

**Brief History of American Legion Post 52**  
**Franklinton, North Carolina**

In the latter part of 1918, Lieutenant Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, Jr. proposed an organization of veterans to improve troop morale. Afterwards, The American Legion was founded in Paris and the first meeting of the American Legion was held there on March 15 – 17, 1919 by members of The American Expeditionary Force at the close of World War I with about one thousand officers and enlisted men in attendance.

Eight months later, the Franklinton Post was chartered on November 20, 1919 by the National Temporary Headquarters in New York City, N. Y. and was designated as Post No. 52. The fifteen charter members on record at the North Carolina Department Headquarters in Raleigh are: George L. Cooke, Hugh S. Daniels, John Henry Harris, Jr., Armstead E. Henderson, James Sydney Joyner, Durward B. Kearney, Henry Crawford Kearney, Claude L. McGhee, Eddie W. McGhee, Hugh A. McGhee, J. Raymond Mitchiner, Jr., Robert J. Rose, Robert R. Speed, Earl B. Sykes and George D. Williams. J. Raymond Mitchiner, Jr. was the Post's first commander.

In 1927, Commander H. Crawford Kearney started the poppy program in Franklinton. The poppies were purchased with his own money and given away on the streets of Franklinton in order to bring forth a way for people to show gratitude to disabled veterans.

On December 31, 1955 the State of North Carolina chartered Post 52 Department of the American Legion while Paul H. Robertson was State Commander. William J. Gupton was Post 52 Commander during this time.

In 1961, H. Crawford Kearney gave a piece of land to Post 52, and with the labor of it's members, the post built it's first and only permanent home. Prior to that time the post met monthly in Franklinton's Community House.

The Franklinton post has been active on the state level with five men having served as District Commander. Rupert B. Pearce, Jr. (1952-1953), John Hedrick (1960-1961), Garland Goswick (1962-1963), Bruce W. Honeycutt (1968-1969), and Douglas N. Hoyle (1970-1971). Post 52 has provided one Division Commander, John Hedrick (1967-1968). Bruce W. Honeycutt of Post 52 served as the State Department Commander (1973-1974). In the 1970s, three men, Douglas N. Hoyle, A. J. Perkinson and J. Larry Kearney were named North Carolina Legionnaire of the Year, an honor bestowed annually upon an outstanding member from one of the many posts throughout the state.

On October 7, 1993 the Post organized The Sons of the American Legion Squadron #52 under Post Commander Lonnie G. House and it received it's charter on October 7, 1993 while Garnett G. Shopshire was the State Commander.

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**The post is active in supporting The Tar Heel Boys State Program, The Student State Trooper Program, and the American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program.**

**Post 52 now has membership totaling 211 and is one of the largest organizations in Franklin County. It continues to meet on the last Tuesday of each month at it's home located at 40 American Legion Road in Franklinton and is still actively serving veterans and the Community of Franklinton and the surrounding area.**

**Submitted by: William C. Hagwood, Post Historian**

**Source: Organization Records**