



# Manuel Schneidmiller Post 154, Inc.

## Rathdrum Idaho

### Newsletter

Volume 3 Issue #1

January 2017

Email: [rathdrum154@gmail.com](mailto:rathdrum154@gmail.com)

Website: [Rathdrumpost154.org](http://Rathdrumpost154.org)

Facebook: Manuel Schneidmiller Post 154

Mailing Address: PO Box 1116, Rathdrum ID

Meeting at: Lions Club 16114 N. Meyer Rd Rathdrum

Editor: Jean Bledsoe

Associate Editor: Lonnie Morse



#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Commander:**

I connected with Sen. Bob Nonini and representatives of the Jacklin Company to get an update on the status of the N. Idaho Veterans Home. Together, we called Col David Brasuell, the director of the Idaho Division of Veteran Services.

Col. Brasuell advised that our final application for the new home has been submitted to the VA. The VA design criteria required our design to be scaled down to 56 beds arranged in 14 bed small unit buildings. VA's current design criteria requires all new homes to be designed in this manner, despite the fact that having small separate buildings connected by exterior sidewalks makes no sense in any northern state which has six months of winter and snow. We attempted to appeal the design requirements but were turned down. We made the case that the design requirements cost much more to build and to operate, but got nowhere.

Only three new Veterans homes were approved for construction last year, with most of the money being allocated to repair and upkeep on existing homes. Clearly the program needs greater funding. Cost of the project is projected to be \$32 Million (and that does not include land, which is being donated). That works out to be \$571,500 per bed, a cost so far above what a privately owned facility of this type would cost as to SCREAM "Crazy Government Regulations!!!".

We hope to get the VA to increase funding for this program in the next two years, and anticipate that our application could be approved in six years (FINGERS CROSSED). – Len Crosby, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Commander

## Adjutant:

### Wreaths Across America Ceremony

On a bitter cold morning in December a Wreaths Across America Ceremony took place at the Pinegrove Cemetery in Rathdrum to honor veterans who have been laid to rest there. A small but warmly dressed and enthusiastic group turned out for this moving ceremony to honor our veterans. It is coordinated to occur at the same time as the main ceremony in Arlington National Cemetery takes place.

During the short ceremony wreaths were placed at by members from each branch of service. Following was a rifle salute by the Post 154 Honor Guard and then Jeff Broadhead played taps on the bugle. All were expecting his lips to freeze to the mouth piece but that didn't happen. Then volunteers spread out and placed wreaths on all veteran's graves at the cemetery.

Chairman Leroy Kronvall, who is also a Post 154 member, organized the event which was a yearlong effort. He raised the funds to purchase wreaths for about 200 veteran's graves at the cemetery. Leroy deserves recognition for his dedication and hard work to organize and make this event happen each year. Post 154 thanks you Leroy! If you'd like to see more data about this year's event, go here: <https://goo.gl/tVTu8f>

- Bryan Bledsoe, Adjutant

---

### 2016 Honor Guard Activities

During the year, the combined Honor Guard for Post 154 and Post 143 participated in 75 events for a total of 1,029 hours of service to the community. They gave a rifle salute and played taps at 33 veterans funerals, marched in 3 area parades, participated in 37 ceremonies and held 3 practices.

The Director of the Washington State Veterans Cemetery, Rudy Lopez, requested that the Honor Guard participate in giving rifles salutes once a month. While the cemetery is operated by the State of Washington it is open to all military and their spouses. Idaho veterans are buried, ashes scattered or remains placed in niches throughout the month. Starting this past June, the Honor Guard has participated in 18 veterans' ceremonies.

Our Post combines with Post 143 so that there are enough members to cover the various events. Not everyone is expected to be involved in each event. Those in the Honor Guard from Post 154 are Todd Halvorson who is the Post 154 Honor Guard Captain, Lew Allert, Len Crosby, Paula Atwood and Bryan Bledsoe. We need additional members so that we can continue to provide rifle salutes at veteran's services and participate in the many community activities that request our presence. With a few practices, anyone can do this. Contact Todd at [509-953-0885](tel:509-953-0885) or by email at [keltodd11@gmail.com](mailto:keltodd11@gmail.com)

On a side note, many of you have met Harold Markiewicz who is a member of Post 143 and who does the major coordination for the Honor Guard. He fell and broke his knee a few weeks ago, and is home recovering.

- Bryan Bledsoe, Adjutant

---

## Finance Officer:

We end the year with \$943 in the bank and reserves of \$29,004. We did not add to our reserves this year, but also did not have to invade them to break even.

We are below budget in both income and expenses, and operated at a small loss for the year ending 12/31/2016. Key expenses included: Equipment (\$321), Operations (\$1,882), Flag donations (\$77), Children and Youth (\$160), Veterans Services (\$1,407) and Charitable donations (\$300).

Income items included: Poppy Sales (\$1,684), Membership (\$507), Shirt Sales (\$136) and Hat Sales (\$70).

As we go into the New Year, we continue to be on solid financial footing. Happy New Year. Now to start the Legion's tax return. - Len Crosby, Finance Officer

## Legislative Chairman:

A major new Veterans Health Care bill passed both houses of Congress recently. The Bill, call the Miller – Blumenthal Veterans Health Care and Benefits Act will specifically addresses the following issues:

Streamline portions of the process for veterans, their families and their survivors to obtain disability compensation and benefits through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA);

Expand the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims from seven to nine judges to help address the large backlog of veterans’ appeals that may soon arrive at the court;

Make changes to the VA’s burial benefits and interment policies, including expanding eligibility for presidential memorial certificates to certain individuals who served in reserve units of the Armed Forces, among others;

Provide a much-needed extension of education benefits for surviving spouses who lost a loved one on September 11, 2001, or during the early years of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq;

Improve how the VA administers and approves education benefits for veterans and allow mobilized reservists to keep their GI Bill eligibility when a deployment interrupts their schooling;

Modify ownership requirements for small businesses participating in the VA contract assistance programs and require the Department of Labor to conduct a five-year study of job counseling, training, and placement service for veterans;

Make improvements to the VA’s health care services and benefits to include:

Ensuring preventative health services for veterans include access to adult immunizations for veterans who wish to receive them;

Prioritizing access to care for medal of honor recipients;

Ensuring veterans who served in classified missions can access mental health care without disclosing classified information;

Requiring the VA to submit an annual report to Congress regarding the provision of hospital care, medical services and nursing home care by the Veterans Health Administration;

Expanding the qualification criteria to make it easier to hire qualified mental health care professionals;

Enhancing research on the potential health effects from toxic exposures to veterans and their descendants.

Increase access to benefits for homeless veterans.

**On December 16, 2016, H.R. 5015**, the Combat-Injured Veterans Tax Fairness Act of 2016 became Public Law No: 114-292. This new law provides veterans medically separated, or retired from the military due to combat-related injuries another opportunity to recoup the taxed portion of their severance payments. The law requires the Department of Defense (DOD) to identify veterans medically separated from military service due to combat-related injuries that were issued severance payments after January 17, 1991, and withheld amounts for tax purposes.

DOD will provide this group of veterans with a notice of the amount of improperly withheld severance payments, and instructions for filing amended federal tax returns to recover the withheld amount. The period for filing this IRS claim for a credit, or refund is extended to one year after DOD provides the veteran with the information required by this Act.

This law will be a significant benefit to this group of injured and ill veterans, and partially fulfills DAV Resolution 011 that calls for allowing all veterans to recover taxes withheld from their disability severance pay. - Len Crosby, Legislative Chairman

---

---

## Chaplain's Pew:

~~~Recipe for a Happy New Year~~~

1. Take twelve whole months, clean them thoroughly of all bitterness, hate and jealousy, make them just as fresh and clean as possible.

2. Now cut each month into twenty-eight, thirty or thirty-one different parts...but don't make up the whole batch at once.

Prepare it one day at a time out of these ingredients.

3. Mix well into each day one part of faith, one part of patience, one part of courage, and one part of work.

4. Add to each day one part of hope, faithfulness, generosity, and kindness.

5. Blend with many parts of prayer, one part meditation, and one good deed.

6. Season the whole with a dash of good spirits, a sprinkle of fun, a pinch of play, and a cupful of good humor.

7. Pour all of this into a vessel of love.

8. Cook thoroughly over a radiant joy, garnish with a smile, and serve with quietness, unselfishness, and cheerfulness.

Your final results may vary depending on your attitude.

Have a Happy New Year! - Paula Atwood, Chaplain

p.s. Be sure to send information of anyone who needs a helping hand or card of cheer.

---

## Service Officer:

These are words from VA Secretary of Public Affairs Robert A. McDonald at the Veterans Courts and Substance Abuse Roundtable on September 20, 2016...we shall see what a new Administration and a New Year brings to all veterans.

Seven years ago, VA named ending Veterans homelessness as one of its three main objectives. With the help of the First Lady's Joining Forces Initiative and Mayors Challenge, we've forged powerful partnerships among Federal, state, and local agencies and nongovernmental organizations ... and as a result, Veterans homelessness is down by 47 percent since 2010.

One of the reasons for our success has been the realization that the No. 1 risk factor behind Veterans homelessness is not mental illness, as we once thought—it's substance abuse. And all too often, that substance abuse begins with opioids prescribed by DoD or VA doctors for service-related conditions. In fact, Veterans are 10 times more likely to abuse opioids than the average American.

Veterans are also more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, and mental illness, which can lead to substance abuse, homelessness, criminality, and even suicide.

All of these things are preventable. We know that Veterans in our care are less likely to commit suicide, commit crimes, or end up homeless. So our focus has been on getting at-risk Veterans into the VA healthcare system.

For homeless Veterans, we've employed a proven strategy called "Housing First"—because treating Veterans for any condition is a lot easier once their basic need for shelter is met.

Since 2010, more than 360,000 Veterans and family members have been housed permanently, rapidly rehoused, or prevented from becoming homeless.

In 2015 alone, in partnerships with communities, VA provided services to more than 365,000 homeless, at-risk, and formally homeless Veterans through our homeless programs.

More than 36,000 Veterans and their family members—including over 6,500 children—were prevented from becoming homeless. (cont. below)

For justice-involved Veterans, we're working with over 400 Veteran Treatment Courts, making sure eligible Veterans get timely treatment for mental health and substance abuse issues, and other VA services and benefits.

VA's Justice Outreach Specialists have served over 127,000 justice-involved Veterans—more than 46,000 last year alone.

Two thirds of Veterans before Veteran Treatment Courts successfully complete their treatment regimens, 88 percent see a reduction in arrests, and 30 percent see an increase in stable housing in the year after.

For Veterans reentering society after incarceration, we're working with Reintegration Into Society Effort (RISE) Courts to reduce the risk of recidivism and promote employment opportunities and economic stability.

The RISE program pairs Veterans with mentors who are Veterans themselves or people who have gone through the justice system. The mentors know that incarceration brings hurdles that many Veterans struggle to overcome when released.

They talk with recently released Veterans at least once a week to make sure they stay on track.

For Veterans in our care, we have implemented a system-wide Opioid Safety Initiative to reduce our reliance on opioids and manage their use more carefully.

Since 2012, we've cut the number of VA patients on opioids by 25 percent.

We've also reduced the number of patients on long-term opioid therapy by 30 percent and on high-dose opioids by 36 percent.

And we've collected over 38,000 pounds of opioids from patients who don't need them or want them.

We owe it to the Nation's Veterans to help them end their dependence on opioids and break the downward spiral that all too often ends in homelessness, prison, or suicide.

But we can't do it on our own. We rely on thousands of public- and private-sector partners to do what VA can't do on its own. We need your help to give America's most vulnerable Veterans a chance to escape the revolving doors of emergency rooms, shelters, and jails.

It's not just the right thing to do: It's the smart thing to do—for Veterans themselves and for the communities their live in. – Ruth Aresvik, Service Officer

---

---

### Mark Your Calendar:

Jan 1<sup>st</sup> - New Year's Day

Jan 1<sup>st</sup> - American Legion Baseball registration opens

Jan 6<sup>th</sup> - Membership renewal date

Jan 11<sup>th</sup> - Executive Committee Meeting – 6 PM Lion's Club, Rathdrum. Open to the public

Jan 16<sup>th</sup> - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Jan 19<sup>th</sup> - Mid-Winter membership target date (80%)

Jan 25<sup>th</sup> - General Membership Meeting – 6 PM Lion's Club, Rathdrum. Open to the public

Jan 27<sup>th</sup> - Vietnam Cease-Fire (1973)

### Bits & Pieces

#### Membership Renewal

- If you haven't renewed your membership for 2017 it is very easy to do online. Just go here <https://goo.gl/7Qb3MJ> and put in your Legion ID# which is on your membership card or on one of the Legion magazine labels. Your membership is very important and appreciated by Manuel Schneidmiller Post 154. Thanks for taking the time to do this! - Bryan Bledsoe, Adjutant

#### Replacement of Veterans' Medals, Awards and Decorations

- I wrote about this a few months ago and my replacement medals just arrived in the mail a few days ago. Two of them are engraved with my name along with two rifle badges I knew I had earned but were not listed on my DD-214.
  - Every veteran is entitled to one replacement set of the military awards. Just go to this URL <https://www.archives.gov/veterans/replace-medals.html> and follow the instructions for your branch of service. I think it took about 6 months from the time I submitted the paperwork online. But you can mail it in if you prefer to do it that way.
  - There is also a Cold War Recognition Certificate that can be ordered that I was not aware was available.
- Bryan Bledsoe, Adjutant

## Avoiding Temptations During the Holiday Season

Editor's note: Though this refers to the holidays we are just finishing, think more expansively. There are "holidays" throughout the year.

The holidays can be a wonderful time to get together with family, relax, and take some time off from work. We also know the holidays can be very stressful and bring about a lot of temptations. In fact, in our society Thanksgiving and Christmas are usually not just two days. The holiday Thanksgiving feast is usually followed by a month-long preparation for Christmas involving gingerbread cookies, hot chocolate, and snacking on peanut brittle. By the time the holidays are over it's not surprising how those extra pounds packed on. In fact, different studies have pointed that that about half the annual weight gain in the U.S. occurs during this 6-week holiday period!

Did you know that the most popular New Year's Resolution is to lose weight? What if that didn't need that to be our New Year's resolution for 2015? What if we stayed mindful during the holiday season, and didn't give in to every candy cane we saw? What if December 26th came around, and we didn't feel bloated, lethargic, and shameful about another season full of bad decisions? What if we could outsmart all the holiday temptations and not feel guilty about the choices we made?

You might be thinking, "How is that possible?!" Well, without further ado I bring you:

Seven strategies to help you stay on track and outsmart those holiday temptations!

1. **Consume PFC Every 3-4 Hours.** You may hear this a lot, and for good reason! Nourishing your body with a protein, fat, and carbohydrate source every 3-4 hours not only helps prevent a ride on the [blood sugar roller coaster](#), but it also helps reduce those sugar cravings, and keep your metabolism working for you (instead of against you). It's pretty common in our society to "save" our calories by not eating all day, and then feasting on a huge meal later on. That might make sense if the whole "calories in, calories out" philosophy were true, [but it's not](#). If we don't eat all day, our blood sugars drop causing us to give in to those temptations, and eat more than we usually would. Of course, you want to be hungry before your holiday meal, but you also want to be in control of your eating. Eat balanced [PFC](#) meals and snacks leading up to the event, and you'll have the power to make better decisions.

2. **Learn How to Say No.** Do you have a family member who is constantly nagging you to eat a piece of pie or a friend that always wants you to sample everything she makes? If that's the case, then learn how to say no. Simply saying "I'll pass, thanks" or "I'm pretty full, looks great though!" is a gentle way to say no to the temptation without sounding rude. Just because you are offered something doesn't mean you need to eat it.

3. **"B.Y.O.D."** Another way to plan ahead is to bring your own dish (B.Y.O.D.) that follows our PFC guidelines. Instead of the typical green bean casserole, what if you brought baked green beans melted in butter with slivered almonds? Yum! Or, if you are [dairy free](#) or [gluten free](#), bring your own version of a popular dish so you know you can eat it.

4. **Be Selective.** While you're walking through the buffet table at the party, instead of taking a sample of everything available, choose carefully. Consider all your available options, and choose the best ones that will fit the PFC guidelines best. I like to start with selecting my protein source first, then my carbohydrate source (vegetables or fruit), then adding in my fat (butter is a very easy one and usually available at parties!). Simply decide which foods will fill you up the most, and give you the most "bang for your buck." Your holiday meals and snacks don't need to be perfect, but it should be possible to make them PFC balanced!

Here are some examples of what a balanced PFC holiday meal may look like:

5 oz. ham (P) + 1.5 cups mixed vegetables (non-starchy C) + 1/2 cup mashed potatoes (starchy C) made with heavy cream (F) and butter (F)

4-6 turkey meatballs (P) + 1/2 sweet potato (starchy C) + 2 cups salad greens with vegetables of choice (non-starchy C) + a few avocado slices (F) + 1 oz. Feta cheese (F) + 1 Tbsp olive oil drizzled on top (F)

And what a balanced PFC holiday snack may look like:

1-2 deviled eggs (P) + 1 cup raw veggies (C) + 2 Tbsp. guacamole (F)

4 mini ham and cream cheese roll ups (P & F) + 1/2 cup strawberries (C) (cont. below)

5. **Avoid Temptation.** The saying, “out of sight, out of mind” has some truth to it! If you don’t buy any gingerbread cookies or English toffee at the grocery store, then you’ll be very unlikely to eat it at home. Write out a grocery list before you go to the store (you can split it into P, F, & C categories found on our Balanced Eating Handout in our [Getting Started Guide](#)) and stick with the foods on your list. Skip the bakery aisle full of Christmas cookies and choose from the outer perimeter of the grocery store (this is where you’ll find the majority of the foods that will fuel your body the most!) You can find more tips on simple strategies for grocery shopping [here](#).

6. **Get Active.** Getting some [exercise](#) during the holiday season can help reduce your blood sugar spikes, as well as improve your energy levels and mood. Instead of sitting around on the couch after eating that big meal, what about going for a walk with the family? Or getting a group together for a game of football or basketball? Or better yet, showing off those dance moves in a [Just Dance](#) competition (my favorite)! Any activity will be beneficial, not only for your metabolism and health, but it will also reduce the likelihood of continuously snacking.

7. **Be Confident.** Do not enter the holiday season with the mentality that you are going to fail! If this is your first attempt at a PFC holiday, go into it thinking, “This year will be different! I have the information I need to be successful!” If you’re thinking, “I don’t have the willpower to say no!” well, the truth of the matter is, it’s not all about willpower. It’s about keeping those blood sugars stable and fueling our bodies with the right foods that it needs. Remember: we make better decisions when our blood sugars are balanced! Be confident in your choice to make your health a priority, and [don’t hold yourself back!](#)

The holidays can be a challenging time to be mindful of the foods you are fueling your body with. Instead of entering every holiday season with the mindset that you can just lose all that excess weight from a quick diet starting January 1st, I challenge you to implement the above strategies to help you outsmart those holiday temptations, as well as every other temptation throughout the year.

Are you ready for a new New Year’s Resolution? – Jeff Broadhead, Children and Youth chairman (but he gave credit to his wife Susan. Thank you Susan)

### Health Watch:



Citalopram (Celexa) Escitalopram (Lexapro) & Tinnitus

Tinnitus, an annoying and often constant or near-constant sound that nobody else can hear, drives many sufferers crazy. An estimated 30 million people cope with this debilitating and invisible condition. Sometimes damage to the eardrum from excessive noise is the apparent cause of tinnitus. For other individuals, the culprit is prescription medication. Even aspirin and quinine are known to induce tinnitus in some people.

[> Read Article](#) – The Peoples’ Pharmacy