing Japan’s defeat.

January 9th, 1995 – In New York, trials began for Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman and 11 other defendants accused of conspiring to wage a holy war against the United States. Nine were convicted of seditious conspiracy, and two reached plea agreements with the government.

January 18th, 1943 – A wartime ban on the sale of pre-sliced bread in the United States — aimed at reducing bakeries’ demand for metal replacement parts — went into effect.

January 28th, 1915 – The merchant frigate William P. Frye was stopped by a German cruiser in the South Atlantic off the Brazilian coast and ordered to jettison its cargo. The following day, the German captain noted that the disposal of the wheat had not been completed, so he ordered the ship’s destruction. The sinking of the Frye was the first such loss inflicted on American shipping in World War I.

legal and financial planning

for alzheimer's disease



an education program by the alzheimer's association

If you or someone you know is affected by Alzheimer's disease or dementia, the time for legal and financial planning is now. Legal and Financial Planning for Alzheimer's Disease is a workshop, presented by the Alzheimer's Association, for anyone who would like to know more about what legal and financial issues to consider and how to put plans in place.

1 to 4:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 7, 2016

Post Falls American Legion Post 143

1138 E. Poleline Ave., Post Falls, ID

**Speakers: Kate Monroe-Coyle, Elder Law Attorney and
Shirley Bade, CPA and Attorney at Law**

Reservations requested; RSVP to (800) 272-3900

For more information, phone (208) 666-2996



Military Legal Alliance Group

This group will be meeting at Post 143 to assist veterans and others on the last Wednesday of each month.

This is a great opportunity for our veterans and local families to get free legal advice from lawyers.

They can help with wills, trusts, advanced directives, legal information and other legal issues.

They can assist with family issues, in regard to older folks and diseases, which may require having a power of attorney.

Post 143 is pleased to host this group for our veterans and community. We are trying to make our post a veteran and community friendly post. Should you have questions about any particular event at the post please call 208-773-9054.

The "Military Legal Alliance Group" group will be at Post 143 on the last Wednesday of each month.

Time: 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Dates: 1/27/2016 @ 3:00 pm	2/24/2016 @ 3:00 pm
3/30/2016 @ 3:00 pm	4/27/2016 @ 3:00 pm
5/25/2016 @ 3:00 pm	6/29/2016 @ 3:00 pm
7/27/2016 @ 3:00 pm	8/31/2016 @ 3:00 pm
9/28/2016 @ 3:00 pm	10/26/2016 @ 3:00 pm
11/30/2016 @ 3:00 pm	12/28/2016 @ 3:00 pm