



Manuel Schneidmiller Post 154, Inc.

Rathdrum Idaho

Newsletter

Volume 6 Issue #5

May 2021

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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:

Spring is in the air. I am now reminded daily as I hear the birds chirping, the weather is warmer, and flowers are blooming. Time for new beginnings and better days ahead, moving forward from all we have been through for the past year.

April was a busy month at Post 154 with the Annual Easter Egg Hunt. It went off without a hitch thanks to Sue and John Fevold and the other Easter Bunny volunteers. Great job and "Bravo Zulu."). We also had several Building Committee meetings. We are putting together plans and figuring out our options. Thank you to all who volunteered for that committee. We also had a great general membership meeting with wonderful spaghetti. I can't wait to see what we will have for dinner at our next general membership meeting. I hope you plan on attending.

I would like to say thank you to all the officers who volunteered to be our new 2021 officers. I really appreciate it and I know the Post does too. Post 154 is the best Post in North Idaho (in my opinion.) You all keep this train on the tracks.

We have a very busy month with doing our Poppy Distribution on three weekends and Memorial Day on the 31st. Please volunteer if you have not, so it is an easy lift for everyone.

Here's hoping the warmer weather is putting a "Spring" in your step. Happy May!

For God and Country - Dee Sasse, Commander



Most lakes and reservoirs as well as most larger rivers are open to fishing year-round in Idaho, but some smaller lakes and most streams are open from May 24 through November 30. After a year of isolation, call your fishing buddies and have at it!

Finance Officer:

As I write this on April 19, we have not closed the books on the month. For the month of April, through the 20th, our Post has spent a total of only \$2,193.66 and received \$45 in income for a net loss of \$2,148.66. Our expenses included payment of \$1,600 to send four young gentlemen to Boys State, \$322.70 for Honor Guard equipment and uniforms, \$128.46 to order new flags for sale, \$55 for membership postage, \$50 for a booth at Rathdrum Days and \$37.50 in membership expenses. Income was limited to \$45 for a new membership. The only other item to note is that we transferred \$6,000 from our checking account to our Money Market account at Washington Trust Bank to try to eke out a few centavos in interest.

Due to the need to submit this report prior to the end of the month, I do not have the bank statements and cannot update the Net Worth report.

Editor's Note: I take full responsibility for this abbreviated finance report. I had to ask for articles to be submitted early for health reasons. But Len feels very strongly about presenting complete financial information each month. You can be sure he will provide all financials at the membership meeting as well as next month's newsletter.

Legislative Chairman:

How to obtain VA assistance: This link to a VA PDF file regarding burial benefits and other key information is important as we age. Having it where our spouses can access it, along with other key documents, would be good for all of us. To save the PDF file after you click on the link below simply go to FILE at the top of the page and choose SAVE AS.

After the passing of a loved one who has served this country, many survivors do not know what to do or where to begin to obtain VA assistance. VA has prepared a Survivors and Burial Benefits kit to help guide Veterans, service members and their families after the loss of a loved one. The Kit gives a description of each burial benefit, instructions on how to apply, and where to go to get assistance. It covers:

- Pre-need eligibility for National Cemetery burial or memorialization
- Memorial or burial flags
- Government headstones or markers
- Medallions
- Presidential Memorial Certificates (PMC)
- Burial benefits and burial automatic payments
- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)
- Dependents' Educational Assistance Program (DEA)
- Marine Gunnery Sergeant John David Fry Scholarship
- Survivors pension
- Special monthly pension benefits
- The Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMP-VA)
- Home loan guaranty
- Veterans Month of Death benefits
- VA life insurance

Other features include tips on how to fill out applications with examples of completed forms. These tips examples give applicants a better understanding of how to properly fill out applications. VA encourages Veterans and service members to discuss their military service with their dependents, as well as planning their legacy. Families and survivors should know where to locate service medical records, discharge documents, VA disability ratings, and other information. These details will be beneficial to survivors as they prepare to apply for VA benefits. Families and survivors should keep this kit in storage so that it will be available when needed. **The Planning Your Legacy VA Survivors and Burial Benefits Kit** is available for download at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/docs/VASurvivorsKit.pdf>.

veterans with the care and benefits they need.

Press Conference on Comprehensive Toxic Exposure Bill: On Tuesday, the American Legion participated in a press conference held by Sens. Thom Tillis (R-NC) and Maggie Hassan (D-NH) to introduce S. 927, the Toxic Exposure in the American Military (TEAM) Act. This legislation aligns directly with the Legion's priority to establish a permanent framework to address past, present, and future toxic exposures in the military at locations both domestic and abroad. Unlike other bills which address toxic exposures in a piecemeal fashion, the Legion believes the TEAM Act will not only take care of a significant number of veterans but would provide VA the guidance necessary to address all toxic exposures in the military. (cont. below)

The Legion also supports the companion bill, H.R. 2127, introduced by House Committee on Veterans' Affairs Ranking Member Mike Bost (R-IL). The Legion looks forward to working with Sens. Tillis and Hassan, and Ranking Member Bost on this comprehensive legislation to provide America's veterans with the care and benefits they need.

SAVE LIVES Act Signed Into Law: On Wednesday, President Biden signed into law [H.R. 1276](#), *Strengthening and Amplifying Vaccination Efforts to Locally Immunize All Veterans and Every Spouse (SAVE LIVES) Act*. The law allows VA to provide a COVID-19 vaccine to all veterans, their spouses, caregivers, and Civilian Health and Medical Program recipients regardless of their eligibility for VA health care. Veterans who are already using VA health care will have priority. "COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on all Americans including veterans and their families," "The end may be near, but **we will not come out of this until everybody possible has vaccinations.**"

FEMA Assistance with Funeral Expenses: The COVID-19 pandemic has brought overwhelming grief to many families. At FEMA, our mission is to help people before, during and after disasters. We are dedicated to helping ease some of the financial stress and burden caused by the virus.

Under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, FEMA is providing financial assistance for COVID-19 related funeral expenses incurred after January 20, 2020.

How to Apply

COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Line Number

Applications begin on **April 12, 2021**

844-684-6333 | TTY: 800-462-7585

Hours of Operation:

Monday - Friday

9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Eastern Time

Call this dedicated toll-free phone number to get a COVID-19 Funeral Assistance application completed with help from FEMA's representatives. Multilingual services will be available.

Get answers to frequently asked questions about the application process on our [Funeral Assistance FAQ page](#).

Fraud Alert: There have been reports of scammers reaching out to people offering to register them for funeral assistance. FEMA has not sent any such notifications and does not contact people before they register for assistance.

Gov. Little appoints Mark Tschampl to lead Idaho Division of Veterans Services: Governor Brad Little announced today he appointed Mark Tschampl as Chief Administrator at the Idaho Division of Veterans Services. "As a veteran himself, I have the utmost confidence Mark will serve and support those who have served our country," Governor Little said. "His career experience in the military and leadership roles in numerous civilian positions will prove to be extremely valuable in his new role."

Tschampl was a Commander in the U.S. Air Force, Security Forces, serving from 1998 to 2005. He spent eight years as the director of the Health and Wellness Center on Mountain Home Air Force Base and has been working as a bureau chief within the Family and Community Services Division at the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. He received his Master's in Health and Human Performance from Iowa State University.

"It is my greatest honor to be appointed by Governor Little as the Chief Administrator of the Idaho Division of Veteran Services," Tschampl said. "As a combat veteran and member of a military family, no work is more important to me than serving those who have served our great nation!" - Len Crosby, Legislative Chairman

Service Officer:

Do you have a Veterans ID Card (VIC)? I applied and got mine - it's easy!

A Veteran ID Card (VIC) is a form of photo ID you can use to get discounts offered to Veterans at many stores, businesses, and restaurants. When you have this card, you won't need to carry around your military discharge papers or share sensitive personal information to receive discounts. If you have a VIC, you don't need to request another type of photo ID card to prove you're a Veteran or to get retail or business discounts. You may be eligible if you meet both of these requirements: You served on active duty, in the Reserves, or in the National Guard, AND, received an honorable discharge or general discharge (under honorable conditions).

If you received an other than honorable, bad conduct, or dishonorable character of discharge, you're not eligible for a Veteran ID Card. If you have an uncharacterized or unknown discharge status, we'll have to verify your eligibility before the VA approves your application.

When you apply, be sure to have these on hand:

- Your Social Security number
- A digital copy of your DD214, DD256, DD257, or NGB22 that you can upload. This could be in a .pdf, .jpeg, or .png file format.
- A copy of a current and valid government-issued ID, such as a driver's license, passport, or state-issued identification card.

You'll also need a digital color photo of yourself from the shoulders up.

HOW TO APPLY:

Try signing in with your DS Logon, My HealtheVet, or ID.me account. Or type in "how to apply for va id card" in the search engine.

Once you've submitted your VIC application, the VA will check and verify your eligibility, that your ID is valid, and the photo image is proper. Once verified, VA will send you an email letting you know the status of your application. If you receive an email asking for additional information or evidence to process your application, you'll need to sign in to AccessVA and update your application with the information. The VA will let you know when the process is complete, and will mail your card in 2-3 weeks.

If you have any questions or need help, please send an email to vetidcard@va.gov

Did you get a stimulus payment? Or two? Or three?

The Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and the IRS worked together quickly to ensure that Veterans and their beneficiaries would receive their stimulus checks without additional paperwork or IRS filings. VBA shared data with IRS on Veterans and their beneficiaries who receive Compensation and Pension (C&P) benefit payments who don't normally file a tax return. People who do not normally file a tax return and do not receive federal benefits may qualify for these Economic Impact Payments. This includes those experiencing homelessness, the rural poor, and others. Individuals who did not get a first or second round Economic Impact Payment or got less than the full amounts may be eligible for the [2020 Recovery Rebate Credit](#), but they'll need to file a 2020 tax return. See the special section on IRS.gov: [Claiming the 2020 Recovery Rebate Credit if you aren't required to file a tax return](#). - Ruth Aresvik, Service Officer

Chaplain's Pew:

- Helen Kinder, Chaplain

Memorial Day Prayer and Meditation

*Let's meditate and remember
Many gave their lives for our freedom ...*

Each year we give this tribute
Out of thankfulness and love
For your loyalty and courage
Virtues that set you above.

We'll never forget you gave your all
That others can be free
You paid the ultimate earthly price
Immortal you will ever be.

We walk the byways, streets of towns
Country lanes, through parks
At ease, at peace, possible because
Of missions upon which you embarked.

When there is no setting sun
And tides stretch out o'er all the land
No birds to fly, no songs to sing
Then we'll come and take your hand.

For now we won't forget
An emptiness your parting left
You gave your life in freedom's call
In God's eyes you're ever blessed.



~~~~~  
Prayer by Susan Helene Kramer  
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Mark Your Calendar:

May 1st - Silver Star Service Banner Day honoring the sacrifices of the combat wounded, ill, and dying service members and recognizes service members awarded the Silver Star Medal.

May 5th - Cinco De Mayo

May 6th - National Day of Prayer & National Nurses Day

May 7th - National Military Spouse Appreciation Day

May 9th - Mother's Day

May 13th - Executive Committee Meeting

May 15th - Armed Force's Day

May 25th - Memorial Day Observed

May 26th - National Senior health & Fitness Day

May 27th - General Membership Meeting 6 PM Lions Club Rathdrum

May 28th - National Poppy Day

May 31st - Memorial Day



National Poppy Day®

May 28, 2021

The red poppy is a nationally recognized symbol of sacrifice worn by Americans since World War I to honor those who served and died for our country in all wars. It reminds Americans of the sacrifices made by our veterans while protecting our freedoms. Wear a poppy to honor those who have worn our nation's uniform.

All donations received will be used by The American Legion Family for their programs that support veterans, the military community and their families.



See Lonnie's article on the next page for details about Post 154's Poppy campaign.



Poppy's in May

The signups for our annual Poppy distribution are almost complete. Available shifts are:



One opening for May 15 at Super-1 in Athol from 0900-1300

One opening for May 29 at Trading Post Hardware in Rathdrum from 0900-1300

Please email or call me so I can schedule you in. I will call people the day before their shift to remind them of when and where.

Lonnie Morse lionlonnie@gmail.com 208-777-5157

Friday, May 14	Super-1 in Athol
0900-1300	Len Crosby, Mike Warren
1300-1700	Holly Greaves, Bryan Bledsoe
Saturday, May 15	Super-1 in Athol
0900-1300	John Hinkston, OPEN
1300-1700	Bob Flowers, Leona Flowers
Friday, May 21	Ace Hardware in Rathdrum
0900-1300	Holly Greaves, Len Crosby
1300-1700	Bob Kernan, Bud Nutterville
Friday, May 21	Bi-Mart in Rathdrum
0900-1300	Paula Atwood, Ruth Aresvik
1300-1700	Joan Genter, Rod Genter
Saturday, May 22	Ace Hardware in Rathdrum
0900-1300	Mike McPhail, Sharon McPhail
1300-1700	Mike McPhail, Sharon McPhail
Saturday, May 22	Bi-Mart in Rathdrum
0900-1300	Paula Atwood, Ruth Aresvik
1300-1700	Dee Sasse, Bud Nutterville
Friday, May 28	Trading Post Hardware in Rathdrum
0900-1300	Len Crosby, Mike Warren
1300-1700	Matthew Schueller, Bud Nutterville
Friday, May 28	Super-1 in Rathdrum
0900-1300	Bill Kinder, Helen Kinder
1300-1700	Ruth Aresvik, Larry Carstensen
Saturday, May 29	Trading Post Hardware in Rathdrum
0900-1300	Bryan Bledsoe, OPEN
1300-1700	Bud Nutterville, Dee Sasse
Saturday, May 29	Super-1 in Rathdrum
0900-1300	Bill Kinder, Helen Kinder
1300-1700	Rick Stills, Patti Stills

Freedom Is Not Free

by Kelly Strong

I watched the flag pass by one day.
It fluttered in the breeze.
A young Marine saluted it,
and then he stood at ease.
I looked at him in uniform
So young, so tall, so proud,
He'd stand out in any crowd.
I thought how many men like him
Had fallen through the years,
How many died on foreign soil?
How many mothers' tears?
How many pilots' planes shot down?
How many died at sea?
How many foxholes were soldiers' graves?
No, freedom isn't free.

I heard the sound of TAPS one night,
When everything was still
I listened to the bugler play
And felt a sudden chill.
I wondered just how many times
That TAPS had meant "Amen,"
When a flag had draped a coffin
Of a brother or a friend.
I thought of all the children,
Of the mothers and the wives,
Of fathers, sons and husbands
With interrupted lives.
I thought about a graveyard
At the bottom of the sea
Of unmarked graves in Arlington.
No, freedom isn't free.

Cemetery on Memorial Day

By Amy Ludwig VanDerwater

Each little flag means someone brave
lost a life and with it gave
breath to freedom. Watch them wave.

Remember.

Soldiers died to save
your right
to vote
to learn
to pray
to speak your mind.

Don't look away.

Read each name carved cold and deep.
Touch each flag and if you weep
let the salty tears you taste
remind you what our soldiers faced.

One sacrifice from every grave.

Feel their breath.
The flags still wave.

Submitted by Paula Atwood, Post 154
with written permission by the author.
(copywrite symbol) AmyLV



What Memorial Day is really about.

1. The American Cemetery at Aisne-Marne, France.
A total of 2289 of our military dead.



2. The American Cemetery at Ardennes, Belgium. A total of 5329 of our dead.



3. The American Cemetery at Brittany, France. A total of 4410 of our military dead.



4. Brookwood, England American Cemetery. A total of 468 of our dead.



5. Cambridge, England . 3812 of our military dead.



This is just five of the 38 US Military cemeteries and Memorials in Europe. If you'd like to see all of them, and the others in the US and foreign countries, follow this [link](#). Thank you to Len Crosby for this contribution.

Post 154 Honor Guard:

For those of you not aware, our Post has an Honor Guard. They march in parades, present the colors at ceremonies, and most importantly, provide a rifle salute to honor Veterans at their funerals. 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 509-226-5355.

In April, the Honor Guard provided rifle salutes for two US Army veterans and three US Navy veterans. Each memorial service requires between 3 and 8 volunteers. This month required twenty-one volunteers, and they logged in 75 volunteer hours. Once a month the Honor Guard travels to the Washington State Veterans Cemetery and provides rifle salutes for any requests made by veteran families for services that day. Idaho veterans are interred there. - Bryan Bledsoe, Honor Guard Member

Bits & Pieces

- [Troops Exposed to Agent Orange Outside of Vietnam Could Be in Line for Presumptive Benefits](#). Click the link to read more.
- [Change Allows Extra GI Bill Benefits for Some Disabled Vets](#). Click the link to read more.
- If you are interested in burn pit toxic exposure, listen to this: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/watch-ion-stewart-advocates-for-congressional-aid-for-sick-veterans-exposed-to-military-burn-pits>
- 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



A Healthier You:

Washington — The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) unveiled updated guidelines on Tuesday detailing activities that vaccinated people can safely resume, including attending small outdoor gatherings without the need to wear a mask.

The new "interim public health recommendations" detail a variety of situations in which individuals who have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 can forgo wearing a mask, but urged the continued use of face coverings in most indoor settings and in crowded outdoor areas.

"Today is another day we can take a step back to the normalcy of before," CDC Director Rochelle Walensky said in a briefing by Biden administration officials. "Over the past year, we have spent a lot of time telling Americans what they cannot do, what they should not do. Today, I'm going to tell you some of the things you can do if you are fully vaccinated." Follow this [link](#) to read the new guidelines.



Len Crosby attended the April 26th **Kootenai County Veterans Council** meeting. Here are the key items of interest:

- Kootenai County Commissioners are going over their budget for next year. Comm. Bill Brooks is requesting that veterans send the Commission letters asking them to increase the budget for our County Veteran Service Officer. Tom is doing a great job, and more and more Veterans are moving into our area. He does need a budget increase. Please support this by sending the commission a letter. Note: Click on the link below for the form to submit a letter of concern to the County Commissioners regarding the budget for the Veteran Service Office. [Kootenai County, ID \(kcgov.us\)](http://kcgov.us)
- VA Claims: The County Veteran Service Officer asked that Service officers for Legion and VFW Posts refer veterans who have benefit issues to the County Service Officer, especially if the issue involves disability claims or benefits.
- NIC is having a very difficult time finding housing for some of its Veteran students. If you have a rental property or want to rent out a room in your home to a veteran student, please contact the NIC Veteran Service office.
- Please send information regarding Memorial Day events to the Veterans Council (kcvcidaho@gmail.com). - Submitted by Len Crosby

The Boise VA Medical Center Announces Stakeholder Listening Sessions as Part of Ongoing Effort to Guide the Future of VA Health Care

Boise, Idaho — The Boise VA Medical Center announced today that it will hold a virtual listening session with stakeholders on May 7, 2021 from 2PM to 3:30PM MST to hear from Veterans and the communities VA serves.

This is one of 50 public virtual listening sessions across the country from March through June 2021 to hear from Veterans on how to design a health care system of the future and grow services for Veterans in a way that reinforces VA's role as a leader in the U.S. health care system.

"We want to hear from Veterans and other stakeholders in the communities VA serves and understand their vision for VA health care," said Director, David Wood. "VA's goal is to collaborate closely with Veterans and other stakeholders to build the best VA health care system that meets the needs of Veterans today and for generations to come."

These listening sessions represent an exciting opportunity for Veterans to help VA reimagine how VA delivers care in an equitable, high quality, Veteran-centered manner and develop a plan for investing in VA's aging infrastructure. The feedback will be used to develop the recommendations VA submits to the Asset and Infrastructure Review (AIR) Commission in January 2022. The AIR Commission will also conduct public hearings as part of their review of VA's recommendations before submitting its recommendations to the President and Congress for review and approval in 2023.

To register for Boise VA Medical Center's listening session, please visit:

<https://www.va.gov/HEALTHPOLICYPLANNING/listening.asp>.

Josh Callihan, Public Affairs Officer

Boise VA Medical Center

-Submitted by Ruth Aresvik, Service Officer

The Spring 2021 edition of the Idaho Veterans Network Newspaper is available for distribution. If your organization would like multiple copies of the paper for distribution, please let me know and we will get them to you – they come in bundles of 50. I will be making some deliveries on Friday so please let me know.

If you want just one copy for your own reading pleasure – papers can be picked up at the Idaho Division of Veterans Services or other locations where Veterans gather.



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www.facebook.com/JFFTWW

A coalition of organizations working together for our Veterans & Active Duty Military



ENGAGEMENT

The first **Miles of Remembrance** event of the year is happening in Post Falls on Saturday, May 15th. Register for free and join past and current military members, first responders, and civilian supporters who seek challenge, connection, and purpose.

This Miles of Remembrance event occurs on Armed Forces Day. Honor the spirit of service and sacrifice by tackling a challenging and technical 5K route in the Q'emiln Park trail system. The social area at the start/finish will include food, beer, music, and fun for all participants. Help celebrate and communicate the significance of military service to the civilian communities of Idaho!

Date: Saturday, May 15th

Time: 3pm-6:30pm

Location: [Q'emiln Park, Post Falls, ID](#)

REGISTER

Dan Nelson

Engagement Director | Mission43

dan.nelson@mission43.org