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THE AMERICAN LEGION MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555

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THE TRIPLE NICKEL

POST 555 AMERICAN LEGION BASEBALL TEAM IS 14-0!!!!

If you have not heard as of yet, our **19U Baseball Team** is at 14-0 for the season so far! What a tremendous showing for our young men as they continue to strive for the state and regional tournaments. If you are able to get to Pelham High School to show your support as a Post 555 Legionnaire in legion attire, please do so. These young men need to see that we support their efforts, and encourage them to drive on toward higher goals. I would like to share the names of all of the people who make this team possible.

Kyle Phillips, Club Representative (a member of the Sons); Alex Brown, Coach; Noah Gwin, Coach; Bill Blank, Legion Representative; and Jonathan Ott, Manager (he just became a member of Post 555)

Now, here are the players (in alphabetical order) who have won 14 out of 14 games so far!!!

***#13 Kaden Bowen, #11 Jake Fox, #2 Harrison George, #5 Luke Hicks,
#17 Jett Hopwood, #1 Brock Isbell, #27 Ethan McInnis, #32 Hunter McRee,
#8 Luke Reid, #24 Mitch Reneau, #9 Chase Saul, #26 Will Schmitt,
#3 Colby Thacker, #14 Andruw Townes, #6 John Martin Williamson,
#23 Colton Willmon, #7 Blake Woodall, and #4 Zach Wyatt***



What is American Legion Baseball All About?

American Legion Baseball is a competitive program primarily comprised of high school ball players that want to compete after the school baseball season ends. However, unlike travel and showcase baseball, all American Legion baseball coaches are vetted by a criminal background check. American Legion registered teams come with liability and supplemental medical insurance as well access to a free robust software program to track player rosters, pitcher pitch counts, and team wins and losses. We work with teams to develop their play schedules against other area American Legion teams.

American Legion baseball costs a fraction of the expense to play summer travel baseball. Our focus is basic civics, sportsmanship and Americanism while playing our National game. We are reinforcing respect to our flag, the rights and privilege of being a citizen in this great nation, and respect for those that paid the price of freedom. We play the National Anthem before each game and encourage Legionnaires and other Veterans to attend the games and wear Legion or service caps, and talk to the players and parents to support and encourage them to be responsible citizens.

American Legion Baseball is one of the most prominent and tradition-rich amateur athletic leagues in existence. The program is growing in the State of Alabama. Participation is easy so there is ample opportunity for new players to join, for coaches who want to start a team, for umpires, and for individuals or groups interested in volunteering.

American Legion Baseball has a long history in Alabama. The league strives to provide a good mix of flexible schedules and good competition. The season typically begins after the academic school year ends which is near the Memorial Day holiday weekend. The state tournament is normally held in mid-July. The season offers both full and part time play. The program has league-focused teams, tournament teams, and hybrid organizations.

Regular season and tournament games are held within the State of Alabama. The American Legion is run as a not-for-profit league with the goal of improving our young people within a positive, competitive environment while preparing our players for high school and collegiate level play.

The Baseball program offers opportunities in three age divisions: Junior Varsity, Varsity, and 19U for state championships. The Junior Varsity division is designed for the 9th grade and younger players in the current academic year. The Varsity division is open for all players with at least one remaining season of high school athletic eligibility. The 19U (Senior Division) division is designed for recent high school graduates and younger players with a possibility that some prior year graduated players may be eligible.

For more detailed information about American Legion Baseball, copy/paste the link as noted below.

<http://www.alabamaamericanlegionbaseball.com/App/GetRoster/list/?teamid=748854&org=alabamaamericanlegionbaseball.com>

*For God and Country,
Nancy J. Waller
Adjutant*

American Legion Baseball 19U MidSouth Regional Tournament

The 19U Division State Champions will move on to the Regional Tournament where they compete to play in The American Legion World Series in Shelby, North Carolina which is aired on ESPN. This year, the 19U MidSouth Regional Tournament will be held at Pelham High School. This tournament will have two teams representing the State of Alabama; the State Tournament Champion and the host team, Shelby County Post 555. The other teams will be the State Champions of Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Oklahoma. The tournament games are scheduled for **August 2-6, 2023** with the Opening Ceremony scheduled for Tues., **August 1, 2023** at 7:00 p.m. at Pelham High School. Here are the Game Dates and Pairings Times.

American Legion Baseball Game Dates/Pairings Times

Tuesday – August 1, 2023

Opening Ceremony @ 7:00pm
Pelham High School

Wednesday – August 2, 2023

Game 1 MS Champion vs. OK Champion @ 10:00 am
Game 2 MO Champion vs. AR Champion @ 1:00 pm
Game 3 LA Champion vs. AL Champion @ 4:00 pm
Game 4 KS Champion vs. Post 555 @ 7:00 pm

Thursday – August 3, 2023

Game 5 Loser Game 1 vs. Loser Game 3 @ 10:00 am
Game 6 Loser Game 2 vs. Loser Game 4 @ 1:00 pm
Game 7 Winner Game 1 vs. Winner Game 3 @ 4:00 pm
Game 8 Winner Game 2 vs. Winner Game 4 @ 7:00 pm

Friday – August 4, 2023

Game 9 Winner Game 6 vs. Loser Game 7 @ 10:00 am
Game 10 Winner Game 5 vs. Loser Game 8 @ 1:00 pm
Game 11 Winner Game 7 vs. Winner Game 8 @ 4:00 pm

Saturday – August 5, 2023

Game 12 Winner Game 9 vs. Loser Game 11 @ 10:00 am *
Game 13 Winner Game 10 vs. Winner Game 11 @ 1:00 pm *

Sunday – August 6, 2023

Game 14 Winner Game 12 vs. Winner Game 13 @ 1:00 pm **
*Game 15 if necessary @ 4:00 pm *

* Pairings for Games 12 and 13 will not match previous opponents against each other unless absolutely necessary.

** If three teams remain after Game 13, the winner of Game 11 automatically draws the bye for Game 14.

2023 FIRE ON THE WATER



The next community event in which we will be participating is the “Fire on the Water” celebration at Oak Mountain State Part on Monday, **July 3, 2023**. The Acting Event Director asked me if Post 555 will present the Colors again this year, and I told her we definitely are!! We have plenty of Volunteers for set-up but could have more if interested, to man the information table, greet attendees as they go past our area, and just enjoy a great time with all of the other members. We have four Volunteers for the presentation of the Colors, so let’s thank Mac Braid, Chris Combs, Vashone Smith, and Nancy Waller. If anyone would like to be there as a possible “back-up”, they would be welcome to do so. Everyone who volunteers will be given a VIP pass for total access to Oak Mountain State Park, so consider that a great benefit and a thank you for volunteering!!! I think we ought to make this the best ever show for our community.

Just one question I have in closing; what will it take to get our members and the Sons to be more involved in our community activities? We are always open to your ideas and suggestions.

*For God and Country,
Bill Blank
First Vice Commander*

CHAPLAIN’S UPLIFT

I am writing this Uplift from another part of the world this month, where the people have no idea about our American values, what they are, or why they are so dear to us. I’m in Central Asia working with college kids from India, and I got my first indication that this was true a couple of weeks ago when my own kids and grandkids called me for Father’s Day. One of the young men here had no idea that we would ask our fathers once a year to have an official “Happy Day.” He started laughing and said, “I’m thinking

about this, and there is no way that I could call my father and say to him, “Happy Father’s Day”. He said that his dad would ask him, “**Why** are you saying that to me?!”

Father’s Day is relatively small, though, compared to our July 4th, Independence Day celebration. Today I had a Pakistani medical student ask me if we in America could say that we are against certain things that would be considered volatile in nature. He had religious topics in mind. I immediately answered, “Yes we can! Our very first amendment allows us the right to speak freely on just about any subject there is.” He certainly seemed surprised, because in his country and many other countries in this part of the world, people do **not** have the freedom to speak openly about just anything they want to, especially religion and political leaders.

To drive that point home, a good Russian friend in Kazakhstan told me that years ago, his grandfather, made jokes about Vladimir Lenin, the founder of Communism, and was thrown in jail for ten years! In many places, people are expected to have a picture ID with them everywhere they go (imagine that). Foreigners in every country must always carry their passport or a copy of it, and they can be stopped on the street at any time and for no reason by the police and be made to show their identification, and most places have absolutely **NO** right to own or carry a firearm.

Hearing all of this on this side of the globe certainly made me more **thankful** to be an American. Even though our freedom of speech is being challenged today and perhaps even being threatened, there is still no fear of being jailed if you say something considered to be an attack on a leader’s political position or even his character. While other countries do not have the freedoms we do as Americans, it is hard for them to understand why we say that we would do everything in our power to keep what we have.

As we celebrate the upcoming 4th of July, let us be truly thankful for what we have as a country. It is easy to take our freedoms for granted, and for the younger generation to not understand the statement that says, “Freedom Is Not Free.” There were those who paid the ultimate price for us to have it, and today many of those in positions of authority do whatever they can within the law to help us keep the very freedoms that we hold dear.

*For God and Country,
Chaplain Joe*



Sons of The American Legion Squadron 555

Three members of Squadron 555 (Commander Walker, Vice Commander Blank, and Adjutant Koonce) traveled to Montgomery for the 2023 SAL Annual Convention on June

24, 2023. Among the business conducted was the adoption of an updated Constitution and Bylaws and the election and installation of new Detachment of Alabama officers, to include Detachment Commander Harry Bedgood. From our squadron, Ron Koonce remains Detachment Americanism Chair and Don Walker remains Detachment Historian.



L/R: Donald Walker, Bill Blank, and Ron Koonce.



Ron Koonce is being introduced as a Veteran of the Year candidate by Detachment of Alabama SAL Advisor Ron Haygood.



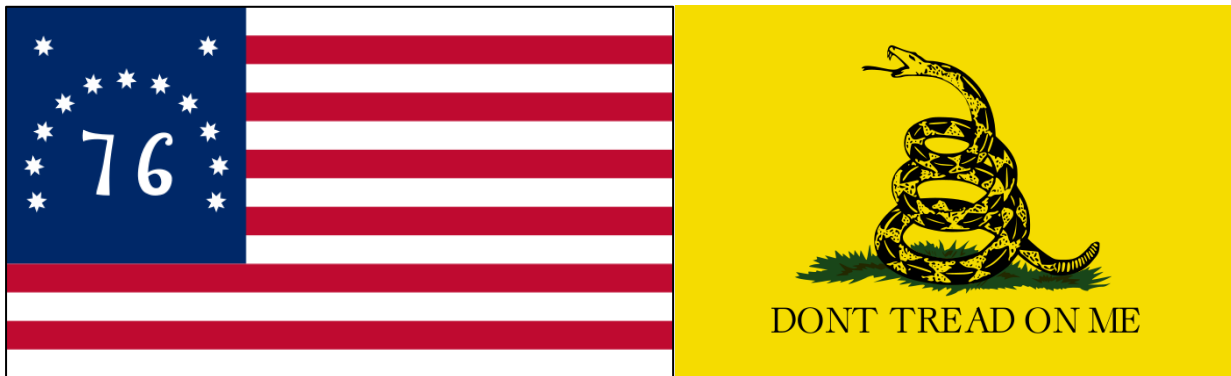
L/R: Donald Walker is receiving a well-deserved Certificate of Appreciation from George Krigbaum that reads as follows: "For Your Outstanding Service to the Detachment of Alabama, 2022-2023, Given this 24th Day of June, 2023, signed Andrew B. Cherry, Detachment Adjutant and George R. Krigbaum, Detachment Commander. Efforts have been underway for some time to replace the flag at the Pelham Senior Center. As a suitable time for a full flag replacement ceremony was unavailable,

members of Squadron 555 performed the replacement on June 20, 2023, raising a new American Flag on the Pelham Senior Center flagpole that was erected as part of Conner McDonald's Eagle Scout project.

On the topic of flags, we have a big update on the flag retirement drop box project. Seeing a need to improve the means by which community members can provide worn American flags to the Triple Nickel family for dignified retirement, Squadron 555 undertook a project to provide that means with the help of Scout Troop 404. Adjutant Koonce secured an appropriate receptacle and troop members have completed refinishing and painting the drop box. Representing Pelham Senior Center, Katie Augsburger has approved the box for placement at the western end of the Pelham Senior Center front porch where it will be protected from the elements and provide community members a safe place to deposit worn American flags so that they can be retired with the respect that they deserve.

Our next squadron meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. on July 11, 2023. This will be a hybrid meeting, taking place at Pelham Senior Center as well as on Microsoft Teams via the SAL Squadron 555 Teams Community.

Finally, as we approach the celebration of our extraordinary nation's birth, I'd like to wish everyone a happy and safe Independence Day. As we commemorate America's founding, take a moment to reflect on the remarkable individuals and their unwavering efforts, from colonial times through present day, to shape this nation as the best in the world and ensure that its blessings of liberty and prosperity continue for future generations.



*For God and Country
Donald L. Walker
SAL Commander*

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

In the month of June 2023, we had a Flag Removal on June 2, 2023 at the Alabama National Cemetery (ALNC) and with the fairly small number of Volunteers we had for Section 8, we were totally completed in **21 minutes**. Picking them up was easy, and the more tedious work was yet to come in the SCALNC Storage Building where we had to clean the sticks, bundle them into groups of ten, put them into storage buckets, and clean-up at the end of the day. It really was a lot of fun because everyone worked hard and there were several Volunteers from Post 555 who of course made it a WHOLE LOT

more fun. There was Andy Burell, Chic Cecchini (behind the camera as well as helping with flag removal/cleaning/storing), Steve Combs, Henry Crist (transporting flags and coolers from the sections to the Storage Building), Ray Pata, Conrad Stempel, Nancy Waller, and Pete Williams. Pete transferred from another Post and I am honored to tell all of you that he has not missed an event or meeting yet—thank you for your support, Pete, and WELCOME AGAIN!!!



Henry Crist hard at work (as always) picking-up flags, hole-punchers, and coolers.



I caught Chic on the other side of the camera again!!! Gotcha, Chic!!



Steve Combs at the end of a busy day for him and everyone else; thanks, Steve!!



Conrad Stempel right in the middle of several women; way to go, Conrad!!!



Ray Pata gathering bundles of flags to put in tubs in the SCALNC Storage Building; thanks, Ray!!!



I (Nancy Waller) had to get into the photos at this event as well. HOOAH!!!

A HUGE event that is scheduled for the July 6, 2023 General Membership Meeting is to honor several First Responders in Pelham and in Shelby County. They will be honored with a plaque, certificate of distinction, and a gift from Commander Barry Blount thanking them for their service in their respective organizations. Here is who they are.

2023 Law Enforcement Officers of the Year:

Deputy Matthew Sulenski, Shelby County Sheriff's Office
Deputy Nicholas Lemoine, Shelby County Sheriff's Office
Officer Iliana Hayakahua, Pelham Police Department
Corporate David Sharpe, Alabaster Police Department

2023 Firefighter of the Year:

Firefighter Brent Rejonis

2023 Public Safety Telecommunicator of the Year:

Mr. David Fuentes, Pelham Police Department

In attendance will be Shelby County Sheriff John Samaniego, Chief Clay Hammac, and Major Jay Fondren; Pelham Police Chief Brent Sugg, Lt James Grier, and Jeanie Davis; and Pelham Fire Chief Mike Reid. Very distinguished group of individuals joining us to honor their award recipients. Should be a great evening.

We will also be hearing from several of the recent "graduates" from Boys State which has always been an experience for them as well as for us to hear how much they got out of the program and how appreciative they are for Post 555 to sponsor them.

*For God and Country,
Nancy J. Waller
Adjutant*

ADJUTANT'S AREA

We are getting close to **July 1, 2023** when our new "Membership Year" begins, so be on the watch for renewal notices for the 2023-2024 Membership Year. Please remember that your memberships are good for "Calendar Years" so your 2023 membership is good until December 31st. **BUT**, the Department of Alabama would LOVE to have us start processing renewals so that we can continue to reach our goals throughout the end of this year and into the next year. I already have the 2023-2024 membership cards, so those of you who attend the General Membership Meetings better beware....because I am on the hunt for RENEWALS at EVERY meeting!!!

Thanks a ton for everyone's membership and support of The American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555 with any/all involvement you have with this great Post whether it be keeping your membership current (which is vital to our existence) to coming to General Membership Meetings, to donating to Wreaths Across America, and to helping as Volunteers in the events we have throughout the year. Zoom MotorSports (the folks at the Barber MotorSports Park) have been extremely generous for the past few years with giving Post 555 financial donations for those of you who have been Volunteers at their events such as the Barber Vintage Festival in 2022 and the one coming up in October on the 6th through the 8th. We are the experts of the "Tram Safety Volunteer" positions,

so if you would like to volunteer this year, let me know. You will receive credentials that enable you to go virtually anywhere during this event for all three days, plus you get "Volunteer Parking" and meals at no cost. Consider the benefits!!!

*For God and Country,
Nancy J. Waller
Adjutant*

JULY BIRTHDAY WISHES FOR OUR MEMBERS

Harris, Jerry F., 07/04 (Happy 4 th of July)	Colvard, Don R., 07/15
Bass, Johnny R. "JR", 07/05	Robertson, Linda M., 07/17
Mize, Harry B. "Skip" IV, 07/05	Bennett, Anita F., 07/18
Murphy, Patrick J., 07/05	Honbarrier, Kurt, 07/18
Newton, Brian K., 07/05	Bangert, John L., 07/20
Fort, Eric P., 07/06	Blount, Barry K., 07/20
Pillar, Thomas N., 07/06	Argo, Richard A., 07/24
Healy, Edward A., 07/07	Raymond, Leroy F., 07/25
Helmick-Williams, Desiree, 07/07	Strayer, Lawrence E. "Larry", 07/25
Remmem, Douglas W., 07/09	Yokel, Raymond, 07/26
Young, Christopher J., 07/09	Byram, Bobby W., 07/27
Carter, Henry, 07/10	Ferguson, Randall A. "Randy", 07/27
Woodie, Bonnie, 07/10	Reagin-Young, Karla, 07/30
Franklin, Leon G., 07/14	



If your birthday is in July and your name is not on this list, it is because it is not listed in MyLegion.org or you did not reply to an e-mail I sent out ages ago asking for updates, so please send it to me so I can wish you a Happy Birthday next year!!!

*For God and Country,
Nancy J. Waller
Adjutant*

NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

We meet the first Thursday of the month, and our next meeting is scheduled for July 6, 2023 with our fellowship meal at 6:00 p.m. and the meeting starting promptly at 7:00 p.m. at the Pelham Senior Center at 50 Racquet Club Parkway, Pelham, AL 35124. You already read earlier about the high-speed awardees that will be honored at this meeting, so please join us!!!

POST LEADERSHIP FOR 2023/2024

Post Commander

Barry Blount

First Vice Commander

Bill Blank

Second Vice Commander

Dorian Ross

Adjutant

Nancy Waller

Judge Advocate

Tom Long

Finance Officer

Ron Koonce

Chaplain

Joe Dunn

Sergeant-at-Arms

Anita Bennett

Service Officer

Curtis Orse

Historian

Shauna Hadley

Public Relations Officer

Nancy Waller

Post Trustees

Chris Combs (1 Yr.)

Tom McDaniel (2 Yr.)

Vashone Smith (3 Yr.)

Sons of The American Legion

Donald Walker, Commander

Ron Koonce, Advisor/Adjutant

American Legion Riders Director

Jeffrey Monday

Flag Team Coordinator

Bill Blank

Boy Scout Troop 404 Coordinator

David Coram

Jr. Shooters

Sam Richardson, Director

Darrell Lawley, Coach

Baseball Director

Kyle Phillips

School Awards Program

Barry Blount, Chairman

Frank Lakotich, Co-Chairman

Awards Program

Barry Blount, Chairman

Nancy Waller, Co-Chairman

Webmaster

Ron Koonce

SAL Advisor

Ron koonce

The Triple Nickel

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Items for publication are accepted upon Executive Committee approval and available space. Submit articles prior to the 10th of the month for publication the following month if approved. We reserve the right to edit any submissions for the purpose of publication. Letters to the Editor must include name, address, and telephone number. Names will be withheld upon request.

Send e-mail to: editor@alpost555.com
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