



American Legion Post 154

Rathdrum Idaho

Volume 1 Issue #5

May 2015

Commander's Message:

The last couple of newsletters I have been talking about leadership and as Paul Harvey would say "this is the rest of the story." I feel that every Post should take the initiative to be proactive, growth oriented, well informed, trained and knowledgeable and I am hoping that Post 154 will be the tip of the spear in North Idaho.

We should have a goal that all members understand the programs and principles of The American Legion and are able to communicate that information to all eligible veterans, military personnel, family members, community and Post members. For us to accomplish this goal the American Legion offers a great learning tool called the American Legion Extension Institute. Its purpose is to educate all of us about the American Legion. Some folks really don't know why the Legion was formed in the first place, the things that have been accomplished in the past and where the Legion is going in the future. It is for all members of the Legion family to take.

The information contained in this program is invaluable to all members even if they are not going to be looking to advance to leadership positions. It's just great information to know. It's why you belong to Post 154. In addition, those who seek leadership positions should consider this course as a basic level of information providing the knowledge needed to move forward. I have taken the course twice (no, not because I didn't pass the first time) but because there were two different tests and I wanted to know what was on each one of them. I have asked each of the officers of your post to take this course to ensure we uphold the highest standards for Post 154.

While I understand that not everyone enjoys school work and taking tests, I am confident you will find this course enjoyable and rewarding. It does cost a couple of bucks (if you can't afford it please let me know), but it is well worth it. I think it would be great to post all of the members Institute completion certificates on our web page for all members to see. This is the website address: <https://www.legion.org/alei> and please let me know if you need more information concerning the Extension Institute course or if anyone would like for the Post to do a one day facilitated Extension Institute training seminar. Thank you and have a great month of May. – Dee Sasse, Commander

1st Vice-Commander:

Our membership continues to grow as of this writing we are at 53 members. Kudos to everyone who makes this possible. May brings us Memorial Day. We are currently working with the city and other groups to relieve them of some of their duties for this Memorial Day celebration in Rathdrum. If you would like to help or be part of the celebration please contact me or Paula Atwood our chaplain. For God and country – Mike Warren, 1st Vice-Commander

2nd Vice-Commander:

Al and I attended a job fair at Real Life Ministries on April 15th. There were 60 employers there interviewing. I don't know how many jobs were awarded, but there were opportunities available.

Bryan Bledsoe, Al and I attended the Idaho annual ESGR convention in Boise on April 24th and 25th. It was a most inspirational two days and I am grateful for the opportunity. At the convention two local members received awards.

Robert Shoeman, Veteran Specialist at the Post Falls Department of Labor and ESGR Area 1 Lead for Employer Outreach, received a Seven Seals Award. This is the highest and most inclusive award given by ESGR and is presented at the discretion of the State Chair or by ESGR Senior leadership. The Seven Seals Award is in recognition of significant individual or organizational achievement, initiative or support that promotes and supports the ESGR mission which includes the efforts of more than 4,700 volunteers who carry out ESGR's mission across the nation on a daily basis. His award declared Robert to be the state's best volunteer for 2014. This is indeed a very rare and special award.

I received an award for the state's rising star for 2014. It is beautiful and I am grateful.

Our May speaker for the general membership meeting will be Sherri Hughes from the Hughes Fiberglass Repair Company. The company totally repairs and refinishes bathrooms including tubs and counters. They specialize in safety remodels benefitting the handicapped and elderly.

Stand Down is coming up quickly and I have 13 employers signed up to interview for jobs at Veterans Stand Down on May 9th. – Margaret Ogram, 2nd Vice-Commander

Chaplain's Pew:

May, the month for remembering many things. First of all, take a few minutes to remember your mother. Give her a call if she is still living, or bring to mind a favorite memory that includes your mother if she is deceased.

Also, remember all of our legion family members who may need a word of encouragement or a helping hand. If you are unable to assist, be sure to contact someone....leave no man behind or forgotten.

And lovely poppies....it's that time again to outwardly show support by wearing a poppy. We do not have an auxiliary group yet, so if you see another group with poppies, be sure to stop by and support them the best you can.

Did you know the 3rd Sat of May is Armed Forces Day? This is a day set aside to pay tribute to men and women who serve in the US armed forces. The first Armed Forces Day was celebrated in 1950...'Teamed for Defense'...which expressed the unification of all military forces under one government department...the US Dept. of Defense. You need to check your calendars...I checked mine and Armed Forces Day does not show up.

And Memorial Day. There is so much to say about Memorial Day (originally called Decoration Day) but I will share more on that subject at another time. For now, just know it is a day of remembering the men and women who died while serving. Do not confuse our Memorial Day with Veterans Day which celebrates the service of all US military veterans.

Be sure to call with information of members who need assistance.

Sitting quietly in the pew – Paula Atwood, Chaplain

Service Officer

As spring unfolds and summer begins many of us start to plan to get away and prepare for our summer projects. Let's not forget how to stretch our hard earned finances. Many of us, myself included don't always think about the many businesses and organizations that offer discounts to veterans for our service. Many restaurants, hotels and home improvement stores are among a large number of businesses that offer discounts. Don't forget to ask if they offer a veteran discount.

The America Legion offers many money saving programs to us, let's take advantage of what we have earned.

Member Discount Programs

American Legion membership can save you money. Discount programs for products and services such as travel, health care, personal finance and computers are offered exclusively to members of The American Legion and Sons of The American Legion.

Automobile Rental

Home Services

Electronics & Technology

Financial & Insurance

Medical

Moving & Relocation

Travel & Lodging

Miscellaneous <http://www.legion.org/benefits>

Stay informed about all the latest discounts by updating your preferences and opting-in to emails for special member discount offers. Visit www.legion.org/discountsoptin to receive money saving discounts from our authorized member discount providers.

This Month's Member Discount Spotlight: SAVE 15% AT MOTEL 6!

[SAVE 15% AT MOTEL 6!]

Motel 6 provides all American Legion and SAL members a 15% discount at any of the 1,100+ pet-friendly Motel 6 locations in the U.S. and Canada. – Charlie Till, Service Officer

Children & Youth

The American Legion Operation Military Kids Program ended March 31st. This program was aimed at kids whose parents were deployed and offered support through recreation, social and educational resources for children living in our communities. Families with children in the Army National Guard can find support for their kids through the State Child and Youth Program with activities at <https://jointservicessupport.org/FP/default.aspx> . For families in the Army Reserve, contact Command Child Youth Services Program to locate information and links for activities at <http://www.arfp.org/cyss.php>. Support resources may also be located by visiting the 4-H Military Partnership at <http://www.4-hmilitarypartnerships.org> – Jeff Broadhead, Children & Youth Chairman

Volunteer of the Month

Each month the Executive Committee will select a member as Volunteer of the Month. The VOM will be someone who has shown themselves to be dedicated to the principals of the American Legion and Post 154, veterans and their families, and the community. They will have gone beyond their “job description” as a member and will be recognized at the membership meeting, in the newsletter (here) and on the website [here](#).

The Volunteer of the Month for April is Post Adjutant, Bryan Bledsoe. Bryan was one of the guiding lights in the early stages of the formation of our post. He researched the requirements for the formation of a new post and made sure all the steps were followed and paperwork submitted, and as Adjutant, continues to do so. He also collects and maintains the membership rolls, as well as the minutes of all meetings. He stays in close contact with the Department leadership to make sure we continue to “do things right.” Bryan is truly a working member of Post 154, committed to the post and working for our local veterans through his work for Stand Down, and his membership in the local DAV and VFW.

Memories of My Service

Paula Atwood, Medical Administrative Specialist.....loosely translated to paper pusher for any/all medical needs and usually is away from many hazardous situations. However, I will never forget.....Air Force duty, Clark AFB, Philippines, 1972-73.....

The war in Vietnam is winding down and POW's are being released from their prisons into American custody. Most are flown first to Clark AFB for several weeks of debriefing and medical care. Before they head back stateside, they rest, are fed, meet many doctors and counselors, unwind, rid their bodies of parasites, put on some weight, and rest some more. And, during the course of bringing their bodies back to some strength, they in turn relive time in captivity by telling their story to official military personnel.

These debriefing sessions took hours each of the soldiers told of their capture, the places they remembered, treatment; names and dates of those captured and who later perished. It was all recorded on Dictaphone tapes (back in the day) and someone had to transcribe those tapes into written reports/records.

I worked in the Commander/Sergeant Major's Office at Clark AFB Hospital during this time and it was my job to listen and transcribe the words from these soldiers. Most of the time, as I typed hour after hour, I couldn't see thru the tears to check spelling, and barely could change from one sheet of paper to the next as they kept talking; unburdening their minds with as much as they could and withholding things they could not bear to remember. Their graphic words and their voices, filled my head and my world.

When it was all over, it felt as though I had absorbed their captivity from afar. I will never forget their words, voices, stories. Each one deserved more than good food and a medal for their brave days, months, and even years in captivity.

Respectfully submitted – Paula Atwood

FINANCE OFFICER: Our Post continues to do well. Our expenses are over budget due to capital expenses associated with opening a new Post, greater than anticipated youth activity costs (Easter Egg Hunt, etc.) and the fact that we now have been given two trailers, each of which will require renovation costs. Fundraising needs to be a key focus and we have a number of opportunities to do that in conjunction with Memorial Day, Rathdrum Days and other summer activities. We should consider creating a fundraising committee and having specific plans in place well before these opportunities arise. The key issue is YOUR involvement. We can plan all sorts of activities and fundraisers, but they will only be successful if YOU volunteer to help.

We will be doing a gun raffle and I want to Thank Charlie Till for coordinating the purchase of the

weapon. If this is to be successful we will need each member of the Post to step up and sell some tickets. – Len Crosby, Finance Officer

Legislative Officer: VETERANS HOME FOR NORTH IDAHO:

Col. (retired) David E. Brasuell, the Administrator of the Idaho Division of Veterans Services has advised that his office is preparing an application for a new Veterans Home in Post Falls. The application is expected to be submitted to the Veterans Administration in the next several weeks.

Once that occurs, it will be important for each member and each Veterans Organization to focus on contacting Sen. Crapo, Sen. Reish and Representative Labrador and have them put their weight behind the application. Here is the form of letter that we need each of you to send or e-mail to our representatives in Washington, D.C:

Subject: VA Construction and Funding Request for State Veterans Home in Post Falls

Dear Representative Labrador: (change name as needed)

The United State Department of Veterans Affairs has received a request for a federal grant to construct and fund a 4th State Veterans Home in Post Falls, Idaho.

The package assembled by the Idaho Division of Veterans Services includes a commitment by the Jacklin family, (owners of Jacklin Seed), to donate the site for the facility with a land donation valued at \$1.5 million. Previous legislative action authorized and funded a feasibility study, which was recently completed. The study recommended that the facility be located in North Idaho, which is underserved by existing facilities and has a veterans population in excess of 18,000. The veterans home has strong support at all levels of government throughout Idaho and especially in North Idaho.

State Senate Bill 1104 established the State of Idaho's commitment to proceed with the application for the federal grant which would provide 65% of the construction costs, and to earmark existing state funds for the remaining 35% of such costs. The Department of Veterans Affairs has a nationwide priority list with nearly one hundred homes on it. Idaho is currently listed number 38. In past actions, the VA has been highly influenced by state packages that are complete and strongly supported. It is common for requests that are "ready", to advance to the top of the list. IDAHO IS READY NOW!

We are asking you to personally work to advance the request through the Department of Veterans Affairs within the boundaries of the law. We hope that your office can bring a positive and timely outcome to our request. We ask the entire Idaho Congressional Delegation, the senators from Washington and the 5th District Congresswoman join together to advance this request. A veterans home in Post Falls should help relieve the pressure on the already full Spokane veterans home. Please use your good offices to keep this request alive and under serious consideration. Sincerely, (Your name and address)

Link to Idaho congressional contacts: <http://www.idaho.gov/government/elected.html> - Len Crosby, Legislative Officer

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE NORTH IDAHO VETERANS STAND DOWN

In times of war, exhausted combat units requiring time to rest and recover were removed from battlefields to a place of relative security and safety. Today, Stand Down refers to a community-based intervention program designed to help our nation's homeless veterans gain access to needed supportive services. The nation's first Stand Down was organized by Veterans Village of San Diego, California in 1988. Since then, the program has been duplicated nationwide. Today, approximately 200 Stand Downs are held across the country each year.

The North Idaho Veterans Stand Down Committee has hosted an annual Stand Down since 1994. Early organizers of the event included John Dunlap, former long-time Commander of American Legion Post #143 in Post Falls, and Robert Wright, former Local Veterans Employment Representative with the Idaho Department of Labor. According to John Dunlap, the 1994 event was actually held in Spokane. The event was moved to American Legion Post #143 in 1995. At that time, the post was located at the current site of the Sonic Drive Inn on Highway 41 in Post Falls. Official records of the North Idaho Stand Down exist from 2002 to present.

American Legion Post 143 was the organization listed as the official event sponsor until 2007. From 2008 until present St. Vincent de Paul North Idaho has served as the official sponsor. The Stand Down events located at the Legion Post located on Highway 41 from 1995 until 2005 were held in the gravel parking lot, utilizing tents furnished by the Idaho National Guard or the Idaho Department of Lands. The 2006 and 2007 events located at the new Legion facility on Poleline Avenue in Post Falls were also held outdoors, in the parking lot and grounds adjacent to the building. The first event that was held primarily indoors was the 2008 Stand Down located at the Idaho Guard Armory in Post Falls. Due to issues caused by large numbers of attendees crowded into the Guard Armory in 2009, a decision was made to move the event to the Kootenai County Fairgrounds in 2010.

Beginning in 2002 the Stand Down Committee received a HVRP grant in the amount of \$2,000 from USDOL/VETS to help fund administrative costs of the event. In 2003 USDOL/VETS increased the amount of the grant to \$5,000, which the Stand Down Committee received each year through 2007. The amount awarded was increased to \$7,000 in 2008 and 2009. A decision was made to utilize private funding in 2010, and the HVRP grant was not pursued. Since that time the Stand Down has primarily operated with donations funded by local business, organizations, and individuals. However, the Health Care for Homeless Veterans program in Spokane has provided reimbursement of approximately \$3,000 for administrative expenses incurred, per event, since about 2009.

In 2013 the event was held in the Jacklin Building in Post Falls because of a conflict in scheduling the Kootenai County Fairground space. In 2014 the event returned to the Kootenai County Fairgrounds. Plans are now being made for the 2015 Stand Down which will be held at the Kootenai County Fairgrounds on May 9, 2015. The event is being co-chaired again by Eric Swanback, Robert Shoeman and Bryan Bledsoe.

**Robert Shoeman, Veterans Representative
Kootenai County Local Office
Idaho Department of Labor**

Vietnam Veteran Tribute

Saturday, May 16 at 11:00 AM

Coeur d'Alene

Memorial Gardens Cemetery

7315 N. Government Way

Parking is limited, please carpool.



50 Years ago, the first Marines stepped foot onto the shores of Vietnam, marking the beginning of the Vietnam War.

Over 9 million men and women served in all the US forces during the Vietnam era and, of those, over 5 million served in Vietnam.

Please come celebrate all of our Vietnam Veterans and the 60,000+ soldiers who perished or are still Missing.

North Idaho Veterans Stand Down
A Day of Appreciation for All Veterans

May 9, 2015
0800 to 1400hrs

ADMISSION:
Military or V.A. ID or DD214

Kootenai County Fairgrounds
4056 N. Government Way • Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815
For more information contact: Eric Swanbeck 208.704.0548
To Volunteer visit: www.KootenaiUnitedWay.org

Thank You to our Proud Sponsors!

Post 154 Gun raffle

Gun Raffle tickets are being printed and are available for sale. The prize is a Glock Model 19 9mm Pistol PLUS 500 rounds of ammunition. Tickets are \$2 each or 3 tickets for \$5. 2,500 tickets are being printed. Drawing will be held at the General Membership Meeting on Wednesday June 22nd at 6 pm at the Rathdrum Lions Club. – Bryan Bledsoe, Adjutant



May 2015 Calendar

Su	M	T	W	Th	F	Sat
					1	2 Newby-ginnings Gun Raffle Drawing 11:00 AM-2 PM
3	4	5	6 Newby-Ginnings Fund Raiser lunch	7	8 V-E Day	9 Stand Down 8:00 AM Pine Grove Cemetery cleanup 9:00 AM
10 Mothers Day	11	12	13 Executive Committee Meeting 6:00 PM	14	15	16 Armed Forces Day Vietnam Veterans Tribute 11:00 AM
17	18	19	20	21	22	23 Flag Day Rehearsal 10:00 AM
24	25 Memorial Day Remembrance 10:00 AM <hr/> Memorial Day Remembrance 12:00 PM	26 Flag Retirement Rehearsal 10:00 AM	27 Membership Meeting 6:00 PM	28 Cut off date for newsletter submissions	29	30
31						