



Manuel Schneidmiller Post 154, Inc.

Rathdrum Idaho

Newsletter

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Commander's Message:

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had an enjoyable and safe Holiday. Here at the Post in December we had our annual Christmas Party. It was magnificent. Thank you to all the folks for planning it, decorating the Lions Club, and everyone who brought the delightful food. We also participated in Wreaths Across America. What a great program for our post to contribute our time to. Our Honor Guard did a fantastic job.

With this new year all of us here at Post 154 will continue to strive to maintain, and even look for ways to improve, the excellence and quality of our American Legion Post. You can help by getting involved and attending our meetings on the 4th Wednesday of the month. Also, if you know someone that is eligible, but not a member of the American Legion, invite them in as your guest and show them our Post. See if they would be interested in becoming a member.

Again, thanks to all of those that have helped me and the Post over the past year.

For the Good of the Legion, God Bless America and our Community. Dee Sasse, Post Commander



Hear Ye Hear Ye!

Beginning on January 24th, our monthly membership meetings will include a pot luck dinner! We welcome everyone and encourage you to bring your favorite dish to share, and your spouse or significant other. Please plan to be at the Lions Club about 5:30 PM with your contribution. Dinner service will start a bit before 6PM with the meeting to begin as soon as all are served. Come join your legion friends for dinner, and find out what's going on in your Post. Coffee, plates, and utensils will be provided.



Winter Word Find

Z C H R N V F G E M I T T E N S T L
 P S L F P B N R T X Y M M M U O S U
 F P Z Y Q I B S A G T N W J X A O L
 M F G R D G W T L C A Z K I Y H R K
 M H L D Y K F O O P S U A I X I F M
 X F E S I S V P C H O I K K B P D Z
 H L I K A E H R O F A I C W W I H F
 S I Z A S R L O H J I T J I M R E K
 X K N T A H S K C L C G S H C O U G
 B Y R I T H I P T C N G Z P E L Y H
 V I K N N O Z W O A P O L Q F P E X
 Y M P G Z X H H H Q R Z G S R E I S
 Z Y Q R A P O E U X H S T A O C O F
 B U J C T W T F R K U V G S T D W W
 Q C G C D E M I Y N M O V H A N O M
 A X X N N Z D Q C T Y I Y S Q N L Z
 O K J S C O L D D V E K U S S F R F
 E V Z D B J U O L O Q D K U S V F F

- | | | |
|---------|----------|--------------|
| COATS | COLD | FROST |
| GLOVES | HATS | HOTCHOCOLATE |
| ICICLES | MITTENS | SCARF |
| SKATING | SLEDDING | SNOW |



Finance Officer:

WHAT THE NEW TAX BILL WILL MEAN TO YOU:

Income

- **Individual income tax rates:** Most individuals will see rates go down. The new rates will sunset after 2025.
- **The standard deduction** has nearly doubled, and many may no longer need to itemize their taxes. Personal exemptions are eliminated. These provisions will sunset after 2025.
- **State and local taxes:** There is a new limit on deductions (capped at \$10,000) for the total of property and sales or income taxes. This provision will sunset after 2025.
- **Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT):** The exemption increases to \$70,300 for single tax filers and \$104,900 for joint filers. The phase-out threshold increases to \$500,000 for single filers and \$1 million for joint filers. This provision will sunset after 2025.

Actions to Consider by Year-end 2017:

- **Consider deferring income into 2018** if personal tax rate might decrease.
- **Consider accelerating charitable contributions** to take full advantage of itemized deductions.
- **Consider making high-dollar purchases now** to take advantage of higher sales tax deductions this year.
- **Consider prepaying 2018 property taxes in 2017** if it's likely you won't itemize in 2018. If you do expect to itemize, consider prepaying all but \$10,000 of your 2018 property tax obligation.

Family

- **The child tax credit** will increase from \$1,050 to up to \$2,000 for children under 17 years of age and is subject to higher income phaseout limits. This provision sunsets after 2025.
- **Dependent tax credit:** There is a new \$500 tax credit for qualifying dependents age 17 and older. This provision sunsets after 2025.
- **529 plans** can now be used for K-12 education expenses. (up to \$10,000 per student per year)

Actions to Consider by Year-end 2017:

- **Evaluate how utilizing 529 funds for K-12 qualifying education expenses may affect your other short- and long-term education savings goals.** It may be beneficial for you to delay payment of 2017 qualifying expenses into 2018 (however, consider the impact of late payment penalties).

Health

- **The medical expense deduction** threshold will be reduced to 7.5% of your adjusted gross income for 2017 and 2018, which means you'll have a higher likelihood of being able to deduct future medical costs in those years. The threshold will be restored to 10% again in 2019.
- **The Affordable Care Act personal mandate** will be repealed beginning in 2019, which means you will no longer be penalized for not having qualified health insurance.

Actions to Consider by Year-end 2017:

- **Consider receiving medical care in 2017 or 2018** to take advantage of the lower threshold deduction. Also, consider where you are in meeting your health plan deductibles.

(cont. below)

Home

- **Deductible mortgage interest** for new home purchases (beginning in 2018) of first or second homes is capped at loans of \$750,000. Existing loans as of December 15, 2017 will not be affected. Loans under binding written contracts entered into prior to December 15, 2017 and that close prior to April 1, 2018 will also not be affected. This provision sunsets after 2025.
- **Deductible home equity loan interest:** Deductions for home equity indebtedness is repealed.

Actions to Consider by Year-end 2017:

- **Evaluate accelerating a home purchase closing or home equity loan**, if feasible.

Investments and Retirement

- **Re-characterizations of Roth IRA conversions** end after the 2017 tax year.

Actions to Consider by Year-end 2017:

- **A re-characterization of a Roth IRA conversion** must be completed by December 31, 2017. Starting in 2018, this option is no longer available.
- Conversions to Roth IRAs will continue to be available in 2018. Consider delaying until 2018 to convert to a Roth IRA since 2018 tax rates may decrease. - Len Crosby, [Finance Officer](#)



Legislative Chairman:

In early December, the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee approved S. 2193, a comprehensive VA health care bill, which includes provisions to overhaul the VA's community care program, provide additional funds to improve the VA health care system and extend VA's comprehensive family caregiver program to veterans of all eras.

On December 7, 2017 the American Legion joined with 25 other Veteran service organizations asking all the members of Congress to push for approval of this landmark legislation. This is an important Bill, and we need all our Members to contact their members of Congress (Senators and Congressmen) to make sure their voice is heard.

The Veterans Administration has been purchasing care in the community through the Choice Program, but this program has been troubled since its rocky implementation. Senate Bill 2193 contains numerous provisions that the Legion supports based on our legislative priorities, including one that would leave the decision to receive community care between veterans and their clinicians. To avoid implementation challenges, Choice would continue to operate as the new program is phased in and would provide additional funds for VA to fill thousands of clinical vacancies across the country.

One of the Legion's top legislative priorities for the past few years is addressing the inequity in access to VA's comprehensive family caregivers' assistance program, currently limited to veterans severely injured on or after September 11, 2001. Veterans of other eras and their family caregivers have been left to their own devices without the critical and comprehensive support from VA's caregiver program. The provisions of Senate Bill 2193 would provide this support for caregivers of Veterans injured prior to 9/11/2001.

- Len Crosby, Legislative Chairman

Chaplain's Pew:

Happy 2018 to Post 154!!!!

We are starting another year in our Post...finding a way to help more veterans and truly becoming a part of the Rathdrum community. It takes a lot of hard work, but it is so worth every moment we dedicate to the effort.

Something I discovered recently was the American Legion Code of Sportsmanship. Hm...am sure it's always been there for all to see, but maybe not in plain sight to me since I am not into tv sports and we do not have a local Post team to cheer and support. It so moved me, that I want to highlight this Code for our January newsletter...and seek to encourage each and every member to look at it often, practice it within the Post, and hold it close to your heart.

American Legion Code of Sportsmanship:

"I will:

Keep the Rules; Keep Faith with My Teammates; Keep My Temper; Keep Myself Fit; Keep a Stout Heart in Defeat; Keep My Pride Under in Victory; Keep A Sound Soul; A Clean Mind and A Healthy Body."

What an incredible statement, whether you think in terms of your own family unit, favorite sport team, individual community, or Post membership. I believe it would make a big difference if we could remember this Code not only with sports, but how about when our least favorite candidate is elected (local or national) or a Post committee takes a direction not to our liking.

Think ahead about what part you want to take with our Post...whether on a committee or taking an elected position. It is good to be on a team for a common goal...we at Post 154 are on a very special team....and our common goal is working together for the betterment of veterans in our area, our State and our Nation. May we enter the New Year of 2018 with the Code of Sportsmanship in our minds and hearts...practice makes perfect.

And as ever, if you know of a Post member or someone in the veteran community who could use a helping hand or card of cheer, please contact me. I stand ready to serve to the best of my ability.

May God bless each and every member and activity of Post 154 in 2018.

- Paula Atwood, Chaplain



Service Officer:

Happy 2018 to one and all! Only 363 shopping days until Christmas! As we set aside the holidays and go gently into a new year, it is common to experience some ups and downs. Not to be a Debbie Downer, but ...D is for...Depression:

Everyone occasionally feels blue or sad, but these feelings are usually fleeting and pass within a couple of days. When a person has a depressive disorder, it interferes with daily life, normal functioning, and causes pain for both the person with the disorder and those who care about him or her. Depression is a common but serious illness, and most who experience it need treatment to get better. The good news is that depression, even the most severe cases, is a highly treatable disorder.

Screening

You may be wondering if you have symptoms of Depression. One way of determining that is to take a brief confidential and [anonymous screen](#). Only you will see the results of the brief screen. None of the results are stored or sent anywhere. You can choose to print a copy of the results for your own records or to give to your physician or a mental health professional.

If you have thoughts of hurting yourself or someone else, please call the Veterans Crisis line [1-800-273-8255](tel:1-800-273-8255), **press 1** or visit their website at www.veteranscrisisline.net/.

- Ruth Aresvik, Service Officer





Mark Your Calendar:

January 1st - New Year's Day

January 10th – Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting – 6PM Lion’s Club Rathdrum

January 15th - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January 18th - Mid-Winter Membership Target Date (80%)

January 24th – Post 154 Membership Meeting & Pot Luck – see page 2 for details

January 27th - Vietnam Cease-Fire (1973)

Cane Seminar Friday February 23rd



In October, over 50 local veterans attended a 3-hour seminar on how to defend themselves with a cane. It was so well received, 9999 the instructor, Mark Shuey, is coming back from Lake Tahoe to do another seminar for veterans. He has been practicing martial arts for 56 years and is a Grand Master instructor. To learn more about him you can go to his website at www.canemasters.com

The nonprofit he is affiliated with, gifts every veteran that attends, a special Warrior Cane valued at \$225 (see example at left). The only cost is a \$15 advance registration fee. The feedback I received was all positive from every veteran. This is going to be held on Friday February 23, 2018, time and place to be determined. If you would like to attend, please call or email me ASAP before all the slots fill up. Bryan Bledsoe 509-990-6739 or bryandbledsoe@gmail.com

- Bryan Bledsoe, Adjutant



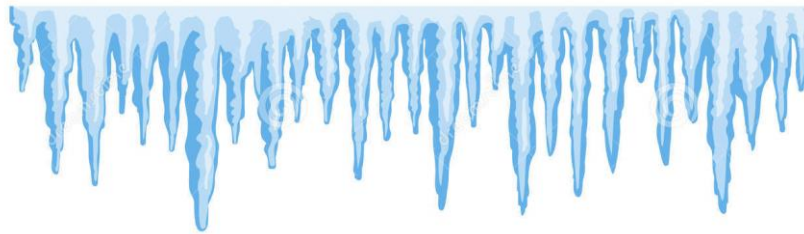
Adjutant:

Honor Guard

In 2017 the combined Honor Guard of Post 154 and Post 143 logged 1016 hours in service to our veterans and community. At 36 funerals and memorial services veterans received rifle salutes to honor their service and sacrifice to our country. They participated in 30 additional ceremonies and community events and in 4 area parades.

When I came back from Vietnam I was stationed in a high population area which meant there were many military funerals. We were a small post but were expected to provide a flag and rifle detail for each military funeral for our fallen comrades. These were the final honors that our military and country provided for these brave young men. It was then that I realized the importance of what we did not only for the fallen soldiers but also for their families, friends and loved ones.

The Post Honor Guard has the privilege to provide a final rifle salute for our military brothers and sisters. I hope that you might consider joining the Honor Guard. Not all members participate in every event. Each contributes the time that they can based on their own schedule and physical ability. Every current member had to attend a couple of practices to begin to feel comfortable doing something that they may not have done in 20, 30 or 40 years. But I think each would tell you that it is a very rewarding experience. Please contact Todd Halvorson, our Honor Guard Captain, to let him know of your interest. His contact information is telephone 509-953-0885 or email keltodd11@gmail.com – Bryan Bledsoe, Adjutant



A Healthier You: from The People's Pharmacy



What Can You Do When the Flu Shot Doesn't Work?

Influenza is spreading across the country. Did you get the vaccine? What if the flu shot doesn't work? What else can you do to protect yourself from flu?

The public health messages have been going out fast and furious: Get Your Flu Shot Now! The media is spreading the word. Here is just a sampling: "Connecticut Health Officials Urge People to Get a Flu Shot." That was published in the San Francisco Chronicle. The USA Today Network asked: "Take Care: "Are You Prepared for Flu Season? The Pennsylvania Department of Health announced on Dec. 19 that the flu activity in the state has increased to "regional status." However, it's not too late to get a vaccine if you or your child is not already vaccinated." The implication is that a flu shot will protect you. What if the flu shot doesn't work very well? [...] > [Read Article](#)