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Matthew Blount Post 555

Billy Edwin Blount, Sr.
April 28, 1936- January
23, 2022

Mr. Blount passed away January 23, 2022 at home.

He served his country with honor in the United States Army and the United States Army Reserves for over 32 years. During his time in active duty, he served in Paris, France during the Korean War. While stationed at Ft. McClellan, he transitioned from active duty to reserve. He attained the rank of Command Sergeant Major and retired as the Director of Communications from the Anniston Army Depot.

Mr. Blount was also a member of the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville and American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555 in Pelham, AL

Mr. Blount is preceded in death by his parents, Rev. Knox Blount and Louree Blount; a brother, James Blount; and two nephews, Matthew Blount and Michael Blount.

Mr. Blount is survived by his wife of 68 years, Annette Blount; a daughter, Kelly Ann Godwin (Steve); sons, Billy E. Blount, Jr. (Sara) and Tracy Blount; three grandchildren, Daniel Godwin, Jessica Blount, and Tara Maynard Scheurich (Cody); a sister, Marjorie Workman (Ron); a brother, Barry Blount (Terrie); several nephews, nieces, great nephews, and great nieces; and special family members, Debra Howell and Gary Hill.



Please keep his family in your prayers.



IN GOD WE TRUST





Tom Long
Post 555, District 23
Judge Advocate



Greetings to all my Legion Brothers & Sisters. As we continue to work towards a stronger and rewarding American Legion Post 555, we should always remember what the foundation of our Legion and Post is.

This is especially important when we are recruiting new members. Our foundation is based upon service. Service to our members, communities, State, and our great Republic. As Post officers and members discuss enhanced and new methods of growing our post, it is timely we all revisit that foundation. It is most evident in the Value Statement of the American Legion.

A VETERAN IS A VETERAN - which means The American Legion embraces all current and former members of the military and endeavors to help them transition into their communities.

SELFLESS SERVICE - which means The American Legion celebrates all who contribute to something larger than themselves and inspires others to serve and strengthen America.

AMERICAN VALUES AND PATRIOTISM - which means The American Legion advocates for upholding and defending the United States Constitution, equal justice and opportunity for everyone and discrimination against no one, youth education, responsible citizenship and honoring military service by observing and participating in memorial events.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - which means The American Legion meets the unique needs of local communities.

ADVANCING THE VISION - which means The American Legion educates, mentors, and leads new generations of Americans.

HONOR THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE US - which means The American Legion pays perpetual respect for all past military sacrifices to ensure they are never forgotten by new generations.

With all the noise that surrounds us we need to stay focused on these values. If we do, we all should have great confidence we will succeed and flourish.

God Bless each of you and God Bless America.

Tom Long



1ST VICE'S COMMENTS



Bill Blank

1st Vice Commander

Legionnaires,

I do not have much to say this time. However our Alabama State Attorney General has requested that our Post and the membership make another effort at getting folks registered to vote. Let's make sure, individually, all our friends and family members not only have been registered but are encouraged to vote.

Secondly we might make mention that our Chaplain Joe Dunn has been very ill and in the hospital. He is now in rehab and making progress at getting healthy. Please pray for him and his wife.

Here is our new American Legion **MARKETING** Logo
which does not replace the **OFFICIAL** logo

 **AMERICAN
LEGION**

OFFICIAL American Legion
Logo





*2nd Vice's
Interim Report
Nancy Waller*



As far as events in January 2022 are concerned, we had the Pelham High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest scheduled for January 19, 2022. After many, many e-mails between 2nd Division Commander (and Post 555 member) Richard Kaster and the POCs at Pelham High School, the decision was made to cancel the contest due to too many illnesses at the school and honestly not enough staff to assist with the event. 2nd Division Commander Kaster contacted 23rd District Commander Paul Gonthier to get his approval to allow Carrington Mills to advance to the 23rd District Oratorical Scholarship Contest scheduled for Sat., February 12, 2022, 10:00 a.m., First Baptist Church in Alabaster. I am looking for Post 555 Volunteers since this is the first contest in which 23rd District Commander Gonthier has been involved, so I am sure he would like any/all help we at Post 555 can provide such as timekeeper, scorekeepers, escorts, and ushers. 2nd Division Commander Kaster will be assisting so I will share any names of anyone interested in helping out. I have this event on my calendar and am hoping to be asked to be the "emcee". I like doing that, and would appreciate working with Post 555 members.

The Department of Alabama American Legion Mid-Winter Conference was held at the Embassy Suites in Montgomery, Alabama, January 13-16, 2022. We had five members of Post 555 paid to attend, but the scare of illnesses that are evident throughout the state, I was the only one who was able to attend, and I was glad to proudly represent Post 555. The National Commander, Paul Dillard (from Texas), addressed the group with his theme of "No Veteran Left Behind". He stated that we need to reduce Veteran suicides, and that Buddy Checks are vital to this effort. He stated "Be the one to save one". There is a Buddy Check Bill that passed the Senate in October 2021 and is currently in the House that would add more mental health assistance to strengthen the program. This would be a non-partisan vote, so it should have no trouble passing.

Here are some bullets from National Commander Dillard.

- NDAAs passed December 2021
- Troops-to-Teachers has been extended
- Need to work on membership
- Flag Replacement Program is important in the communities

3rd Division Commander Willie Rogers works with the Oratorical Scholarship Contests. He urged the District Commanders and the other two Division Commanders to work with their Posts to help start or continue this program. The Department of Alabama Oratorical Scholarship Contest is scheduled for Sat., March 12, 2022. The contests in which we can help are the 23rd District event mentioned in the first paragraph, then the 2nd Division event scheduled for Sat., February 26, 2022 at the Shades Crest Baptist Church in Birmingham. Even if you do not want to participate in any of these events, there is plenty of room for observers. It is a great experience to witness the expertise of these contestants, and I highly recommend spending the time to attend.

Several other key members who shared some words with the group were the National Vice Commander of the Southern Region (out of Georgia) of the Sons of The American Legion, Jason Roberts. He "passed the hat" for the Children and Veterans Program and raised a little over \$300 which he gave to Department Commander Bush. American Legion Riders Director Bill Kilde talked about being a Legionnaire first and attend meetings to stay in touch with your respective Post and Riders group. He talked about how important the "Legacy Fund" is and to donate whenever possible. American Legion Baseball Director (Post 555 member) Alan Phillips and his son, Kyle (Squadron 555 member), gave a presentation about 2022 American Legion Baseball with something that really caught my attention. The 19U Regional Tournament is scheduled for August 03-07, 2022 and guess where? PELHAM, AL!!! Alan mentioned needing Volunteers again this year so I am sure you will hear a lot more information about this in the coming months. Another excellent presentation was from the Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner, Read Admiral Kent Davis. If you were at our Thanksgiving Dinner Meeting several years ago, he was our guest speaker. He spoke of a new Veterans Home coming in Enterprise, Alabama, but his special topic was "The Suicide Challenge: Veterans at Special Risk", similar to the National Commander's focus. It was a great conference and I learned a lot including where to find "stuff" on legional.org. Briefings, videos, publications/handouts, print ads, etc. Lots of info for us to share at our General Membership Meetings—YEAH!!! The last guest speaker was the National Judge Advocate, Mark Seavey. He started his briefing with the fact that he was a lawyer and he didn't even like lawyers, and the rest of his briefing was very informative and accompanied with funny stories that made my face hurt by the end of his briefing!! He emphasized that we need to be ready and understand our Constitution and Bylaws at the National, Department, and Post levels. He shared some information about The American Legion emblem being copyrighted, and that his mission in life is going to Amazon on-line and looking for counterfeit items from China with our emblem on them. He said he cancels these items just as fast as he sees them. Unbelievable, huh?

ADJUTANT'S AREA



Nancy Waller
Adjutant

**AMERICAN
LEGION**

In past newsletters, I have provided the numbers of members we have had at specified times at the Department's direction, and want to let you know that as of January 19, 2022, Post 555 is at 82.11% of our goal of 218 (total of 179 current members paid for 2022) so we met the 80% that we needed—**THANKS TO THOSE WHO HELPED US REACH THE 80% GOAL!!**

Those of you who have not yet paid your dues for 2022, I found out some good news from Ron Koonce, Assistant Adjutant and my "mentor". He said that there is a 30-day grace period until January 31, 2022 to renew your dues to retain your continuous years, as well as keep all of the insurance benefits you currently have.

NOTE: If you do not renew before the deadline of January 31, 2022, you lose your continuous years and will have to re-enroll in the Legionnaire Insurance Trust (LIT) for the plan(s) you had prior to the deadline. I was given a beautiful flyer at the Mid-Winter Conference about the LIT and will provide copies for all at the February 3, 2022 General Membership meeting, and will also include a copy in the monthly mail to members without e-mail addresses as well as add it to the MailChimp e-mail.

There are two ways to renew with one being to mail your \$45.00 check made payable to **Matthew Blount Post 555** to 50 Racquet Club Parkway, Pelham, AL 35124. Ron Koonce will get them out of the mailbox at the Pelham Senior Center, deposit your check, and send me a copy of the "Dues Notice" for me to update your membership in MyLegion.org as a 2022 paid member! I will then send your 2022 membership card via USPS along with a nice letter thanking you for your Service and continued support of Post 555. I cannot wait to send you my nice "thank you" letter and your 2022 membership card with

my signature on it; that is the best part of my job as Adjutant; taking care of YOU!!!

The second way to renew is to pay with a credit/debit card. Please go to legion.org and join online. I check that report almost on a daily basis, so I would LOVE to see your on-line renewal if you like renewing from the comfort of your own home. I just pulled-up a report from MyLegion.org and there are six members who renewed, so THANK YOU!!!

If you are a current R.S.V.P. (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) member, don't forget to report your volunteer hours for the month of January when you come to the February 6, 2022 Post 555 meeting. I submit the hours by the 10th of the next month. If you are not yet an R.S.V.P. member, the only criteria is that you are age 55+ years young. You need to complete an application and supply a copy of the front of your driver's license (proof of age). There is a copier at the Senior Center that I can use to make a copy of your driver's license for you. Every month you will record your volunteer hours anywhere you serve, including Post 555 meetings and events. Just let me know if you would like an application!!

For God and Country
Nancy J. Waller
Adjutant



SERVICE OFFICER NOTES



Jerry McClain
Service Officer

Are you looking for help in encouraging a Veteran to get support or mental health care? Call 888-823-7458 Call us Monday – Friday, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern time

About Coaching Into Care

Coaching Into Care is a free service for families and friends of Veterans. Our responders will briefly assess your concerns and provide appropriate resources and referrals. Through 10 to 30 minute calls, licensed psychologists and social workers offer guidance and help for starting conversations with the Veteran in your life about their mental health or substance use and motivating them to seek treatment if it's needed.

Call us: 888-823-7458

Coaching That's Made for You

No matter your role in the Veteran's life, we are here to educate, support, and empower you to help them access the mental health care they need and deserve.

Spouses and Significant Others

As a Veteran's intimate partner, you may have questions about how to support the Veteran you love. Find answers through the following resources and programs:

- Find tips on communicating during difficult conversations with your loved one.
- Recognize mental health symptoms.
- Learn about VA's treatment options.
- Learn about PTSD's effect on relationships.
- If you worry about the threat of violence in your relationship, seek domestic violence support.

Parents and Family Members

As a Veteran's parent or other family member, you may need help in your efforts to show your support. Explore the topics below to get the help you need:

- Find tips on communicating during difficult conversations with your loved one.
- Recognize mental health symptoms.
- Learn about VA's treatment options.



- Learn about PTSD's effect on families.
- If the Veteran in your family hears voices or has delusions or hallucinations, learn about psychosis.

Veterans

Find support for yourself or another Veteran in making treatment decisions. Start by exploring the resources below:

- Recognize mental health symptoms and hear fellow Veterans' stories of treatment and recovery.
- Find tips on communicating during difficult conversations with a Veteran.
- Find information on benefits that are available to Veterans.
- Call a Vet Center to talk to a fellow Veteran and discuss military experience or challenges in readjusting to civilian life.

Other Veteran Supporters

Whether you are a friend, neighbor, or co-worker of a Veteran, you can make a difference by helping them seek care if they need it. Get started by exploring the topics below:

- Find tips on communicating during difficult conversations with the Veteran.
- Recognize mental health symptoms and how to help someone with PTSD.

va.alabama.gov



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
**VETERANS
AFFAIRS**

CHAPLAIN'S UPLIFT



Joe Dunn
Post Chaplain



Happy New Year, My Fellow Vets

Another year has gone! Oh, how we hoped for 2021 to be a promising year, yet even before the year had left, we were hit with two new variants of Covid!

I'm also sure that many people made New Year's resolutions last January, perhaps thinking that 2021 is the year that they can surely make their resolutions stick. How'd that work out for you? Probably not so good.

It's been said that 83% of people who make resolutions will ditch them by the middle of February! I want to encourage you with 4 New Year's resolutions that you just might be able to keep. At least, this is, I know they're possible for me.

REMEMBER THIS:

A **preference** is something you would **like** to see happen.

A **conviction** is something you would do everything possible to **make** it happen.

RESOLUTIONS THAT WE CAN CONTROL

1) Make it a point to compliment someone every day. It's been said that if we would but compliment **3** people every day, it would go a **long way** in helping to prevent or deal with depression. But at least compliment **One**. YOU CAN DO THAT.

2) Look for ways to do random acts of kindness to others. I always taught my son to give a gift to someone who could really use it, or who would really love to have it, but would never buy it for themselves. YOU CAN DO THAT. My wife and I put money aside regularly and call it "GOD'S MONEY." We don't spend it on ourselves. We look for others who have real needs, in which we could help.

3) Work hard to control your attitude. When things happen to us, it's our **attitude** that makes ALL the difference. What happens to us affects us by about 10%. Our attitude towards it affects us about 90%! You CAN choose your **attitude**.

4) **Don't** wait till Spring to do a Spring cleaning. YOU CAN DO THAT. We all have WAY too much "**stuff**." Look in your drawers, closets, sheds, etc. There **are** people that could use our things that we keep for "some-day". That "day" may come once a year. There are women and children living in shelters because of abuse etc., who **could use** donations, or there are low-income families who **could buy** things more cheaply from stores like The Salvation Army.

If you make resolutions, make sure they ARE attainable, and make sure that you really WANT to make a change in your life in that area. Otherwise, you well may become discouraged and part of the 83% of people who ditch their resolutions by mid-February.

HINT: Accomplishing resolutions are **FAR** more likely to bring to pass if we are secure enough and humble enough to allow a "Buddy" into our lives to help us.

Sorry my Dearly Beloved, that's just the way it is!

For God and Country
CHAPLAIN JOE

POST 555 WORK AREAS

*Triple Nickel
Riders*



Legionnaires,

December was a crazy month! The Legion riders made our presents known. We kicked off the month with a good ole Christmas parade. The riders helped with the First Annual Pelham Christmas Parade. The riders along with other members of the post helped in positioning of the floats in proper order. We also joined in with the decoration of Post 555's own float for the parade. No! no! no! we just could not stop there. We jumped on our bikes and escorted our float through the entire parade.

The next task at hand was Wreaths Across America. Some of my fellow riders and myself joined in with the Patriot Guard to escort the 18-wheeler that carried the thousands of wreaths needed to adorn the headstones of veterans laid to rest at the Montevallo National Cemetery. Once there we jumped in and helped unload the trucks, in preparation of the ceremony; the day of the wreath placement ceremony the Rider joined up with the Patriot Guard once more, and rode in together to pay honor to our comrades laid to rest, to join in the placement of the wreaths on the headstones.

I am Starting the New Year Off with a motorcycle ride. Everyone is invited. January 2nd at 10am. Meet at Dunkin Donuts on Cahaba Valley Road in Pelham. Ride route will depend on temperature. Mount Cheaha Harley Davidson or through Shelby County. We are dealing with Alabama weather, if raining, the ride will be rescheduled.

Doug McDaniel
Triple Nickel Rider's Director

Sons of The American Legion



Due to issues with COVID the January Squadron meeting was canceled.

Several members also were disappointed in having to cancel their plans to attend the Mid-Winter Conference in January.

The February meeting will be February 8, 2022 , 7:00 pm at the Pelham Senior Center. The main business will be preparing for the election of the 2022-2023 Officers. Members are encouraged to attend this important meeting as we prepare for the coming year.

Hope to see everyone on February 8th.
Stay safe!

For God & County

Ron Koonce
Adjutant

MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555



Meets first Thursday of the month.
The February Triple Nickel Membership meeting will be held at the Pelham Senior Center on Thursday February 3rd
 Please join us for dinner at 6PM and for the meeting at 7PM

February 14th will be here before you know it! Let's remember that Special One!

Post Leadership 2021/2022

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

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

Send email to: Editor@alpost555.com

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