



# News and Views

American Legion Post 284, Colonial Heights, Va. February 2026

*"Best Newsletter in the American Legion" (Large Post) — 2021, 2023*

*For God and Country*

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*Post 284 Veterans Service Officer Lora Adkins pulled together a Department of Virginia Veterans Claims and Benefits Clinic to benefit veterans from across the state on Friday and Saturday, Jan. 23-24. A total of 48 veterans received assistance from 10 VSOs during two-hour, one-on-one appointments during the two days of the clinic. (Photo by Robin Lee)*

## Post 284 hosts successful Veterans Claims and Benefits Clinic

By Dick Cole  
Editor

Gill, and Dick Cole did the planning for the clinic.

Cole created the flyer for the event, assisted with statewide publicity for the clinic and set the clinic up on Eventbrite to allow veterans to reserve their desired day and two-hour appointment time. As registrations came in, he kept Adkins, Gill, and

*(cont'd on p. 3)*

Happy Valentine's



**A** total of 48 veterans were able to get one-on-one assistance with claims and benefits during a Department of Virginia clinic hosted by Post 284, Jan. 23-24.

Post 284's VSO Lora Adkins, with assistance from Tim Farley, James

## **POST OFFICERS**

### Commander

La Monte Thomas, Sr.  
(804) 926-3370

### 1st Vice Commander

Tim Capps  
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### 2nd Vice Commander

Vacant

### 3rd Vice Commander

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### Post Phone and Webpage

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<https://alpost284va.org>

# FROM THE COMMANDER



**A**s January brings winter weather, we encourage everyone to exercise caution and to check in on fellow members, particularly our senior members. We extend our gratitude to Tony and the kitchen staff for their ongoing commitment to the Commander/Community breakfast—a program that continues to see increased participation from our community each month.

We commend VSO officers Lora Atkins and James Gill for delivering an exceptional claims clinic to our veterans. Special thanks are due to the Post 284 family for volunteering substantial hours and navigating challenging winter conditions to ensure the clinic's success.

The Commander's/Community Breakfast remains a valuable opportunity to serve both our membership and the broader local community. The February breakfast will be Feb. 14 from 8-10 a.m.

The Building and Grounds Committee, led by Bill Feasenmeyer, deserves recognition for their outstanding efforts in maintaining and enhancing the Post, including ongoing beautification initiatives. Progress continues on the administration building project, supported by the American Legion Riders and Post volunteers. We have begun relocating furniture into the offices. Sincere appreciation goes to First Vice Commander Tim Capps and his committee for their exemplary oversight, from interior details to exterior improvements.

Our recent participation in Legion Day on Capitol Hill provided meaningful insights into new legislative developments introduced at the inaugural House and Senate meetings of the year. We thank all members who represented Post 284 at this event.

All fundraising and project proposals are required to be submitted to the Executive Board and Membership for approval, in full compliance with our Constitution and Bylaws. Please note: The Commander does not possess authority to make independent financial commitments.

The Post is in need of several new committee chairs. If you are interested in becoming the chair of any of the following committees, please contact the Post Commander: Children & Youth; Athletics; ROTC/JROTC/Oratorical; and Buildings and Grounds. Additionally,

*(cont'd on p.17)*

## "Clinic" (cont'd from p. 2)

Farley appraised of attendees' names and email addresses so they could be loaded into a spreadsheet. Cole also sent registrants a fillable pdf questionnaire for them to fill out with the basic information of their case that they were required to return to Adkins no later than three days before the clinic. The information from the questionnaires was entered into the database by IT manager Farley.

Cole also kept Adkins, Gill and Farley apprised of still open appointments so they could encourage veterans to sign up.

Several Post members volunteered to assist at the two-day clinic, despite forecasts of severe snow and ice. Among the Post members who assisted at the clinic were: Tim Capps, Erica Singleton, Harold Gresham, Rita Feasenmyer, Bill Feasenmyer, Sherry Merrill, Jon Merrill (also 11th District Commander), Phil Vaughan, Eric Wagner, Rick Oertel, Brad Harter, Bridget Thomas and Post Commander La Monte Thomas, Sr.

Manning the kitchen on Saturday were Jim Rovinski, Linwood Moore, Kevin Jones, Tony Reagan, Robin Lee, and Liz Capps.

Post membership chairman Bret "Maverick" Bordwell was also present with a table set up for recruiting new members to the Legion.

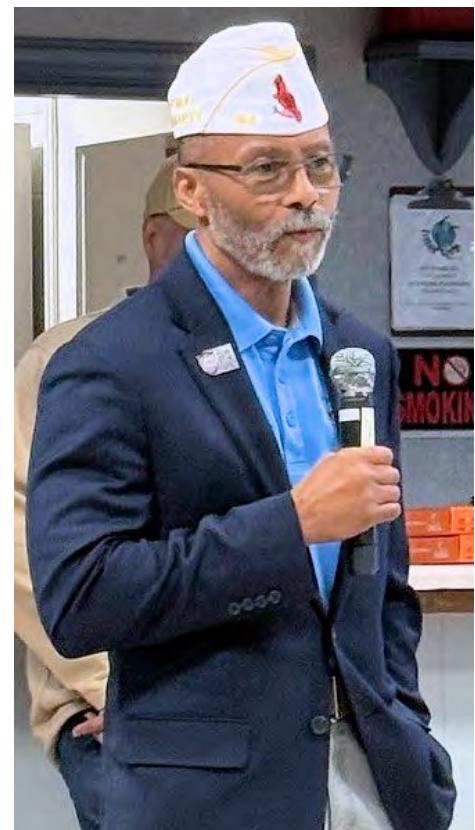
Veterans Service Officers present at the clinic to assist vets included: Department of Virginia Assistant to the Department Service Officer for the Western Region Rita Dixon, Post 99, South Boston; Rita Chandler, Post 55, Fredericksburg;



***Greeting attending veterans and dependents at the door on Saturday, Jan. 24, were (l. to r.): Jim Rovinski, Liz Capps and clinic IT manager Tim Farley. (Photo by Robin Lee)***

Department of Virginia Service Officer Scott Morse; Department of Virginia Assistant to the Department Service Officer for the Eastern Region Bob DeChamplain, Post 327, Norfolk; Dr. Norma Newman, Post 120, Disputanta, and VSO trainees Tom Benda, Kevin Buckner, Cornell Bynum and Brandon McClain.

Besides providing the facility, and Internet connectivity for the clinic, Post 284 also provided hotel rooms for VSOs who travelled in to work the event at the Colonial Heights Hampton Inn, and pizza at lunchtime for workers and attendees on Friday and hotdogs, potato salad, chips, coleslaw on Saturday.



***Also present to greet clinic attendees was Department of Virginia Eastern Region Vice Commander Norris Evans, (Photo by Robin Lee)***





*Members of Legion, Sons, Auxiliary and guests all encouraged to attend*

## **Legion Family heading to Louisville for 107th National Convention**

**L**he American Legion's 107th National Convention will be held in Louisville, Ky., Aug. 28 to Sept. 3. Attendance is not limited to convention delegates — members of the Legion, Sons of The American Legion, American Legion Auxiliary and their guests are all encouraged to attend to help strengthen and support the nation's largest veterans association.

Department hotel assignments have been posted at [legion.org/convention](http://legion.org/convention) under Information for Attendees. Those planning to attend must go

through their department headquarters to register and secure lodging; contact information is on the Information for Attendees page, as well as a list of area Legion posts available to host events during convention week and one of numerous campground sites in the "Kentuckiana" area, all with their distances from the downtown Kentucky International Convention Center.



## **SVALR New Year's Day ride to Amelia Veterans' Cemetery**

*SVALR members rode to Amelia Veterans' Cemetery on New Year's Day to visit the resting places of George Ahrend and Jim Althouse. Members who made the ride are (l. to r.): Tim Capps, Steve Cunningham, Elizabeth Capps, Rose Moore, Stave Bates, Mari Althouse, Jon Merrill with service dog "Sarge," Richard Milton and Bill Rose. (Photo courtesy of Sherry Merrill)*

# 1 S T A N N U A L

AMERICAN  
**LEGION**

# 5K

## **RUN/WALK**

**BE  
THE  
ONE**

Support our concentrated effort  
to save the lives of veterans  
and service members  
due to Suicide

*Saturday, April 25  
9 a.m.*

American Legion Post 284  
505 Springdale Ave  
Colonial Heights, VA

ADULT REGISTRATION \$25 (18 and over)

STUDENTS/CHILD \$15 (17 and under)

AMERICAN LEGION FAMILY DAY  
ACTIVITIES IMMEDIATELY AFTER

Face Painting, Hot Dogs, Popcorn,  
Bouncy House, First Responder Vehicles, & MORE...  
**FREE TO THE COMMUNITY**

**REGISTER ON WEBSITE HERE**  
<https://alpost284va.org/>





Emmy and Edward R. Murrow award winning WTVR-TV CBS6 reporter/anchor Greg McQuade will present "Heroes Among Us: Veterans Voices with Greg McQuade, Thursday, February 12, from 7-9 p.m. at the Virginia War Memorial. (Courtesy photo)

## Virginia War Memorial presenting "Heroes Among Us: Veterans Voices with Greg McQuade," February 12

### Virginia Department of Veterans Services

The Virginia War Memorial is proud to present "Heroes Among Us: Veterans Voices with Greg McQuade" on Thursday evening, February 12 from 7-9 p.m.

This special program will feature Emmy and Edward R. Murrow award winning WTVR-TV CBS6 reporter/anchor Greg McQuade who will give a retrospective look at many of the "Heroes Among Us" video segments about Virginia military veterans and active military members he has produced and have been shown on television over the past 25 years.

There is no admission charge to attend the program to be held in

the Memorial's Veterans Hall, but as seating limited, pre-registration is requested by clicking [here](#).

Parking is also free in the Memorial's surface lot and parking deck at 621 South Belvidere Street, Richmond, 23220.

A native of Massachusetts and broadcast journalism graduate of Northeastern University, McQuade moved south to Richmond and joined the WTVR-TV news staff as a political and military reporter in October 2020.

Also a history buff, he produces a weekly segment called "Heroes Among Us," about inspiring people – many of whom are and have been military veterans. He also serves as the news anchor of the "CBS6 Weekend Morning" program on Saturdays

and Sundays and volunteers his spare time to serve as emcee for many charitable events around Central Virginia.

"We are especially excited to present this program highlighting Greg McQuade and his "Heroes Among Us" segments he has written and produced for CBS6 television for over two decades," said Virginia War Memorial Director Dr. Clay Mountcastle. "We consider Greg a true friend of our veterans and practically a member of our Virginia War Memorial team as he is so often here doing research and filming his "Heroes Among Us" segments."

For more information visit [www.dvs.virginia.gov](http://www.dvs.virginia.gov).





Colonial Heights Post 284

We are waiting for you at

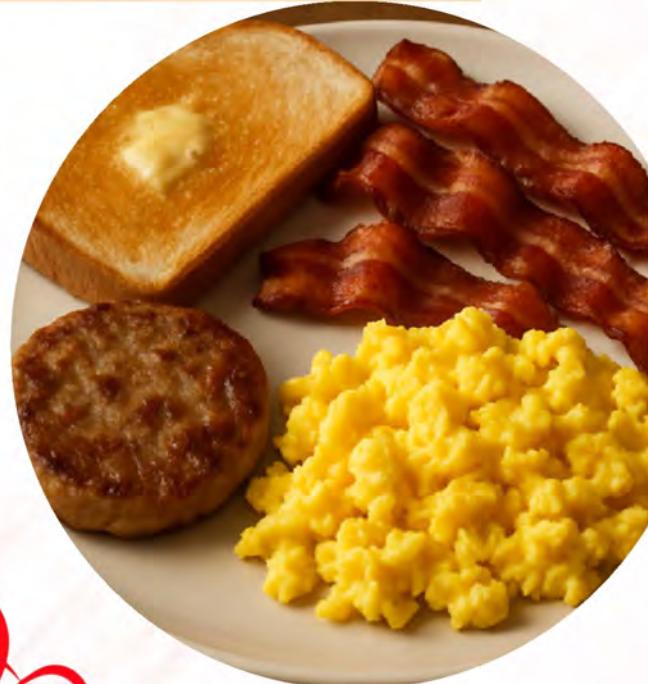


# Free Community Breakfast



Saturday, Feb. 14

8-10 a.m.



American Legion Post 284  
505 Springdale Avenue  
Colonial Heights, VA 23834

(804) 526-4167





## FROM THE POST CHAPLAIN

Rev. William H. Gibson III

### Valentine's Day: A Reminder of Christ's Love

**V**alentine's Day, while often commercialized, has roots as a Christian feast day commemorating Saint Valentine, a third century martyr who exemplified sacrificial love. The day reminds us of the love we have for our spouses, families, and even friends and coworkers. But, ultimately, we should be reminded of the love Christ has for His church.

*Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. (John 15:13)*

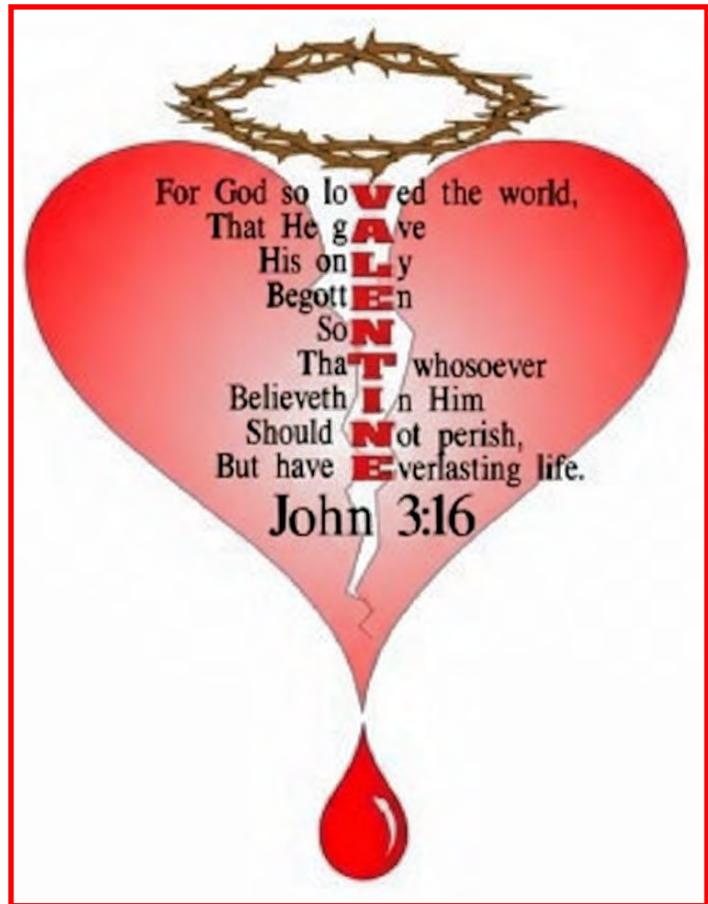
There is no greater love than the love of Christ for us, His bride. He loved us so much that He willingly came and gave His life for us, paying the penalty of death that we deserve because of our sin. And those believers who are married are called to reflect that love in a unique way through the marriage relationship.

*Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. (Ephesians 5:25–29)*

Husbands, do you love your wife to the extent you would die for her? Yes, that's the sort of love we need to show our wives.

This Valentine's Day I encourage you, if you are married, to commit to being purposeful in the coming year to reflect Christ's love for the church through your marriage.

*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).*



BE THE ONE

# *Sons of the American Legion Squadron 284*



**Semi-Annual Fundraiser**

**Saturday March 28, 2026**

**Pick up 4 - 6 PM**

**\$40 each  
shredded or whole**

**505 Springdale Ave  
Colonial Heights, VA**

Contact any S.A.L.  
member for tickets  
or  
call Linwood  
804-240-3062



**Not responsible for unclaimed butts**



# NEWS FROM THE AUXILIARY

## ***Are you walking the walk, or just talking the talk?***

**I**f we are not working together as a united American Legion Family, we are not truly honoring the commitments we make each time we recite the preamble. *Are you walking the walk, or just talking the talk?*

January was marked by notable collaboration among members, with a particular highlight being the American Legion Day on the Hill. Appreciation is extended to Sue Oertel, ALA Department Legislative Chair, for leading the delegation in meetings with senators and delegates at the Capitol on January 16, where the veterans' organizations Joint Legislative Committee's 2026 legislative priorities were presented alongside other Department of Virginia representatives. Recognition is also given to Sherry Merrill, Tonya Meunier (serving in a dual capacity), and Lisa Chaplin for their representation of Unit 284.

Robin Lee represented Unit 284 on Martin Luther King, Jr., Day by delivering books to North Elementary School in observance of the National Day of Service. She also restocked the Little Free Library with literature about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and George Washington Carver, and provided MLK-themed cookies to her church group, reflecting ongoing community engagement through acts of kindness.

January saw the return of Line Dancing and the new year's inaugural Commander's Community Breakfast—events that fostered fellowship among

members and guests.

Auxiliary members are encouraged to attend the upcoming February membership meeting on Wednesday, February 11 as dinner will be served by the Legionnaires at 6 p.m.

Events continue into February with a Commander's/Community Breakfast scheduled for Valentine's Day, followed by the Unit's Valentine's Paint Party in the afternoon. The paint party, which requires preregistration, is open to the public and will benefit Crater Community Hospice. Further details are provided in the flyer on the following page.

Applications for Girls State Delegates and Scholarships have been distributed to local high schools and shared with unit members. These materials are also accessible via the Post [website](#) under the Auxiliary tab.

Support for the Sons of the American Legion (SAL) is appreciated, particularly through the purchase of their highly regarded Boston butts.

Please save the date—Saturday, April 25, 2026—for American Legion Family Day. Planned activities include the **BE THE ONE 5k** run, a one-mile fun run, children's activities, and involvement from community partners. Additional information will be communicated upon finalizing event details.

***Rita Feasenmyer***

Unit 284 President



# BE THE ONE





Colonial Heights  
AMERICAN  
LEGION  
AUXILIARY  
Unit 284



# Valentines Day Paint Party

Saturday, February 14th

Proceeds to benefit



Celebrating Life Every Day Since 1995



A



B



C

Select A, B, or C

LIMITED RESERVATIONS  
on a 1st PAID basis...

Join us for Fun, Food, & Beverages

\$40 per person

Includes Everything to Create  
A Beautiful Door Hanger

Must Reserve in Advance

Contact Tina Price 804-400-9904  
OR

Membershipunit284@gmail.com  
Venmo~ @Rita-Feasenmyer

Cash~ Check~ payable to: ALA Unit 284

Doors OPEN at 2:00

Instruction begins 2:30



# SAL NEWS



## **A** BELATED HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM SQUADRON 284!

As we shift gears into a new year, do not forget the service and sacrifice to this great nation of the veterans—our fathers, mothers, grandfathers, grandmothers and step-parents from whom we are male descendants which allows us to be part of the Sons of the American Legion. And as always - **LET'S HAVE FUN!!!**

Our February meeting will be on Wednesday, February 18, 2026 with supper at 6:15 p.m. and meeting at 7:00 p.m.

If you have a 2025 membership card, your membership expired on December 31, 2025. Your 2026 dues are \$30.00. Please pay now as it saves the Post, Detachment, and National money in postage sending out reminders but more importantly your membership is vital to our Squadron and Post so **PAY YOUR 2026 DUES NOW.**

Membership as of this writing is 142 members which is 69.27 percent of our 2026 goal of 205 members. We need 63 more members to renew or recruit to hit our goal. We've had a solid start so keep recruiting and keep reminding those who have not renewed to renew. While we are very fortunate to have a dedicated Membership Chairman in Linwood Moore, he cannot and should not be expected to do it

alone. Membership is everyone's responsibility. Of our 142 members, 136 are renewals and six are new members so there is work to do on both fronts.

A final thank you to everyone who purchased a Boston butt last Fall. We sold 108 butts, raising right around \$2,100 for our Squadron, and appreciate everyone's support of Squadron 284. Thanks to all the Sons who participated in, supported, or attended the many Christmas events our Post put on this past holiday season. You are a vital part of Post 284 and its operations. Frankly, many things would not happen or be much more difficult to achieve if it wasn't for the support of Squadron 284 and the Post appreciates your support. Thanks to all the Sons who supported or worked the Riders' Brunswick stew sale in January, especially stewmaster Bill Beatty.

We will be putting out Flags on Monday, February 16, 2026 for Presidents Day. Put out time is 5:00 a.m. and pick up time is 3:00 p.m. On the horizon, our Spring Boston Butt sale will be March 28, 2026 and be here before you know it.

See ya'll around the post!

*Kevin Jones*

Commander, Squadron 284



## **Make sure your potential member recruits get a "wooden nickel!"**

The post has created a wooden chip to be given to potential new members. The chips—available from any Post officer—can be redeemed by the potential new member for food and/or non-alcoholic beverage in Topsid for a value of \$5! That's enough to have a sandwich and a soft drink on the Post while they are introduced to the social quarters! Make sure to get your potential recruits a "wooden nickel" and welcome them to Post 284!



## Come Join Us For Our 10th Annual Winter Biker BBQ

Proceeds will go to Military Personnel in need, VA Hospital Support, youth programs, the American Legion Legacy Run Fund as well as other worthy community programs.



**Saturday, Mar 14th 2026 Noon – 5 pm**

American Legion Post 2, Petersburg, VA.  
820 Winfield Rd. Petersburg, VA 23803

**\$20 General Admin. \$15 Active Duty  
Door Prizes, Fundraisers, Games  
Bikers Brew  
Welcome all**

POCS: ALR Director: Joe Polemeni 804-892-2907/  
Kim Grobarcik 804-894-1513 or at



OLD DOMINION HONOR FLIGHT  
PRESENTS



**APRIL 18, 2026**

**VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II,  
KOREA, AND VIETNAM**

Old Dominion Honor Flight is a non-profit organization created solely to honor America's veterans for all their sacrifices. Old Dominion Honor Flight of Virginia serves the Richmond area and Southeastern Virginia to include the Outer Banks and Northeast North Carolina.

We transport our heroes to Washington, D.C. to visit and reflect at their memorials.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO APPLY VISIT:

[HTTPS://OLDDOMINIONHONORFLIGHT.ORG/APPLY-NOW/](https://olddominionhonorflight.org/apply-now/)

E-Mail: [info@olddominionhonorflight.org](mailto:info@olddominionhonorflight.org)



## Guardians NEEDED!

Old Dominion Honor Flight  
Mission 10: April 18, 2026

Interested in volunteering?

Guardians are individuals who accompany a Veteran on their trip to Washington, D.C. for the day. Guardians can be family members or friends, except spouses.

If you are traveling with a veteran who meets the eligibility dates, use this application and be sure to reference the veteran you will be escorting.

Guardians are requested to donate \$150.00 to help in covering a portion of their participation in this celebratory trip

<https://olddominionhonorflight.org/apply-now/>

# TOPSIDE Lounge SCUTTLEBUTT



We are one month into the new year, and, so far, it has been a great year here at Topside!

We will continue to have Karaoke with Star Maker the first Saturday of each month. Bill and Gabe do an excellent job, and we appreciate them coming out each month.

We are going to have a Mardi Gras Party! We have never had one before and we are super excited to try something new! We will have all the traditional Mardi Gras dishes and other mainstays of the celebration. We will have a photo backdrop, and we will take your pictures, print them, and send them with you at the end of the night! We will also have music, provided by Bill Rose. Save the date! Friday,

February 13. We will send out more details as we get closer to the event. We hope that you will come up and join in the fun.

If you haven't already, please sign up for our texts. Text AL284 to 78859. We use this service to send out Dinner Specials and information about events, not just for Topside, but for the Auxiliary, the Sons, the Riders and the Legion. Keep up to date with all the goings on here at our Post.

We hope to see y'all soon!

*The Topsid Team*

## Topsid Lounge

Topsid Lounge is open 5 days a week with a full menu.

**Hours of operation are as follows:**

**Sunday – Closed**

**Monday – Closed**

**Tuesday-Wednesday 2:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m.**

**Thursday-Saturday 2:00 p.m. until 11:00 p.m.**

**Kitchen opens at 4 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday**

We may close early at the bartender's discretion depending on business.

If you are in doubt or have any questions, please give us a call at (804) 526-4167 and follow prompts for Topsid.

# Post 284 Events Calendar

## **February 2026**

2           Bingo—Doors open at 5 p.m. Games and snack bar sales begin 5:30 p.m. Early bird games 6:30 p.m. Regular games start at 7 p.m.

3           Southern Virginia American Legion Riders, 6:30 p.m.

5           Leadership and Calendar Coordination Meeting, 6 p.m.

7           Karaoke at Topside, 6-10 p.m.

8           Kick-off Meeting for 9th Annual Virginia Legacy Run, Post 146, 217 E. City Point Road, Hopewell. Zoom available.

Noon — lunch

1 p.m. — Meeting

Super Bowl Party at Topside (Gaming machines will be OFF), 4-11 p.m.

9           Bingo—Doors open at 5 p.m. Games and snack bar sales begin 5:30 p.m. Early bird games 6:30 p.m. Regular games start at 7 p.m.

11          Auxiliary Unit 284 Meeting

6 p.m. — Dinner being served by Legionnaires

12          General Membership Meeting

6:15 p.m. — Dinner

7 p.m. — Meeting

13          Mardi Gras Party at Topside, all night.

14          Commander's Community Breakfast, 8-10 a.m.

Auxiliary Valentine's Day Paint Party, \$40 per person, must reserve in advance, doors open 2 p.m.  
Instruction begins at 2:30.

16          SAL Squadron 284 putting out flags for Presidents' Day; set up 5:30 a.m., pick up 3 p.m.

Bingo—Doors open at 5 p.m. Games and snack bar sales begin 5:30 p.m. Early bird games 6:30 p.m. Regular games start at 7 p.m.

18          Sons of the American Legion Squadron 284 meeting

6:15 p.m. — Dinner

7 p.m. — Meeting

21          Department of Virginia American Legion Riders College, Post 3, Salem, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Lunch provided.  
Country Line Dancing with "Dancin' Cat," \$10 per person, doors open 5p.m., instruction begins at 7 p.m.  
Food and drink available for purchase, Must be 13 or older to attend. Dancing 7-11 p.m.

23          Bingo—Doors open at 5 p.m. Games and snack bar sales begin 5:30 p.m. Early bird games 6:30 p.m. Regular games start at 7 p.m.

Topside Committee Meeting, 6 p.m.

26          Executive Committee Meeting, 7 p.m.

27-Mar 1    Department Spring Conference, Renaissance Portsmouth-Norfolk Waterfront Hotel, 425 Water Street, Portsmouth. Register [here](#) for conference.

*News and Views* is the publication of Colonial Heights Post 284, The American Legion, Department of Virginia. The newsletter was selected as the "Best in The American Legion" produced by a large post for 2021 and again for 2023. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep all members of Post 284 informed about activities at their post. The post's telephone number is (804) 526-4167. Address comments to the Editor, *News and Views*, P.O. Box 57, Colonial Heights, VA 23834.

Those receiving printed copies should send changes of address to Dick Cole, [dickcole1853@verizon.net](mailto:dickcole1853@verizon.net) or call (804) 796-6250.

# Southern Virginia American Legion Riders



*The Southern Virginia American Legion Riders leadership for 2026 are (l. to r.): Joe O. Pully, sergeant-at-arms; Sherry Merrill, adjutant; Jon Merrill, director; Liz Capps, assistant director; Richard Milton, treasurer and Bill Rose, sergeant-at-arms. The officers were installed at the SVALR Christmas Party, December 20, 2025. (Photo courtesy Jon Merrill)*

**H**ello!  
Yes, it's me again. This is my second time as the Southern Virginia American Legion Riders director. I want to thank the SVALR membership for their confidence in electing me, again. Thank you all.

We started December by participating in Wreaths Across America. The SVALR was responsible for the purchase of 600 wreaths. If you want to purchase a wreath, contact Phil Vaughan or myself. They are \$17.00 and the SVALR receives \$5 back for each wreath purchased. SVALR makes no money on wreaths. All the rebate money received is used for the purchase of more wreaths.

December 20, we held our annual Christmas Party, where the new leadership was sworn in by Post Commander La Monte Thomas, Sr. Then the festivities began! Great food, music and great time together.

On New Years Day, nine of us made the ride to Amelia Veterans Cemetery, where we visited our lost friends, George Ahrend and Jim Althouse. We then rode to Blackstone Brewery for lunch. I'm not saying his name (Scott), but I have never seen a man consume a sandwich so fast!

January 17, we made our Brunswick Stew. It was a huge success, as we were sold out before we even started. Thank you to everyone who worked this

event and especially Bill Beatty for doing another fantastic job as the stewmaster. Thank you, too, to each and every one of you who purchased the stew. Hope you enjoy it.

Colonial Harley-Davidson is having their Chili Cookoff again this year, February 7. As usual, a Rider will be entered. I'm not sure who is stepping up this year, but come out and support whoever it is.

Please remember when driving, look out for motorcycles. You never know who's brother, sister, mother, father, son or daughter is on the motorcycle.

*Jon Merrill*

Director, SVALR



**"From the Commander" (cont'd from p.2)**

the Post will need a new Public Relations Officer and Historian. The individuals serving in all of these positions all wish to step down. Interested individuals are encouraged to inquire about the roles' responsibilities.

Additional support is currently needed for Monday Bingo Nights, which constitute a significant source of funding for our charitable programs. Every volunteer contribution is valued.

I hope to see you all at these upcoming events:

- Commander's/Community Breakfast: Saturday, February 14, 2026 | 8:00 a.m.–10:00 a.m.
- Country Line Dancing: Saturday, February 14, 2026 | 5:00 p.m.–11 p.m.
- Monthly Membership Meeting: Thursday, February 5, 2026. You are welcome to join us for supper at 6:15 p.m. The membership meeting begins at 7:00 p.m.

*La Monte Thomas, Sr.*

Post Commander

The Post is in need of several new committee chairs. If you are interested in becoming the chair of any of the following committees, please contact the Post Commander: Children & Youth; Athletics; ROTC/JROTC/Oratorical; and Buildings and Grounds. Additionally, the Post will need a new Public Relations Officer and Historian. The individuals serving in all of these positions all wish to step down.



**News and Views wants to tell your story!**

We'd like to publish a story in each month's issue about one of our members' experiences in the military!

- ~ Why did you join?
- ~ What path did your service take?
- ~ What combat, humanitarian, and peacekeeping operations did you participate in?
- ~ Describe memories you still reflect on today?
- ~ What are you proudest of during your service?

These are just some of the questions we'd like to ask.

If you are willing to participate, contact editor Dick Cole at [dickcole1853@verizon.net](mailto:dickcole1853@verizon.net), or call (804) 796-6250.

**Share your memories with your fellow Legionnaires!!**



On Feb. 7, the Rev. George L. Fox Memorial Chapel in Gilman, Vt., will host a special Four Chaplains Day ceremony, featuring Army Chief of Chaplains (Maj. Gen.) Bill Green Jr. as guest speaker. The chapel is the last church pastored by Fox, a Methodist minister and one of four Army chaplains who gave up their life jackets to save others when their transport was torpedoed in the North Atlantic on Feb. 3, 1943. (Photo via American Legion)

## Artifacts, educational displays illuminate the life of one of the heroic Four Chaplains

By Matt Grills  
American Legion

**O**n Feb. 7, the Rev. George L. Fox Memorial Chapel in Gilman, Vt., will host a special Four Chaplains Day ceremony, featuring Army Chief of Chaplains (Maj. Gen.) Bill Green Jr. as guest speaker.

The chapel is the last church pastored by Fox, a Methodist minister and one of four Army chaplains who gave up their life jackets to save others when

their transport was torpedoed in the North Atlantic on Feb. 3, 1943.

Following the ceremony, Fox's family will join state and local officials in opening the George & Isadore Fox Museum, a collection of items related to the chaplain's life and legacy. The event will be livestreamed at 11 a.m. EST on the chapel's [Facebook page](#), with a video to follow there and at the chapel's [website](#).

Last seen with arms linked on the slanted deck of

USAT *Dorchester*, singing and praying as the ship sank, the “Immortal Chaplains”—Fox, Rabbi Alexander Goode, Father John Washington and the Rev. Clark Poling—became a symbol of courage, unity and service to others. In the decades since their sacrifice, the chaplains’ story has been commemorated with monuments, plaques, sculptures, paintings, stained glass, books and other works. Every year, on and around Feb. 3 – Four Chaplains Day – thousands of American Legion posts host or participate in ceremonies, services and programs.

For Lisa Murray Hirbour, Fox’s granddaughter and the chapel’s treasurer, the century-old sanctuary is an answer to prayer. As heir to what she calls the “Fox family treasures,” she is eager to show them to the public – including letters, photographs, Fox’s World War I and World War II medals, the Western Union telegram notifying Fox’s family of his death, the first run of the 1948 Four Chaplains stamp, and a replica of the Chaplains’ Medal of Heroism, a one-time honor awarded posthumously with the same weight and importance as the Medal of Honor, presented to the chaplains’ families in 1961.

“My grandmother’s dream was to have a little chapel where people could meditate and reflect and see memorabilia from (her husband’s) life,” Hirbour says. Like Fox, “she was an itinerant minister who didn’t make much. She scrimped and saved her whole life and never could come up with the money to do it.”

Following the building’s purchase a couple of years ago, Hirbour and the chapel’s board of directors began discussing “how to bring in stuff that had been in storage, perfectly preserved for almost 83 years. And finally we’re bringing it to a chapel that is in his memory, just as my grandmother always wanted, and in a place that meant so much to him. He loved preaching in Gilman.”

In 2024, Fox received full military honors following installation of a memorial grave marker at Arlington National Cemetery, [where Green spoke of the chaplain’s life and Army career](#). A native of Altoona, Pa., Fox joined the service at 17 “not with a romanticized notion of heroism, but rather with a simple burden to care for others above himself,” he said. “Ultimately, this was his selfless service to others that set him apart.”

As an orderly in World War I, Fox evacuated wounded troops on the Western Front, earning the Silver Star, the Purple Heart and the French Croix de Guerre. In November 1918, he suffered a spinal injury in a building collapse and learned of the armistice after waking from a coma.

His experiences on the battlefield led Fox to spurn a career in finance to go into ministry. He and his wife, Isadore, served communities in Illinois, New Hampshire and Vermont while he studied theology, and in 1934 he was ordained.

In Gilman, Fox joined Walter G. Moore American Legion Post 41 (renamed Moore-Fox Post 41 after World War II), where he was known for [his work in getting men admitted to the veterans hospital and others’ pensions paid and even increased](#). Soon he was appointed historian and chaplain for the American Legion Department of Vermont.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, Fox volunteered for active duty, Hirbour says. “He said, ‘I have to go. Those boys do not know what they’re going to face. I have to be there for them spiritually.’ So, at 42, he signed back up.” His son, Wyatt, enlisted in the Marine Corps the same day.

After the sinking of *Dorchester* and the loss of her husband, Isadore continued her own ministry. She was the first ordained minister to serve as the American Legion Auxiliary’s national chaplain (1970-1971) and also served as a unit and department president.

In 2023, a campaign to buy the Gilman chapel brought in contributions from the community, the Chapel of Four Chaplains in Philadelphia, the Fox family, American Legion posts and departments, American Legion Auxiliary units, Sons of The American Legion squadrons, other veterans’ groups and donors. A large donation from the late Mary Fox Murray secured the purchase.

Since then, the Rev. George L. Fox Memorial Chapel has undergone extensive renovations, thanks to an ongoing fundraising initiative and various grants.

“We’re trying to do all sorts of things for the community, because that’s what my grandparents did,” Hirbour says. “We want to continue their legacy of selfless service to others.”



# Photos from the “Day on the Hill”



1. Members of the Joint Legislative Committee in the Virginia House of Delegates' balcony. 2. Visitors to Representative Mike Cherry's office included (l. to r.): Tonya Meunier, Cherry, Rick Oertel, Sue Oertel, Lisa Chaplin, and Kevin Chaplin. 3. Members of the Joint Legislative Committee in the Virginia House of Delegates' balcony. 4. Visitors to Senator Glen Sturdivant's office included (l. to r.): Kevin Chaplin, Lisa Chaplin, Sturdivant, Rick Oertel, Sue Oertel and Tonya Meunier. 5. Department Auxiliary members present included (standing, l. to r.): Sherry Merrill, Sue Oertel, Lisa Chaplin, Pam (last name and Post unknown) and Judy Farabaugh of Unit 176. Seated is Department President Carol Campbell.



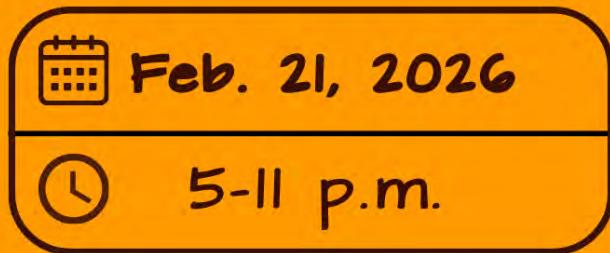
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# Department of Virginia AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS COLLEGE 2025-2026



**6 December 2025 Post 176**

**Springfield**

**17 Jan 2026 Post 280**

**Chesapeake**

**21 February 2026 Post 3**

**Salem**

All Sessions  
10 am - 3 pm  
Lunch provided  
12 - 1 pm  
Graduation  
3 pm

- \*History of ALR
- \*Governing resolutions
- \*By-Laws/operating document
- \*Eligibility for membership
- \*Gaming rules Insurance
- \*ALR officers guide
- \*Emblem usage
- \*Position descriptions – Volunteers\*
- \*\*\*Best Practices AND MORE!\*\*\*
- \*Dress & Regalia
- \*Finances
- \*Post responsibilities
- \*Rider of year/Chapter of year
- \*Ceremony's & Installation
- \*Social media
- \*Member discipline



Contact / Preregister: Don Forshey  
[donffor24@verizon.net](mailto:donffor24@verizon.net)

**Course Certificate, Riders College Patch, Pin and Lunch Provided**

# MEETING



**Department of Virginia American Legion Riders**

**February 28, 2026**

**Renaissance Portsmouth-Norfolk Waterfront Hotel**

**425 Water Street**

**Portsmouth, VA**

**Time TBD (either 10 or 11 a.m.)**

**During Department of Virginia Spring Conference**

**Conference preregistration encouraged**

**Walk-in registrations will be available**

**(Conference registrants will have their registration fee  
refunded if they attend the ALR Meeting)**

## **Bingo Volunteers Needed!**

We still need three or four volunteers on Monday evenings from 5:30-7:30 p.m. to assist with selling pull-tab gaming cards. If you volunteer, we will provide you with dinner! Come help us make the funds we are able to use to support community charities and maintain our Post!

The American Legion  
Colonial Heights Post 284  
P.O. Box 57  
Colonial Heights, VA 23834

Return Service Requested

*This newsletter is published to keep the members  
and friends of Post 284 involved and informed.*



## AMERICAN LEGION POST 284

*Serving Veterans*



*Community*



*Nation*

