



# Manuel Schneidmiller Post 154, Inc.

## Rathdrum Idaho

### Newsletter

Volume 6 Issue #

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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.

## Excerpt from “For the Fallen”

BY LAURENCE BINYON

“They went with songs to the battle, they were young,  
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.  
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted;  
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.”

## Excerpt From “Goodnight Saigon”

BY BILLY JOEL

[We held the airport...]

“They held the highlands  
And they were sharp  
As sharp as knives  
They heard the hum of our motors  
They counted the rotors  
And waited for us to arrive  
And we would all go down together  
We said we'd all go down together  
Yes we would all go down together”



These excerpts were submitted by Len Crosby for the 10 Marines, 2 soldiers, and the Navy Corpsman we lost at the Kabul airport.

### Names of those killed:

- Marine Corps Lance Cpl. David Espinoza, 20, of Rio Bravo, Tex.
- Marine Corps Sgt. Nicole Gee, 23, of Roseville, Calif.
- Marine Corps Staff Sgt. Darin Taylor Hoover, 31, of Utah
- Army Staff Sgt. Ryan Knauss, 23, of Corryton, Tenn.
- Marine Corps Cpl. Hunter Lopez, 22, of Indio, Calif.
- Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Rylee McCollum, 20, Jackson, Wyo.
- Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Dylan R. Merola, 20, of Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.
- Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Kareem Nikoui, 20, of Norco, Calif.
- Marine Corps Cpl. Daegan William-Tyeler Page, 23, of Omaha
- Marine Corps Sgt. Johanny Rosario, 25, Lawrence, Mass.
- Marine Corps Cpl. Humberto Sanchez, 22, Logansport, Ind.
- Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Jared Schmitz, 20, of Wentzville, Mo.
- Navy Hospital Corpsman Max Soviak, 22, of Berlin Heights, Ohio



If you'd like to read their stories, click [HERE](#).

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## The Fall of Afghanistan (An Opinion)

Written by Len Crosby, Post 154 Finance Officer & Legislative Chairman

Two weeks before the U.S. was set to complete our withdrawal of troops, Afghanistan has fallen to the Taliban in a mere matter of days. The complex emotions we all feel watching and reading the news of the rapidly deteriorating situation are a mix of anger, sorrow, disbelief, and shock.

We grieve, for the men and women who did not come home, for those who came home with physical or mental scars, and for those brave Afghans who risked their lives to support our troops. We remember the costs and sacrifices this almost 20-year conflict has required of our Service members, veterans, and their families. But we must not forget those same costs and sacrifices of the Afghan people.

**The Afghan people** — many who greeted American service members with peace, **who fought alongside so many of us**, who lived in deep hiding for fear of execution by the Taliban, who risked their lives and the lives of their families, who are desperately trying to flee the country in fear of the violent retribution that has been happening in small doses, until now — **deserve better from us. Those who fought with us deserve better.**

America must have an engaged, active presence in the world and remain a global leader — even as we withdraw our troops from Afghanistan. We are stronger abroad when united at home. Just as we once answered our nation's call to battle, we now need to shift our fire to building America into the nation we aspire to be in our founding documents, and that includes keeping our promise to those who served alongside us and providing refuge for those fleeing violence and threats of death.

### Dealing with the end of combat in Iraq and Afghanistan:

While some troops have reconciled their service, not all have. With the recent news and announcements over the end of the Afghanistan mission, VA facilities also started seeing an increase in Veterans with mental health issues seeking help. Two psychologists from the National Center for PTSD said they are starting to see Afghanistan Veterans dealing with serious issues around their service. (cont. below)

**They forecast an increase in Veteran suicides over the next 18 – 24 months as those who served and were injured try to reconcile their suffering and their loss with the reality of what we are seeing as Afghanistan is lost over a matter of days. This should not be the result of 20 years of service and sacrifice, which have cost the American public thousands of lives and trillions of dollars.**

“Reactions aren’t always what people think they are going to be, and that’s okay,” said Dr. Jennifer Vasterling, the chief of psychology at the Boston VA Hospital. Veterans should be on the lookout for the red flags if news of Afghanistan starts changing behavior. These include isolating, using alcohol, drugs or any increase in unhealthy behaviors compared to normal. This could even include things like excess work or video games.

### ***Avoidance***

Another unsuccessful coping mechanism many Veterans use is avoiding the topic.

“It can feel really good in the short term,” one Veteran said. “In the longer term, avoidance breeds more avoidance. It felt so good that one time that you begin avoiding more and you start doing less. Your world becomes so small, time over time, as you avoid more and more.”

That numbness can spread and snowball, where people aren’t feeling pleasure or joy. People can feel danger in relatively safe situations. For Veterans with PTSD, replacing traumatic wartime memories with thoughts and activities that make them happier can be difficult without treatment and may feel reluctant to let the memories out. Seek the assistance of a trained counselor at VA!

### ***‘Be proud of what you have done’***

Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans should be proud of the fact that U.S. troops carried out their mission and most arrived home safe. The last U.S. combat death was Feb. 8, 2020, more than 17 months ago. Our Country asked us to go there, and we have been there for 20 years.

The things that our Troops accomplished from then to now are phenomenal including helping stand up a new government and building a military force.

All Veterans of this war should be proud of what they have done. Our government made the decision to invade those countries, and our Volunteer troops and Veterans have fully and faithfully followed lawful orders. Nobody trained in the military to “nation build”. Our military trains to protect our Country by finding, fixing, and eliminating its enemies, and that often (and SHOULD) requires killing bad people and breaking things, not building things. The military is NOT a nation building organization or an agent for regime change. If the United States wants to be in that business, Congress should create a “nation building” agency and let them do that. **It is NOT the job of the military.**

Have we learned NOTHING from Vietnam and now Afghanistan?? When our leaders in Congress decide to take military action against another country, we need to DEMAND that they fully define and establish specific mission objectives, plan for a violent and limited action to achieve those mission objectives, set specific limits on our Country’s continued involvement following the achievement of the military objectives, and require that the military execute an orderly and prompt withdrawal once its mission has been accomplished, including the withdrawal of all of our military hardware. - Len Crosby



## Finance Officer:

We ended the month of July with income of \$2,934.12 (primarily donations to our Honor Guard which has been doing double duty and income from membership renewals) and expenses of \$1,235.53 (primarily membership expenses and the purchase of Post 154 hats for resale) for a net income of \$1,630.63. Our Capital Reserves totaled \$65,280.45 at the end of July. The reserves are invested in one-year CD's which are laddered over a six month period, and in a money market account.

In your prayers, thoughts and actions, please remember those men and women warriors who served in Afghanistan and Iraq to protect our Country. They will be having a difficult time reconciling the end result of the service and sacrifice of so many to a 20 year effort by our Country that eroded into chaos so very quickly. Those most impacted will be the men and women who suffered serious wounds or the loss of a limb that may have changed their lives in a dramatic way. Many will feel betrayed by the outcome of their personal sacrifice.

Following our withdrawal from Vietnam, we had a spike in veteran suicides (we still have 20 per day). I know that all of our Veteran Service Organizations are reaching out to these Veterans and offering them support and encouragement. We all need to do that. We also need to remind each of them that we recognize and honor their service and sacrifice, which was made on behalf of our country, and confirm that, in our eyes, they ACCOMPLISHED the stated military mission of eliminating Al Qaeda, killing Osama bin Laden and capturing Saddam Hussain. Finally, we need to remind them that EVERYONE in our Country (no matter what political agenda we ascribe to) feel that **each and every one of our Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans served loyally and well and should be respected and honored for their patriotism.**

- Len Crosby, Finance Officer

## Legislative Chairman:

**Major Medical Facility Bill Signed into Law:** President Biden signed into law the *Major Medical Facility Authorization Act of 2021*. This change will authorize VA to carry out specific major medical facilities projects and also increase the amount of money that can be spent on each project. The American Legion applauds the passage of this legislation and calls on Congress and the Administration to continue rigorous oversight of VA's infrastructure needs. The Legion has testified numerous times on VA infrastructure and the need for proper attention to aging VA facilities. This new law will be a step in the right direction.

**DUMP Opioids Act Becomes Law:** In 2019, almost 70,000 Americans died from drug overdoses. Properly disposing of unneeded and unused opioids is one way to battle the opioid epidemic. President Biden has signed [S. 957](#), *DUMP Opioids Act*, into law. This law expands on VA's program to dispose of controlled substances introduced in the [Isakson Roe Act of 2020](#). It will make VA's drop boxes accessible to the general public with a community information campaign announcing designated times for disposal in an effort to improve medication safety in homes.

**Congress Passes Dog Training Pilot Program:** The Senate passed VFW-supported [H.R. 1448](#), the *PAWS for Veterans Therapy Act*. This legislation would establish a pilot program on dog training therapy for veterans diagnosed with PTSD and require VA to provide service dogs for those veterans, including veterinary insurance. In recent congressional statements for the record submitted to both the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs, VFW National Legislative Service Deputy Director Tammy Barlet noted that studies and anecdotal evidence indicate veterans diagnosed with PTSD who have service dogs experience increased participation in social settings and overall satisfaction with life. The bill, which passed the House in May, now heads to the president's desk for signature. - Len Crosby, Legislative Chairman

## Chaplain's Pew:

### A Prayer for the Anniversary of 9/11

The Rev. Jeremy Pridgeon

O God, our hope and refuge,  
in our distress we come quickly to you.  
Shock and horror of that tragic day have subsided,  
replaced now with an emptiness,  
a longing for an innocence lost.

We come remembering those who lost their lives  
in New York, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania.  
We are mindful of the sacrifice of public servants  
who demonstrated the greatest love of all  
by laying down their lives for friends.

We commit their souls to your eternal care  
and celebrate their gifts to a fallen humanity.  
We come remembering  
and we come in hope,  
not in ourselves, but in you.

As foundations we once thought secure have been shaken  
we are reminded of the illusion of security.  
In commemorating this tragedy,  
we give you thanks for your presence  
in our time of need  
and we seek to worship you in Spirit and in truth,  
our guide and our guardian. **Amen.**

Submitted by Helen Kinder, Chaplain



## Service Officer:

### VA added 3 presumptive conditions related to particulate matter exposure

The new presumptive conditions are asthma, rhinitis, and sinusitis. To be eligible for benefits, you must have gotten one of these conditions within 10 years of your separation from active service.

This will expand benefits for Veterans who served in:

- Afghanistan, Djibouti, Syria, and Uzbekistan during the Persian Gulf War, from September 19, 2001, to the present, or
- The Southwest Asia theater of operations from August 2, 1990, to the present

If you have a pending claim for one or more of these conditions, you don't need to do anything. We'll send you a decision notice when we complete our review.

"Airborne hazard" refers to any sort of contaminant or potentially toxic substance that we are exposed to through the air we breathe. While on active duty, military service members may have been exposed to a variety of airborne hazards including:

- The smoke and fumes from open burn pits
- Sand, dust, and particulate matter
- General air pollution common in certain countries
- Fuel, aircraft exhaust, and other mechanical fumes
- Smoke from oil well fires

VA understands that many Veterans are especially concerned about exposure to the smoke and fumes generated by open burn pits.

In Iraq, Afghanistan, and other areas of the Southwest Asia theater of military operations, open-air combustion of trash and other waste in burn pits was a common practice. The Department of Defense has now closed out most burn pits and is planning to close the remainder.

Depending on a variety of factors, you may experience health effects related to this exposure. Factors that may indicate you have a greater or lesser risk of short or long-term health effects include:

- Types of waste burned
- Proximity, amount of time, and frequency of exposure
- Wind direction and other weather-related factors
- Presence of other airborne or environmental hazards in the area

Researchers, including experts at VA, are actively studying airborne hazards like burn pits and other military environmental exposures. Ongoing research will help us better understand potential long-term health effects and provide you with better care and services.

Many health conditions related to these hazards are temporary and should disappear after the exposure ends. Other longer-term health issues may be caused by a combination of hazardous exposures, injuries, or illnesses you may have experienced during your military service including blast or noise injuries.

**The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)** has determined approximately **115,000** Veterans may be eligible for a refund of their unused Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP) contributions totaling up to **\$2,700**, but VA only has contact information for **25%** of them.

VA has informed us that approximately 115,000 Post-Vietnam Era Veterans are entitled to a refund of contributions they made to the Veterans' Educational Assistance Program (VEAP). If you don't know, VEAP was a service member education and training savings program for Post-Vietnam Era Veterans. (cont. below)

### **Why are some service members owed refunds?**

In general, Veterans have ten years from their date of discharge to use their education benefits. Some ineligible Veterans still have unused contributions and are entitled to a refund.

### **Who might be missing their refund?**

Veterans potentially eligible for a refund would have:

- Entered Active Duty between 01/01/77 to 06/30/85
- Contributed to VEAP while on active duty and before 4/01/87
- Not used all their contributions
- Not have been dishonorably discharged
- Completed 24 months of continuous service **or** have been discharged early due to:
  - Convenience of the government within three months of the end of their enlistment (an “early out” under Title 10, Section 1171)
  - Hardship (under Title 10, Section 1173)
  - Service-connected disability (this includes those rated for a compensable service-connected disability even if they were not discharged for that disability)

### **What should an eligible, or potentially eligible, Veteran do?**

If you have unused VEAP funds, you should submit VA Form 22-5281 after completing sections 1-6, 14, 15, and 18. It will take 3-4 weeks to receive a response and/or refund via U.S Treasury check.

If you are unsure whether you are eligible for a refund or whether you participated in VEAP, you can call the Education Call Center at 1-888-GIBILL-1 (1-888-442 4551) Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. CT. - Ruth Aresvik, Service Officer



**It's time  
to renew**

**Jinny Cash**, the new Dept. of Idaho Commander and the Dept. Membership Committee has announced an incentive to earn money for each Post. We need to attain 100% membership by January 31, 2022, based on the size of our Post. If we do this the Department will send us a check for **\$400.00 (100% Post size 126-300 members= \$400.00)** Our renewal drive is moving along at a steady pace! As of August 26th, our paid membership is at 69 for 2022. This places us at 51.49% of our goal, with our total membership goal set at 134. Remember membership is everyone's responsibility.

**Once again, I highly recommend your use of the On-Line Renewal feature. It's fast and easy. Go to [legion.org](http://legion.org), click renewals. Make sure you have your ID card and credit card available for this transaction. If you haven't done so already, take an extra minute and go to [Mylegion.org](http://Mylegion.org) and sign up for this section.**

If you haven't done so already, take an extra minute and go to [Mylegion.org](http://Mylegion.org) and sign up for this section. - Bill Kinder Post 154 1st Vice Commander. Membership Chairman



## Toxic Exposure in the Military

### DOD Dragged Its Feet on Toxic Chemical Exposure, Prevention, and Cleanup, IG Finds

As reported July 27 by Meghann Myers for *Army Times*, DoD's Emerging Chemical Program, in 2011, issued a "risk alert," detailing the hazards of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, known collectively as PFAS, found in aqueous film-forming foam used to fight vehicle and aircraft fires. Then nothing happened. Due to a tricky bit of bureaucracy, that risk alert had no muscle behind it, because it wasn't endorsed by the Pentagon's Emerging Chemicals of Concern Governance Council, according to an inspector general report released Friday. In short, they could put out the alert, but there was no accompanying instruction to allow them to do anything about it.



"Therefore, DoD officials were not required to plan, program, and budget for any actions in response to the 2011 risk alert," according to the IG report. "EC Program officials did not require proactive risk management actions for PFAS-containing AFFF until 2016."

The report comes two years after dozens of lawmakers requested a DoD IG review of the use of PFAS on installations and exposure to those living on and around them. The IG announced the evaluation in early 2020.

DoD has been aware of the risks of PFAS for decades, including their tendency to build up in the body over time, as well as their links to cancer.

[Read More...](#)

## Training Officer:

### What to do Before - and After - a Veteran Dies.



Death will affect all of us. The family (or executor) left behind will be responsible for all arrangements for a deceased veteran. This is a difficult and time-consuming process but planning ahead can make it easier. The Veterans Administration provides death benefits to eligible veterans and family members. The requirements and qualifications are available on the VA website, but the pertinent information is not always easy to extract. Other organizations also provide helpful information. We have compiled advice and instructions from the VA, The American Legion, AARP, and funeral homes.

There are three checklists as well, one for pre-planning, one specifically for use after the death of a veteran, and one that applies to the death of anyone. The full document can be found on the Post 154 website by following this [LINK](#). - Submitted by Jean Bledsoe, Training Officer

**This letter**, slightly edited, was received from Kellie Richardson who is a member of the Eastern Washington Veterans Taskforce. He is very knowledgeable and offers classes on final arrangements for veterans and their families.

"I am once again conducting in person classes and seminars for Final Arrangements 101. The events of 2020 have caused some significant changes to be made.

Washington is no longer an open records state and death certificate prices have increased significantly. If you order them at the time of death through a funeral home, they are \$26. If you order them yourself, they are \$40 and \$43 if ordered by phone or internet. Veterans receive ONE free death certificate, it must be ordered in person by an immediate family member or authorized executor, and the DD214 is required.

[**Editor's Note:** Idaho is an open records state, public records being always available for legal uses. Also, the price of certified copies of death certificates is \$14. These are computer generated copies and are valid for most legal purposes.]

Before 2020, I was able to get many cremations paid for through area organizations and individuals. Many of these resources are no longer available and only limited funds are available in certain circumstances, making it even more important to pre-plan. As you know, the VA does not pay for veterans' funerals or cremations, only the Veterans Cemetery is free of charge. This common misconception is creating a large volume of crisis calls. Veterans and their families assume it will all be covered so they do not plan for this, as well as their other legal, family, and financial issues....

I offer three seminars: A comprehensive one covering everything, which includes guest speakers in related fields. One for veterans and their families, and a third for people who have no family or resources and will most likely go unclaimed after they die. There are things they, or their social workers can do to prepare for the situation to reduce the stress on yourself, landlords, police chaplains, ME's office and cremation services.

I do not and will not charge to speak to veterans or their families and am currently concentrating on Vietnam and Vietnam era veterans, as they are the most affected right now."

Thank you,

Kellie Richardson, US Army, Desert Storm Veteran  
Eastern Washington Veterans Taskforce  
509-714-7482

## Did you know...?

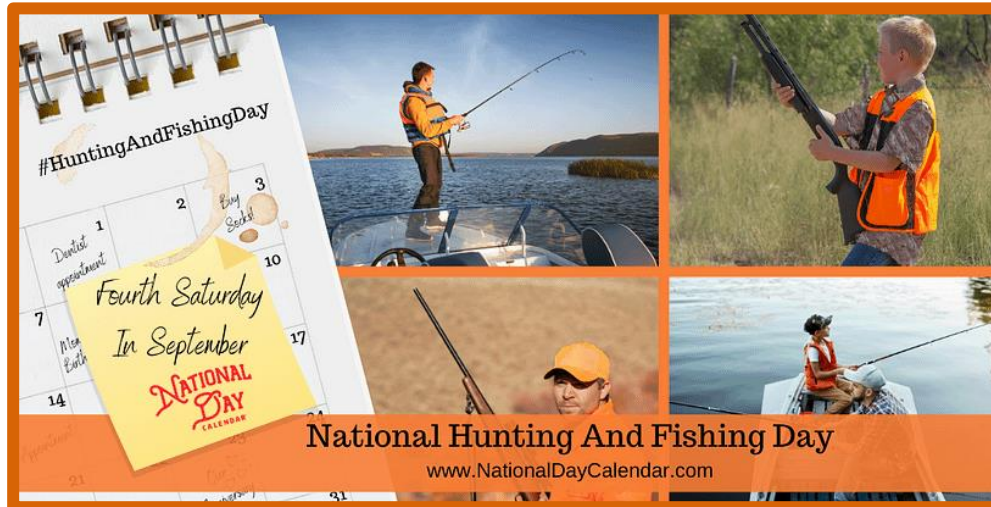
Scams are always around trying to catch someone. While Dee was at National Legion convention, an email came to us, supposedly from her, saying she was in a conference and needed gift cards and couldn't get them online. Asked us to buy them and she would reimburse us. It was signed "Kind regards, Dee Sasse", definitely *not* how she would have addressed her friend and adjutant. When Bryan checked the sending email address, it was executivecommander20@gmail.com. Looks like something a legionnaire might use, right? But of course, to Bryan it was a dead give-away. Someone had gotten her email address, probably from a mass email sent out at convention. Then her email was hacked and produced addresses for scammers. Continue to be alert folks, they're after us!



### 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. 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](mailto:keltod11@gmail.com) or by phone at 509-226-5355. Here are the latest numbers for our Honor Guard:

In August, the Honor Guard provided rifle salutes for 18 veterans., twelve (12) US Army veterans, three (3) US Navy veterans, two (2) US Air Force veterans, and one (1) US Marine veteran. Each memorial service requires between 3 and 8 volunteers. This month required forty-six (46) volunteers, and they logged in 180 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 and there were six ceremonies this month that are included above. Idaho veterans are interred there as well. These statistics go monthly from the Membership Meeting a month ago to the last Membership Meeting. - Bryan Bledsoe, Honor Guard member



### Mark Your Calendar:

August 27<sup>th</sup> – Sept 2<sup>nd</sup> - American Legion National Convention in Phoenix

September 1<sup>st</sup> - National Disaster Preparedness Month

September 2<sup>nd</sup> - National Victory Over Japan Day

September 6<sup>th</sup> - Labor Day

September 7<sup>th</sup> - Rosh Hashanah Day

**September 9<sup>th</sup> - Post 154 Executive Committee Meeting at Lions Club @ 6 pm**

September 11<sup>th</sup> - 9/11 Ceremony at Rathdrum City Hall @ 10 am

Patriot Day & National Day of Service & Remembrance Day

September 16<sup>th</sup> - The American Legion Day (proclaimed by Congress in 2009)

Yom Kippur

September 17<sup>th</sup> - POW/MIA Day

Citizenship Day

Constitution Week

September 18<sup>th</sup> - US Air Force Birthday (by act of Congress in 1947)

September 19<sup>th</sup> - Employ Older Workers Week

National Wife Appreciation Day (Yay!)

September 21<sup>st</sup> - National Pecan Cookie Day - see **page 21** for a delicious recipe

September 22<sup>nd</sup> - Autumnal Equinox - marks the end of summer and beginning of fall in the Northern Hemisphere.

**September 23<sup>rd</sup> - Post 154 Membership Meeting at Lions Club @ 5:30 pm Potluck - Note: be sure to check the home page of our website or watch for an email to tell you the status of the meeting and potluck.**

September 26<sup>th</sup> - Gold Star Mother's Day

September 27<sup>th</sup> - National Day of Forgiveness

September 28<sup>th</sup> - National Voter Registration Day

September 29<sup>th</sup> - VFW Day

## Bits & Pieces

### ❖ VA 'Reimaging Approach' To Costly Electronic Health Record Project

As reported July 15 by Nikki Wentling for *Stars and Stripes*, the VA has promised a new approach for the major project to overhaul its electronic health-record system, following concerns from federal watchdogs and employees who used the program when it first when live in Spokane, Wash. [Read More...](#)

### ❖ Retirees and Disabled Vets Due for Record Raise Next Year

As reported August 17 by Jim Absher for Military Times, military retirees and disabled veterans could see their monthly checks jump by a hundred or more dollars each month in 2022, the largest increase since 1983. [Read More...](#)

### ❖ Veterans With PTSD Could Get Service Dogs from VA Under New Law

As reported August 25 by Nikki Wentling for *Stars and Stripes*, President Joe Biden, on Wednesday, signed a bill into law that will allow some veterans with mental-health conditions to receive service dogs. The law orders the VA secretary to develop and launch a five-year pilot program that provides service dog training to benefit veterans diagnosed with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. Previously, the VA only covered some costs of service dogs for veterans with certain physical disabilities, such as blindness, hearing impairment, and mobility issues — but not mental health conditions. The *Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers for Veterans Therapy Act*, or *PAWS Act*, requires VA to start the pilot program in early 2022, and it must be carried out by at least five VA medical centers. The facilities will partner with accredited service dog organizations to perform the training. [Read More...](#)

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](mailto:crosbylenmary@frontier.com)



## A Healthier You:

A different kind of healing this month. Do you have a story?

### 40 Years of Healing. The Wall in Your Words.

In 2022, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund will commemorate the 40th anniversary of the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* – one of the most iconic places of remembrance in the entire country. As part of that commemoration, VVMF is collecting short stories that reflect the many ways that *The Wall* continues to impact our nation today – stories of loss and remembrance, of healing and reconciliation, or service and honor. We want to hear your story about what the *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* means to you. We invite you to submit a story from 500-1,000 words in length.

[Submit your stories here...](#)

This is a story written by one of Post member, about one of our Post members. It appeared on the front page of the [Coeur d'Alene/Post Falls Press](#) on Tuesday 24 August 2021.

## Tragedy at the Pentagon — A 9/11 story

By **RUTH ARESVIK**/ Veterans Help Net Correspondent

Where were you when you heard the news? It's a date that needs no explanation. This Sept. 11th will mark the 20th anniversary of the terrorist attack on America that toppled the World Trade Center towers, penetrated the Pentagon and changed a field in Somerset County, Pa., into hallowed ground. Someone says "9/11," and conversations start. As a Navy Wave, I had worked at the Pentagon during the mid-'70s for Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Zumwalt. Hearing and seeing the news about the Pentagon on that fateful day broke my military heart. For Kenneth Johnson of Rathdrum, 9/11 brings back much more.

"It was a perfect September morning," Johnson said. "A slight breeze — crisp, cool — just a great day to be supporting our country working at the Pentagon."

Johnson, an Army sergeant first class, worked as the property book officer & logistics coordinator for the chief of staff of the Army. He had been there since the spring of 1995. His fiancée, Molly, was a civilian analyst in the Army Budget Office as of 1981.

"That's how we met," said Johnson. "And I had just proposed on Friday, Sept. 7, 2001."

That Tuesday morning, 9/11, they commuted together to the Pentagon. Because of fiscal year close-out activities, they arrived early for work, by 4:30 a.m.



This undated photo provided by the FBI shows damage to the Pentagon caused during the 9/11 attacks. FBI via AP

"We parted for our individual offices," Johnson said.

He later left the building for a meeting.

After the meeting, he returned to the Pentagon via the Metro subway system.

As the train pulled into the station, he "heard a thunderous noise. I started up the escalator and into the building when a rush of personnel screaming and crying started exiting, saying the Pentagon had just been attacked."

It was impossible to re-enter the building, so he rushed to the south side heliport area where the plane had crashed into the Pentagon.

Being a trained combat lifesaver, Johnson immediately joined others. For 22 hours straight, he worked with rescue personnel until 7 a.m.

Wednesday morning, all the while constantly paging Molly and trying to locate her.

"My office only received smoke and water damage from the attack," Johnson said, "but Molly's office was in the direct path of the hijacked plane. During the early hours of the recovery, it was impossible to determine from the outside, the exact location of the numbered offices. I worked beside another soldier who feared for his fiancée also.

"We put it in our heads that their respective offices were to the left of the collapsed section, and that maybe ... maybe ... they had escaped.

But on Wednesday morning, when we had the chance to review blueprints, we realized we were wrong. They weren't to the left, they weren't to the right. They had been dead-center. (cont. below)

"The hardest thing was to go home without her, to see her new car parked in the driveway, or her hairbrush on the counter."

After a month and a day of waiting, Molly's body was identified by the staff at Dover Air Force Base. Two weeks later, she was laid to rest near her father in Ephrata, Pa. "Molly was the devoted mother of two sweet girls, Lea (age 14) and Alana (age 11)," Johnson said. "She was a talented singer and musician who played the clarinet and the piano. She always had a smile and was a true and loyal friend. She was a devout Christian who read her Bible every day before going to sleep."

More than 215 attended her memorial service.

Johnson left the Army but stayed on at the Pentagon in his same position as a Department of the Army civilian. "Staying on at the Pentagon after 9/11 was difficult," Johnson said.

"Even though sensors were installed to prove otherwise, I (like others) could still smell jet fuel in the building." In 2008, Ken said goodbye to the Pentagon and accepted a position with TSA — Transportation Security Agency, a part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, created in November 2001 as a response to the 9/11 attacks. "It seemed fitting for me to come here. I had been at the Pentagon for 13 years," Johnson said.

Sometime later, Ken met Desiree through Christian Mingle. They dated for about eight months online and via phone calls.

Desiree lived in Idaho; Ken was still in Washington, D.C. They finally arranged to meet in person and hug each other for the first time.

He proposed the next day and they married shortly after.

Johnson was able to take a position in Government Property Administration at the Hanford Nuclear Site in the Tri-Cities, Wash., and join his wife to start their married life. He retired in 2020 after a total of 34 years combined service to our country. Ken and Desiree enjoy their retired life on their property on Rathdrum Mountain.

He is involved with church activities and is a member of the Rathdrum American Legion Post No. 154, where he is part of their Honor Guard. A total of 2,996 people were killed in the 9/11 attacks: 2,763 at the World Trade Center, including 403 firefighters, paramedics and police officers; 189 at the Pentagon; and 44 when the plane crashed in Pennsylvania.

This September, our country will honor the fallen with various ceremonies and television documentaries. There will be many ways to watch, pay tribute and commemorate this date in history. Kenneth Johnson will be at the Pentagon.



### **Rathdrum remembers 9/11 with ceremony**

The city of Rathdrum will commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks with a ceremony at 10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 11 in front of City Hall on Main Street.

The event will feature photo displays, flags, a memorial wreath and music. Rathdrum American Legion Post No. 154 will conduct the ceremony with comments from several local dignitaries.

The remembrance will honor the first responders and heroes who fearlessly gave their lives, and all those who worked to protect and defend our country on that tragic day.



Pentagon 9/11 Memorial

## Missing Man Ceremony honors absent soldiers

[Coeur d'Alene/Post Falls Press](#) Tuesday 24 August 2021

Held nightly at fair in memory of MIAs, POWs

By ELLI GOLDMAN HILBERT Staff Writer

**COEUR d'ALENE** — A table of honor stands alone, with four empty wine glasses and four empty chairs.

Other items on the table symbolize the experience and the memory of our country's servicemen and women who have gone missing in action or been taken as prisoners of war.

The Missing Man Ceremony will be held each evening at 7 at the North Idaho State Fair at the Kootenai County Fairgrounds by members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 889 from Coeur d'Alene and other local servicemen.

"The tablecloth is white," said Bob Martin, a member of Post 889. "It shows the purity of their intention when called upon by our nation."

A slice of lemon is on the bread plate as a symbol of "the bitter fate of those captured and alone in a foreign land," Martin said.

A pinch of salt communicates the tears of the missing and their families who don't have answers.

The red rose "reminds us of the life of each of the missing," and to represent the continual hope of reuniting with the lost warriors sits a burning yellow candle and yellow ribbon.

The table is alone, separate from any others, which represents the vulnerability of a prisoner against his captors.

"Our men and women have sacrificed much and in many cases all," said Hal Donahue, who served in the U.S. Navy during the Korean War.

Donahue is a member of the Honor Guard of the American Legion Post 154 in Rathdrum.

Seventy-two thousand military members went missing during World War II, 7,600 during the Korean War and 1,600 during Vietnam, Donahue said.

The solemn ceremony begins with four team members slowly marching as they carry the hat representing each military branch under the left arm.

Approaching the table, the hats are placed at the table in unison.

A sword salute is then performed and the team retreats to face the audience in honor of veterans, servicemen and women and their families.

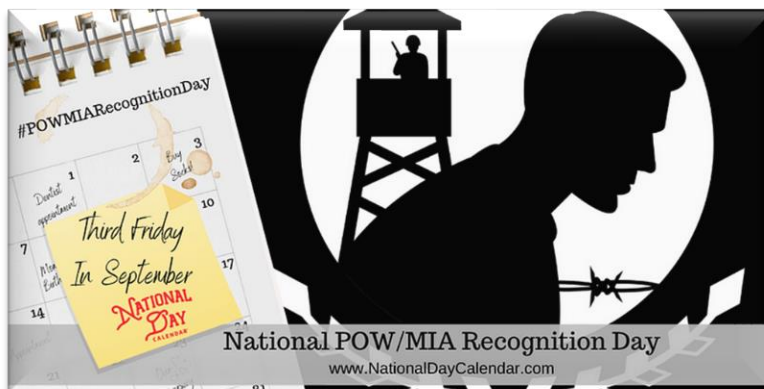
Originally conceived after the Vietnam War, the ceremony carries a memorable and powerful message.

"It is an honor for me to do this," said Donahue, who narrated the ceremony on the fair's opening night, Friday.



## Soldiers salute during the Missing Man Ceremony, Friday night.

ELLI GOLDMAN HILBERT/Press





**The “Topping Out” ceremony for the North Idaho Veterans Home** was held on August 26<sup>th</sup>.

It was attended by several hundred people, most proudly wearing hats showing their military service or membership in a Veteran Service Organization. It was exciting to see so many of them were Post 154 members with their significant others, and many of our Honor Guard member in uniform.

The event started with the beam signing - a huge white steel beam set up to allow the public to sign and leave comments. It was exciting to know all those names would be forever encased in our Veterans home. A second beam was provided after the ceremony for more signings.

Mark Tschampl, Division of Veterans Services Chief Administrator, opened the ceremony by asking Post 154 member Len Crosby to lead the Pledge of Allegiance. He then introduced Idaho Governor Brad Little, Post Falls Mayor Ron Jacobson, and brothers Don & Doyle Jacklin whose family donated the land for the Veterans home.



Post Falls Mayor Ron Jacobson, Len Crosby, Chief Administrator Idaho Div of Veteran Services Mark Tschampl, Idaho Governor Brad Little, Don Jacklin and Doyle Jacklin whose family donated the land for the Post Falls Veterans Home - Photo courtesy of Kerri Thoreson

Governor Little’s short remarks focused on thanking veterans for their service and support of this new Veterans Home and promising it will provide all the care and comfort veterans have earned.

Mayor Jacobson focused on thanking the local people who worked long and hard to see that this project went forward. Those thanks included the Jacklin family, Duane Jacklin, past Post Falls mayors, Clay Larkin and Frank Henderson, all three who have passed, and Len Crosby, who received special recognition for his continued efforts to see this home is all we hope it will be. Mayor Jacobson also thanked the veterans for their support of the North Idaho Veterans Home and showing that support by their attendance at the event.

Don Jacklin related a short story of the land; how the family worked to clear the rock-filled acreage in the 1950s and then planted Christmas trees in soil too full of boulders for other uses. The remaining trees have been left to provide natural and

peaceful walking paths for the Veterans home residents. Doyle Jacklin added his comments about the three Jacklin brothers who are all Navy Veterans themselves.

The event ended with the raising of the signed beam into its place on the frame which will become the new Veterans Home. By the way, those tiny object on top of the beam are the American flag and a little potted evergreen tree. It is an old tradition whenever a building is Topped Out. The evergreen brings good luck to the builders and to all the residents of the building in the future. - Jean Bledsoe, Newsletter Editor



## Rathdrum Parks & Recreation

Join us for the 20-Year Anniversary 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony. The ceremony will be Saturday September 11th at 10 AM in front of Rathdrum City Hall. Together we will honor and remember all of our first responders and the victims of that fateful September day 20 years ago.

Come see actual artifacts on display from ground zero. For more information please call Eric at Rathdrum Parks and Recreation at 208-687-2399 or go to [rathdrum.org/rec](http://rathdrum.org/rec)



**9/11** Remembrance Ceremony

**A Day to Remember**

**Saturday  
September 11th, 2021  
Rathdrum City Hall  
10:00 AM**



For more information call 208-687-2399  
or go to [rathdrum.org/rec](http://rathdrum.org/rec)

The poster features a background image of the World Trade Center towers on 9/11. The text is in blue and red. The date and time are in red. The logos are in various colors. The American flag is on the right side.

**This is a sight you have probably never seen.** This is a rare memorial to our veterans who were killed in the Vietnam War. It hangs in the National Veteran's Art Museum, Chicago.

Did not know this existed?

When visitors first enter the museum, they will hear a sound like wind chimes coming from above them and their attention will be drawn upward 24 feet to the ceiling of the two-story high atrium.

Dog tags of the more than 58,000 service men and women who died in the Vietnam War hang from the ceiling of the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum in Chicago on Veterans Day, November 11, 2010.



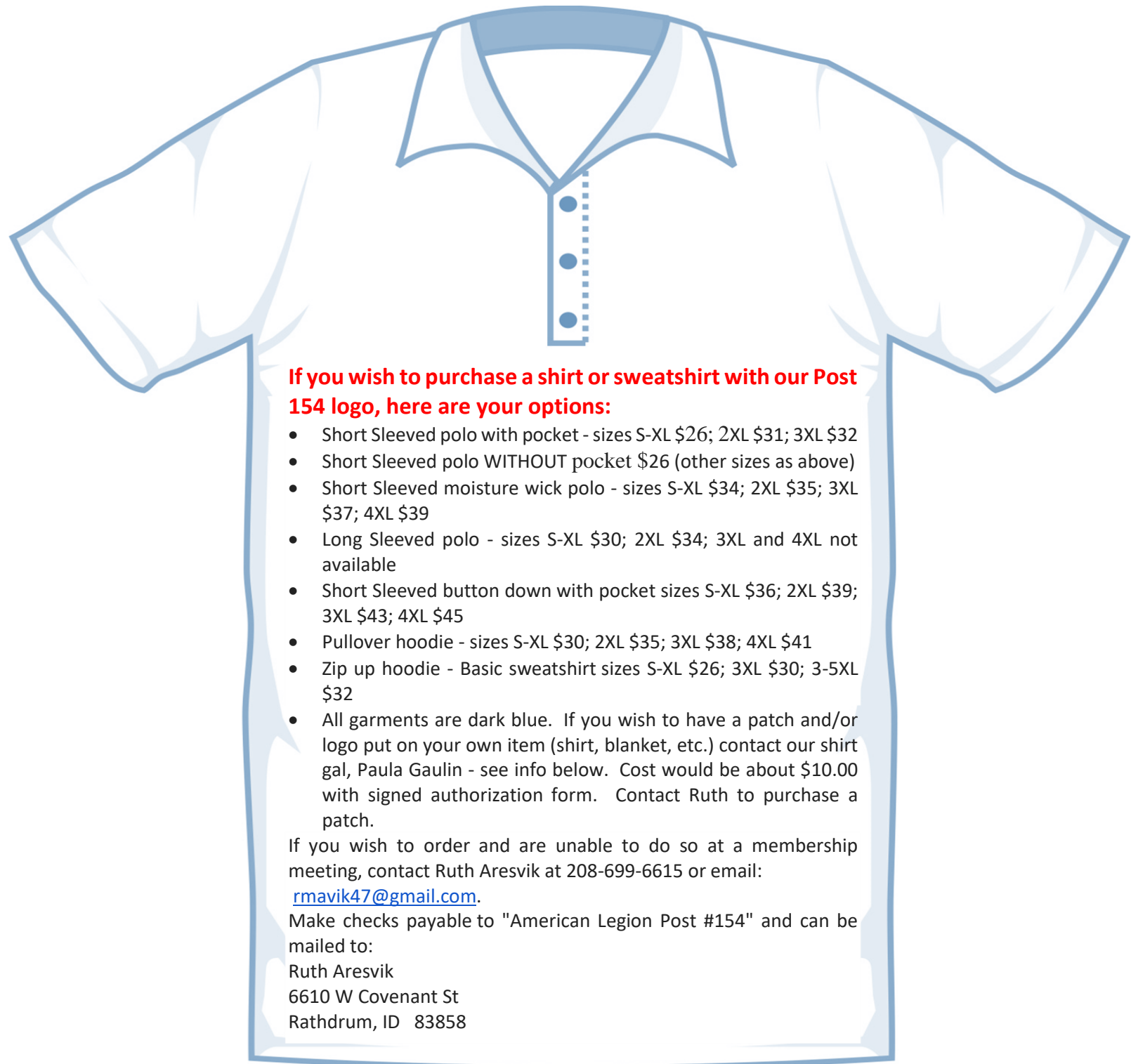
The 10-by-40-foot sculpture, entitled *Above and Beyond*, was designed by Ned Broderick and Richard Stein.



The tens of thousands of metal dog tags are suspended 24 feet in the air, 1 inch apart, from fine lines that allow them to move and chime with shifting air currents.

Museum employees using a kiosk and laser pointer help visitors locate the exact dog tag with the imprinted name of their lost friend or relative.

Submitted by Post member  
Paula Atwood



**If you wish to purchase a shirt or sweatshirt with our Post 154 logo, here are your options:**

- Short Sleeved polo with pocket - sizes S-XL \$26; 2XL \$31; 3XL \$32
- Short Sleeved polo WITHOUT pocket \$26 (other sizes as above)
- Short Sleeved moisture wick polo - sizes S-XL \$34; 2XL \$35; 3XL \$37; 4XL \$39
- Long Sleeved polo - sizes S-XL \$30; 2XL \$34; 3XL and 4XL not available
- Short Sleeved button down with pocket sizes S-XL \$36; 2XL \$39; 3XL \$43; 4XL \$45
- Pullover hoodie - sizes S-XL \$30; 2XL \$35; 3XL \$38; 4XL \$41
- Zip up hoodie - Basic sweatshirt sizes S-XL \$26; 3XL \$30; 3-5XL \$32
- All garments are dark blue. If you wish to have a patch and/or logo put on your own item (shirt, blanket, etc.) contact our shirt gal, Paula Gaulin - see info below. Cost would be about \$10.00 with signed authorization form. Contact Ruth to purchase a patch.

If you wish to order and are unable to do so at a membership meeting, contact Ruth Aresvik at 208-699-6615 or email:

[rmavik47@gmail.com](mailto:rmavik47@gmail.com).

Make checks payable to "American Legion Post #154" and can be mailed to:

Ruth Aresvik  
6610 W Covenant St  
Rathdrum, ID 83858

Two extra shirts available for purchase:

Short sleeve polo - no pocket 2XL = \$26.00

Short sleeve polo - no pocket 3XL = \$29.00



## Honey Sandies

- A delicious and tender shortbread cookie that's easy to make any time. The small amount of honey keeps the pecans from leaving a bitter aftertaste.

Makes about 2 dozen cookies

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 c. all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 c. pecans, finely chopped
- 1/4 c. granulated sugar
- Pinch kosher salt
- 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
- 1 Tbs. honey
- 1/2 c. butter, chopped and softened
- 1 c. powdered sugar

### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350° and line a large cookie sheet with parchment. In a large bowl, mix flour, pecans, granulated sugar, salt, and vanilla. Add butter and honey and, using your hands, combine everything until mixture resembles a coarse meal.
2. Form dough into small balls and place on prepared cookie sheet.
3. Bake 15 minutes.
4. When they're still warm but cool enough to touch, roll cookies in powdered sugar.
5. Set aside on a rack to cool completely. When cool, dust again in powdered sugar. Enjoy with a cup of coffee!



# SEPTEMBER 2021

RATHDRUM COMMUNITY CENTER



See Our Delicious Menu Prepared by Our Incredible Kitchen Staff on the Back of This Menu!!

8037 Montana Street, Rathdrum 208-687-2028

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				2	3	4
				Lunch @ Noon Rental 6-8:30 PM		Thrift Store & Farmer's Market 10-4
5		7	8	9	10	11
Rental 10 AM- 2 PM	Labor Day! RCC CLOSED	Lunch @ Noon Bingo @ 6:00 PM	SNR Rental 10:30 AM- 1 PM Grief Share 1 PM SNR Rental 5-8 PM Thrift Store	Lunch @ Noon RCC Board Meeting @ 1:00 PM		Thrift Store & Farmer's Market 10-4
12	13	14	15	16		18
Rental 10 AM-2 PM		Rental - 9-11 AM Music 11 AM Lunch @ Noon Bingo @ 6:00 PM	Bible Study 9 AM "Remembering" Grief Share 1 PM	Lunch @ Noon Family Night Bingo @ 6:00 PM		Thrift Store & Farmer's Market 10-4
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Rental 10 AM- 2 PM		Lunch @ Noon Bingo @ 4:00 PM	Bible Study 9 AM "Remembering" Grief Share 1 PM	Lunch @ Noon		
26		28	29	30		
Rental 10 AM- 2 PM	Casino Bus 1 OAM	Lunch @ Noon Music 1 1 AM Bingo @ 6:00 PM	Bible study 9 AM "Remembering"  Grief Share 1 PM	Birthday Lunch @ Noon		

<p><u>Facility Rentals:</u> Our center is available for Special Event Rentals. Please See: Rhonda or Mona for more details</p>	<p>Farmer's market:</p>	<p><u>Bible Study:</u> Every Wednesday @ 9 am <u>Remembering "Grief Shaina":</u> Every Wednesday</p>	<p><u>BINGO:</u> RCC Bingo Every Tuesday @ 6 pm Family Night Bingo <del>EVERY LAST</del> Thursday of the Month @ 6PM</p>	<p><u>SNR:</u> Special Needs Recreation Potato Feed: Wednesday, September 8th 5-8 PM</p>	<p><u>Meal Donation:</u> \$5.00 For Seniors &amp; Children Under 10 \$7.00 For Adults Under 60</p>
	<p>Thrift Store &amp; Every Saturday Thru September 18th</p>				

RATHDRUM COMMUNITY CENTER Menu - September 2021

2nd	THURSDAY	Mac-N-Cheese Bar with Pulled Pork or Crunchy Chicken, Green Salad Fruit, Molasses Cookie
7th	TUESDAY	Salisbury Steak served over Buttered Noodles, with a Creamy Mushroom Sauce, Green Salad, Green Beans, Dinner Roll & Pudding Parfait
9th	THURSDAY	Chicken Cacciatore, Rice Pilaf, Green Salad, Garlic Bread, Fruit & Texas Chocolate Sheet Cake
14th	TUESDAY	Taco Bar with Ground Beef and Queso Chicken, Beans, Lettuce Tomato, Olives, Onions, Salsa Served with a Corn or Flour Tortilla, Apple Bar
16th	THURSDAY	Pork with Cabbage & Apples, Herby Mashed Potatoes, Roasted Carrots, Green Salad, Bread & Butter and Jell-O Salad
21st	TUESDAY	Creamy Chicken Lasagna, Garlic Bread, Green Salad, Fruit & Brownies
23rd	THURSDAY	Roast Beef with Mashed Potatoes & Gravy, Carrots, Dinner Rolls Garden Salad, Fruit & Cobbler
28th	TUESDAY	Goulash, Green Beans, Green Salad, Breadsticks, Fruit & Oatmeal Cookies
30th	THURSDAY	White Chicken Stew, Cheddar Zucchini Biscuits, Grilled Vegetables, Salad with White Beans & Birthday Cake

If you have restrictions or food allergies and need to substitute, please let us know  
ahead of time.

The menu is subject to change based on supply & demand.

CONSUMER HEALTH REMINDER OF UNDERCOOKED FOODS: Consuming raw or undercooked, meat, poultry, shellfish  
or eggs (such as sunny side up) may increase your risk for foodborne illness: especially if you have certain medical  
conditions