



# The Légionnaire

## Tidewater Post 327

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Norfolk, VA 23518

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JULY 2026

### POST OFFICERS

Commander: Bob DeChamplain  
1<sup>st</sup> VCDR: Alan Cole Sr (AJ)  
2<sup>nd</sup> VCDR: Keith Shanesy  
3<sup>rd</sup> VCDR: Colleen Lemond  
Adjutant: Tracy Cortez  
Finance: Janet Sullinger  
Service Officer: Lee Goldman  
Chaplain: Desh Nendze  
Sgt-at-Arms: Inocencio Gaitan  
Historian: Paulmichael Youngmills

### Exec Board

Robert Sullinger  
Keith "Klutch" Palmer  
Joseph DeCosta

### LEGION RIDERS

Director: Keith Palmer  
Asst Dir: (DJ) Derrick Johnson  
Secretary: Phillissa Marable  
Treasurer: David Seate  
Safety Officer: Keith McCauley  
Chaplain: OPEN  
Sgt-at-Arms: Kenneth Parker  
Road Captain: OPEN

### Exec Board

ALR Gnome

### SAL SQUADRON

CDR: Alan J. "AJ" Cole, Sr  
1<sup>st</sup> VCDR: Dawson Montagna  
2<sup>nd</sup> VCDR: David Vernon (Benski)  
Adjutant: James Doty Jr  
Treasurer: Jeff Evans  
Chaplain: Rocky English  
Sgt-at-Arms: David Laws  
Historian: Robinson 'Rob' Douglas

### Exec Board

Steve Gower  
Cliff Carney  
Kenneth O'Bryan

### AUXILIARY

President: Crystal Cross  
Vice President: Kathy Morrison  
Secretary: Charlotte Cole  
Treasurer: Chrystal Odle  
Chaplain: Jackie Miller  
Sgt-at-Arms: Sally Newman  
Historian: Maria Gaitan

### Exec Board

Mary Taggart  
Sheila Pyatt  
Laquetta Joe

\*\*\*\*\*

**COMMANDER:** Legion Family, As I step into the role of Commander of American Legion Post 327, I want to begin by expressing my gratitude for the trust and confidence you have placed in me. Our Post has a proud legacy built by generations of veterans who believed in service beyond their years in uniform. It is an honor to continue that work alongside each of you. This year, our focus is simple: strengthen our Post, support our veterans, and serve our community with purpose. We will build on the foundation laid by past leadership while embracing new opportunities to grow, modernize, and engage more veterans and families.

Our Post is at its best when our members are active, connected, and informed. In the months ahead, we will:

- ▣ Reach out to new and returning members
  - ▣ Increase communication through meetings, newsletters, and digital platforms
  - ▣ Create more opportunities for veterans of all eras to get involved
- Every member has a place here, and every voice matters.

Supporting Veterans and their Families. Whether it's navigating VA benefits, addressing Toxic exposure concerns, or simply offering a place to belong, our mission remains unchanged:

veterans helping veterans. We will continue to strengthen our Service Officer program, provide updated resources, and ensure that every veteran who walks through our doors receives the support they deserve. Serving Our Community. From youth programs to patriotic observances,

our Post plays a vital role in the community. This year, we will:

- ▣ Reinforce partnerships with local schools, first responders, and civic organizations
- ▣ Support programs like Boys State, Oratorical, Scouting, and JROTC
- ▣ Continue honoring those who serve and those who teach the next generation

Our community looks to us for leadership—and we will answer that call. No Commander succeeds alone. I am grateful for the dedication of our officers, volunteers, and members who keep this Post moving forward. Together, we will preserve our traditions while preparing for the future. Thank you for your service, your support, and your commitment to the American Legion. I look forward to working with each of you as we begin this new chapter. For God and Country, Robert "Bob" DeChamplain  
Commander

**FIRST VICE COMMANDER:** Thanks to everyone that supported my election as First Vice Commander. Byron Pianalto has taught me everything that I know about membership. Now I'm trying to learn everything that he knows about membership. He's a tough act to follow. Thanks to Byron, our post membership exceeded its 2026 goals. I'm looking forward to creating a repeat success for 2027.

It is not too late to renew your 2026 membership. We begin 2027 renewals on July 1, 2026, and I will have a Membership Table at the Independence Day Picnic. Stop by for the festivities and renew your membership or take advantage of our renew and Zelle pay-on-line option

at [legion327.com](http://legion327.com). Select "PAY MEMBERSHIP DUES." Once I receive notification of your payment, I will mail your membership card to the address on file. Additionally, you can renew online at [legion.org/renew](http://legion.org/renew) for one or three years, or purchase a Paid Up For Life (PUFL) membership with a credit card.

As a reminder, you are required to have your membership card (either the physical card or a digital image on your phone) in your possession whenever you are at the Post.

For God and Country, Alan J. "AJ" Cole, Sr. 1st Vice Commander

**SECOND VICE COMMANDER:** Happy Fourth of July, everyone!

As we celebrate Independence Day, we also mark a historic milestone—the 250th birthday of the United States of America. Two and a half centuries ago, brave patriots pledged their lives, fortunes, and sacred honor to establish a nation founded on liberty and self-government. We remember the courage shown at the battles of Lexington and Concord and Siege of Yorktown, where the fight for independence helped shape the future of our nation. We honor heroes such as George Washington, whose leadership guided the American cause, and the countless soldiers, sailors, and citizens whose sacrifices made freedom possible. For 250 years, Americans have risen to meet challenges, defend our ideals, and work toward a more perfect union. Today, as we enjoy the blessings of liberty, let us remember those who came before us and renew our commitment to the principles that have sustained our nation for generations.

Happy 250th Birthday, America. May God bless our nation, and may the



spirit of freedom continue to inspire us for centuries to come.

We have a few events coming up in the month of July for our wonderful and supporting membership. I thank each of you for supporting what we are striving to accomplish here at Post 327.

We start off on July 3rd with Scott Ruepple conducting Trivia for the 250th Birthday of America. I would encourage any and all history buffs to come and take part in this well put together program by Scott.

Our annual July 4th picnic takes place on Saturday July 4th. Our protein choices will be Hot Dogs, Hamburgers, and Fried Chicken. Dessert donations will be gladly accepted. Bring your favorite American dessert! We have a balloon artist and temporary tattoo artist coming for the children (and adults also), as we will also have the snow cone machine out and fired up! Whiskey Tide will be providing the musical entertainment for the afternoon. WE ARE ALSO GIVING OUT LOTS OF DOOR PRIZES DURING THE PICNIC!!!! WHEN YOU PAY FOR THE PICNIC, YOU WILL RECEIVE A TICKET FOR THE DRAWINGS. PLEASE ENSURE WE CAN READ YOUR NAME AND PHONE NUMBER. YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE PRESENT TO WIN.

July 16th is our quarterly Grover Gaming night, hosted by Marcie.

July 18th The Family Jules will be playing in the clubroom.

July 25th, our very own Jack Menendez and his band Aging Prophets will be playing in the clubroom. For God and Country,

Keith Shanesy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander

**THIRD VICE COMMANDER:** Greetings and happy summer Post 327 members! June has been a busy month with the kitchen renovations including a new floor. Thank you to all the volunteers who came out to assist with clearing everything out of the kitchen it was so nice to see so many post members show up to help. Everything at the post couldn't be done without the volunteers that show up to assist! Please be respectful when asked to show your membership card. The house rules require that you have your card on you at all times when in the post and can be asked to show it to verify membership at any time. Please do not block the entrance or exit to the lawn with your cars so members who need to park on the lawn can enter an exit. Even though they have been clearly marked members are still parking in those areas members have been

still parking in those areas blocking the flow of traffic. There will be volunteer opportunities for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnic and hope some of you will come and help out. Putting on the picnics is a lot of work for all who volunteer to ensure everyone can enjoy themselves. The Queen of Hearts was finally won on June 12<sup>th</sup> and a lucky member walked out with over \$39,000. A new board will be starting soon!

For God and Country, Colleen Lemond, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice Commander

**ADJUTANT:** Thank you to my fellow Legionnaires for your support in the election to my position as Adjutant. July 9-12 will be the 108th annual Department convention in Richmond. If interested, please see me. For God and Country, Tracy Cortez, Adjutant

**SERVICE OFFICER:** Greeting all. First and foremost, I want to thank everyone for the opportunity to serve as the new Post Service Officer. I look forward to serving the Veterans in our community proudly. Please note and pass along the following information.

The Department of Veterans Affairs today formally launched the VA Partial Claim Program, a new effort to help Veterans facing financial struggles avoid foreclosure and stay in their homes.

The VA Partial Claim Program is authorized by the VA Home Loan Reform Act, which President Trump signed into law July 30, 2025. Here's how it works:

Mortgage servicers identify Veterans who are in default and might be able to qualify for the Partial Claim Program.

Servicers place qualified Veterans on a three-month trial payment plan to assess their ability to stay current on their loan.

When a Veteran successfully completes this trial period, the mortgage servicer will pay the overdue amount on the mortgage to make the Veteran current again.

VA will then pay that same amount to the mortgage servicer.

Servicers must repay the VA when the loan is paid in full, refinanced, or the property is sold.

Our amazing and thorough Post Service Officers are available Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday from 1000-1500. We are closed on holidays. For God and Country, Lee Goldman, Service Officer

**CHAPLAIN:** July Greetings Legion Family!

I hope everyone is doing well! As the VEP (Veterans Engagement Program) through the School of Social Work at Norfolk State University is in the home stretch over the next few months, I highly encourage anyone who is interested to access our

link [https://nsugradstudies.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_elp6PXqskLp6ALA](https://nsugradstudies.iad1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_elp6PXqskLp6ALA). We have modified our services for the program so if resources or connections to community services are needed or if two free online mental health sessions per month are needed, please feel free to contact me. Our goal is to assist with any stressors that are impacting Veteran mental health.

I am also going to be starting a "Be the One" Committee to promote the American Legion mental health initiative and expand how we support and care for the needs of our members. If you are interested in joining, please let me know ([chaplain327@gmail.com](mailto:chaplain327@gmail.com)). In my quest to make our Post a mental health resource center for those who have served and always promote BE THE ONE, please let me know how I can help everyone and always let me know if you have any ideas you would like me to look into. For God and Country, Desh Nendze, Chaplain

**LEGION RIDERS:** Happy Fourth of July from Chapter 327 American Legion Riders and Supporters.

The riders' next meeting is on Thursday, July 16, 2026. The new Officer's Installation will take place during the meeting.

Thank all Chapter 327 Riders and Supporters for their contributions, fundraising and participation in 9th Annual Virginia Legacy Run, Colonial Beach, VA held 18-20 June 2026, was a tremendous success.

#### Upcoming Events:

**\*\*Combat Vets Ride to Remember On-Site Poker Run**, location Jones & Cabacoy Veterans Care Center 2641 Nimmo PKWY Va Beach, VA 23456, 29 August 2026, time 1000-1300.

**\*\*Department of Virginia ALR 16th Annual State Rally Post 79** South Boston, VA 25-26 September 2026. The award for High Mileage/Safety Award and the Department of Virginia, Rider of the Year Award. Keep both wheels on the ground and be safe, For God and Country. Keith "Klutch" Palmer, Riders Director.

#### **ATHLETIC OFFICER: APA Pool**

Our APA teams wrapped up another competitive session.

**Resurrection** and **Lights Out** both reached the playoffs but were eliminated in the opening rounds. **Iraq'd Iran** captured the Thursday 9-Ball Session Championship before falling in the first round of the Tri-Annual Tournament. **Rack Stars** finished 10th, while **Deal's a Deal** earned an impressive 2nd-place finish in the Tuesday Eastern League and is already competing in the new session.

The new season is off to a strong start with **Lights Out** currently in 1st Place and **Iraq'd Iran** in 2nd Place in Thursday 9-Ball. Congratulations to all of our players for proudly representing American Legion Post 327.

#### **Friday Night Coed Softball**

Our Coed Softball Team completed another successful season built on teamwork, sportsmanship, and camaraderie. The team proudly represented Post 327 throughout the season and now looks ahead to the playoffs on **June 26** (weather permitting). Best of luck as they finish the season strong!

#### **Senior Softball**

Our Senior Softball Team continues to compete at a high level, recently earning an impressive **4th-place finish** at the Great Smoky Mountain Tournament in Knoxville, Tennessee. Upcoming tournaments include **Roanoke, King George, Loudoun County (Eastern Nationals)**, and the **Senior World Championships in Las Vegas** this September. Thank you to everyone who continues to support our team as we proudly represent American Legion Post 327.

#### **Upcoming Event**

##### **American Legion Post 327 Charity Golf Tournament**

**Date:** July 31

**Location:** Ocean View Golf Course

A special thank you to our **Platinum Sponsor, BAFO Services**, for their generous support. Registration is open, with eight teams already signed up. To participate, add your name to the sign-up sheet outside the Post Hall.

#### **Get Involved**

We're always looking for members to join our athletic programs. We are currently recruiting players for:

- Kickball
- Men's Softball

For more information or to sign up, contact the Athletic Committee or see the sign-up sheets at the Post.

For God and Country, Mike Encalade, Athletic Officer

**SQUADRON COMMANDER:** Steve Gower (Past Commander, Past Detachment Commander, Past National Vice Commander, and Member of The National Executive Committee) presided over the installation of the 2026-2027 Officers of Squadron 327; Commander Alan J. "AJ" Cole, Sr., 1st Vice Commander Dawson Montagna, 2nd Vice Commander David "Benski" Vernon, Adjutant James Doty, Jr., Chaplain Rocky English, Treasurer Jeff Evans, 1st Sgt-at-Arms David Laws, and Historian Robinson "Rob" Douglas.

Volunteering is the ultimate expression of community and compassion . "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."-- Winston Churchill

#### **Want it done, call a Son. Be that Son.**

For God and Country. Alan J. "AJ" Cole, Sr. Squadron 327 Commander

**HONOR GUARDS CORNER:** In June, the Honor Guard participated in the Flag Day ceremony and flag retirement at the Norfolk Elks Lodge #38. For the 250th birthday of the United States on July 4, we celebrate our nation's history and honor its diversity while looking to forward a bright future.

Other days of remembrance in July:

Korean War Veterans Armistice Day, July 27

National Buffalo Soldiers Day, July 28

Anniversary of the Army Chaplain Corps, July 29

In 1992, President George H.W. Bush established National Buffalo Soldiers Day to honor the legacy of the all-Black Army Soldiers. The Army Chaplain Corps is one of the Army's earliest branches dating back to July 29, 1775, when the Continental Congress approved one chaplain be assigned to each regiment of the Continental Army.

Honor Guard members continue to give their time and travel to support the requests of the community and the American Legion Family. All members of the Legion Family are welcome to join. Contact Otha Newton for questions and requests.

For God and Country, Mary Taggart

**ALA PRESIDENT:** Attention Auxiliary Senior Members- We will have our Early Bird Membership Drive on July 4<sup>th</sup> at the picnic. For the 4<sup>th</sup> only, the 2027 dues renewal will be only \$35.00 vice the regular renewal of \$40.00 which is remaining the same from last year.

We will need volunteers for the July 4<sup>th</sup> picnic. Please be on the lookout for information from the Post for volunteers via text, the clubroom and Facebook.

Our first regular 2026-2027 meeting is July 7th at 7pm with the Officers and Exec board meeting at 6:30. I would like to introduce our Unit 327, 2026-2027 Unit Officers that were installed at our June meeting: President-Crystal Cross, Vice President-Kathy Morrison, Secretary-Charlotte Cole, Treasurer-Chrystal Odle, Chaplain- Jacki Miller, Sgt. At Arms-Sally Newman, Historian- Maria Gaitan, and our Executive Board-Helen Mary Taggart, and Laquetta Joe, and Shelia Pyatt. I would also like to congratulate the Post, Son's, and Legion Riders on their elections and Officers for the coming year!

The new year promises to continue to build on the Legion Family relationship and will bring great things! I want to say Thank you to the 2025-2026 Officers for all their hard work this past year.

For God and Country, Crystal Cross, Unit 327 President

**CLUBROOM MANAGER:** Good afternoon, everyone, I only have a few reminders. First, members need to write Full Name and date on their bottles. There are some of you who are not following the post guidelines. Members must sign their guests in when entering the post. This includes full name, date, and time at which you entered the clubroom. ALL INFORMATION, must be in print Not cursive writing. There seems to be some confusion with members drinking from other members bottles when the member is Not in the clubroom. No member can drink from another member's bottle if the member is not in the clubroom, this is in the house rules. Members bottles will be removed from behind the bar at 90 days. After 90 days bottles will be placed in the back of clubroom where they will remain for 14 days. Thereafter, the bottles will be disposed of. .For God and Country, Clubroom Manager, Angie Hernandez

