



# For God and Country

## Seward Post 5 Newsletter

September 2019  
Volume 16, Issue 09

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### COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

By Clare Sullivan



Well we made it through another summer and what a summer it has been! I don't ever remember this kind of weather in this state, much less in Seward! I've got to admit I am very happy to see the rains, this "good" weather has been tough on a lot of folks, particularly with all the fires throughout the state. With the onset of summer come our members who spend their summers here, it is always good to see these folks and we enjoy their company while they're here, and we are a little sad when they have to go back to the Lower 48 to their families and their regular lives. We wish them well and look forward to their return next summer!

It looks like we're heading headlong into a regular fall season (I hope); it should be as nice a transition as we had into summer. The daylight will be getting much shorter; we're starting to drive with headlights on at night now. It is a sure sign that the colder days are on their way. With this in mind, we need to think about getting our homes ready for the cold weather and for many we'll need to budget for the increased heating and utility charges with the cold and dark.

We have good things planned for September as we transition to the slower times in town, such as one of the "fav's" - the yummy Early Bird Dinner 🍴 so stay tuned! 🎉 We also have the possibility of a ship or two stopping by during the month and Admiral Scott Gray who will be meeting in town with our City Leaders on the 17<sup>th</sup> and will be stopping by the post to have a casual meet and greet with our American Legion Family to discuss the future of the Navy in Alaska and of course experience our fabulous Taco Tuesday dinner fare! 😊

Switching gears here, I'd would like to provide a brief update on the continuing cemetery expansion and the great job that **David (Ozzie) Osborn** has done throughout the year leading this project at our cemetery. We've had many volunteers stop by when they had time to help, and without them we would not be anywhere near as far in the project. Of note, Ozzie was a consistent factor in directing/assisting the volunteers who oftentimes arrived to help with no advanced notice, but he was there to give them direction so productive work could be accomplished. Also, as mindful of the environment as Ozzie is, he is accomplishing this land clearing, conditioning and planting in a positively environmentally conscious fashion. This is important to do, albeit a bit more work. As many people visit our cemetery, their comfort and safety are major points of consideration when maintaining the grounds for the friends

and loved ones who have transferred to Post Everlasting. This method also helps preserve many of the headstones that commercial land clearing and fertilizing materials would otherwise degrade.



We've had some incredible people step up to help out and in no small way with equipment donations and loaning their own equipment (Thanks Dave Joslin); and considerable manual labor (Thanks Dennis Bailey) during the hot weather. Of late,

we must also thank Jim McCracken who built an amazing soil aerator that will allow us to spread lime and other nutrients for the lawn and the soon to be new lawn on the north-side of the cemetery.



During this month we have a few days of remembrance and celebration. We have **Patriot Day** (Sept 11<sup>th</sup>) where we remember the tragic day of 9/11 and those lost in the terror attack in NY, the Pentagon, and Flight 93 in Pennsylvania. We also have **POW/MIA Recognition Day** on Sept 20<sup>th</sup> where we remember and honor the sacrifices made by this nation's prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action. We also have a day of celebration in the **American Legion Day** on Sept 16<sup>th</sup>. This day was dedicated in 2009 on the anniversary of the establishment of the American Legion in 1919.

The **American Legion Day** celebrates official chartering of the American Legion and celebrates what it has accomplished throughout the country with well over 12,000 posts and two million members representing the largest veterans support organization in the country. On September 16, 1919 The American Legion was granted their federal charter by Congress, and 100 years later this organizations has kept their commitment to serve not only as a resource and a voice on behalf of veterans across America, but also as an organization dedicated to the betterment of America through community service. As stated by House of Representative Deb Davidson (Illinois) in 2009 when American Legion Day resolution was brought to the floor and passed she said - "Since their founding charter, The American Legion has not wavered from the guiding principles and vision that can be found in their Four Pillars of Service." This day honors veterans who continue to serve their fellow veterans and are committed to community support. Seward Post 5 has been in existence since 1919 and remains committed to carrying on that tradition of supporting local veterans and the community, as well as our military service members.

Con't next page

We, at Post 5, assist our veterans in securing benefits, treatment, and compensation from the Veterans Administration commensurate with their military service. We work hard to keep patriotic holidays alive in the minds of our community, because we know our holidays are a celebration of our incredible history as a country, and if you lose your history you will lose your sense of who you are as a nation. We work to provide help to those in need when times get hard and provide scholarships to our graduating seniors and others in post-secondary schools for their educational goals. We as an American Legion Family look to continue to contribute where we can and seek opportunities to employ much in our preamble - particularly our desire for "mutual helpfulness."

As you know we are in the new membership year and for those who have renewed - Thank You! I want to thank you for your membership at Seward Post 5. By being a member, you help us do all that we can for our veterans, our children and youth and ultimately this fabulous community of Seward we call home. Dues really are an investment in our future as they are an important source for funding for many programs that impact all of us, and not just in Seward. I personally feel our dues support the legislative watchdogs at our National HQs who significantly influence the effort in protecting our earned benefits via our military service, as well as the Legion's efforts to support all the children and youth programs - particularly its focus on volunteerism and education about our amazing American History.

- [Baseball](#)
- [Boys State / Nation](#)
- [Legion Riders](#)
- [National Convention](#)
- [National Emergency Fund](#)
- [Operation Comfort Warriors](#)
- [Oratorical Contest](#)
- [Scholarships](#)

We work to remain good community stewards and a good service organization for all in our American Legion Family. Once again, thank you for your membership, investment and support of Seward Post 5. And, if you haven't renewed please consider renewing.

As you can see, we have an incredibly dedicated group of people who work hard right here at Post 5 and we still manage to have fun in the service of our veterans and the community. Thank you for all you do and for your service to this community and this great nation.

*Thank you*

## Newly Elected National Commander



James W. Oxford, National Commander of The American Legion

James W. "Bill" Oxford was elected national commander of The American Legion on Aug. 29, 2019, in Indianapolis, during the organization's 101st national convention. He has been a member of the nation's largest veterans organization since 1986.

A native of Lenoir, N.C., Oxford is a paid-up-for-life member and past commander of Post 29 in Lenoir. He served as department (state) commander of the North Carolina American Legion from 2010 to 2011. A veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, Oxford was an aviation electronic technician for the A-6 Intruder and served in Vietnam during his initial enlistment. After being discharged as a sergeant in 1970, Oxford joined the North Carolina National Guard. He subsequently attended officer's candidate school and transferred to the U.S. Army Reserve, where he ultimately retired as a colonel after more than 34 years of military service.

Oxford has served at every level of The American Legion. A former mayor and city council of Cahah's Mountain, N.C., he has worked since he was a high school student, with most of his career choices being in the maintenance and engineering field. He earned a bachelor's degree in environmental studies and multiple safety and environmental certificates. Oxford has volunteered as a coach, umpire, referee and administrator in several youth athletic programs, including service as the public address announcer for the Post 29 American Legion Baseball team.

An active volunteer with several organizations, Oxford is a member of Masonic Lodge-York Scottish Rite and the North Carolina Army Retirees Council. His theme as national commander of The American Legion is "A Foundation for the Future," as the organization enters its second century of service.

Oxford and his wife, Frances, have been married since 1967. They have a son, Charles (married to Deah Reid), and a daughter, Jackie (married to Mike Carr). They also have four grandsons, Isiah, Micah, Jaggar and Dawson.

## News From the Road.....

By ALR Director Bobby Dunno



What an incredible summer we have had outside of the fires and accompanying smoke this has been the best Alaskan riding season ever! I apologize for missing the August newsletter, but I was in the saddle enjoying the sunshine, warm temperatures and fun of motorcycling.

The ROMP in July went pretty well despite the lack of serious planning of activities and rides. There was fun and comradery along with some great riding. Brad and Andrea from Chapter 16 did awesome putting together the rides and activities.

We were hosted by Post 18 and their backyard turns out is a perfect place to hold a motorcycle event. We also visited Post 16 and Post 20 and had an incredible lunch made for us at the VFW Post 10221 in Anchor Point. The ALRA membership that was present decided on a couple of agenda items for the ALRA meeting at our next convention concerning the 2020 & 2021 ROMP. So, for planning purposes Chapter 1 will plan to host the ROMP July 2020 and Chapter 35 will plan for July 2021

For the Legacy Run the American Legion Riders of Post 5 voted to donate \$500.00 to the American Legion Legacy Scholarship Fund. I do not have the total for all of the ALRA and Department of Alaska, but nationwide this year's Legacy Run raised a total of \$975,208.00. That's down from last year when the total was well over the million dollar mark.

Since I have been kinda out of touch I don't have a lot of additional comments for this month's newsletter except to say that we continue to pray the rain in the forecast actually materializes and the firefighters get a little respite from wet and cooler temperatures. And does not that make you wonder here a biker guy, praying for rain rather than wanting more sunshine so we can all Get On Our Bikes and Ride!  
For God and Country

## From the President's Desk

By Debbie VanTassel



Well summer has certain flown by in a hurry this year. I hope everyone has fared okay through all the smoke and haze. It will definitely be a summer for the record books.

I just had the honor of attending the National American Legion Auxiliary Convention in Indianapolis for 2 days. It was an inspiring and humbling experience to meet with and get to talk with so many members who are doing some amazing work to help our Veterans. The one thing I heard over and over was... you don't have to do great big amazing things to make a difference in a Veterans life. Yes, those programs are important but also

just the little things- like taking a Veteran to the store or even just having a cup of coffee with them - makes a difference in their life.

It was inspiring to meet and hear the stories of the three Women selected as the Woman of the Year. They have truly made a difference in the lives of our Women Veterans.

**There was also some exciting news- this was taken from the ALA website:**

*"History was made at the American Legion Auxiliary's 99th National Convention in Indianapolis!*

*Male spouses may now join the American Legion Auxiliary.*

*The American Legion has voted to extend membership in the American Legion Auxiliary to male spouses of U.S. veterans and servicemembers. During The American Legion National Convention in Indianapolis in August, delegates of The American Legion voted to replace the word "wife" with "spouse" in their constitution and bylaws, opening up membership in the American Legion Auxiliary."*

The Auxiliary also voted to follow the American Legion guidelines on dates of eligibility. As many of you may know, The **Legion Act** was recently passed by Congress and signed by President Trump. The Legion Act opened up membership eligibility to all dates from December 7, 1941. This will open up membership to thousands of new members for the Post, the ALA and the Sons of the American Legion.

I encourage all members to go on the ALA website: <https://www.alaforveterans.org/> for all the information and news from the National Convention. There is a lot of great information on the website.

Some other exciting news - Lisa Williamson from Alaska is now "in line" to become the National President for the 2022-2023 term. Lisa would be the first National President from Alaska. Many of our members who have attended the state convention or workshops will recognize Lisa. We will be hearing lots more in the next few years as she raises money and works to achieve this major goal.



# House and Vice Report.....

By Mike Calhoon



Hello from the Second Vice,

Looks like we will have a break from the hot and smoky summer, at least for a bit.

A big shout out to all the great volunteers from all the Post 5 Family organizations. The Social Area of the Post would not be able to function as it does without all the help and support of our volunteers and the membership in general.

The Social Area or "Club" is for the use of the membership and their guests. It is not open to the public nor should it be. All members have earned the right to come to the Club due to their own military service or that of a family member. We have developed a safe and comfortable environment for our members to come and socialize, enjoy some good food and possibly a beverage or two. Your support of the Club is one part of helping the Post 5 Family take care of our veterans and the community of Seward. You should all be proud of what you are doing.

This month we will be hosting the Auxiliary Unit 5 fundraiser on the 14<sup>th</sup>, the Community Breakfast on the 15<sup>th</sup>, the visit of a naval ship in mid-month, the visit of a Naval Admiral on the 17<sup>th</sup>, and the Early Bird Dinner the later part of the month. We will need volunteer support for all these functions so come on in and we will put you to work.



The 2020 membership year is here. I want to thank everyone who has already renewed their memberships. Membership is the backbone of our organization and we need to keep that backbone strong to continue to carry the load we do for our veterans and the community of Seward. You can renew at the Post, mail in your renewals, or go online to [Mylegion.org](http://Mylegion.org) and renew. Renew early and qualify for the Early Bird Dinner in September.

Bingo is going strong on Mondays at 6:30 and we have food every night.

Thanks to all of you who continue to support your Post and all the activities designed to support our membership, our veterans, and the community. We look forward to seeing you all and please feel free to call if you have any questions or concerns.

# Sounding Off from the Sons....

By Mike Calhoon



Looks like the later part of summer may return to normal. It has been a heck of a summer but seems we will survive.



Squadron 5 continues to support all activities of the Post 5 family. David "Ozzie" Osborn and Al Dykstra continue to carry the banner for the Sons. The cemetery looks great and the help around the Post is truly appreciated.

Squadron 5 volunteers assisted with the community breakfast and the Suicide Prevention Day activities. Awesome job by all.



This month the Post 5 family will have the Auxiliary fundraiser on Sep 14<sup>th</sup>, community breakfast on the 15<sup>th</sup>, a Naval ship visit in mid-September, Early Bird Dinner in late September, and who knows what else will transpire. Post 5 family will need lots of help so stay in touch and we will gladly put you to work.

The new membership year for 2020 is here so think about renewing early and qualify to attend the **Early Bird Dinner** later this month. I thank all those who have renewed their memberships and ask everyone else to consider doing so. Membership is the cornerstone of our organization and we need to continue to strive to be a strong and active part of the Post 5 family.



Thank you again for all your hard work and support of the Post 5 Family mission of service to the veterans and other community members in Seward.

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact me at 224-5440. Thanks again for all your support of the Post 5 family and I look forward to seeing you all around the Post.



## Patriot Day

Patriot Day is an annual observance on September 11 to remember those who were injured or died during the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001. Many Americans refer Patriot Day as 9/11 or September 11.



On the direction of the President, the flag of the United States of America should be displayed on the homes of Americans, the White House and all United States government buildings. The flag should be flown at half-mast as a mark of respect to those who died on September 11, 2001. Many people observe a moment of silence at 8:46 AM (Eastern Daylight Time). This marks the time that the first plane flew into the World Trade Center.

On September 11, 2001, four planes were hijacked. The hijackers then deliberately flew three of the planes into two important buildings, the Pentagon in Washington DC and the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York. The fourth



crashed into a field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania. The loss of life and damage that these hijackings caused form the biggest act of terrorism ever on United States soil. Nearly 3000 people died in the attacks and the economic impact was immense.



The attacks have greatly increased attention to national security in the United States. This has had huge implications for United States national and international politics. This is particularly true for the relationships between the United States and Islamic countries in the Middle East.



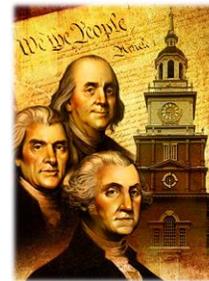
## Constitution Day and Citizenship Day

Constitution Day commemorates the formation and signing of the U.S. Constitution by thirty-nine brave men on September 17, 1787, recognizing all whom are born in the U.S. or by naturalization, have become citizens. Now **Constitution Day** is the time to carry on their legacy and develop habits of citizenship in a new generation of Americans.

In 1952 Congress passed a law that September 17 was the official date to commemorate "the formation and signing of the Constitution of the United States" but the day was also designated "**Citizenship Day**" and retained its original purpose of recognizing all those who had attained the status of American citizenship.

Every September 17th (unless it falls on a weekend or other holiday) Constitution Day, also called Citizenship Day, is celebrated to mark the anniversary of the ratification of the U.S. Constitution. This is one of the newest federal holidays to be established by Congress, as it was passed in just 2004. Citizenship Day was the name given to the holiday prior to its official designation.

However the roots of Citizenship Day stretch much farther back beginning in 1940 when *I am an American Day* was initiated by Congress for the third Sunday in May. The day of September 17th was reached by citizens themselves. In 1952 Olga T. Weber of Ohio successfully convinced her municipality to name the date Constitution Day. The next year she went a step further and petitioned the Ohio government to celebrate the holiday statewide as Constitution Week from September 17-23 and the movement was soon passed.



Today we consider **Constitution Day** as a birthday for our country and it serves as a means for American citizens to express their pride in their citizenship. Constitution Day also designates a time to honor the Constitution of America and learn more about the famous piece of legislation. The Act that passed the holiday also states that federally funded schools are required to provide lessons on the U.S. Constitution during the holiday.

## POW/MIA Empty Chair

Resolution 288, adopted at the 67th American Legion National Convention, calls for designating a POW/MIA Empty Chair at all official meetings of The American Legion.

At the beginning of every American Legion meeting, we remember the incredible cost paid by those who gave their all to help preserve the freedoms we enjoy, those gallant individuals who fought and died for our country. Yet, it is in remembering our fallen comrades that we are reminded of those whose fate is still unknown, those still listed as Missing In Action and Prisoners Of War. More than 78,000 Americans are still unaccounted for from World War II; 8,100 from Korea; 120 from the Cold War; 1,810 from Vietnam; and 3 from the Gulf War. These courageous Americans, who dedicated their lives to preserving and protecting our freedom, will never be forgotten.



To honor these men and women, we perform the **POW/MIA Empty Chair Ceremony**. It symbolizes the fact that members of our armed forces are missing from our ranks. They are referred to as POWs and MIAs...we call them comrades.

They are unable to be with their loved ones and families, so we join together to pay our humble tribute to them, and to bear witness to their continued absence.

*The table set for one is small... it symbolizes the frailty of one prisoner against his oppressors.*

*The tablecloth is white... it symbolizes the purity of their intentions to respond to their country's call to arms. The single rose displayed in a vase reminds us of the families and loved ones of our comrades in arms who keep faith awaiting their return.*

*The red ribbon tied so prominently on the vase is reminiscent of the red ribbon worn on the lapel and breasts of thousands who bear witness to their unyielding determination to demand a proper accounting for our missing.*

**A slice of lemon is on the bread plate... to remind us of their bitter fate.**

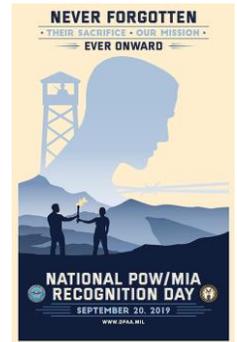
**There is salt upon the bread plate... symbolic of the family's tears as they wait.**

**The glass is inverted... they cannot toast with us tonight. The chair is empty... they are not here.**

Remember... all of you who served with them and called them comrades, who depended on their might and aid, and relied on them... for surely... they have not forsaken you.

## National POW/MIA Recognition Day 20 September 2019

For years, The American Legion Supported a National POW/MIA Recognition Day, it is now recognized annually on the third Friday of September. This commemoration is set aside to honor the commitment and sacrifices made by this nation's prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action, as well as their families.



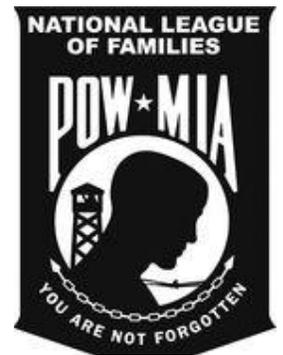
Until July 18, 1979, no commemoration was held to honor POW/MIAs. In the first year, Congress passed resolutions and the national ceremony was held at the National Cathedral in

Washington. The 1<sup>st</sup> Tactical Squadron from Langley Air Force Base in Virginia flew the Missing Man formation.

A poster was published by the VA which contained only the letters POW/MIA. That continued until 1982, when a black and white drawing of a POW in captivity was used to show urgency of the situation.

The **National League of Families**

proposed the third Friday of September as a commemoration date. Most of the National POW/MIA Recognition Day ceremonies have taken place at the Pentagon. Now, they're held throughout the nation and around the world on military installations, ships, schools, churches, etc. The focus is to ensure that America remembers its responsibility to stand behind those who serve it and to make sure that we do all that is possible to account for those who have not returned.



As of July 29<sup>th</sup> 2019 the number of missing and unaccounted for per the National League of Families:

**TOTAL MISSING AND UNACCOUNTED FOR - 1,587**

From the Desk of the President cont'...

**Back to local Unit news:** We will be holding our annual fund raiser on Sept 14. The format is going to be different this year. We will have dinner at 6 PM followed by a brief fundraising auction/silent auction and then at 8 PM we will have live music by Seth Malone and the Mabry Bros. This is a great band that has played throughout the state. While the band is playing we will also do a split the pot raffle. Watch for flyers and more information coming out in the next few days. This will be open to the public so invite your friends and neighbors.

We are now in the new membership year so please remember to renew early so that you can participate in the **Early Bird Dinner!** But not only to get dinner but membership is the root of our organization- Our members are our most important asset! Last there are a couple days in September we cannot forget:

September 16 is American Legion Day. On this date in 1919, the American Legion received the Charter from Congress.

And, September 11- 911 Remembrance Day or also called Patriot Day. I doubt anyone will ever forget where they were on the morning of September 11, 2001, when they heard of the attacks on the twin World Trade Towers in NYC and the Pentagon in Washington. This horrible and tragic day is etched forever in our memories.

#### 911 History:

- On the morning of September 11, 2001, nineteen Islamic al-Qaeda militants hijacked four planes. The hijackings occurred from Boston, Newark and Washington airports. The planes selected were long distance flights, which would have more fuel in the tanks.
- One plane each hit the north and south towers of the World Trade Center in New York city. The planes and engulfing firestorm, ultimately brought down both towers.
- A third plane hit the Pentagon in Washington, DC.
- The fourth hijacked plane crashed in a field in Shanksville, PA. Passengers on the plane learned of the fate of the other planes, and unsuccessfully attempted to take back control of the plane from the hijackers. Everyone aboard died.

#### 911 Deaths:

- Total Victims: 2977
- Victims in the towers: 2606
- Pentagon victims: 125
- 4th plane, crashed in PA: 40

Deaths included Americans and citizens from many other countries - Let us Never Forget.

I hope everyone has a wonderful September and we finally get some much needed rain.

## Seward Post 5 Centennial Site

By Clare Sullivan, Post Historian

As many of you may (or may not) realize Seward Post 5 will be 100 years old on 31 December 2019! A long time for a tiny post in a small town in Alaska! With that said we've done quite a bit over the years and continue to do so in service to our veterans and our communities.

As it is also the 100<sup>th</sup> year for the American Legion as well there is a "Centennial Celebration" ongoing for all of the posts in our organization. The national organization created a section on The American Legion site that allows posts to tell their stories. Ours is on there and it is continuing to build with input from newspapers and other data sources that can be located. Take a look at The American Legion site at

<https://centennial.legion.org/timeline>. Here you can find some interesting information on The American Legion and see the progress we have made on our own history. I have to admit it has been a bit tough getting the history in the earlier years of Post 5 but I'll keep digging as I need to fill in the 1930-1960's, but I expect with continued wading through microfilm, photos/documents at the post and visiting with the good folks at the museum I'll get more tidbits of history. In addition to all that, if you have any tidbits of information or direction where I can dig, please let me know!!!! Wish me luck! 😊

### One last item...

As it is our centennial year, we also have designed a centennial coin to commemorate our 100 years of service. They're not here yet but here is a proof of what is coming. The coin nicely represents our post and our state, and proudly displays our post logo (the Silver Salmon) and helps in the celebration of 100 years of service to our veterans and our community of Seward.

Stay tuned, I'll let you know when they come in so you can get your own Post 5, Seward Alaska Challenge Coin! 😊



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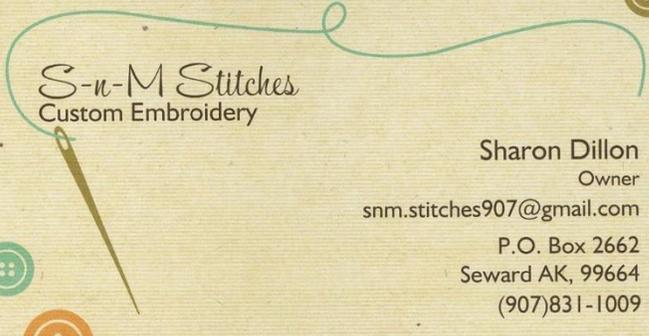
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**BRASS BONES**



Sam Clemons Jewelry Artist/Owner

**ADVENTURE SXTY NORTH**

Outdoor Adventure Center  
Seward, Alaska



# September 2019



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	Mexican Martes 3	4	5	Steak Night 6	7
<u>Luscious Leftovers</u>	BINGO!!! 6:30PM  Chili Dogs			ALR Meeting 7pm 		
8	9	Mexican Martes 10	Patriot Day 11	12	Steak Night 13	14
<u>Luscious Leftovers</u>	BINGO!!! 6:30PM  Chili Dogs	Post Meeting 7pm 	Auxiliary Meeting 6pm 	SAL Meeting 7pm 		Auxiliary Unit 5 fundraiser with Live Music 6:00pm 
15	American Legion Day 16	Mexican Martes 17	18	19	Steak Night 20	21
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the Month Breakfast <u>Luscious Leftovers</u>	BINGO!!! 6:30PM  Chili Dogs	Constitution and Citizenship Day CONSTITUTION DAY! SEPTEMBER 17 <sup>TH</sup> 			POW/MIA Day 	
22	23	Mexican Martes 24	25	26	Steak Night 27	28
<u>Luscious Leftovers</u>	BINGO!!!! 6:30PM  Chili Dogs					
29	30	 <b>September</b>				
<u>Luscious Leftovers</u>	BINGO!!! 6:30PM  Chili Dogs					



Food Every Night at the Post