



Published exclusively for the members of

**AMERICAN LEGION MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555
PELHAM, ALABAMA**

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IN GOD WE TRUST



Matthew Blount Post 555

Pelham Community Health Fair

Post 555 and the BSA Troop 404 participated in the Pelham Community Health Fair held on June 12, 2021 at the Pelham Recreation Center.

More Photos at: <https://alpost555.smugmug.com/Pelham-Community-Health-Wellness-Fair-6122021/>



The Triple Nickel American Legion Riders participated in the Pelham Community Health Fair as well, see photos and details on page 13

COMMANDER'S CORNER



Jeff Monday
Post Commander



Hello, my fellow Legionnaires:

I know it has been a very hot and wet June, but as they say, the show must go on. Thanks to those that attended the many activities the post was involved in this month. I am just getting back from the Department of Alabama Convention; the convention was held in Montgomery from 17 June 21 – 20 June 2021.

So many things I could list about the convention, I will share more at the post meeting. However, I would like to congratulate the Following: Congratulation to Ron Bradstreet elected to the Alternate NEC position, Tina Bush elected to Department Commander, Buddy Keen elected to Sr. Vice Commander, Charles Marsh elected to Jr. Vice Commander, Richard Kaster elected to 2nd Division Commander, and Paul M. Gonthier elected to 23rd District Commander. Wish all the best of luck, for God and Country. The most important thing about the convention was the fellowship that we had missed for eighteen months.

American Legion baseball season has kicked off. This year is incredibly special to the program because Post 555 has the honor of hosting the 2021 Southeast 19U regional tournament. We will be hosting state champions from Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Louisiana.

The regional tournament is a particularly special event because, not only the winner will go to the American Legion World Series to represent the Southeast, but also this is the first time the state of Alabama has hosted the 19U Senior Regional.

This tournament is particularly important not only for the Post but for Alabama American Legion baseball. We want to create an experience for the players and families of the teams participating that will last a lifetime. We need assistance in making this event successful. What does that mean? This means we need you to come to the games! Let's show the Southeast that Post 555 knows how to be a great host.

The post meeting will move to Tuesday 3 August 2021, this will give us the opportunity to host the Meet and Greet the night before the Tournament starts. By the time you get this newsletter and the post meeting in July, we will have a time and place for this to happen. The following will happen on the 3rd of August: we will have multiple food vendors to provided finger foods, the post will be responsible in setting up 2 tents and the Post tent; we will show case all the programs that the post offers: Baseball, Oratorical, Boys and Girls State, Boy Scouts, Rider (motorcycles on display).

This is just the beginning; see the Tournament Schedule on page 11. And I will share more, at the Post meeting, on 1 July 2021. See you all there!

1ST VICE'S COMMENTS



Bill Blank
1st Vice Commander



Welcome back to Pelham High School's baseball field where our home games are played. The season started out a little slowly this year, but that was expected after a year of COVID-19. I am certain that game participation will pick-up as the season moves forward.

I would like to express my thanks to those of you who volunteered to help sell tickets for the games. These wonderful Volunteers are Caroline Culpepper, John Zeiss, Chris Combs, my wife Pat, grandson Jack, and granddaughter Alyssa; Eldon Woodie, Jerry McClain, Frank Chacon, Larry Strayer, Vashone Smith, and Melvin and Frances Grissett. These folks gave of their time to support American Legion baseball. It was great working with each and everyone one of you; THANKS!!!

What would an outdoor sport like baseball be without the rain and poor field conditions? There

have been more than our share of them so far this year. The season is not over yet, so I am hoping there will be those who have not worked a game before to volunteer their time to sell tickets. Let me know if you would like to join this wonderful group who already gave of their time.

Let's talk about Fire on the Water which is scheduled for Saturday, July 3, 2021. This is expected (as in past years) to be a great event to include food trucks and fireworks. I am looking for volunteers to take part in the presentation of the National Colors, and manning the information table during this event. Please contact me (Bill Blank) at 214-476-7074 and join those of us who will be helping make this event a great one again this year for Post 555. Also, please come and enjoy the Post 555 pavilion for your comfort and enjoyment. You will have a great time as we all celebrate the 4th of July together (a day early).



2nd Vice's Interim Report



Still transitioning into the Adjutant position with Ron Koonce's guidance, and filling-in as the Acting Second Vice Commander since the position is still vacant. Anyone interested, let Commander Monday or me know, PLEASE!!!

With the lifting of the majority of COVID-19 restrictions around mid-June, our events are getting us back out into the community.

Wed., June 2, 2021: Flag removal at the Alabama National Cemetery after the wonderful Memorial Day Ceremony on May 31, 2021. Thank you to Eldon Woodie, Jim Darden, Bob Byram, Henry and Nancy Crist, myself, and of course Chic Cecchini who was wiping flag sticks as well as taking photos (check out SmugMug for his photos).

Sat., June 12, 2021: Commander Monday told me today that the three people at this event were going to be "me, myself, and I", so I hope that there are more people there after the event happens (I am writing this article before the event takes place).

Mon., June 14, 2021: Nothing planned but remember that this was Flag Day and hopefully you honored your flag by making sure it was up (if you have one). I will be sure to wear my "flag pants" that some of you have seen; they are my tribute to Old Glory. Also, Happy Birthday to the Army!!!

Tues., June 15, 2021: Jerry McClain and perhaps one or two Post members will be doing a flag presentation to the students and teachers at Maranathan Academy in Birmingham. With Jerry's vast knowledge of the flag and how to handle and honor it, I am sure the students and

teachers will have a much better understanding of the flag at the end of Jerry's visit.

Sat., July 3, 2021: Fire on the Water is scheduled for this year at Oak Mountain State Park which is located at 200 Terrace Drive, Pelham, AL 35124. Bill Blank told me that he would have free passes from his POC from Oak Mountain to help us gain access to the park. Thanks, Bill!!!! Also, Bill Blank is spearheading this event and is looking for folks to help the Riders set-up, perhaps sit at the information table for a little while, help with the presentation of the Colors (I am fairly certain that some of the flag positions have not been filled as of yet), and help with the tear-down at the end of the event. Let either myself, Commander Monday, or First Vice Commander Blank know if you are interested in being a part of this neat event.

So far, that is all of which I am aware on our calendar, but we will be rocking and rolling as the summer continues and people start going outside and becoming involved with "stuff" again. I hope you are looking forward to a MUCH better 2021 and spend your time with friends, loved ones, and members of the community to enjoy everyone's company after a LONGGGGG year of COVID-19 keeping us separated. Tough times for a lot of folks, so welcome back to the way things "used to be" and I look forward to seeing you at our next Post General Membership Meeting on Thurs., July 1, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. for our fellowship meal and 7:00 p.m. for our monthly meeting. **Come one, come all** (who said that; sounds like something a famous person would have said)!!



ADJUTANT'S AREA



Nancy Waller
Adjutant

Adjutant Area

Happy Summer as of June 21, 2021. Let's hope that we do not have too many hot days and less gnats than I experienced today while cleaning-up limbs, leaves, and branches from the wind and rain over the last few days. The gnats are ferocious!! I had to resort to wearing my "bee-keepers hat" and it worked great.

I am continuing to train with Ron Koonce to try to become as self-sufficient as possible and to take some of Ron's work over to let him concentrate on the zillions of other things he does. That is typical of a lot of Retirees, isn't it? I work harder now than I did when I was an AGR Soldier in the Alabama Army National Guard (not really, but it feels like that sometimes). Retirees play an important role as mentors to our younger military members as they go through their careers, so do not EVER think you are not important just because you do not wear the uniform anymore. We will ALWAYS be a vital part of the military—HOOAH!!!

Our membership for 2021 is 218 (84.5% of our goal) as of the Department Report dated June 7, 2021, so we may be falling short of our goal of 258 by 40 members. We only have a few weeks to meet our goal, so if you have not renewed, please do so. The 2022 membership campaign begins July 1, 2021. Do not get behind on your membership since that would affect the loss of your benefits. Everyone is important to the Post even if you cannot participate directly.

I remember something I read in the most recent The American Legion magazine and I want to bring it to everyone's attention if you missed it. It is entitled "A Commitment to Civics". I quote, "On October 21, 1922, the American Legion formed a committee to lead the development of textbooks to be used by public schools to strengthen the understanding of U.S. democracy, history, add identity.

Multiple organizations endorsed the project, including the American Legion Auxiliary, American Federation of Labor, Boy Scouts of America, Elks, Civic League for Immigrants, and Knights of Pythias. Five years later, "The Story of Our American People," a two-volume set of textbooks under the leadership of The American Legion, was in circulation to public schools." Those Legionnaires were a great group of Americans, and we should be proud to follow in their footsteps; I know I am.

For God and Country
Nancy Waller
Adjutant

4 ways to be a member of our Legion family

- American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555
- American Legion Auxiliary
- Sons of the American Legion
- American Legion Riders (must be members of one of the 3 above)

Contact Information (Please Print)

NAME: _____
 CITY: _____
 CELL PHONE: _____ HM: _____
 EMAIL: _____
 MILITARY BRANCH: _____
 REFERRED BY: _____

SERVICE OFFICER NOTES



Jerry McClain
Service Officer

Benefits, **Ten-Hut!**

Many VA Benefits Will Be Expanding in 2021 Thanks to a New Law!

Military.com | By [Jim Absher](#)

The VA's My HealtheVet website lets you view your health information online as well as refill prescriptions, make appointments and more.

Just to list a few but please go to military.com and read the entire article.

Life Insurance

Beginning in 2023, the VA will be getting into the life insurance business.

The new law requires the VA to offer all disabled veterans under age 81 a whole-life policy by that date. The program will be similar to Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI); however, veterans must sign up for VGLI within 16 months after leaving the service. The new insurance program will have no such time limit. Home Loans for National Guard Members National Guard members without active-duty service will be eligible to receive a VA home loan beginning in 2021. The new law makes Guard and Reserve members who have at least 90 days of service eligible for the home loan program. Thirty of those days must have been consecutive.

Currently, only Guard and Reserve members who had at least 90 days of active service are eligible for home loans.

Not new, but still most important to the vet is the Healthevet webpage: <https://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/home>

With My HealtheVet you can:

- Use the VA Blue Button to view, save, download and/or print your VA health and DoD Military Service Information. You can also share this with your caregiver, non-VA provider or others you trust
- See your VA test results
- View vaccination records, including COVID-19 vaccine
- See your appointment notes made by your VA caregiver
- Learn about different health conditions and treatment options
- Use secure messaging to communicate online with your VA health care team. You may send messages to request or cancel VA appointments. Use it to ask about lab results or find out about a medication or health issue. Or simply to discuss other general health matters
- Make appointments with your primary care physician or specialist
- Fill prescriptions

and much more [See our Veteran's Health Care pages for more details about what healthcare benefits are available to eligible veterans](#)

va.alabama.gov



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
**VETERANS
AFFAIRS**

CHAPLAIN'S UPLIFT



Joe Dunn
Post Chaplain



I came across a statement this month that said, **“A Broken Promise Is Better Than No Promise at All.”**

With a whole slew of kids and grandkids running around my house, I knew that the statement was absolutely untrue! I know in my house, I had better come through with what I promised, or my “stock” goes down immediately.

There is a statement, though, that I SO desire to see in myself and in other people that I interact with: And that is to: **“Say What We Mean and Mean What We Say.”**

I was promised 12 times in a month, by various people, who said that they would do a particular thing, but they never did it. I took them at their word, but they didn't come through. Some of those promises were around town in general, and some in the Triple Nickel.

There was doubt raised in my mind, though, to the point where I called the commander and asked him: “If I tell someone on a Buddy Check that, 'we'll be there for them, or that we've got their back,' is that really true?”

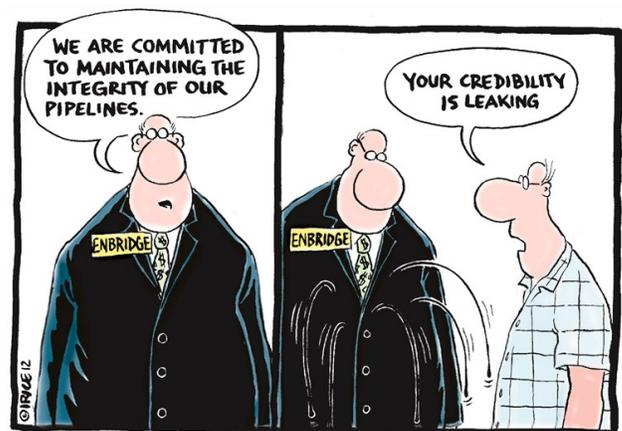
He assured me that we want to be a Post that **“Says What It Means and Means What It Says.”**

I find that very reassuring, because when we say something, we're putting our name out there.

Consider this: In the Old Testament, King Solomon wrote in Proverbs 22:1, **“A Good Name Is Rather to Be Chosen Than Great Riches.”** (NKJV) If we are not people of our word, our character is seen as weak, and our credibility takes a huge hit.

May I challenge all of us as Vets, to be a cut above and to want people to say of us: **“There goes a person of integrity!”**

Chaplain Joe



POST 555 WORK AREAS



AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL 2021

POST 555 FAMILIES

The school year has finished which means another American Legion baseball season has kicked off.

This year is incredibly special to the program because Post 555 has been given the honor of hosting the 2021 Southeast 19U regional tournament. We will be hosting state champions from Alabama, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Louisiana. The regional tournament is an incredibly special event because not only the winner will be sent to the American Legion World Series to represent the Southeast, but this is the first time the state of Alabama has hosted the 19U Senior Regional.

This tournament is particularly important not only for the Post but for Alabama American Legion baseball. We want to create an experience for the players and families of the teams participating that will last a lifetime. We need assistance in making this event successful.

We are requesting assistance in these areas:

Financial sponsorships – The tournament has financial costs for the event. We are looking for sponsors to help us create this unique experience. If you know any individual or businesses that would like to give back to the community, please contact us. We would love to speak with them on how they can help us achieve our goal of creating an event that will promote Americanism one athlete at a time.

Committee workers – We have several needs for people to assist in the planning of the events and

support for the tournament. We will have a once weekly meetings on Mondays at 7pm. People can attend in-person or by virtual through Zoom. We have a framework of all aspects of the tournament but need to put the final parts together to make the event work well.

Workers for the tournament – We have a multitude of staff positions for the week of the tournament. If you have interest of serving in some capacity, then please contact us.

Game schedule: The games are subject to change due to weather conditions, but the tentative game times (Central time zone) would be:

August 4th - Wednesday – 4 games:

10:00am, 1:00pm, 4:00pm, 7:00pm

August 5th - Thursday – 4 games:

10:00am, 1:00pm, 4:00pm, 7:00pm

August 6th - Friday – 3 games:

1:00pm, 4:00pm, 7:00pm

August 7th - Saturday – 3 games:

10:00am, 1:00pm, 4:00pm

August 8th - Sunday – 1 game: 2:00pm

If necessary, game – 5:00pm

My contact information: Kyle Phillips - phone 205-381-3713 or email: kp.albaseball@gmail.com

Thank you,
Kyle Phillips
Regional Tournament Program Director

See the full chart schedule on page 11

MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555



Meets first Thursday of the month.
The July 2021 Meeting
will be held on
Thursday 1 July at the Pelham
Senior Center at 7PM; dinner and
fellowship starting at 6PM. Please
bring a friend and/or member

Members of Squadron 555, Ron Koonce, Jeff Monday, and Kyle Phillips attended the American Legion State Convention attending both the SAL Detachment Convention and sessions of the American Legion.



Sons
of the
American
Legion
Since 1932

Kyle Phillips, Director of the National American Legion Baseball Southern Regional Baseball Tournament, was there with Alan Phillips, Alabama State Baseball Commissioner, to promote the regional tournament. The tournament is being hosted by Post 555 and will be held at the Pelham High School Hayes Field. Activities begin August 3, 2021.

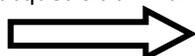
This is the very first time a national regional tournament will be held in the State of Alabama. Everyone is encouraged to support this event either by joining a support team or just by attending the games. If you are interested in joining a support team, contact Bill Blank, SAL Commander at bhbpac@yahoo.com or 214-476-7074.

Squadron 555 is finishing the 2020-2021 year falling short of 100% membership by nine members. This is the first time since the squadron's existence that it has not made the 100% goal. July will begin the 2021-2022 renewal and membership campaign to improve our performance over the previous year.

The annual dues remain at \$20. We encourage all members and sponsors to submit your 2022 renewal now. Also, everyone is a recruiter. One new member will earn you a Post 555 Commander's Membership Award pin. Five new members will earn you a National Commander's Excellence pin.

Applications for new members are found on the "Home" page of www.alpost555.com. Just select the "Join the Sons of American Legion" button and print the application. Checks are to be payable to "Matthew Blount Post 555".

Mail renewals and applications to: American Legion Sons of The American Legion, 50 Racquet Club Parkway Pelham, AL 35124

 continues

Post Leadership 2021/2022

- | | |
|---|--|
| Post Commander
Jeff Monday | Auxiliary President
Caroline Culpepper |
| 1st Vice Commander
Bill Blank | Sons of American Legion |
| 2nd Vice Commander
TBD | Bill Blank, Comm.
Ron Koonce, Advisor |
| Adjutant
Nancy Waller | Legion Riders Director
Doug McDaniel |
| Asst Adjutant
Ron Koonce | Flag Team Coordinator
TBD |
| Judge Advocate
Tom Long | Boy Scouts Coordinator
David Coram |
| Financial Officer
Barry Blount | Jr. Shooting Director
Darrell Lawley |
| Chaplain
Joe Dunn | Baseball Director
Jon Freeman |
| Sergeant-At-Arms
Derek Winters | School Awards Program
Frank Lakotich, Chr. |
| Anita Bennett | Awards Program
Barry Blount, Chr. |
| Post Service Officer
Jerry McClain | Webmaster
Ron Koonce |
| Historian
Shauna Hadley | Triple Nickel Editor
Frank Chacon |
| Public Relations Officer
Vacant | Photography
Chic Cecchini |
| Post Trustees
Frank Lakotich
Robert Horsley
Chris Combs | |

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 Pelham, AL 35124
 205-678-1375
commander@ALpost555.com

Items for publication are accepted on Executive Committee approval and available space. Submit articles prior to the 10th of the month for publication the following month. We reserve the right to edit any submissions for the purpose of publication.

Letters to the Editor must & include name, address telephone number. Names will be withheld upon request.

Send email to: Editor@alpost555.com
Photos by Chic Ceechinni, Post 555

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American Legion Post 555

The Sons will continue to meet with the Post on July 1, 2021, at the Pelham Senior Center at 6:00 p.m. for the fellowship meal and 7:00 p.m. for meeting.

Separate future Son's meetings are being planned. Members will be notified once location/date/time have been confirmed.

Ron Koonce; adjutant

Matthew Blount Post 555



Congratulations to Lt. Matt Maples. Lt. Maples was awarded Firefighter of the Year from American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555. The Pelham Fire Department is very proud and honored for Lt. Maples. Lt. Maples serves as the Department's EMS director and works tirelessly to ensure the safety of the citizens, firefighters and all Pelham employees.

Pictured L-R: Past Commander Barry Blount, Lt. Matt Maples, Commander Jeff Monday

Congratulations to Shelby County Sheriff Deputy Adam Mitchell who was awarded Deputy of the Year 2021 from American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555.

Pictured L-R: Post 555 Commander Jeff Monday, Adam's son, Deputy Adam Mitchell, Adam's wife, and Past Commander of post 555, Barry Blount



WALLER NAMED 2021 LEGIONNAIRE OF THE YEAR



Matthew Blount Post 555 Past Commander Barry Blount named Nancy Waller, Legionnaire of the Year for 2020-2021, at the June 3, 2021 Post meeting.

Waller joined the Post in 2017 and has served faithfully as Second Vice Commander, Events Committee Chair, and Retired Senior Volunteer Program Coordinator, among other leadership positions.

Nancy Waller received the Alabama Senior Hall of Fame Military award in 2018.

Major Nancy Waller attended the Alabama Military Academy Class 30 receiving her commission in 1986. She was the first female Honor Graduate in the history of the AMA.

As a Retiree and 29-year Veteran of the Alabama Army National Guard, she continues to take care of Soldiers and Airmen in the National Guard and Reserves dedicating countless hours to several National Guard organizations.

In 2014, Waller began volunteering with the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve, a

Department of Defense organization, where she continues to serve as District Chair and Employer Outreach Coordinator.

Upon her military retirement in April 2014, she was awarded the Legion of Merit award for exceptionally meritorious conduct in performance of outstanding service and achievements.

Since 2006, Waller continues to serve as the Secretary/Treasurer on the Executive Council of the Enlisted National Guard Association of Alabama (ENGAA) and currently serves as the Adjutant of The American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555. Waller is also a charter member of the Lance Cpl. Thomas Rivers VFW Post 12185.

Join us in congratulating Nancy in receiving this prestigious award.

THE AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE



American Legion Baseball Southeast Regional Tournament

Stadium – Bobby Hayes Stadium
 Host – Matthew Blount Post 555
 Local Chairman – Alan Phillips
 (albaseball@charter.net)
 Local Program Manager - Kyle Phillips
 (kp.albaseball@gmail.com)



<u>Game</u>	<u>Date/Pairings</u>	<u>Time</u>
Wednesday - August 4		
Game 1	FL Champ vs. TN Champ	10:00 a.m.
Game 2	SC Champ vs. MS Champ	1:00 p.m.
Game 3	LA Champ vs. AL Champ	4:00 p.m.
Game 4	GA Champ vs. Post 555	7:00 p.m.
Thursday - August 5		
Game 5	Loser Game 1 vs. Loser Game 3	10:00 a.m.
Game 6	Loser Game 2 vs. Loser Game 4	1:00 p.m.
Game 7	Winner Game 1 vs. Winner Game 3	4:00 p.m.
Game 8	Winner Game 2 vs. Winner Game 4	7:00 p.m.
Friday - August 6		
Game 9	Winner Game 6 vs. Loser Game 7	1:00 p.m.
Game 10	Winner Game 5 vs. Loser Game 8	4:00 p.m.
Game 11	Winner Game 7 vs. Winner Game 8	7:00 p.m.
Saturday - August 7		
Game 12	Winner Game 9 vs. Loser Game 11 (See Note 1 below)	1:00 p.m.
Game 13	Winner Game 10 vs. Winner Game 11 (See Note 1 below)	4:00 p.m.
Sunday - August 8		
Game 14	Winner Game 12 vs. Winner Game 13 (See Note 2 below)	2:00 p.m.
Game 15	(If necessary) Fifteen games will be needed if Winner Game 11 loses Game 13 or Winner Game 12 wins Game 14	5:00 p.m.

www.legion.org/baseball

Note 1: Pairings for Game 12 & 13 will not match previous opponents against each other unless absolutely necessary. (Tournament Director has further instructions).

Note 2: If three teams remain after Game 13, the winner of Game 11 automatically draws the Bye for Game 14.



It is great to be a Legionnaire and even better to be a Legionnaire and a Legion Rider! The Riders have had an active month.

The Triple Nickel Riders was joined by the Combat Veterans Ass. Riders and others riders in a Memorial Day ride. Our ride began at Dunkin Donuts in Pelham. The first stop of our journey was Elmwood Cemetery, where Eric Fort's father is laid to rest.

The next destination of our journey took us to the National Cemetery in Montevallo. Here is where our post namesake, Matthew Blount, is laid to rest. We left out heading to the City of Pelham Cemetery. While at each of our stops, we placed a wreath at each location and dedicated it to all of our fallen brothers and sisters. We left there to have lunch and toast the great men and women past and present to serve this great nation.



I like to give a special thanks to the Combat Vets Ass. and the others that joined us in making the ride memorable.

On June 10th the riders had their first meeting in over a year in the HOG room at Heart of Dixie Harley Davidson, We discussed several issues and events relating to the post and the riders. We gave out a door prize or two to welcome everyone back, Post 555 was invited to participate in the City of Pelham Annual Health Fair, The Triple Nickel Riders answered the call for help, We set up the tent. manned the booth and packed everything up. While at the Health Fair the booth had several visitors. We passed along information to veterans and family members on benefits and access to healthcare.

Thanks,
 Doug McDaniel
 Riders Director



L-R: Jeff Monday, Chic Cecchini, Justin Hadley, Doug McDaniel