AMERICAN LEGION

News and Views

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

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

For God and Country

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Auxiliary Unit 284 conducted the "Breakfast with Santa," Dec. 13. Lots of attendees came dressed in their Christmas pajamas for free breakfast of scrambled eggs, sausage patties, pancakes, and juice or coffee, and a visit with Santa Claus. (Photo by Dick Cole)

Post feeds more than 180 adults and kids during Breakfast with Santa

By Dick Cole
Editor

December 13 was certainly a busy day at Post 284. The day began with "Breakfast with Santa." The Auxiliary decorated the hall, prepared the meal and ran the event.

After stopping in for breakfast, the members of the Southern Virginia American Legion Riders traveled to Post 146 in Hopewell where rendezvoused with a law enforcement escort and traveled to City Point National Cemetery for Wreaths Across America. Later that afternoon, members of the Post got together to watch the Army/Navy football game in the

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FROM THE COMMANDER

December was a busy and productive month for Post 284. On Dec. 13, we proudly hosted our Breakfast with Santa. We served more than 180 adults and kids. The personal touch from Auxiliary President Rita Feasenmeyer and her team. The kids were overwhelmed with joy.

Later that afternoon the Post hosted its first Army/Navy watch party and what a treat bringing together veterans of all service branches in comradeship. I must salute the Navy for their victory. A special thanks to the kitchen crew.

The monthly commander/community breakfast continues to serve both members and the wider community. Thank you for the continued volunteer service of Post members who help make this event a success.

⚜ Fundraising & Projects

All fundraising and project proposals must be submitted to the Executive Committee and Post membership for approval, in accordance with our Constitution and Bylaws. Reminder: The Commander cannot make financial commitments independently.

⚜ Committee Openings

We are seeking dedicated members to assume the following positions:

- **Legislative Officer**
- **Athletic Officer**
- **Children and Youth Committee Chair**
- **ROTC/JROTC/Scholarship/Oratorical Committee Chairs**
- **Building and Grounds Committee Chair**
- **Historian (in July 2026)**
- **Public Relations Officer (in July 2026)**

If interested, please reach out to learn more about responsibilities.

⚜ Volunteer Needs

We urgently need support for Monday Bingo Nights, a vital fundraiser for our charitable programs. Every helping hand makes a difference!

(cont'd on p.17)

Post's main hall.

Because so many activities were happening consecutively, the Auxiliary took over preparation and execution of the Breakfast with Santa.

The Auxiliary set up the breakfast as a buffet this year, which allowed attendees to get their food faster and kept crowds from forming around the bar in the main hall.

The meal this year consisted of scrambled eggs, sausage patties, pancakes, orange juice, hot chocolate, and coffee.

The event was well attended and the main hall was full.

Above: ***Brad Harter cooks pancakes in the kitchen as Jeff Lee makes a brief visit.***
Below: ***Auxiliary members staff the buffet line. (Photos by Dick Cole)***

Jim Rovinski places freshly cooked scrambled eggs on the buffet line. (Photo by Dick Cole)

BE THE ONE

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration

VA to launch largest reorganization of health care system in 30 years

The Department of Veterans Affairs is planning a massive reorganization of its health care management system, reducing the number of networks that support VA medical centers and realigning policy offices to promote consistency.

In the largest planned overhaul of the Veterans Health Administration framework since 1995, the department will slash the number of Veterans Integrated Service Networks, or VISNs, from 18 to five and require them to report directly to the VA under secretary for health.

Overall staffing levels across the VHA are expected to remain largely the same even after the changes are implemented, the VA said. The reorganization is intended to cut red tape, improve efficiency and strengthen care delivery without reducing staff.

While organizational details will be released when the plan is formally announced in early 2026, the effort is affecting how policy is set, how operations are run and how care is given — both inside VA facilities and through private providers in the community. The shift could transform how millions of veterans receive care nationwide.

Under the new structure, VHA's Central Office would be responsible for setting policy goals and overseeing finances and compliance. Operations Centers and VISNs would then take direction from the central office, developing operational, quality and performance standards to guide over 1,300 VA medical facilities nationwide.

"The current VHA leadership structure is riddled with redundancies that slow decision making, sow confusion and create competing priorities," VA Secretary Doug Collins said in a statement Dec. 15. "Under a reorganized VHA, policymakers will set policy, regional leaders will focus on implementing those policies, and clinical leaders will focus on what they do best: taking great care of veterans."

The VA also announced plans to expand partnerships with private health care companies, giving veterans greater options to see doctors in their own communities as long as providers meet VA care standards. Currently, about 40 percent of all VA care is provided through community care, according to the department. The new plans suggest the VA is preparing to send more veterans to non-VA providers while continuing to cover the cost of that care.

The push toward expanded community care is also driven by expiring contracts. Many of the health plans currently managing VA community care are set to end in 2026, prompting the department to seek new agreements aimed at improving choice, quality and oversight.

VA officials say the new contracts would give veterans access to a broader range of doctors while allowing the department to track care more closely and replace providers that fail to meet standards, without disrupting ongoing treatment.

Veterans are eligible for appointments with non-VA providers if:

- The care is in the veteran's best medical interest.

- The necessary care isn't easily available at a VA facility.
- The veteran lives in a state or U.S. territory without a full-service VA facility.
- The VA can't meet designated wait time or drive-time standards
- The VA care fails to meet quality standards.
- The veteran qualifies under distance rules from the former Veterans Choice Program.

Before the announcement, VA wait-time standards were 20 days for primary care, mental health and noninstitutional extended care and 28 days for specialty care. The distance standards are a 30-minute drive for primary or mental health care and a 60-minute drive for specialty care.

VA clinicians still handle referrals, authorizations and medical record coordination, even when your care shifts to a civilian provider. If you've used community care before, the process should move faster now: In May 2025, the VA removed the secondary review step, so once you and your clinician agree on a referral, it no longer needs another VA doctor's sign-off.

For many specialties common among older veterans community care authorizations can now last 12 months without reapproval, reducing disruptions during transitions.

The following types of care are eligible for these streamlined, one-year community care approvals: addiction medicine (outpatient); addiction psychiatry (outpatient); cardiology; dermatology; endocrinology; ENT (otolaryngology); eye care exams; family and couples psychotherapy (outpatient); gastroenterology; hematology and oncology; mental health (outpatient); nephrology; neurology; neuro-ophthalmology; nutrition services; oculoplastics; optometry (routine); orthopedic (general); orthopedic (hand); orthopedic (spine); pain management; physical medicine and rehabilitation (physiatry); podiatry; podiatry (DS); pulmonary; rheumatology; sleep medicine; urology and urogynecology.

Officials told *Military Times* that the department plans to eliminate 25,000 vacant positions in the Veterans Health Administration, cuts that some say would negatively affect an organization already stretched thin by the loss of 30,000 jobs earlier this year as a result of incentives, early retirements and the firing of probationary hires under orders from President Donald Trump to cut the federal workforce.

American Legion National Commander Dan K. Wiley issued the following statement in response to VHA's restructuring plan.

"The American Legion has a long history advocating for increased accountability and efficiency in the Department of Veterans Affairs, particularly regarding access to timely, quality health care for our nation's veterans. We share longtime concerns of independent auditors like the GAO and the VA OIG that the current VISN system has often been plagued by bureaucratic inefficiencies, leadership failure, and delayed or denied care for our veterans. The Secretary briefed us on initial details of the reorganization plan, including elimination of long-standing vacant positions, and any changes in structure or staff will not disrupt or delay veteran healthcare. As VA updates its plan in the coming months and commences its implementation in the next few months, The American Legion will continue to provide Congress and VA direct feedback from our members through System Worth Saving and Regional Office Action Review visits. Veterans now – and in the future – must have a VA that delivers for them," Wiley said.

BE THE ONE

National Judge Advocate legal opinion forcing Legion-wide examination of membership practices by local Posts

A November 6, 2025, legal ruling by American Legion Judge Advocate Mark C. Seavey has local Posts reviewing their membership practices.

Dick Cole
Editor

National Judge Advocate Mark C. Seavey issued a November 6 , 2025, legal opinion that is causing a Legion-wide examination of membership practices by local Posts.

The bottom line, up front, is that the judge advocate has ruled that the Sons of the American Legion is a "program" of the American Legion and not a coequal organization to the Legion with the same membership rights.

"For 50 years, the Sons of The American Legion (SAL) has coexisted at all levels of The American Legion. However, this has also created a perception that SAL members have the same rights and privileges as those in The American Legion, and this misinterpretation of the rules, which has gone largely unchecked or uncorrected in some areas, is starting to cause some very real problems for the organization. Recently, this has grown into a larger concern as we hear reports of Posts being audited and, when asked for their membership rolls, submitting the names of SAL members in addition to those of regular members," opined Seavey.

The opinion seeks to clarify for everyone that the Sons of The American Legion is a *program*, not simply a cheaper alternative that comes with the same rights and privileges as a traditional member. Further, leadership at all levels—Post, District, Department and National—must be knowledgeable on what the rules governing veterans and nonprofit organizations are and safeguard the integrity of our organization by ensuring that no person or group jeopardizes our future by operating in a manner not consistent with the laws and regulations set by Congress and the IRS."

"We are hearing more and more anecdotal evidence (and indeed some is even being sent to us) that various Departments and Posts are incorrectly interpreting the IRS code regarding the SAL, and, crucially, may be taking actions that could jeopardize The American Legion's non-profit status," wrote Seavey.

How you might ask?

Congress sets the membership eligibility criteria for The American Legion, and the laws that govern it are found in Title 36 of the United States Code, Chapter 217, which deals exclusively with our organization. Eligibility for membership is addressed explicitly in 36 USC 21703, a provision most recently amended with the passage of the Legion Act in 2019, and the Internal Revenue Service has promulgated rules based on what the Congressional intent was in the enactment of those laws.

For us, the problem arises because Congress and the IRS have created differing rules for veterans of various conflicts, rules that largely do not apply to the SAL. The IRS, in its Audit Technique Guide for Veterans Organizations, defines a member of a 501(c)19 with the following characteristics:

1. An individual eligible for membership under the constitution and bylaws of the veterans' or-

ganization.

2. May attend and vote at membership meetings.
3. Hold office in the organization.
4. Participate in State or National Conventions.
5. Posts remit membership dues for the individual to the central organization.

SAL squadrons, detachments, and the national organization are not stand-alone Veteran Service Organizations; rather, they must co-exist through the adoption and sponsorship from a post and cannot have their own EIN or tax-exempt status. (The same is true of American Legion Rider chapters.) This means that the SAL is under the full autonomy of its sponsoring post. If the post chooses to allow the squadron to use the post's EIN and tax-exempt status, that would be predicated on whether the squadron (program) is in full compliance with the Four Rules of a Program.

Moreover, the rights and privileges of a program are not the same as those of a Legionnaire, or member of the American Legion Auxiliary.

For example, the post bar, restaurant, canteen, or other social activity is intended for *Legion members (veterans) of the post, their bona fide guests, and members of the Auxiliary unit*, with the revenue remaining in the tax-exempt category.

The IRS defines a bona fide guest as *an individual a member invites to participate in an activity and pays for his expenses*. If the guest pays for his own recreation or food, he isn't a bona fide guest. Social non members are not eligible for membership in The American Legion. *The members of the SAL squadron would be considered social non-members, and therefore, any sales or revenue generated from social non-members may also be subject to Unrelated Business Income (UBI) Tax by the IRS.*

Interpreted by the IRS, SAL members are considered social non-members when they utilize a post's social activities (if the operations are not already open to the general public and paying UBI tax for the income derived), and may generate taxable income if a Legion post member does not sign in that individual and pay for all food and entertainment for the guest. This includes all social or recreational activities of a Post not related to one of the other exempt purposes of a 501(c)19. In all such activities, an SAL member is not considered a member of the organization; therefore, revenue generated by these non-members may be considered taxable income, unless a Legion post member officially signs the non member into the post and pays for all their purchases and services or another exception to UBI is claimed (such as volunteer labor exception).

So what does this mean for us in Post 284?

Members of SAL Squadron who are not dual members of American Legion Post 284 cannot use the Topside lounge and cannot pay for their food or entertainment. They must be signed-in to Topside as a guest by an American Legion or Auxiliary member, who is then responsible for paying for the expenses of their SAL guest. The SAL member who is not a dual member of the Legion may also not possess a keycard for access to Topside on their own.

The same rules would apply at another Post. If a SAL member who is not a dual member of the American Legion was attending an activity, they would only be permitted to use that Post's social quarters if the operations were open to the general public and that Post was paying UBI tax for the income derived. Otherwise, for them to use the social quarters, they must attend as a Legionnaire or Auxiliary member's guest and their sponsor must sign them into the facility and pay their bill.

In summary, the SAL program should be viewed as a "participatory initiative" that fosters the development of youth into patriotic Americans as outlined in the SAL Preamble.

The SAL, as a program, is equivalent to an ALR chapter, Boys' and Girls' State, or Oratorical. All of them are Legion programs, but do not entitle participants or members to equal rights and privileges with veterans eligible for a Legion membership or to privileges commensurate with members of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Certainly, no post would assume that a member of the Post's American Legion Baseball team would have unfettered access to the Post commensurate with what a Legionnaire enjoys, but some Posts then turn a blind eye to members of SAL or ALR who are not Legionnaires.

FROM THE POST CHAPLAIN

Rev. William H. Gibson III

This year, don't simply wait for opportunities to appear—partner with God in creating them.

As we enter this new year, we are reminded that every sunrise is a gift from God—a quiet invitation to begin again.

The turning of the calendar is more than a date; it is a sacred reminder that renewal is always possible.

Whatever may have weighed you down in the past year, you are free to lay it down now. Step forward not seeking perfection, but embracing the possibilities God places before you.

This year, don't simply wait for opportunities to appear—partner with God in creating them. Each day is a blank page, and with His guidance, you can write a story shaped by courage, curiosity, and compassion. Be gentle with yourself. Celebrate the small victories that often go unnoticed. Learn from the stumbles that remind us we are still growing. And trust that with every step—no matter how small—you are moving closer to the extraordinary person God is shaping you to be.

For those who have served, you know better than most what resilience, sacrifice, and perseverance look like. Carry that same spirit into this new beginning. Believe in the dreams God has placed on your heart. Start today. Let this year become your masterpiece—not because it is flawless, but because it is lived with faith, intention, and hope.

This is a new year. A new beginning. And things will change. May you meet that change with strength, grace, and the assurance that God walks beside you every step of the way.

AMERICAN LEGION

Colonial Heights Post 284

Join the Fun with Country Line Dancing

Easy Steps · Great Music · Good Vibes

Whether you're a beginner or just love to move, our line dance classes are for everyone, Doors open at 5 p.m. Instruction begins at 7 p.m. Food and alcohol available for purchase. Must be 13 or older to attend.

$10 per person

January 10, 2026

5 - 11 p.m.

Lessons by

Dancin' Cat

505 Sprindale Ave., Colonial Heights ✦✦✦ (804) 526-4167

NEWS FROM THE AUXILIARY

Auxiliary Unit 284 members, with assistance from some of their spouses, put on the Post's "Breakfast With Santa' serving a breakfast to more than 150 adults and kids, Dec. 13.

To begin 2026 without recognizing the incredible work during the first part of the 2025-2026 year would be a disservice to all the wonderful volunteers we have at Post 284.

Members are showing up, stepping up, and doing work that matters to them. A collective ***"THANK YOU"*** to each and every one of you.

The Legion year commenced with an incredible July 4th event, attending the Department and National Conventions, Back to School Hype Night, National Night Out, visits to the schools, our Post's selection as the "Best of the Best" civic organization in the Tri-Cities, hosting National Auxiliary President Pam Ray, line dancing, Patriots' Day when we delivered goody bags to the school resource officers, community breakfasts, Fall conference and hosting Veterans' Day.

This is a defining start to the accomplishments of a community that is alive, visible, and deeply connected to its purpose. It also says a lot about our members' hearts. You do not earn the *"Best of the Best"* unless people feel your presence in real, tangible ways.

We did not just move into the holidays — we launched into them with heart, tradition, and a whole lot of joy. We began with Post 284 members decorating the hall and packing 157 "Stockings for Soldiers" (three times more than what we provided last year), our annual Christmas membership dinner with a little fun squeezed in, reviving the tradition of serving dinner to the Legionnaires, an incredible "Breakfast with Santa" experience, the Army/Navy game, collecting for the animal shelter, and assisting

Auxiliary Unit 284 members, assisted by some of their spouses, packed 157 "Stockings for Soldiers" this year—three times as many as last year!

with feeding 72 needy families through the Christmas food baskets.

What really shines through is how every event had its own purpose. Packing 157 Stockings for Soldiers is the kind of quiet, powerful service that ripples far beyond our walls. Decorating the hall and hosting the Christmas membership dinner brought our Post 284 family together. Reviving the tradition of serving dinner to the Legionnaires shows respect for the roots of our organization. And "Breakfast with Santa" — that's pure community magic; the kind of memory kids carry with them for years. The feedback and accolades from the parents, first responders, and members attending solidify the success of the event.

Even the fun moments, like the Army/Navy game, sit right alongside the service projects: collecting for the animal shelter, preparing Christmas food baskets. It is a beautiful mix of celebration and giving. If someone looked at our holiday season from the outside, they would see a post that knows how to honor veterans, lift families, and still make space for laughter. It is the kind of rhythm that keeps a community strong.

We, as a Post, have accomplished a vast range of successful projects. Big patriotic celebrations. Serious moments of service. Fun, energizing events. Recognition at the civic level. And meaningful engagement with schools, veterans and national leadership. That is the kind of balance most organizations wish they could pull off!

Every single member has something unique to offer, and when those contributions come together, the whole organization shines brighter. Enjoying membership paired with service — is powerful. This is not about duty, it is about belonging, pride, and shared purpose.

"Together, we have built momentum that honors our veterans and strengthens our community. With each member's passion and dedication, Post 284 will continue to rise, setting the standard for excellence in our community and across the Department of Virginia."

Wishing each of you a Peaceful, Healthy, Happy New Year!

Rita Feasenmyer

Unit 284 President

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 Topside for a value of $5! That's enough to have a sandwich and a soft drink on the Post while they are introduced the the social quarters! Make sure to get your potential recruits a "wooden nickel" and welcome them to Post 284!

OPEN TO ACTIVE DUTY, VETERANS AND DEPENDENTS

JANUARY 23-24, 2026

9:30 A.M.-3:30 P.M.

Get answers to your claim questions | File new claims, supplementals, open Intents to File, survivors benefits, or appeal denied claims | Learn about PACT Act claims (toxic exposures and presumptive conditions) | Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) claims | Must bring medical records and other supporting documents

AMERICAN LEGION POST 284
505 SPRINGDALE AVE.
COLONIAL HEIGHTS, VA 23831

Appointments limited to two hours!

MUST REGISTER THROUGH EVENTBRITE

CONTACT US
804-526-4167, Option 4

VISIT OUR WEBSITE
alpost284va.org

Congrats Bill!

Past Department Commander, Post 284 Treasurer Emeritus, present Post 284 Adjutant, and Colonial Heights Reserve Police Sgt. Bill Feasenmyer was honored at a Colonial Heights Council meeting upon his retirement as the City's Commissioner of Revenue. Gee, perhaps he'll now have more time available to volunteer for American Legion positions and projects. Just kidding, Bill. Congratulations on your many years of service to the city and the citizens of Colonial Heights! (Photo courtesy Rita Feasenmyer)

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.

OLD DOMINION HONOR FLIGHT PRESENTS

MISSION 10

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/

E-Mail: 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 cannot believe that another year has come and gone. As we begin the New Year, we take time to reflect on everything wonderful that happened in 2025>

We had a new addition to our Topside family with the birth of little Ellie Harter. We also gained an extra fella, Dalton, with his engagement to our exceptional waitress, Harley Lancaster. Crazy isn't it?!? I know most of you watched her grow up in the 10 plus years her mom, Laura, has worked at Topside. We are so excited for them to start their journey as husband and wife in 2026!

We enjoyed bartending at the Army/Navy watch party. It was a good time, with a great group of people, and an awesome event!

A huge thank you to everyone that came out for our Topside Staff Christmas Party. We had so much fun hanging out on the other side of the bar with y'all.

The Topside bartenders at the Army/Navy watch party.

We hope that this year brings you good health and happiness. We are thankful that we get to be a part of your lives.

We'll see y'all soon.

Topside Lounge

Topside 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 Topside.

Post 284 Events Calendar

January 2026

1	New Year's Day
5	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.
6	Southern Virginia American Legion Riders, 6:30 p.m.
8	General Membership Meeting 6:15 p.m. — Dinner 7 p.m. — Meeting
10	Commander's Community Breakfast, 8-10 a.m.
12	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.
14	Auxiliary Unit 284 Meeting 6 p.m. — Membership Meeting
17	Department of Virginia American Legion Riders College, Post 280, Chesapeake, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Lunch provided.
19	Dr. Martin Luther King Day 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.
21	Sons of the American Legion Squadron 284 meeting 6:15 p.m. — Dinner 7 p.m. — Meeting
23-24	Department of Virginia Veterans Benefits and Claims Clinic, 9:30 a.m.– 3:30 p.m. *No walk-ins*. All veterans must register in advance through Eventbrite. (Flyer with website address and QR code for registration included in this issue of *News and Views.)*
25	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
26	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.
29	Executive Committee Meeting, 7 p.m.

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 or call (804) 796-6250.

Army Officer Candidate School Database: preserving the legacy of commissioned leaders

By Emory N. Deason, Jr.

Many American Legion members earned their commissions through Army Officer Candidate School (OCS) and went on to lead soldiers during some of the most challenging periods in our nation's history.

The Army Officer Candidate School Database stands as a landmark resource or OCS graduates, their families and historians. Built to honor more than eight decades of service and sacrifice, the database is dedicated to preserving the lineage and accomplishments of those who earned their commissions through these programs.

For over 80 years, Army Officer Candidate Schools have transformed prior-service enlisted soldiers and qualified civilians into commissioned leaders. From the battlefields of World War II to modern operations around the globe, OCS-commissioned officers have played pivotal roles in shaping American military history. The creation and expansion of the database (www.armyocsdatabase.com) represents a major milestone in capturing that heritage with accuracy, dignity and permanence.

For the first time, graduates, families, researchers and veterans can explore a growing historical archive documenting the men and women who received their commissions through every Army branch school dating back to 1941. This living, continually expanding database currently includes more than 282,500 graduates, with additional entries added as new records are discovered, digitized and verified.

More than a directory, the Army Officer Candidate Schools Database is a tribute - ensuring that the leadership, commitment and stories of OCS-trained officers are never lost to time. It serves as a bridge between generations of soldiers and a foundation for future historical research, education and remembrance.

Veteran spiritual renewal

By Sunny "Dos" Dosanjh

We all took the Oath. There is more to us than what is mere flesh and blood. There is the light within that compels us forward. For God, For Country, For Family, For Our Future.

When we are discharged from our active-duty military oath, there is no formal ceremony, no acknowledgement of our pledge to lay down our lives except the official transaction of receiving a DD 214. We GIs are not looking for pomp and circumstance, but what we do require is the acknowledgement of an oath fulfilled.

We served, many of us just teenagers. We served as best as we could. Yes, there is death; yes, there are those who are POWs and yes, there are those who are MIA. Yes, there are those KIA. We all served and us lucky ones found our way back home. We never forget those who didn't.

Yet home, for many a veteran, has now become unrecognizable. We do not recognize the societal need to succeed solely for money or status. The quarterly goal of quotas is not in our DNA. We were built for missions to defend our country and our fellow citizens. This civilian goal of achieving some customer satisfaction survey, some sales goal, some financial quarterly number or some artificial metric of success is perceived as exactly that ... artificial.

Now, our current society is in anxiety over the fact that artificial intelligence will displace those roles that were purportedly upheld with college degrees etc. I say to them, welcome to world of us veterans. However, as veterans, if there is a means to adapt and overcome, we are that population. We are not at war

with our civilian counterparts, but we are here to show them that we can overcome tragedy, no matter how painful the cost.

Chaplains will lead the Spiritual Way forward and together with our fellow veterans, we will blaze a path toward success. For us veterans, it starts with a new ceremony that acknowledges our active-duty oath, and now we are in a position to recognize that oath fulfilled in a Veterans Spiritual Renewal Ceremony. Washed away are any energies that may consume our minds of trauma, grief or moral injuries. Rebuilt is our foundation with a sense of purpose guided by divine grace. And together with our foundation established with God, mentors to guide us and the spirit of "e pluribus unum," we shall be welcomed home to our land, our country.

As it is written in our country's official motto "In God We Trust"; as it written in our Pledge "One Nation Under God"; as it is sworn in our oath of military service "So Help Me God"; and as it is stated in many of our veteran organizations "In God We Trust."

Either we become the 22 veteran suicides per day, or we do something to reach that veteran by the very first step: Welcome Home.

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

Upcoming events in January 2026:

- January Commander's Breakfast - Saturday - Jan. 10, 2026, 8-10:00 a.m.
- Country Line Dancing - Saturday - Jan. 10, 2026 7:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m.
- January Meeting – Thursday Jan 8, 2026
  Supper at 6:15 p.m.
  Meeting at 7:00 p.m.
- Veterans Claims Clinic - Friday and Saturday - Jan 23 and 24, 2026, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

VSO Lora Adkins has requested help with this clinic. Volunteers are needed to help with meals and refreshments.

Legion Day on Capitol Hill, please see Commander if you plan on attending, It's a great experience. Couple things to look for in 2026.

⚜ Message from the Commander

As we move forward, let us unite as **One Legion Family**, under one flag, promoting progress and making a lasting, positive impact. **Together, we are stronger.**

La Monte Thomas, Sr.

ANNOUNCEMENT!

9th Annual
Virginia Legacy Run
Is scheduled
Mark your calendars
18, 19 & 20 June 2026

Kick-off Meeting
25 January 2026
Sunday 12 pm
American Legion Post 146
217 E. City Point Rd, Hopewell, VA
Zoom will be available at
https://www.facebook.com/VirginiaLegacyRun/
2025 Donation Awards
Lunch @ 12 pm
Meeting @ 1 pm

AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS

VIRGINIA LEGACY RUN

FOR THE CAUSE NOT THE APPLAUSE
AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS

KAJ 10/2025

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
*Dress & Regalia
*Finances
*Post responsibilities
*Rider of year/Chapter of year
*Ceremony's & Installation
*Social media
*Member discipline
Position descriptions – Volunteers
Best Practices AND MORE!

Contact / Preregister: Don Forshey
donffor24@verizon.net

Course Certificate, Riders College Patch, Pin and Lunch Provided

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*