

THE MIDLOTHIAN LEGIONNAIRE

FOR GOD & COUNTRY

A PUBLICATION OF THE MAJOR CHARLES A. RANSOM
AMERICAN LEGION POST 186 - MIDLOTHIAN, VIRGINIA



April 2024

amlegionpost186@aim.com

americanlegionpost186.org



Post 186 Calendar

April 2024

| | | |
|----|-------------------------|-------------|
| 2 | Executive Board Meeting | 7pm |
| 11 | Legion Riders Meeting | 6:30pm |
| 13 | 40/8 Breakfast | 8am |
| 16 | Membership Meeting | 7pm |
| 20 | SAL Meeting | 10am |
| 25 | Post Social | 5:30-7:30pm |

May 2024

| | | |
|----|-------------------------|-------------|
| 7 | Executive Board Meeting | 7pm |
| 9 | Legion Riders Meeting | 6:30pm |
| 11 | 40/8 Breakfast | 8am |
| 18 | SAL Meeting | 10am |
| 21 | Membership Meeting | 7pm |
| 23 | Post Social | 5:30-7:30pm |

June 2024

| | | |
|----|-------------------------|---------------|
| 4 | Executive Board Meeting | 7pm |
| 8 | 40/8 Breakfast | 8am |
| 6 | Legion Riders Meeting | 6:30pm |
| 15 | SAL Meeting | 10am |
| 18 | Membership Meeting | 7pm |
| 27 | Post Social | 5:30pm-7:30pm |
| 29 | Commander's Luncheon | 11am - 2 pm |

Maj. Charles A. Ransom died on April 27, 2011 at Kabul International Airport, Afghanistan.

Maj. Ransom was a graduate of Virginia Military Institute where he majored in computer science.

He served in the Air Force with the 83rd Network Operations Squadron out of Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Virginia.

Maj. Ransom was killed by enemy gunfire at the headquarters building on an Afghan air force compound in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Maj. Ransom was posthumously awarded the Meritorious Service Medal, Purple Heart and Bronze Star Medals.



From the Commander

I hope everyone is doing well. We celebrated the 105th birthday of the American Legion recently. I am proud to have served this last year as your commander and have seen growth in our membership and some of the new members showing interest in also serving the post. All of that being said. I would like to take a moment to echo some of the comments from the most recent membership meeting concerning volunteerism. The need for increased volunteerism across all our endeavors is approaching critical. We have developed an excellent reputation within Legion District 11 and the Midlothian community. It will be difficult to maintain and nearly impossible to build upon this reputation without additional volunteers. We are quickly approaching the point where the "rubber meets the road". Let's all reach out to our Adjutant/ Quartermaster/ Building and Grounds Dick Hahn to volunteer even if it is only for an hour a month to help out the Post and our brother and sister veterans. I would deeply appreciate our members stepping up and helping out where needed.

Additionally I have started attending the post on Sundays with Dick Hahn and his son David for Archery at the Post. It is an enjoyable event and I find it quite relaxing. If you think this is something that would interest you, we would love to have you join us on Sundays. The contact information is below.

The Archery Club meets every morning Sunday (weather permitting). If you are interested contact Dick Hahn @ 703-508-1544 or email richardahahn@verizon.net.

Executive Board for 2024/2025:

Commander: Don Pierpont
1st Vice: Billy Heflin
2nd Vice: Bill Seif
Adjutant: Richard Hahn
Finance Officer: William Pouch
Chaplain: Dale Mark Benedict
Service Officer: Henry Bowe
Judge Advocate: Richard Jackson
Quartermaster: Richard Hahn

Smoking Curtailment:

Please keep in mind, the Post is a Completely non-smoking facility.

After Hours:

Key holders, remember you are required to sign in and out when opening the Post after hours. Non-compliance could result in loss of your key privilege.

Membership:

March 2024 figures:

Membership:

| | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Renewed: 154 | PUFL: 35 | |
| New: 7 | Grand Total: 273 | |
| Transfer: 2 | Percentage of Goal: 86.943% | |
| On-Line: 75 | Goal: 314 | Shortfall: 41 |

Post Everlasting:

Norman W. Garrett Sr.
Ryland Bowen Jr.
Edwin S. (Steve) Parrish
Ralph Poling
Robert "Bobby" Wilcox
David A. Brown
Stewart R. Dodson



Quartermaster:

Operations Cost

We are often reminded that many of our members are not aware of the cost to complete AL Post 186 "business". We also often hear "we pay our dues, so why should we have to do more?". In recent times we did an analysis of our fixed and semi-fixed costs to come up with an average monthly cost of doing business. We found it to be between \$1800-\$2000 a month. Fixed costs are those such as insurance and trash removal which are averaged out on a monthly basis. Current insurance for example is running at approximately \$9500 a year. Semi-fixed costs such as utilities are necessary to operations but can vary significantly from month-to-month. Heating and air conditioning, mostly using heat pumps, can be around \$1200 per month. All of these costs, as we are seeing across the economy, are rising and show no signs of leveling out. What does all this mean?

Using member dues as a main revenue component, from each member at \$50 we send \$29 up to Department and National and keep \$21 at the Post level. This gives us a calculation of nominally 300 members x \$21 per member retained = \$6300 or roughly 3.5 months of average operating costs. While there are many moving cost elements, what should be obvious is that our fundraising efforts must cover the remaining 8.5 months of operations plus provide funds for all of the budget items we hope to support.

Ways & Means Changes

The recent addition of an annual golf tournament to our committee support profile has had several primary effects. First, as is reflected in our annual budgets, our revenue has gone up sharply because of this event. This has been reflected in our growing cash assets and also making some decisions about other support requirements.

Field Day of the Past (FDOP) has been a significant contributor to our annual bottom line for many years. It was also a significant consumer of volunteer support hours taking dozens of faces and hundreds of hours to complete. For a number of reasons, the Executive Committee decided that our involvement in FDOP needed to come to an end.

- Waning available support
We are reasonably sure most of you should be aware, the average age of the Post members has been steadily increasing as the majority of Vietnam era members begin to age out of participation and younger veterans are not joining the ranks at a significant rate. Activities that require a lot of outdoor physical activity or strength are harder to staff. Trying to maintain our

slate of activities and community involvement profile relies on a smaller and smaller contingent of the same faces and they too are tiring out.

- **Maintain Post reputation**
Commitment to support FDOP required a decision early in the year that we would be there in late September. Supporting a contact program to line up the necessary people in vacation season was always difficult. Early commitments on the part of individuals that later had family issues or other competing issues sometimes caused unresolvable conflicts. We decided it was better to not commit to something that we could no longer guarantee than to risk failure and damage to our reputation in the local communities.
- **Additional revenue sources**
While the income from FDOP was not guaranteed and tied to overall participation in the event, it was reasonably reliable and in recent years was almost all profit. Last year's exercise convinced us that fielding sufficient people to complete the event was increasingly difficult and perhaps our manpower resources could be better allocated. One current event that needs more help as it grows in size and popularity is the annual golf tournament. This has rapidly become our top fundraiser and needs many hands to effectively complete all phases of the competition and associated activities. If you have traditionally supported FDOP and will regret missing the opportunity, please consider coming out for the golfers and call Jim Flore @ 804-283-6457 to sign up.

Should a need arise, electric/non-electric wheelchairs, walkers (with and without wheels) and platform canes are available at the Post for short or long-term loan.

Honor Guard:

Billy Heflin, Honor Guard Coordinator

The mission of the Honor Guard is to show reverence to those veterans who have passed on by providing a proper, distinguished military memorial, and to support patriotic events, in order to promote and preserve our nation's independence.

Currently the Post is in need of an Honor Guard Commander. In addition, the Post continues to solicit volunteers to be members in the Post 186 Honor Guard. If you are able to fill the position of Honor Guard Commander, or become a member of the team, contact Billy Heflin for details.

The Post will subsidize 50% of the cost for personal uniforms up to 3 new volunteers.

Brunswick Stew

Jan 26 – 27, 2024

The weather cooperated and there were volunteers showing up to help with Stew Prep day. It was a good start. The Quarter Master had everything ready to go as people took their places ready to cut potatoes, chicken and beef.



Volunteers cutting potatoes for the pot



The chicken chopper hard at work

With cut potatoes in the pot and the beef & chicken cut up and ready for tomorrow, the cleanup was accomplished in no time. A few of the volunteers set things up for the very early start tomorrow.



3am – Saturday

The fire under the stew pot was lit and last-minute details were accomplished. Now, the group that braved getting up before the chickens, waited for the water to heat up & for the volunteers to arrive around 6:30am.

Soon volunteers started to arrive and the stirring of the pot began!



Let the stirring begin. Getting ready for the tomatoes

Fortunately there were enough volunteers to rotate those individuals doing the stirring. It's not an easy task standing and stirring for any length of time



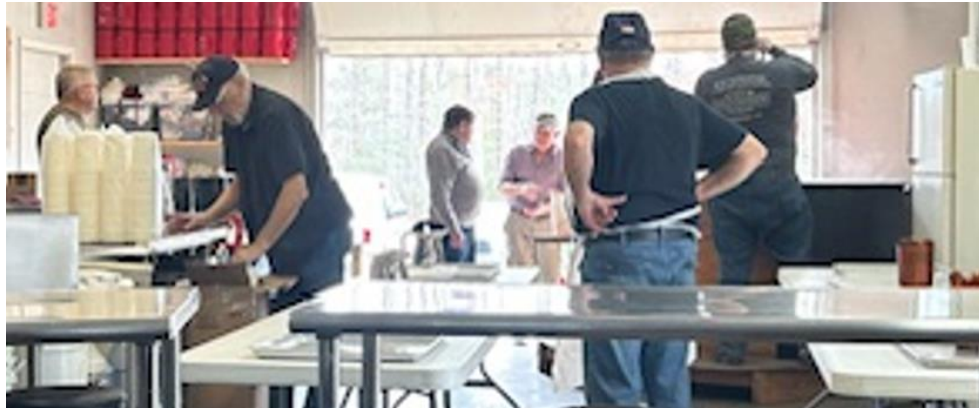
"Double, double toil and trouble: Fire burn, and cauldron bubble."

Everyone waited for the final cooking process



Waiting to spring into action!

With all the ingredients added and the stirring in full swing, preparations for filling the quart containers were made ready



At 11:45 am – the stew was ready



The stew is scooped out of the big cauldron and into smaller pots. These pots are placed on tables where the stew is poured into the quart containers.
(I'm happy to report, no major spills occurred during the transfer of the stew)



The containers are then transferred to a cart and moved to the Post meeting room



75 filled containers are placed on the cart and moved to the Meeting room

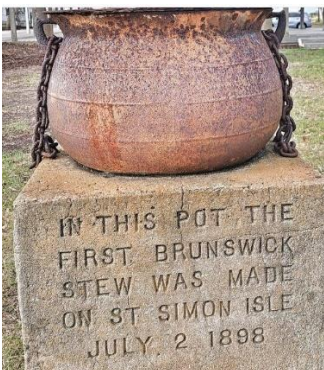


507 quarts of stew ready for pick up!

The entire process went smoothly thanks to the many volunteers that showed up both days to help. Everyone commented on how much fun they had, even though at times, things got hectic.

A special thanks to each and everyone involved.

Brunswick Stew Monument



Brunswick Stew Monument claims to display the first pot used to cook a famed Southern stew. "There is a great debate between Brunswick, Georgia and Brunswick County, Virginia. The feud is over which region originated the concoction known as Brunswick stew. This tomato-based Southern dish was originally made up of squirrel, rabbit and opossum as the base proteins in the past.

The problem is, historical accounts show Virginia having Brunswick Stew prior to 1898. Which is the date shown on Georgia's stew monument. However, Brunswick, Georgia has put up a good fight regarding the origins of the stew. There's even a second monument to Brunswick stew in Mary Ross Park (Brunswick, GA) that has proudly stood since 1946, when two restauranteurs attempted to solidify the town's claim to the dish. To this day the stew's true hometown remains a mystery."

(Talk about your true Stew food fight!)

February Members Meeting

Feb. 20, 2024

The meeting got underway with an update on projects both completed and on-going around the Post. After reports from the various departments, the Chaplain proceeded with the Four Chaplains Ceremony. Several Members of the Post read the biography of each of the four Chaplains.

On February 3, 1943, the troop ship U.S.A.T. Dorchester was torpedoed. As the Dorchester sank, the chaplains were seen linked arm in arm, praying. American Legion posts nationwide remember Four Chaplains Day with memorial services that pay tribute to the courageous chaplains and the brave young men who lost their lives on that fateful night.



Billy Heflin



Randy Lafflin



Bill Lipsett



Dale Mark Benedict

March Breakfast & Easter Egg Hunt

March 9, 2024



It was a rainy, cold morning but everything was ready for members and the Easter Bunny



Eager crowd ready for breakfast

Then he arrived, the Guest of Honor, the Bunny himself – the Easter Bunny





Things started to wind down as members and their families participated in small talk



Even the adults enjoyed seeing the Easter Bunny



The lone server trying to stay awake after a long morning



Watching the kids responses to the Easter Bunny made all the work worth it. Their smiles said it all. Many thanks to those individuals who helped set up the hall, did the decorating, cooked the delicious breakfast, helped Mr. Bunny, and cleaned up at the end. Great job!

March Membership Meeting

March 19, 2024

Things were fairly routine on an evening well attended. The Commander, again, stressed the need for more participation from the membership. As the current workforce ages, the Post needs more members to step up whenever and where ever they can.



Listening to the various reports.



Celebrating the American Legion's Birthday

Historian

Bill Lipsett

Tales of Valor - Spring 2024

How many out there know that a soldier in the US Army named Custer would be the first recipient to be awarded two Medals of Honor? No, not the famous one who was killed by the Sioux at Little Big Horn, but his little brother Thomas, who was every bit as courageous as his brother.

Only 16, Thomas enlisted in late 1861 as a private in the 21st Ohio Volunteer Infantry. He participated in major battles of the Western Theater, and obtained duty on the staff of Major General Negly in April of 1863; he remained in this position until mustering out in October 1864.

Seeking further military service, he re-enlisted, earning a promotion to 2nd Lieutenant. He was transferred to the 6th Michigan Cavalry, serving with his brother, Brigadier General George A. Custer in the Shenandoah Valley. During the Petersburg Campaign, he fought bravely at Dinwiddie Courthouse and Five Forks, which led to a promotion to Brevet Major.

With the final days of the Civil War coming to a close near Appomattox, he was part of the engagement at Namozine Church, capturing a Confederate flag on April 3, 1865. For this action, he received the Medal of Honor. Only three days later, Custer again showed his valor at Sailor's Creek. Astride his horse, Custer leaped over enemy works to capture two more Confederate battle flags. He was wounded in his face, and his horse was shot out from under him. For this, he received a second Medal of Honor. As flag capture meant low morale and shame, his double flag captures took any honor from two enemy regiments.

Custer continued his military career after the Civil War, and in 1866 was commissioned as First Lieutenant in the 7th Cavalry, fighting in the Dakota & Montana territories. By this time, he and his brothers, George, and Boston, all served in the 7th Cavalry. Their fates were united to the end. Following the Battle of Little Big Horn on June 25 1876, the bodies of all three brothers were found near one another. Thomas was initially buried on the battlefield, but in 1877, his remains were re-interred at Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery in Kansas.

Altogether, according to military records, there were 19 men so honored with two Medal of Honors. Six of these recipients are buried in National cemeteries.

The answer to the most awarded medals belongs to US Army First Lieutenant Audie Murphy from Kingston, Texas (20 June 1926-28 May 1971), with 24 medals from the MOH on down. In January 1945, he single-handedly held off a company of German soldiers for an hour, before leading a successful counterattack while wounded and out of ammunition. Even John Wayne couldn't think this one up!

How's about a bonus question? Who was Audie's leading lady in 'To Hell and Back'? No, it wasn't Rosalind Russell or Taylor Swift.....



Rental Manager:

The Post continues to be rented almost every weekend and even during the week. Keep up the good work Dan!



As we can see, it takes time and energy to keep your Post running smoothly. Without volunteers like Dan, a lot of other activities and events at the Post would not take place!

Think about volunteering some of your time in helping your Post continue with its outstanding work. Even an hour or two a week would be helpful.

Also, if you, your family, or your friends are interested in renting the Post, contact Daniel at 804-677-1587 or use the link at <http://americanlegionpost186.org/post-rental.html>



American Legion Auxiliary

Bea Miller, Auxiliary President

Ladies Auxiliary Board:

President - Bea Miller

1st Vice President - Maura Seif

2nd Vice President - Christina Smith

Secretary - Derenda Lovelace

Treasurer- Anne Weeks

Historian - Bobbie Murphy

Chaplain- Pat Welling

Sargeant at arms - Frances Bowe

The Auxiliary wants to give special thanks to Tom Zircopoulos and Severin McNulty for their support and most of all being our Easter Bunny at our Breakfast sponsored by Voiture 53. Also, a special thanks to Emma McDaniel for all of her support. The children had a lot of fun with the Easter Bunny and finding the easter eggs.

April is 'Month of the Military Child', we will wear purple at our breakfast on Saturday, April 13th to honor our Military Children. Also, on Tuesday, April 16, we will take a group picture of the Auxiliary wearing our purple in honor of our Military Children.

April is designated as Month of the Military Child, a celebration of the important role children play in the military community. Schools nationwide participate in "Purple Up for Military Kids" and engage in activities that honor the sacrifices made by children of service members.

This year marks the 36th anniversary of Month of the Military Child, which was created by former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger in 1986. The color purple is used because it represents all branches of the military.

Teacher's Appreciation Week is May 6 to 10. The Auxiliary recognizes and appreciates Susan Plunkett and Cheryl Seif for their service as Chesterfield County teachers and members of our Unit 186. We thank you ladies for all that you do for our youth and our Auxiliary Unit 186.

Come join us at Candela's Pizzeria & Ristorante Italiano at 14235 Midlothian Tpke located in Ivymont Square Shopping Center on Wednesday, April 10th from the hours of 11am to 10 pm. When you place your order, it is very important to please mention the Auxiliary Unit 186. The Auxiliary will

receive 15 % of your total receipt minus taxes. All of the proceeds we receive will go to helping our Veterans and Military service members.

We thank you for your support.



ALR:

Denis(Leak) Graffum
ALR director

Post 186 American Legion Riders (ALR) is a group of Legionnaires committed to helping veterans, their families and their fellow Post 186 family in their mission to support our community.



Veterans interested in learning more or joining the group, please contact Denis Graffum, Rider Director 804.305.8090 or email graffumden@g.mail

Other Activities:

10 Jan, 2024

(Photos by Marion and Larry Crow)

Larry Crow and Marian Crow attended a special event at the Keystone Tractor Museum along with approximately 80 veterans and a few spouses.

They were told a lot of the VA Hospital patients that would normally attend were having issues with sickness, so there were just a few who attended.



The Chesterfield County Honor Guard opened the event. After announcements were made, everyone was invited to have lunch. Goody bags were provided to the veterans in attendance.



Our thanks to Sheriff Karl Leonard for the invitation to visit the museum and enjoy some camaraderie and a meal with fellow veterans.

Pay It Forward

Mike Black

As my wife and I sat down in one of our favorite restaurants, I noticed a young man and his wife seated at the next table. He was wearing a ballcap with the word ARMY on it. Thinking nothing more about it, we placed our order and waited for lunch to arrive. Soon our meal came and lunch proceeded.

After a short time the couple at the next table got up and started to leave. The wife passed us by but the young man, after seeing my Air Force cap, stopped at our table and paused for a second or two. I was expecting the usual “thanks for your service”, a handshake, and him moving on.

Instead he asked if he could tell me a short story. Here’s what he related: “While having lunch last week a gentleman wearing a ballcap which read, Retired Air Force, stopped at my table. The man, while laying down a \$20 bill, said, “thanks for your service and I’d like to pay \$20 toward your meal”. The young man said the gentlemen then told him to pass it on. With that he laid a \$20 bill down on our table and said, “I want to thank you for serving so that when I became of age, I could also serve”.

My wife said that in 40 years she has never seen me speechless. Well, I was. I didn’t know what to say. I stood up, shook his hand, and told him thanks. As he left, he told me to pass it on because we sometimes need to hear a heartfelt thanks for serving.

It was a month later, while we were having breakfast at IHOP an elderly gentleman came in with his wife and daughter. They sat across the room from us. He was wearing a ballcap which read, “Korean War Veteran”. I looked at my wife and smiled. She knew immediately what I had in mind.

When we finished eating, I walked to the man’s table and said, “I’m sorry to interrupt your meal but I’d like to tell you a short story.” I related to them what had happened to me. As I ended the story and laid the \$20 on his table I told him, “Thanks you for your service. Without your sacrifice I wouldn’t have been able to serve.” He wiped a tear from his eye and thanked me. His wife said it was the nicest thank you he had ever gotten. I think passing along the \$20 and my thanks, meant the world to all of us that morning.

I would challenge each of you that reads this to invest \$20 and find a veteran that looks like he or she could use a heartfelt thank you and maybe help with their meal. Not only will it make their day, but yours too.

Did You Know?

Rumor has it there's a shark that roams the Post Lounge. He can be seen occasionally shooting pool on the Lounge pool table.



We invite you to stop by during business hours to have some coffee, conversation, and maybe, shoot a game or two with your fellow members. Who knows, the shark may even be there. (Cue the music.)

Fundraising:

American Flag:

Purchase an American Flag from the American Legion Flag and Emblem Store and designate Post 186 to receive a portion of the proceeds when you check out. You simply click the "please click here" below your normal log in, register and designate Post 186, Virginia in the blanks. It's easy and provides our Post additional funds just by showing your patriotic pride with a vibrant new flag. Order here <https://emblem.legion.org/American-Flags/departments/756/>

Post 186 Hat Sale:

Hey! We just received a new shipment of ball caps and visors. Don't miss out on this awesome SWAG! Cost is \$16 ea. Contact the post at [804-794-9785](tel:804-794-9785) to place your order.

Cans for Cash Program:

Save your aluminum cans and bring them to the post for recycling. Minimal effort = cash for the Post!

Geezer Talk:

NOT Forgotten...unable to make it to Post events or would like a visit for conversation? Please contact the Post at [804-794-9785](tel:804-794-9785), or americanlegionpost186@aim.com. We care about you and would like to keep in touch.

Notary Services Available:

Need a notary? Don't look any further than your legion! Barbara Vonada (804-433-9735) is a Commonwealth of Virginia Notary and has volunteered her services to any Legion Family member in need.

Visitation and Transportation:

If you or another Legionnaire you know is in the hospital or confined to their residence due to health reasons, please contact the Post at [804-794-9785](tel:804-794-9785) to let us know and advise us if a visit is appropriate. We take our fellowship obligations seriously and that means assuring our fellow Legionnaires are not alone in times of illness or despair. This also includes assisting with arranging alternate transportation for you if you are

uncomfortable driving at night and wish to attend our evening events. It is important you know that when you need us, we will be there for you.

Beyond Our Doors

Blood Donation Program

We had 50 pints donated August 22 which brought our July 2023-June 2024 total to 100 pints for this American Legion year.

We have blood drives scheduled through April 2024 and dates available through December 2024. Our total blood donated since beginning in November 2020 is 1,287 pints.

The American Legion Blood Donor Program www.legion.org/security/blood is easily supported through our local blood centers such as the American Red Cross www.redcross.org/give-blood and Virginia Blood Services donateblood.vablood.org/.

Appointments are available at blood drives through their websites or in person. Persons in good health between 17 and 65 are eligible to donate blood. Donors older than 65 may need special permission from a blood center's medical director. Current standards set an 8-week interval between donations or limit them to no more than 5x a year.



The American Legion recognizes its donors with a series of blood donor tacks available through the American Legion Store emblem.legion.org/Activities/products/338/2/0 and even a certificate when each level of giving is achieved. National, Department and Post recognition also supports dedicated participants in the program.

My Legion:



Take a moment to register at MyLegion.org through the American Legion website at legion.org. Select MyLegion.Org at the top right of the page to connect to the Introduction Page and choose the "Members" site. You will benefit from the additional information available to you and the ability to view and edit your personal information. You will also assist your Post leadership provide the best support and administration.

THANKS

Thanks to everyone who sent in pictures and articles dealing with Post 186 involvement. Hopefully you know it's impossible to use each and every one, but we still love getting them.

If you have something of interest to the Post, you may submit your article/pictures to:
communications186@gmail.com

Please try to keep your articles short (two to three short paragraphs) and appropriate for the News Letter.