

American Legion Post 284, Colonial Heights, Va. September 2025

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

For God and Country

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The contractor began tearing down the old administrative building in early August to make way for a new building. (Photo by Kevin Jones)

New Post administrative building under construction on the hill

By Dick Cole
Editor

If you haven't been on the hill recently, things look a bit different.

The Post executive committee and the Post's membership approved the expenditure of up to \$300,000 in July for the destruction of the present administrative building and construction of a new building. The existing building had a leaking roof and mold and asbestos issues.

Vice Commander Tim Capps contacted Modern Richmond Building Company and discussed the Post's needs and secured floor plans and cost estimates for consideration and approval of the Post leadership.

A storage pod was procured and all of the furniture and files were removed from the old building in late July. The builder began tearing down the existing structure immediately and has been working earnestly,

(cont'd on p. 3)



POST OFFICERS

Commander

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

1st Vice Commander

Tim Capps
(804) 916-9976

2nd Vice Commander

Vacant

3rd Vice Commander

Bradley Harter
(804) 712-4272

Adjutant

William S. "Bill" Feasenmyer, Jr.
(804) 337-8753

Chaplain

William H. Gibson III
(804) 536-1125

Finance Officer

Kevin Jones
(804) 721-6405

Judge Advocate

Eric L. Wagner
(804) 931-1203

Veteran Services Officer

Lora Adkins
(804) 452-0036

Membership

Bret Bordwell
(804) 712-8308

Historian

Richard M. "Dick" Cole
(804) 796-6250

Public Relations

Vacant

Athletic Officer

William Shill
(804) 218-1198

Sergeants-At-Arms

Robert G. Emerick
(804) 526-1874
Harold Gresham
(803) 300-7055

Sons of the American Legion

Kevin Jones, Commander
(804) 721-6405

Southern VA American Legion Riders

Phil Vaughan, Director
(804) 241-1277

Auxiliary Unit 284

Rita Feasenmyer, President
(804) 337-0905

Post Phone and Webpage

(804) 526-4167

<https://alpost284va.org>

FROM THE COMMANDER



Post 284 continued to sizzle throughout the hot summer months, working tirelessly in the community and supporting many local organizations. Congratulations to Unit 284 on receiving the following Department awards for the 2024-2025 year:

- **Best Overall Children & Youth Program** (Robin Lee)
- **Best Overall Legislative Program** (Sue Oertel)
- **Outstanding Unit Promoting the Poppy Program**

Your dedication and hard work have not gone unnoticed! Unit 284, Post 284, and our entire Legion family continue to set an inspiring example throughout the 11th District, the Department of Virginia, and the Eastern Region. Let's keep this incredible momentum going! This administration is focused on working together for the betterment of our great Post.

Upcoming Events & Opportunities:

- **Commander/Community Breakfast:** Starting **September 13th**, join us for a delicious breakfast with eggs made to order by your truly, the **COMMANDER**. It's a great way to enjoy a hearty meal while connecting with fellow members.
- **Bingo Fundraiser:** Our **Bingo** nights are a vital fundraising event supporting many of our charitable contributions at Post 284. We're in need of volunteers to help on **Mondays**. Your support would be greatly appreciated.
- **Committee Openings:** We have openings on several committees, including **Boys State**, **Legislative Officer**, and **Building & Grounds**. If you're interested, please reach out to me for more details and the responsibilities of each committee.
- **Hurricane Season:** As we enter hurricane season, please take a moment to review family safety plans and stay prepared. Your safety is always our top priority.

Back to School: The **2025-2026 school year** is in full swing! Let's all do our part to ensure our children's safety as they travel to and from school.

Mark Your Calendars!

- **Line Dancing** continues every **3rd Saturday** of each month through October.
- **Army vs. Navy Football Game** on **December 13th**. Stay tuned for more details, including food, games, and a whole lot of fun!

As we move forward, let's unite as one Legion Family under the flag, promoting progress and making a lasting, positive impact on our community. Together, we are stronger!

La Monte Thomas, Sr.

weather permitting, to get the new building completed. It is hoped that the new structure will be completed and ready for occupancy by October.

The new building will have four offices and a conference/meeting area. Additionally, it will be equipped with an Americans With Disabilities Association compliant bathroom with shower. All of the doorways and hallways in the new building will also be ADA compliant. Of course there will also be a ramp to the entrance of the building to accommodate visitors using a wheelchair or walker.

The four officers are expected to be used by the Post Commander and Adjutant, finance officer, veterans service officers, and an office for the joint use of the SVALR Director, SAL Squadron 284 Commander and Auxiliary Unit 284 President.

The building will also have a small kitchenette with microwave and sink, and have two ground fault indicator electrical outlets.



Above: The brick foundation is in, the floor is in, and workers were preparing to erect the exterior framing for the front of the new building when this photo was taken. ***Below:*** The trusses for the roof of the new building are all stacked up ready for installation once the framing of the new building is completed. The new building will be “dried-in” when the foundation is complete, the exterior framing is up, windows and exterior doors are installed and the roof is sheathed with water-resistant material. (Photos by Kevin Jones)





FROM THE POST CHAPLAIN

Rev. William H. Gibson III

“God and Country” Why?

In 1951, the national convention of The American Legion authorized the “Back to God” program as a continuing American Legion activity, urging Americans to seek divine guidance in their everyday lives. In 1963, it was designated the “Service to God and Country” program.

The American Legion’s “Service to God and Country” program is meant to be more than just a motto, and more than a philosophy. The American Legion wants its members in every Post, District, and Department to demonstrate service to God and country among the people of their communities.

What exactly is service to God? The American Legion’s “Service to God and Country” program has three spiritual objectives:

- Regular public worship
- Daily family prayer
- Religious training of children

We’ll get back to these in a minute.

Did you know that Gallup found in 2022 that 81 percent of Americans expressed belief when asked the simple question, “Do you believe in God?” This was down from 87 percent in 2017 and a record low for this question first asked in 1944, when 96 percent believed. It reached a high of 98 percent in the 1950s and 1960s.

In recent years, the share of American adults who do not affiliate with a religious group has risen dramatically. At the same time, only a slim majority of Americans now believe in the God of the Bible and roughly one-in-ten U.S. adults don’t believe in any higher power or spiritual force.

A 2025 survey conducted by the Cultural Research Center at Arizona Christian University has revealed that more than half of Americans either do not believe in God or think that He does not influence their lives.

The research indicated that overall, 60 percent of Americans do not believe God exists or that He “affects lives.” Alarming, nearly half of the respondents who identified as Christians, at 47 percent, and a slightly smaller percentage of theologically identified born-again Christians, at 40 percent, shared the same sentiment.

Among those Americans who profess belief in God and acknowledge His influence, a plurality of 38 percent characterized God as the “most important element” in their

lives. Meanwhile, 23 percent described God as “extremely important,” and 18 percent viewed Him as having a “very important” influence.

Additionally, 14 percent of believers regarded God as “somewhat important,” while 5 percent considered Him to be either “not too” important or “not at all” important. The remaining 3 percent categorized their views on God’s influence as “it varies.”

Only 20 percent of those who believe in the God of the Bible stated that they maintained “an intimate and interactive spiritual relationship with Him, with constant two-way communication.” In contrast, 45 percent described their relationship with God as “close,” characterized by frequent prayer and trust in Him to “do what is best and right.”

Additionally, 11 percent reported their relationship with God as “arms-length,” while 18 percent affirmed that, although God exists and is capable of all things, they do not engage in a personal, interactive relationship with Him. The remaining seven percent expressed uncertainty about whether God interacts with people and were unsure how to describe their relationship with Him.

When it comes to the influence of God in their lives, one-third of believers defined God as having a “total” influence, while another third acknowledged “a lot” of His influence in their lives, which often reflected His guidance. Nineteen percent felt that God had “some” influence, while six percent said He had “not much influence,” and four percent claimed He had “no identifiable or conscious influence” on their lives. The remaining three percent indicated that God’s influence was “consistent or unknown.”

George Barna, the director of research at Arizona Christian University, commented on these findings, stating, “The more time you spend thinking about what this research tells us, the more you are likely to conclude that nothing short of sweeping national repentance and spiritual renewal can save America from itself.”

He further noted, “The fact that more than three out of four people who believe God exists and is influential in their lives nevertheless do not get their identity from their relationship with Him explains a lot.” He added, “The fact that two out of three people who believe in God’s exist-

ence and influence do not believe their connection to Him comes with responsibilities, delivers additional insight.”

We are experiencing the decline in the belief of God, and a decrease in the influence of Christian values and beliefs every day. They manifest in higher crime rates, violence, increased divorce, corruption and a world where it is increasingly difficult to tell what is true and what is false.

As the chaplain for this Post, I am charged with much more than performing funerals and visiting the ill and infirmed. While these are important, certainly, my primary charge is to serve as spiritual shepherd for the flock that comprises the membership of Post 284. A huge part of serving as your shepherd is managing the “Service to God and Country” program in our Post.

What exactly does that program entail? I encourage you to participate in regular public worship. The American Legion encourages all families to attend and participate in public worship of their God, that they may enjoy closer relationships with Him and each other. Regular worship also provides the spiritual strength necessary to resist the daily temptations of greed, lust, hate, selfishness, anger and conceit.

The American Legion respects the personal relationship between an individual and his or her God. However, the objectives of organized religious groups walk side by side in promoting the public worship of God, the author of all rights and liberties.

It’s often said, “The family that prays together stays together.” Families are the most basic building block of society; in fact, they are the only natural unit of society. Prayer is the foundation of a partnership of faith, hope, tolerance and mutual love, sustaining and keeping the family strong. We should remind parents that nothing spiritually enriches the life of the family like the habit of regular family prayer.

Youths who know God and are trained in the tenets of their faith will grow to appreciate, understand and respect more fully such principles as law, government and justice. On the other hand, if they are not taught the truths of the supreme authority, God, they cannot be expected to seek His divine counsel and guidance through their lives.

Chaplains witness, walk, weep, wait and celebrate ... not always in this order.

Much like firefighters, chaplains run towards the fire. Or in our case, we run toward reality. There are days this means the reality of suffering. Isolation compounds suffering. Suffering alone, holding onto agony without someone at your side to give witness to your pain deepens the agony. Chaplains are there to give witness, to agree with people that, “yes, this is a difficult place, an awful place.”

Chaplains walk into this space, stride alongside to help carry the load, if only for a few moments. When medicine can do no more, we journey and sometimes stagger with people into the chaos that disease and death bring. We walk and weep. Our tears give evidence that suffering can be shared, that it needs to be shared.

Chaplains wait. We wait for the moment when we can gently speak the truth that suffering is not abnormal, it is a space we all visit. We wait to tell again that the chaos of suffering does not have the final word, life does – a truth beautifully told in the book of Genesis. In the beginning there is chaos, “a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness.” God breathed on the chaos and brought forth life, very good life. Chaos was not the end, it was only the beginning.

Chaplains bear witness that suffering can be entered into, felt, grieved, shared and mourned, but suffering does not have the power to destroy us. We celebrate this truth.

Chaplains celebrate the reality of good news. We celebrate the successful surgery, the negative test result, the birth of new life.

Chaplains give witness to “Yes! This is great!” Good news shared tastes all the better. We cheer because good news deserves a party and people deserve to be celebrated.

Witness – walk – weep – wait – and celebrate. That’s what chaplains do. I am here for you to assist however I can. I particularly look forward to opportunities to assist you better in your “Service to God and Country.”



WHY I CHOSE THE MARINES

Share your story with us.
(We bet it’s a good one.)

Celebrate the Corps’ 250th
with The American Legion.

Email service250@legion.org



Dan K. Wiley of Kansas was elected 2025-2026 national commander during the 106th American Legion National Convention, Aug. 22-28, in Tampa, Fla. (Photo by Jennifer Blohm/The American Legion)

Newly elected National Commander Dan K. Wiley pledges to continue highlighting Legion's veteran suicide prevention mission, calls for teamwork among American Legion Family

Upon being elected 2025-2026 American Legion National Commander on Aug. 28, Kansas Legionnaire Dan K. Wiley took the stage at the organization's 106th National Convention and thanked all of those who helped him get to this day.

And then he told a story.

It was the story of a young attorney in Wiley's hometown who, due to various circumstances, was going through a difficult time – one he thought was just physical.

When the attorney went to his doctor for some cold medicine, the doctor noticed a difference in his patient and began asking questions: "Do you value your work? Do others value your work? Do you think you are doing good work?"

Puzzled, the attorney said he just wanted his cold prescription, but the doctor didn't let it go. He asked the attorney if he was considering self-harm and

offered to provide some medication to address that.

After a week, the attorney admitted he could not think clearly, explaining, "It's like I'm driving a car, and it is foggy, and I cannot get the defroster to work. I can stay on task and get things done, but I can't see ahead." He then agreed to take the prescription for 30 days, which improved his condition considerably. He was then advised to continue to take the prescription for one year.

But a few months later, the attorney decided to apply for a vacant judgeship – but then realized that the application called for disclosing current medications taken, but not past medications.

"Well, you can see this train wreck coming," Wiley said. "It's the most attorney thing ever: 'I'm going to stop taking the medication, and then when I sign that form in 30 days, I don't have to disclose it.'

"It's the stigma, right? It's the stigma of mental health that we're combating. Trying to let people

know it's OK not to be OK."

The attorney called his doctor to inform him he was going to stop taking the medication. But the doctor wasn't hearing it, telling the attorney that those reviewing the application would judge the attorney based on his ability and character, and would see it as positive as someone helping himself.

Then the doctor explained that roughly 20 percent of the population will have a depressive episode in their life. "You are not alone," said the doctor.

The attorney agreed, continued to take the medication and ended up becoming a state court judge. But that career now has come to end. Kansas Circuit Court Judge Dan K. Wiley is now American Legion National Commander Dan K. Wiley.

"That's why the 'Be the One' mission is important to me. It's personal," Wiley told convention delegates. "I can't tell you that Dr. Richard Whitlow saved my life. I can tell you he made a difference in my life. He made it better."

Continuing Be the One, the Legion's suicide prevention program, is one of Wiley's priorities for the upcoming. The others are his slogan "Better Together," The American Legion legislative agenda; the Veterans and Children Foundation; celebrating America's 250th birthday; and what he said are the three Cs: communication, community and camaraderie.

A U.S. Air Force veteran and cattleman, Wiley is a paid-up-for-life member of Byron H. Mehl American Legion Post 23 in Leavenworth and is a past department commander of the Kansas Ameri-

can Legion. He also served as Kansas' National Executive Committeeman.

He spent Thursday's remarks focusing on Be the One and "Better Together." "Be the One is a personal and passionate mission for me," Wiley said. "Taking care of one another is what we do. It's who we are."

Wiley's theme of "Better Together" focuses on the American Legion Family. "I am a big believer in the American Legion Family," he said. "Those posts that are successful are the ones that are inclusive and not exclusive. They're the ones that operate in unity with the units, squadrons, and chapters. Those are the successful posts: the ones that care about the mission and helping each other. Taking care of one another.

"But better together has an even deeper meaning. We use phrases like 'I've got your 6' and 'I've got your back.' Those are not just nice sayings. It's what we were trained to do when we served. It's human nature. It's who we are."

To illustrate his point, Wiley told how in December 2023 he received a phone call from American Legion Past National Commander Jake Comer, who had received an email from a disgruntled former court litigant.

"My first reaction was that I'm not too worried about someone attacking me. I'm used to it as a judge," Wiley said. "But when you start bothering my friends it upsets me. And I was mad."

Wiley said he called Comer

back, and that the past national commander could tell quickly Wiley was upset. "About 10 seconds into the conversation ... he said 'Dan, we had that forwarded to you for your situational awareness. We're not concerned about you. We know who you are,'" Wiley said. "And then the four words that mattered the most. He said, 'We got your back.' That's all I needed to hear. Powerful words in that moment."

Wiley plans to pay that forward to the men and women he will lead over the next 12 months. "This next year as your national commander, I got your back," he said. "The American Legion has had your back since 1919. The American Legion had your back in the 1920s when we advocated for the creation of the Veterans Bureau, which would eventually become Veterans Affairs. The American Legion had your back in 1944 when we advocated the GI Bill of Rights. The American Legion had your back in 1983 when we alone funded a study on the disastrous effects of Agent Orange, which culminated with Congress passing the Agent Orange Act in 1991. "And most recently, The American Legion had your back with the passage of the PACT Act. The American Legion had your back yesterday. The American Legion has your back today. And The American Legion will have your back tomorrow. As long as America exists, and as long as there are veterans, there will be an American Legion, and we will have your back."





Current Post 284 Commander La Monte Thomas and immediate past Post Commander Tonya Meunier display The American Legion 1919 Society Gold Medal presented to the Post during the 106th American Legion National Convention in Tampa, Fla. The contributions from members of the 1919 Society help fund various programs aimed at assisting veterans and their families, including youth programs, VA disability claims assistance, and other community services. The society plays a crucial role in ensuring that new generations of veterans receive the support they need to succeed. (Photo courtesy of The American Legion)

Post 284 presented The American Legion 1919 Society's Gold Medal at the 106th National Convention in Tampa

By Dick Cole
Editor

Were you aware of the existence of the 1919 Society within The American Legion? I wasn't!

The 1919 Society is a network of proud donors who believe in The American Legion's sacred com-

mitment to veterans, military service, young people, responsible citizenship and patriotic values.

Within its ranks are leaders who stand up for The American Legion's mission or who have benefited from its programs and services. The society also consists of some groups and associations that have chosen to invest in the future on behalf of someone



The beautiful dark cherry wood 1919 Society Wall of Honor is prominently displayed in the executive wing of the American Legion National Headquarters in Indianapolis. This multi-dimensional installation features polished black brass nameplates engraved in gold lettering that celebrates the names of 1919 Society members from the Silver Level and above for their commitment to America's future. Each name is inscribed on the 1919 Society Wall of Honor as a striking and stately recognition connecting proud donors to the patriotic roots of The American Legion.

they wish to honor.

Members of the 1919 Society generously pay it forward so new generations will have opportunities to succeed and benefit through the volunteer efforts of U.S. military veterans, from youth programs that instill responsible citizenship to free assistance on VA disability claims.

At this year's 106th American Legion National Convention in Tampa, Fla., Post 284 was presented a Gold Medal by the 1919 Society for its financial support of the organization.

The 1919 Society provides several levels of recognition based on the amount of the financial gift.

Diamond Level members who contribute \$50,000 or more, have achieved the highest level within the Society. The names of those who attain this level of giving are engraved prominently in the center area of the 1919 Society Wall of Honor. Diamond Level members also receive a Diamond Level 1919 Society plaque and special recognition at the National Commander's Banquet at the national convention.

Platinum Level members of the 1919 Society have contributed between \$10,000 and \$49,999. Their name is engraved on the inner flanks of the 1919 Society Wall of Honor. Platinum Level members also receive a Platinum 1919 Society medal with ribbon necklet, a Platinum Level lapel pin and recognition at the National Commander's Banquet at the national convention.

Gold Level members of the 1919 Society contributed between \$5,000 and \$9,999. They receive a gold medal with ribbon necklet and name engraved on

the 1919 Society Wall of Honor. Gold Level members also receive a Gold Level lapel pin and recognition during the National Commander's Banquet at the national convention.

Silver Level members contribute between \$2,500 and \$4,999. Silver Level members receive a 1919 Society Silver Level lapel pin and name engraved on the outer flanks of the 1919 Society Wall of Honor. Silver Level members are also recognized at national convention.

Bronze Level members contributed between \$1,000 and \$2,499 to the Society. They receive a 1919 Society Bronze Level lapel pin, recognition on the virtual 1919 Society Wall of Honor, and recognition at national convention.

Anyone, or any Post, can become a 1919 Society member. Funds donated to the 1919 Society goes to the American Legion Endowment Fund supporting the Veterans and Children's Foundation.

Since its inception in 1925, the foundation has assisted millions of veterans, their families and children in need. The VCF provides one-time, temporary financial assistance grants to cover food, housing, utilities and other basic needs for family members with children at home.

It also funds training for The American Legion organization's accredited veteran service officers who are continuously working more than 750,000 benefits claims for disabled veterans and their families, free of charge.

You can get more information about the Society at legion.org/1919Society



NEWS FROM THE AUXILIARY

"The only way to do great work is to love what you do!" —Steve Jobs

Goodbye August, you flew by in a minute! Much planning and preparation is going into this year by the Post 284 leadership. Before jumping into that, a brief recap of exciting things we participated in during the month of August. The "Back to School Hype Night" held at Shepherd Stadium, Aug. 4, was highly successful. Thank you to Post 284 for being the primary sponsor of this event hosted by the Colonial Heights Department of Recreation and Parks.

The next night, the Sons of the American Legion Squadron 284 did an outstanding job hosting the National Night Out with visits from our local neighbors, emergency medical technicians, firefighters, policemen, and City of Colonial Heights officials. Please plan to attend this next year as it was a fantastic way to highlight what we, The American Legion, do for our Veterans and the Community.

The National Convention in Tampa, Fla., was attended by a number of Post, Squadron, and Auxiliary members from 284. It was a wonderful way to wrap up the 2024-2025 year. Our own Post Commander was spotted rubbing elbows with members of the Buffalo Bills in the hotel.

Changes to the Unit meetings are being implemented. Executive committee meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of each month via Zoom beginning in October. Auxiliary Membership Meetings will continue the second Wednesday of each month. The *new time* will be **6 p.m.** Your attendance is encouraged so that you know what is going on within the unit and post.

The September meeting will have special guests in attendance. An Auxiliary Youth Hero Award is being presented to a local young man who saved his grandmother and siblings from a fire. We will have a presentation on the Freedom Flag, and receive a few words from our Post 284 Commander, Sons Commander and Riders Director.

Post events on the horizon are the Veterans Day Ceremony, SAL Boston Butts, Breakfast with Santa, Army Navy Game followed by a casual Christmas Party afterwards. More importantly, the Post's **80th Anniversary** will be celebrated next year with events in the planning stages. Information will be disseminated, and we encourage you to attend.

Membership—All Early Bird membership cards have gone out either by mail or left at Topside, per member request. You can now pay your dues online at legion-aux.org. Paying online is easy, and you can print your card immediately.

Rita Feasenmyer

Unit 284 President

WHY I CHOSE THE NAVY

**Share your story with us.
(We bet it's a good one.)**

Celebrate the Navy's 250th
with The American Legion.

Email service250@legion.org

Pics from National Night Out, August 4

Photos by Dick Cole and Rose Moore



Above: Jeff Lee flips the hotdogs and sausages on the grill with assistance from Kevin Chaplin, immediate Past SAL Detachment Commander. Right: SAL Squadron 284 Commander Kevin Jones took a turn putting the grilled 'dogs and sausages in buns as Linwood Moore looks on. Below: Colonial Heights Police officers enjoy the food while Bill Rose approaches the table to help himself to some food.



COUNTRY LINE DANCING NIGHT

JOIN THE DANCE PARTY!



SEPTEMBER 20, 2025

**DANCE TO STAR
MAKER**



**LESSONS
FROM DANCIN'
CAT!**



**AGES 15 AND
OLDER
WELCOME**

ADMISSION \$10 PER PERSON

FOOD AND DRINK AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

7-10:30 p.m., Doors open
at 5:30 p.m.

505 Springdale Avenue,
Colonial Heights, VA 23834

 **AMERICAN
LEGION**

YOU'RE INVITED



CRATER
COMMUNITY
HOSPICE

Celebrating Life Every Day Since 1995

30th Anniversary BENEFIT AUCTION

Sunday, October 5th
2pm - 5pm • Tickets \$65

Includes:

- Delicious Brunch
- 2 Adult Beverage
- Tickets (Beer or wine)
- Silent & Live Auctions
- Inspiring Stories
- Music, Community, & Giving Back

The Country Club of Petersburg

1250 Flank Rd, Petersburg, VA 23805

All proceeds support the mission of Crater

Southern Virginia American Legion Riders



SVALR member Bob LaRue rode to South Boston, Va., to see off his friends from American Legion Riders Chapter 197, Jacksonville, Fla., on their return to Florida on the National Legacy Ride. With Bob are (l. to r.): Crossbones the dog, Joshuaun Hinton, and Chapter 197 Director Mark "Quemedian" Hinton. Crossbones was one of two poodles in this year's Legacy Ride. (Photo courtesy of Bob LaRue)

Greetings and happy September!

It's been a super-hot month with a lot less riding than we are used to doing. We are all looking forward to the cooler temperatures just around the corner.

The National Legacy Run started on Aug. 18 in South Boston, Va., this year and will finish in Tampa, Fla. Bob LaRue rode out to South Boston to catch up with some old friends and see them off.

They will make stops for wreath laying, and visiting wounded warriors along the way. Safe travels to all who are participating. Next month we will have details about how the ride went so stay tuned.

Tim Capps and several riders went to Seneca Rocks, W.V., for a fun-filled weekend of twisty roads and switch-

backs.

We have had several riders who have been on our sick and distressed list over the last month. While I won't mention names, just know that you are all in our thoughts and prayers and we're here for you if you need anything.

FISH FRY, FISH FRY, its time for our fourth annual Fish Fry on Saturday, Sept. 6 from 11 a.m.-4 p.m. It is always a great time with great friends, fantastic food and surprises. Hope to see you all there.

Lastly, something I cannot stress enough, please look out for motorcycles. A minor fender bender can have catastrophic consequences for a rider. Please, be safe and keep your eyes on the road.

Hope everyone has a Happy Labor Day. Until next month, enjoy the open road and stay safe.



Please note the DATE change!

4th Annual Fish Fry

September 6, 2025

11:00am - 4:00pm

Cost: \$15 (includes 1 meal and 1 drink ticket)

Beer tickets: \$2 Soda or Water: \$1

Menu: Fish, Coleslaw, Baked Beans,

Mac & Cheese, & Hushpuppies



AMERICAN
LEGION

Join the Fun!

Southern Virginia American Legion Riders

American Legion Post 284

505 Springdale Ave.

Colonial Heights, VA

Sponsored BY:

**Hanover
PRECAST**



Edward Jones

TOPSIDE *Lounge*



SCUTTLEBUTT

Can you believe how fast this year is flying by? By the time this publication reaches y'all, school will be back in session. We hope our Legion Family kiddos have a great first day, and school year!

Lets give a shout out to our members that came out to hear Nick Constantine sing and play for us as a solo act, and the guys from the trio, 100 Years from Now. We sure do enjoy hearing all of you. You do a fantastic job. If you haven't been out to see them, you are definitely missing out.

Nick has already booked some future dates to come back to Topside! He will be here, Oct. 3, and 7, Nov. 8 and Dec. 12.

We will send out reminders as we get closer to these dates.

Also, be sure to check out the calendar at Topside.

We update it continuously. Be sure, too, to take advantage of our text system. Text AL284 to 78859. Stay up to date on all of our events!

Planning is underway for a Halloween Party on the 31st of October! That is a Friday this year. Mark your calendars and come out and celebrate with us!!! More details to come.

If you haven't been up to Topside lately, stop in and say hello. The company is fantastic, the food is on point, and the drinks are ice cold!

We'll see y'all soon!

The Topside Team

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.



THURSDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL

GAME ONE: DALLAS COWBOYS VS.
PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

HOTDOGS ARE \$2, NACHOS ARE \$3
DOMESTIC BEER \$1.50, PREMIUM BEER \$2
NO BUCKETS!
OPEN TO POST MEMBERS AND THEIR GUESTS

4 SEPTEMBER 2025 | 08:20 PM

TOPSIDE LOUNGE
AMERICAN LEGION COLONIAL HEIGHTS POST 284

Join us every Thursday all season long,
except Thansgiving day!

Post 284 Events Calendar

September 2025

- 1 Happy Labor Day! No Bingo!
- 2 Southern Virginia American Legion Riders Post 284 Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
- 4 Commander's Leadership Meeting, 6 p.m.
NFL Football at Topside on the New 70-inch TV!—Dallas Cowboys vs. Philadelphia Eagles. Game starts at 8:20.
(Hotdogs \$2, Nachos \$3, domestic beers \$1.50, premium beers \$2. NO BUCKETS!)
- 6 SVALR Fish Fry, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. \$15 includes meal and one drink ticket.
Karaoke at Topside, 8 p.m.
- 8 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.
- 10 Auxiliary Unit 284 Meeting
6 p.m. — Executive Board Meeting
6:30 p.m. — Refreshments
7 p.m. — Membership Meeting
- 11 General Membership Meeting
6:15 p.m. — Dinner
7 p.m. — Meeting
NFL Football at Topside—Washington Commanders vs. Green Bay Packers. Game starts at 8:15 p.m.
(Hotdogs \$2, Nachos \$3, domestic beers \$1.50, premium beers \$2. NO BUCKETS!)
- 13 Commander's Community Breakfast, 7:30-9:30 a.m.
Pizza Possibilities Party, Topside, 6-9 p.m. Everyone present gets a ticket for the possibility of winning a free pizza. (Domestic beers \$1.50, premium beers \$2. NO BUCKETS!)
- 15 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.
- 17 SAL Squadron 284 Meeting
6:15 p.m. — Dinner
7 p.m. — Meeting
- 18 NFL Football at Topside—Miami Dolphins vs. Buffalo Bills. Game starts at 8:15 p.m. (Hotdogs \$2, Nachos \$3, domestic beers \$1.50, premium beers \$2. NO BUCKETS!)
- 20 Country Line Dancing with Dancin' Cat and Star Maker DJ, \$10 admission
5:30 p.m. — Doors open
7:30-10:30 p.m. — Dancin' Cat Instructing
11 p.m. — Event ends
- 22 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.
- 25 Post Executive Committee Meeting, 7 p.m.
NFL Football at Topside—Seattle Seahawks vs. Arizona Cardinals. Game starts at 8:15 p.m.
- 29 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.

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.

MEMBERSHIP

Continued: The Four Attitudes in Membership Conversations

Last month, I introduced the four attitudes you're likely to encounter in membership conversations: acceptance; indifference; objections (due to either misunderstanding or perceived drawbacks) and skepticism.

We started last month with acceptance. When someone is ready to join, don't hesitate. As the 1992 film, "Glengarry Glen Ross," taught us: "ABC – Always Be Closing."

This month, let's talk about indifference. The best way to respond to indifference is by turning features into benefits.

When I was recruited, Bob Barrett mentioned the scholarships Post 284 offers to members. With nine grandchildren, several of whom were approaching eligibility, that feature caught my attention. It wasn't a direct benefit for me, but it was for my family. That made it *worth it*.

Indifference often means someone hasn't yet heard the right reason to care. Most people are quietly asking, "What's in it for me?" Your job is to answer that. To do that, you need product knowledge—a solid grasp of what The American Legion offers. Know the *features* that you can turn into *benefits* based on each person's interests or needs.

Here are a few features worth having in your back pocket:

- Scholarships for members and their families
- Youth programs like Boys State and American Legion Baseball
- Support services for veterans in crisis or transition
- VA benefit assistance and resources for navigating red tape
- Volunteer opportunities that give back and build purpose
- Community events like holiday ceremonies, bingo nights, and fundraisers

- Topside Lounge: Good food, good people, and a place to belong
- Fitness and wellness – join our new PT/PE sessions! And don't overlook the intangibles: camaraderie and friendship; leadership development; a sense of purpose and a reason to get out of the house and reengage with community

Pro tip: When you talk to a potential member, ask them a few simple questions:

- "Do you have kids or grandkids?"
- "Do you enjoy volunteering or mentoring?"
- "Do you ever feel like reconnecting with people who understand military life?"

Their answers will point you toward the feature that matters most—to them.

Next month, we'll discuss skepticism. It's not far from acceptance—they're already considering it, they just need reassurance. We'll talk about how to turn doubt into belief. Stay tuned.

Join Our PT/PE Program! We're now up and running—literally—with our new PT/PE program: Saturdays at 7 a.m. (0700) and Wednesdays at 6 p.m. (1800). We meet at the Post or a TBD location. Wear a yellow shirt, we want people to see us out there. I'd love to see others help lead, vary the activity, and grow the group. Contact me at bret@bordwell.com if you're interested.

Final Thought: Know the Legion, Share the Benefits

Take time this month to deepen your product knowledge. Learn about the Legion—*not just what it is, but what it does*. You just might find something that benefits you *and* helps you connect with someone new.

Maverick

Membership Chairman



SAL NEWS



As Fall approaches and ushers in crisp air, football, bonfires, and trips to the pumpkin patch, let's 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 September meeting will be on Wednesday, Sept. 17, with supper at 6:15 p.m. and meeting at 7 p.m.

I had the pleasure of attending a Congressional Gold Medal (the highest civilian award bestowed by the United States Congress) ceremony given to the Vietnam War Dust-Off Pilots at Covenant Woods in Mechanicsville, Va., on July 30. Al Micheals (not the sportscaster) was part of this group and the residents of Covenant Woods honored him for his service and this award. It was really cool and Sons Bill Feasenmyer and Rick Oertel also attended.

What a tremendously successful National Night Out 2025! We served 100 hotdogs and 60 sausages with peppers and onions. We want to thank everyone who came out and participated in and helped out with National Night Out 2025 on Aug. 5. Special thanks to Linwood Moore for bringing his grill to the Post and cooking, to Jeff Lee and Linwood for passing out flyers in the neighborhood, and Linwood (seems to be a theme here), Rose Moore, Jim Rovinski, Jeff Lee, Carl Brandt, George Dimirack, and Kevin Chaplin for helping with the preparation, cooking, serving and clean up. Thanks to Colonial Heights Police Sgt. Bill Feasenmyer for providing CHPD swag for the kids (and some adults). Thanks to Post Commander La Monte Thomas and Auxiliary Unit 284 President Rita Feasenmyer for their support from the Legion and the Auxiliary. We would especially like to thank the Post Executive Committee for approving the funds for National Night Out for us.

Another huge thank you to the Legion for their very generous donation to Squadron 284 of \$1,000 so we could replace our flags for our Holiday Flag Display

Program. We are very appreciative of the Post's support of Squadron 284 and of working with the Legion as part of the Legion Family.

Our events in September are putting out flags on Sept. 1, (Labor Day) and Sept. 11, (Patriot Day). The Legion Family, in partnership with the VFW, will be providing lunch for Colonial Heights Public Schools resource officers and Police, Sheriff, and Fire & EMS personnel on Patriot Day. Contact me if interested in participating.

The Southern Virginia American Legion Riders' Fish Fry is Saturday, Sept. 6. Country Line Dancing is happening again on Saturday, Sept. 20.

Our next big event is our Boston Butt Sale which will be on Nov. 15. Flyers for these events are enclosed in this issue of *News and Views*.

Now, the broken record part of this little essay – the Post really needs your help in three areas: Bingo – we always need volunteers so please considering helping out on Monday nights; Country Line Dance – every third Saturday night and we've had a pretty good crowd the last two months, but we really need more attendance from our members so come on out and learn a Boot-Scoot or two; and lastly, Topside – support our club by getting something to eat or have a beer.

It continues to be a real pleasure, a lot of work, and a heck of a lot fun working with everyone in our Post 284 Family. We have a really great group comprising our leadership - Commander La Monte Thomas (Legion), Vice Commanders Tim Capps and Brad Harter (Legion), President Rita Feasenmyer (Auxiliary) and Director Chief Vaughan (Riders).

By the time you read this college football will have kicked off another season so...ROLL TIDE! See ya'll around the Post.

Kevin Jones

Commander, Squadron 284

Sons of the American Legion Squadron 284



Semi-Annual Fundraiser
Saturday, November 22, 2025
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



Five tips on how to help homeless Veterans

Practical advice so you can be part of the solution

By Shawn Liu

National Homeless Program Manager
VA Homeless Programs Office

If you've ever walked down the street and seen a person curled up on a pile of cardboard or passed a row of makeshift tents, you may have thought, "How does this happen? What life did this person live before I saw them on the street? I want to help, but I don't know how."

If you want to help a Veteran living on the street or in an encampment, here are some safe, useful ways to support them.

1. Leave judgments and misconceptions aside

People can become homeless in many ways, including job loss, illness of themselves or a family member, lack of affordable housing, loss of a home, health issues and substance use.

Showing kindness and instilling hope can go a long way. Smile, say hello and ask their name. You are speaking with a member of your community. Showing them the respect of treating them as you would treat any other person having a bad day. If you are able and comfortable, give them a bottle of water, a prepackaged snack or food for their pet.

If you live in an area where you encounter many unhoused people, traveling with an extra bag stocked with supplies helps you be prepared to assist more community members at any given mo-

ment.

2. Offer to help them call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans

If you believe the person you encounter is a Veteran and could benefit from VA services, ask if they have served in the military. Some unhoused people do not identify as a Veteran. The fastest way to get them connected to VA is to call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at (877) 424-3838. The call is free, confidential and staffed 24/7 with trained counselors who will connect them to their nearest VA medical center for help and resources.

In some cases, the VA team may already have a relationship with the Veteran and started gaining their trust, which is an important step. Many Veterans aren't willing to get care after a first encounter, but after building a rapport with a social worker or case manager they decide to come to VA for help.

It's important not to rush Veterans into accessing services they aren't comfortable with. Veterans experiencing homelessness are going through many struggles at any given time, whether they are health issues, hunger, thirst, exhaustion or something else.

Keep in mind that many have also experienced trauma that brought them to where they are now. Not knowing where their next meal will come from, where they'll sleep or if they'll be safe can make anyone distrustful of institutional services.

It's also a good idea to share the general location of homeless encampments with VA medical centers so that teams will know where to go to provide outreach and services, especially in winter and during other extreme weather events.

3. Offer a connection to resources

A simple way to share resources with Veterans is to carry printouts or water bottles with the numbers of the Veterans Crisis Line and National Call Center for Homeless Veterans written on them so Veterans know where they can go for help when they are ready.

If a Veteran isn't comfortable using VA services, there are community agencies VA can connect them with. Community providers often offer things VA cannot, such as support geared toward families. Libraries are also great hubs for homeless Veterans to find resources to help them through the day, including bathrooms, air conditioning, computers, entertainment and more.

4. Volunteer

If you are interested in doing more for homeless Veterans, consider volunteering at a local stand

down event. Stand downs are typically one- to three-day events during which VA staff and volunteers provide food, clothing and health screenings to homeless and at-risk Veterans. Veterans receive referrals for health care, housing solutions, employment, substance use treatment, mental health counseling and other essential services.

You can also reach out to your local VA for information on volunteering.

5. Learn more about VA programs

Visit the [VA Homeless Programs website](#) to learn about housing initiatives and other programs for Veterans exiting homelessness.

- [Find your nearest VA.](#)
- Learn how to [get involved with housing homeless Veterans.](#)
- Download and print [outreach flyers, brochures, wallet cards, and more.](#)



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/Scholarships; and Buildings and Grounds. The longtime chairmen of these commit-

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, or call (804) 796-6250.

Share your memories with your fellow Legionnaires!!

TOPSIDE PRESENTS

OPEN MIC NIGHT



TOPSIDE LOUNGE

Colonial Heights Post 284
The American Legion

All talents welcome--
singing, music, comedy,
etc.

1 OCT
2025

6-9 PM

OPEN TO TOPSIDE MEMBERS AND THEIR GUESTS



Colonial Heights Post 284

TOPSIDE LOUNGE

PIZZA POSSIBILITIES PARTY!

**Everyone in Topside will receive a free
ticket. If your number is drawn, you
will receive a free pizza!**

**EVERY 2ND SATURDAY
BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 13
6-9PM**

**Bring family, friends, and fellow pizza lovers! Domestic
beers \$1.50 each and premiums \$2, NO BUCKETS!**



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

