

# The Centennial

VOLUME I EDITION 12

DECEMBER 2020



## AMERICAN LEGION NEAL THOMAS JR. CENTENNIAL POST 209

3613 JEANNINE DR. COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80917  
719-599-8624 [WWW.LEGION209.ORG](http://WWW.LEGION209.ORG)

### MEET YOUR 2020 - 2021 OFFICERS!!

#### 2020-2021 American Legion Post 209 Officers

<b>Commander:</b> Joseph Schmidt 651.328.9029	<b>Finance Officer:</b> Bill Coakley 972.825.7193	<b>Executive Committeeman:</b> Art Kimbrel 719.339.4610
<b>Sr. Vice Commander:</b> Marvin Weaver Jr. 719.244.3535	<b>Chaplain:</b> Glen Thompson 334.717.3746	<b>Judge Advocate:</b> Marvin Weaver Sr. 719.638.4763
<b>Jr. Vice Commander:</b> Sarah Tobin 719.439.7724	<b>Historian:</b> Vacant	<b>Service Officer:</b> Art Carter 603.913.3261
<b>Adjutant:</b> Jerry Hopper 918.953.9980	<b>Sgt At Arms:</b> Joel Haas 719.482.4496	<b>Honor Guard Captain:</b> Michael Wescott 719.306.9170
		<b>Club Manager:</b> Art Kimbrel 719.339.4610

#### 2020-2021 American Legion Auxiliary Unit 209 Officers

<b>President:</b> Cathy Barger 719.290.3163	<b>Secretary:</b> Pat Weaver 719.638.4763	<b>Chaplain:</b> Donna Rae Smith 815.973.0073	
<b>Vice President:</b> Donna Testorff	<b>Treasurer:</b> Kellie Hayes 719.494.7167	<b>Historian:</b> Royce Hopper	<b>Sgt At Arms:</b> Annette Coakley 228.243.1218

#### 2020-2021 Sons of The American Legion Squadron 209 Officers

<b>Commander:</b> Michael Wescott 719.306.9170	<b>Adjutant:</b> Rick Kettering 813.967.6680	<b>Sgt At Arms:</b> Bob Ingram 480.353.8234	<b>Chaplain:</b> Steve Cox 970.580.8191
<b>Sr. Vice Commander:</b> Brian Wess 719.528.6672	<b>Jr. Vice Commander:</b>	<b>Finance Officer:</b> Ken Taylor 719.461.4047	

#### 2020-2021 American Legion Riders Post 209 Officers

<b>President:</b> Steve Hayes 719.494.7166	<b>Treasurer:</b> Kellie Hayes 719.494.7167	<b>Vice President:</b> Tim McDowell 719.510.9907	<b>Road Captain:</b> Wade Newborn 719.360.4956
<b>Secretary:</b> Mike Sylvester	<b>Sgt At Arms:</b> Mark Griffin		

#### 2020-2021 Amateur Radio Club Officers

<b>President:</b> Jon Davis K0YOV	<b>Vice President:</b> George Johnson KE0ALQ	<b>Director:</b> Jim Harris WOEM
<b>Secretary:</b> Harvey LeCato W1JU	<b>Treasurer:</b> Henry Russell KCONAJ	

# CHRISTMAS PARTY/DECEMBER DINNERS AND EVENTS CANCELLED!

Due to the spike in COVID-19 cases, the Post leadership made the difficult decision to cancel our annual Christmas Party/Dinner this year. This was not an easy decision and one that was made after much deliberation. But we feel the health and welfare of our membership trumps any event or dinner.

As you are probably aware, Colorado Springs has been put on notice that all gatherings outside of family events are restricted. This means Restaurants and even our Post events and dinners are on temporary, but indefinite hold.

Our hope and prayer for all our members is that you have a very enjoyable and safe holiday season and are able to spend quality time with family and friends.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all!

Post 209 Family Leadership





## **FROM THE DESK & MIND OF THE COMMANDER**

As my wife Charyse drives through the Tonto National Forest in Arizona, I find myself in the passenger seat staring out the window admiring the Saguaro Cactus. The Saguaro Cactus grows in one of the world's harshest environments, with temperatures in the summers exceeding 115 degrees and less than 20 in of rain a year. The Cactus will only grow an inch and a half in its first 10 years of life, it won't sprout its first arm until it's about 85 years old. Eventually though, after 115 or so years the Saguaro Cactus will be that iconic image of the American Southwest.

Now that this year is ending, I can't help but finding myself as your Commander feeling defeated. Due to the pandemic, we as a Post have been unable to expand or grow on programs that I went into my term wanting to do. COVID-19 has closed down our Post again, revenue is down, and above all else our overall ability to assist Veterans has been affected. I ask myself how we as a Post can make it through this, then I saw the fields Saguaro Cacti.

This cactus endures through the harshest of environments to bloom a beautiful flower in the spring. With all the conditions set for the Saguaro Cactus to fail, it finds a way, a way to survive, and a way to endure year after year. When I think about what 2021 holds for American Legion Neal Thomas Jr. Centennial Post 209, I see us surviving the harsh environment, patiently waiting to emerge in full bloom. I see hope and not letting the pandemic stop us from our mission of helping Veterans and their families. I see a bright future for our Post.

Although our ability to assist Veterans is not at one hundred percent, we are finding ways to continue serving them in our community. From our Veterans assistance programs to the American Legion Riders giving out food baskets, we find a way. This is a testament to how we persevere as Post. We will never let anything get in the way of our mission to support Veterans.

There will be nothing traditional about this year's holiday season. Instead of gathering around a table with family, some will gather around a computer screen to spend time with loved ones. There are others who will be alone for the holidays. Reach out to those who are homebound and those who may struggle during this time of the year.

There are not many words to express my gratitude, so all I can say is thank you to each and every member our Post for their continued dedication to this organization. Without you we wouldn't be able to do collectively do what we do as a Post. Chanukah Sameach, Merry Christmas, and a Joyous Kwanza to all.

*Joseph Schmidt*  
Post Commander



## FROM THE DESK OF THE SR. VICE COMMANDER

We have been doing well with membership this year despite the challenges presented to us by COVID-19. Look at your membership card and if it does not say 2021; your membership will expire on Dec 31st. If your card says 2020 please send in your renewal or contact Jerry our Adjutant to pay up your membership today.

Things have been tough for the Post during 2020 because of the COVID-19 restrictions but we have been able to stay afloat. Your membership helps us to maintain and continue forward with the programs we have. If you know of a Post member that may be in need reach out to them or if you haven't heard from them in a while reach out just to check out how they are doing. With the isolation we have all been experiencing a phone call can go a long way.

I hope you and your family have a great Christmas and holiday season.

*Marvin Weaver, Jr.*

Sr. Vice Commander



## FROM THE DESK OF THE JR. VICE COMMANDER

COVID strikes again! Despite our limited access to the Post, we are still collecting unwrapped toys for Toys for Tots and shelf stable food (cans/package foods) for Care and Share. Both drop off boxes are located in the lobby.

In January, our speaker will be Jim Snell, retired owner and operator of his own Funeral Home in Grand Junction. He also managed 3 different funeral homes in the CS area. He will speak to Veterans needs, cost of burial and options available. Additionally, he will emphasize the need to fill out your wishes before your passing to make it easier on your loved ones left behind.

In February, Don Miranda will speak about Survivor Benefits and the necessary steps to ensure your loved ones are taken care of. More details to come next month.

Stay safe and happy holidays!

*Sarah Tobin*

Jr. Vice Commander



## FROM THE DESK OF THE UNIT PRESIDENT



I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving Holiday. As we celebrate the Christmas Season, from my family to yours, I want to wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Unfortunately, we our annual Christmas Party is cancelled due to the COVID restrictions.

I want to take this time to welcome all the new members and their families who have joined or have transferred to Neal Thomas Jr. Centennial Post/Auxiliary Unit 209 Family.

A big thank you from me and the Auxiliary Officers goes out to you all that have stepped up in 2020 and volunteered their time to the Post. And thanks to all of those that supported the Butter Braid sales. We had a very successful fundraiser with your help.

Happy Birthday to Celestina Barnes, Doris Carroll, Cassandra Eagen, Kaylene Khosla, Chris Kinnard, Sharon Rawson, Carolyn Schubert, Melia Palaroan and Janet Schwarzbart. Make sure to wish these ladies Happy Birthday when you see them.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR!** May everyone have a safe and joyous holiday season.

*Serving Our Veterans Proudly!*

*Cathy Barger*  
Unit President



## **AND THE EAGLE SOARS!**

2020 has presented a number of challenges to us all, but to Scout Troop 77 member, Sierra Dooley, learning to adapt and overcome was just an everyday part of Scouting. Sierra is a 17 year-old Senior at Manitou Springs High School who watched her younger brother from the sidelines as he was able to do all kinds of incredible things in Scouting. When she turned 14, she immediately joined a BSA Venturing Crew so that she could be a part of the fun, but the path to Eagle Scout was still not open to her. That all changed in February of 2019 when the BSA opened the doors to girls in Troops and the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 209 chartered Troop 77, an all-female Scout Troop. Sierra knew that for her to earn Eagle Scout before she turned 18 would mean that she needed to set a schedule and stick with it. Her perseverance and determination paid off on Sunday, October 18, 2020 when she attended her Eagle Scout Board of Review. Sierra completely blew the Board away with her attention to detail and knowledge. Board President, Shane Deichman commented that he had never seen a Scout put so much detail into an Eagle binder before. Her project was to complete a trail reclamation project in conjunction with Manitou Springs High School and the Manitou Springs School District. In addition to reclaiming the student-created trail, Sierra and her team erected a permanent wooden fence at the top and bottom of the section to prevent use.

Sierra set the bar for all male and female Eagle candidates that come after her. She is the first Eagle Scout in Troop 77 and the first female Eagle Scout in Pikes Peak Council from the first all-female Scout Troop in the Pikes Peak Region. Our Post 209 family prides itself in helping mold and mentor future leaders through the many youth programs we sponsor, and Sierra's achievement epitomizes the traits and passion we see in our future leaders.

Congratulations, Sierra!

*Cheri Cayemberg*  
Post 209 Member and Troop 77 Leader



## **FROM THE DESK OF OUR SAL COMMANDER**

2020 Commander Eric Testorff resigned as SAL Squadron 209 Commander. He asked that the current Sr. Vice Commander be appointed Commander and the Jr. Vice Commander be appointed as Sr. Vice Commander. The Squadron Executive Board asked both Sr. Vice and Jr. Vice if they would take on the roles of Commander and Sr. Vice Commander and both have said yes.

The new SAL Squadron 209 Commander is Michael Wescott and the new Sr. Vice Commander is Brian Wess.

Eric has done an outstanding job as the Squadron Commander and we thank him for his service as the SAL Squadron 209 Commander. We also wish him fair winds and following seas as he starts a new chapter in his life.

*Michael Wescott*  
SAL Commander



## **FROM OUR LEGION RIDERS PRESIDENT**

The ride schedule for ALR209 has tapered off a bit as COVID raises its ugly head again and the weather chills off. In November we supported the Veteran's Day Poker Run and built Thanksgiving meals for 24 local families. We also had the honor of providing Final Honors Escort for a Fairplay Veteran to Pikes Peak National Cemetery on 19 November in conjunction with Riders from ALR172 Fairplay and ALR38 Fountain. We obtained approval to add 22 motorcycle parking spaces in the Post lot and will accomplish that as soon as weather and availability align. We also painted the maneuvering course markers in the lot as approved at the October Post Executive Committee meeting. There are markers for two turn circles with keyhole entry, one 28 foot outer/24 foot inner and one 24 foot outer/20 foot inner, together with a 12 foot interval weave course. Elections for ALR209 will occur at the January 26th membership meeting. Nominations for office open at the November 24th membership meeting and remain open until the start of elections. Due to the holidays, we will not hold our December membership meeting. Take care and be safe!

*Steve Hayes*  
ALR President



## **FROM OUR SERGEANT-AT-ARMS**

It is hard to believe that the holiday season is already here. While it seems 2020 has lasted a lot longer than just 11 months so far, time has gone by pretty quickly. For the majority, the holidays are a time to enjoy spending time with family and friends, as well as taking some much-needed downtime to decompress. This time can also be difficult for some, from being very stressful to completely depressing. For those without family nearby, the holidays can be more difficult to handle. This year is likely making it much harder for many of us due to the impacts of COVID-19. The limitations on travel, gatherings, and concern for others can isolate people even further which creates an even worse time than people possibly experience on a normal basis.

With Post 209 having to implement limitations on gatherings and meetings, some have also lost their ability to see their American Legion "family". Please be on the lookout for those around you experiencing a hard time dealing with the holidays, and just life in general. I encourage you to reach out to anyone you know that may need some extra encouragement to get through this difficult time. And while 9 out of 10 people may not need a Buddy Check, doing them makes sure that you reach the "one" who really does need it. Be sure to reach out for help if you are experiencing a hard time, need assistance with something, or just need someone to listen.

I want to wish a Happy Holidays to everyone at American Legion Post 209. In looking forward to 2021, I hope the new year brings positive change for the American Legion Post 209 family. In 2021, I want to be able to say “Welcome Back” to ALL our members.

*Joel Haas*  
Sergeant-At-Arms



## THE AMERICAN LEGION AMATEUR RADIO CLUB (TALARC)

Our Veterans Day on-the-air operation was a fun time. In addition to Post 209 folks, we were visited by Legion folks from Elizabeth, CO.



Pictured from the left are Bill – AC0VC, Harvey - W1JU, Bonnie – KE0RBJ, Lionel - KC0JAH , Alan - AC0F, and Henry KCONAJ.

We were planning a Holiday get-together on December 14th to mark this special month, and promote the American Legion, but due to COVID-19 restrictions, we must cancel the event. We’ll try to re-schedule when things open back up.

73 – Harvey W 1 J U      331-1212      [mbca@comcast.net](mailto:mbca@comcast.net)



## VETERANS ASSISTANCE FACILITIES

VA Eastern Colorado Health Care System - PFC Floyd K. Lindstrom Clinic

Health & Medical

3141 Centennial Blvd, Colorado Springs, CO 80907

(719) 327-5660

**Open** · Closes 6:30 PM Hours or services may vary

<https://www.denver.va.gov/locations/ColoradoSprings.asp>

Parent Facility: Denver VAMC (ECHCS) Phone: (303) 399-8020 or (888) 336-8262

## **Mt Carmel Veterans Service Center**

Veterans Organization

530 Communication Cir, Colorado Springs, CO 80905

(719) 772-7000

**Open** · Closes 5 PMHours or services may vary

[veteranscenter.org](http://veteranscenter.org)

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## **El Paso County Veterans Service**

Public Service & Government

5850 Championship Vw Ste 130, Colorado Springs, CO 80922

(719) 520-7750

**Open** · Closes 8 PMHours or services may vary

[communityservices.elpasoco.com](http://communityservices.elpasoco.com)

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## **Colorado Springs Vet Center**

Key Staff

3920 N. Union Blvd. Suite 310

Colorado Springs, CO 80107

Phone: 719-471-9992

Fax: 719-632-7571

**Working hours are:**

**Monday: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

**Tuesday: 8:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.**

**Wednesday: 8:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.**

**Thursday: 8:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.**

**Friday: 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

**Saturday: 09:00 am - 2:00 pm**

**Sunday: Closed**

\*Normal Operation Hours: 0800-1630. Extended hours are subject to change periodically.

Please call Vet Center for availability.

For assistance after hours, weekends and holidays call: 1-877-WAR-VETS (1-877-927-8387)

<https://www.va.gov/directory/guide/facility.asp>

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## **Pikes Peak National Cemetery**

**Hours:** Office Hours: Monday thru Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Closed federal holidays except Memorial Day.

719-216-1025

**Visitation Hours:** Office Hours: Open daily from sunrise to sunset.

Currently, we accept casketed and cremated remains for in-ground burial only

<https://www.cem.va.gov/cems/nchp/PikesPeak.asp>

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## Veterans Community Living Centers

### FITZSIMONS

1919 Quentin Street, Aurora, CO 80045  
(720)857-6400

[www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/veterans-community-living-center-fitzsimons](http://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/veterans-community-living-center-fitzsimons)

### FLORENCE

903 Moore Drive, Florence, CO 81226  
(719)784-6331

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/bruce-mccandless-veterans-community-living-center-florence>

### HOMELAKE

Monte Vista, CO 81144  
(719)852-5118

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/veterans-community-living-center-homelake>

### RIFLE

851 E 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Rifle, CO 81650  
(971)625-0842

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/veterans-community-living-center-rifle>

### WALSENBURG

23500 US-160, Walsenburg, CO 81089  
(719)738-5100

<https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/spanish-peaks-veterans-community-living-center-walsenburg>

Resource Google Inquiries, Art "AJ" Carter, VA&R Committee



Merry  
Christmas and Happy  
Holidays' to All!!!



# AMERICAN LEGION POST 209

THE PREEMINENT VOICE FOR VETERANS • COLORADO SPRINGS, CO



## WALK OF HONOR

### Buy A Brick Fundraiser!

We are re-introducing an exciting fundraiser for our Post. We are partnering with Polar Engraving to offer our members, family, friends, and our corporate Veteran-friendly supporters an opportunity to purchase an engraved brick to adorn our landscaping project we are working. The engraving uses the same technology as used on tombstones so it's extremely durable. Here are some FAQs:

- **What Are We Having?** A Brick Fundraising Event
- **Why?** To Further Funding of our American Legion Programs
- **What Size Are the Bricks?** 4"x 8" or 8"x 8" bricks for individuals, and 8"x 8" or 12"x 12" bricks for our corporate supporters.
- **What are the Costs for the Individual Bricks?** Prices vary depending on size, style and lettering desired, but typically range from \$75 to \$200. For the 8x8 or 12x12 bricks, you can add a second emblem. Contact the Adjutant for ordering details. There is **NO** additional cost for the second emblem on the larger bricks.
- **What are the Costs for the Corporate/Veteran Supporter Bricks?** Again, prices vary depending on size, style, and lettering but typically range from \$125 to \$500.
- **What is the Difference between Individual and Corporate Bricks?** Individual bricks are identified for Veterans, and family members of Veterans wishing to purchase a brick to honor their Veteran. The corporate bricks are for our Veteran-friendly supporters and businesses who wish to show their continued support to our Nation's heroes by purchasing a brick.
- **Is the Brick Purchase Restricted to Members of the Post 209 Family?** No. We encourage members to buy a brick for themselves as a lasting memory of their association with Post 209. We also welcome anyone to purchase a brick for their Veteran loved one, or to show their support to our Veterans.
- **Can I Buy a 12"x 12" Brick for Myself/Loved One?** Absolutely!
- **Where Do I Go to Buy a Brick?** We have a link on our website. Just visit [legion209.org](http://legion209.org) and click on "Walk of Honor." Or, you can visit <http://polarengraving.com/ALPost209> to buy your brick. The site is very user-friendly and will walk you through the design and purchase. You will be able to see a preview of your brick before finalizing the purchase.
- **How Do I Pay For the Brick?** We have the site setup to accept payment via PayPal or by check. PayPal is an extremely safe way to purchase a brick and you don't need a PayPal account to use it.
- **Where Will the Brick Be Shipped?** All bricks will be shipped to the Post. We will notify you when it arrives and you are welcome to stop by and see the brick you have purchased.
- **What Will Become of My Brick?** It will be placed near the Flagpole at the Post and will be part of the landscaping design we are working. If you are a landscaper or know a good one (preferably a Veteran), have them contact our Adjutant.
- **How Long Will this Fundraiser Effort Last?** We plan to only sell as many bricks as needed for the first phase of the landscaping project. Currently, that is anticipated to be 600 bricks, but that number may change depending on brick sizes purchased and the final design approved by the Post.
- **Will I Have an Opportunity to Buy a Brick Later?** Quite possibly. It depends on what is decided/approved for the next phase of our project.



Order your brick(s) now to ensure you get one in Phase One of our project. If you buy multiple bricks, let our Adjutant know and we will make certain they are all placed together.

## FROM OUR POST SERVICE OFFICER

So far this year, we have reached out with assistance to 62 Veterans. You may not be aware, but we have a Post Veterans' Assistance Fund that was first established by our Post's namesake, Neal Thomas, Jr. As of 31 October, we have just over \$4,900 in this emergency fund. That may sound like a lot of money, but it goes very quickly when used to assist Veterans with emergency support.

If you would like to donate to keep this fund going, you can mail us a check or go to our Post website at [legion209.org](http://legion209.org) and click on the "Donate" button. You can enter the term PVAF to ensure the donation is earmarked for this special account.

Remember, we are a non-profit charity so your donation may be tax deductible. Check with your tax advisor to find out!

*AG Carter*  
Post Service Officer



We all have talents and gifts, and as Legionnaires you have the opportunity to share them with not only the Post but our community as a whole. These committees are the foundation of how we work the many programs of The American Legion and their success depends on our membership. Even if you have never served on a committee please come out and give it a try, or for those who have chaired one before all are invited to come

and share their talents! Below are some of the committees and positions we are looking to fill. If you are interested, please reach out to the Chairperson or anyone on the executive committee. Don't waste your talents! Make a Difference! Get Involved!

### Membership Committee:

Chaired by the Sr. Vice Commander, the Membership Committee is responsible for creating and spearheading projects/ideas to maintain and increase membership of the Post. This includes, but is not limited to, conducting a vigorous recruiting effort, such as actively supporting the Direct Mail Solicitation (DMS) campaign to obtain new members and ensuring retention.

### **Currently seeking the following members:**

Vice Chair, 2-3 committee members

### Program and Planning Committee:

Chaired by the Jr. Vice Commander, the Program and Planning Committee is responsible for planning programs for the Legion year, and preparing and submitting to the Executive Committee both short- and long-range plans for the conduct of Post activities. This includes, but is not limited to, fundraising, securing speakers for Post meetings, and for planning Post observances of national holidays and other significant community events.

### **Currently seeking the following members:**

Vice Chair, 2-3 committee members

### **Public Relations Committee:**

The Public Relations Committee is responsible for promoting public interest and support of Post programs and activities through local news and social media, and assisting the publication of the Post newsletter.

#### **Currently seeking the following members:**

Chair, Vice Chair, 2-3 committee members

### **Welcoming Committee:**

Chaired by the SGT-At-ARMS, the Welcoming Committee takes on the job at all Post-sponsored events to welcome new members, guests, or even older members who are not well acquainted, making them feel at home, and introducing them to other members.

#### **Currently seeking the following members:**

Vice Chair, 2-3 committee members

### **Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee:**

Chaired by the Service Officer, the Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Committee shall be responsible for assisting Post members and other veterans and their families in obtaining veterans' benefits to which they are entitled; for visiting comrades who are sick or disabled; and for keeping the membership informed on veterans' benefits available.

#### **Currently seeking the following members:**

Vice Chair, 2-3 committee members

### **Americanism and Youth Committee:**

The Americanism and Youth Committee is responsible for inspiring patriotism and good citizenship through patriotic observances, patriotic and civic instruction in schools, and similar activities. This committee shall also be responsible for Post participation in such Legion programs as Boy's State, Oratorical contests, and other Americanism.

#### **Currently seeking the following members:**

Chair, Vice Chair, 2-3 committee members

### **Fundraising Committee:**

The Fundraising Committee is responsible for all the major fundraising activities of the Post to include corporate sponsors, in-kind gifts, fundraising events, and any other ways to raise fund to support the programs and operations of the Post.

#### **Currently seeking the following members:**

Chair, Vice Chair, 2-3 committee members

## BRINGING A LITTLE SOUTH TO THE WEST



This month, I was planning to write more about TV shows from the 50's and 60's, but felt instead I would share/re-share some of my best Christmas memories. You may remember some of them from previous writings, but some will be memories I have not yet shared.

The Bowen family celebrated Christmas on Christmas Eve every year. I don't really know why we did that, but it was something we always did and still do today. Now it works out great because Jackie's family celebrates Christmas on the 25th, so this gives us a chance to spend quality time with families.

As I've mentioned in numerous articles, I was blessed to have grown up and know both sets of Grandparents. They were Arkansas farmers, not large farms, but a few hundred acres of cotton and soybeans each year. For most of my childhood, they lived about 5 miles from each other, which made visiting them very easy. Their respective farm was outside the little town of Cherry Valley, about an hour and a half from our house in Memphis.

For some reason, they always came to our house to celebrate Christmas. Maybe it was to prevent arguments on which of them would host, or maybe they wanted to get away and come to the big city, or more likely they just didn't want to have to deal with all the muss and fuss of hosting. Whatever the reason it worked out well for us kids.

Most of the time they would arrive on Christmas Eve mid to late morning. They rarely showed up the day before to spend the night. That was okay with us. We lived in a small 3-bedroom house with one bath. There was Mom, Dad, and 4 kids living in that house. Having overnight company was a challenge to say the least. Us kids would end up sleeping on a "pallet" of blankets in the living room floor so our out of town guests could have a bed. That could have been part of the reason my Grandparents didn't show up early, but I think it was mainly because our house bordered the Memphis Airport and our house was in the flight line. Planes taking off and landing late at night or very early morning never bothered us, but company not accustomed to the noise found sleeping at night very difficult.

Most of the time Dad's only sister and her family drove over from West Memphis, just across the Mississippi River, to join us for our Christmas celebration. It was my Aunt Alta Mae, Uncle Troy, and cousin Barbara. Barbara was about 6 years older than me, but about the same age as my older sister Dee and they were close friends growing up. So Dee seemed to enjoy their visit each year.

Barring an unexpected visit from a wayward Great Uncle, which thankfully happened infrequently, this was our Christmas gathering. If we did get that "pop in" visit, Mom would disappear to her bedroom and find a tie Dad had in the closet to wrap up for our surprise guest. Dad HATED ties, and only wore one when it was absolutely necessary, so losing one on occasion always gave Dad a smile and seemed to give him an extra Christmas present.

We didn't open gifts until the turkey dinner was done and dishes washed and put away. Well, most of the gifts were opened then. Dad would sometimes give over to our relentless begging to open one gift early. I think he did that just so he could also open one of his, but we didn't care why he did it.

I can still remember a few of the gifts I received over the years, like my "Fanner 50" gun and holster, and my Mouse Trap Game, but most of my lasting Christmas memories was about spending time with family. It is still that way today.

Merry Christmas everyone from the Bowen family! May your memories be pleasant, lasting, and bring a smile to your face each time you remember your Christmas season.

*Jay Bowen*






Past Post Commander



## December 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3 Executive Committee Meeting 6:30pm <b>Virtual!</b> 	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11 Holiday Dinner! 6:00pm <b>CANCELLED!</b>	12 <b>Post Christmas Party!</b> <b>CANCELLED!!!!</b>
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 Wreaths Across America! 10:00am
20	21 Start of Winter  ALR Exec. Board 6:00pm <b>Virtual via Zoom!</b> 	22	23	24	25 Christmas <b>Merry Christmas!</b>	26
27	28	29	30	31	Notes: <b>All Dinners/Events/Meetings for December are Canceled to allow our volunteers quality family time during this holiday season!</b>	

## January 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 New Year's Day  <b>Happy New Year!!!!</b> M&C Polar Bear Run Pancake Breakfast M&C Fountain 9am 	2
3	4 Troop 77 Mtg; 6:30p Post Honor Gd. Training 6:00pm 	5	6	7 Executive Committee Meeting 6:30pm  TALARC Ex. Mtg 5:00pm 	8 <b>\$10.00 Meal</b>  Aux. Dinner - 6:00pm <b>RSVP Required!</b> 	9 Membership Meeting Breakfast - 9:00am Meeting - 10:00am 
10	11 Post Honor Gd. Training 6:00pm 	12	13 Welcoming Committee Mtng 6:00pm 	14	15 <b>\$10.00 Meal</b>  Chef's Choice Dinner 6:00pm <b>RSVP Required!</b> 	16
17	18 Martin Luther King Troop 77 Mtg; 6:30p ALR Exec. Board 6:00pm Post Honor Gd. Training 6:00pm 	19	20 Inauguration Day	21	22 <b>\$10.00 Meal</b>  Chef's Choice Dinner 6:00pm <b>RSVP Required!</b> 	23 TALARC Radio License Test Session 2:00-6:00pm 
24	25 Troop 77 Mtg; 6:30p Post Honor Gd. Training 6:00pm 	26 ALR/SAL Monthly Mtng 6:30pm. Social 5:30pm SAL 5:45pm 	27	28	29	30
31	Notes:					