



**AMERICAN
LEGION**

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AMERICAN LEGION MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555

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THE TRIPLE NICKEL

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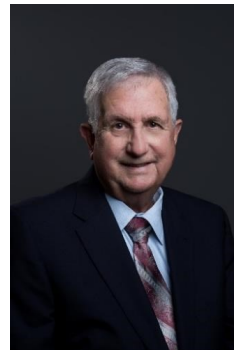
IN GOD WE TRUST



Matthew Blount Post 555

Post Everlasting

James Preston "Jim" Harris III



James Preston "Jim" Harris III, age 83, of Wilsonville, passed away on March 29, 2022.

The service was held on Monday, April 4, 2022 at the First Baptist Church of Columbia with Dr. Mike Miller officiating. Burial was at 2:00 p.m. at the Alabama National Cemetery in Montevallo with Bolton Funeral Home directing.

Jim attended Fairfield High School and the University of Alabama at Birmingham, studying accounting. Jim had a long career in real estate, first as a mortgage banker and then in the real estate title industry in Birmingham. His entrepreneurial spirit led him to find several successful businesses including Cambridge Title, Preferred Title, and Common Bond Title from where he retired at the age of 80.

Jim served his country with honor as a member of the Alabama Army National Guard, the Civil Air Patrol, and the USAF Auxiliary. Jim was a very active member of his community and served in many volunteer capacities. Jim was a member of The American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555, Pelham, Alabama.

His passion for aviation led him to serve as Past President of the Birmingham Aero Club, Past President of the Birmingham Soaring Society, and to serve on the board of the Southern Museum of Flight. He was the Co-Founder of the Shelby County Aviation Society and a member of the Birmingham Hangar of Quiet Birdmen. Flying was more than just a passion for Jim. He believed every hour in the air was a gift from God.

Jim was predeceased by his parents, Agnes Amelia Glen Harris and James Preston Harris, Jr. He is survived by his loving wife of 60 years, Mary Jane Aldridge Harris; daughters, Mary Lee Carter (Ed) and Suzanne Lynne McAdams (Mark); sister, Glenda Aileene Robertson (Carl); grandchildren, Rebecca Lynne Gattus (Bill), Andrew Wheeler McAdams, and Lydia Jane McAdams; and great-grandson, Carter James Gattus.

COMMANDER'S CORNER



Jeff Monday
Post Commander



Winners of the 2022 American Legion National Oratorical contest in Indianapolis, IN:
Third place, Jackson Boone, of Calvert City, KY. Second place, Ashley Tuell of Johnson City, TN and the National First place winner “our” Emma Noble (center)



1ST VICE'S COMMENTS



Bill Blank

1st Vice Commander



First and foremost, I want to congratulate Emma Noble for winning the National Oratorical competition.

We knew as a post that this would be Emma's year at the Nationals. Thank you, Emma, for your fine effort.

Second, I would like to mention Palooza in The Park (A wild, crazy & extravagant party) on May 21, 2022 at 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Ron Koonce, Don Walker and I will not be able to attend due to a prior commitment.

We need someone who will take charge of getting the equipment from the trailer to city park. A truck will be necessary to move the canopy, travel flags, table, banners and information to city park. The best way would be to hook up the trailer and pull the trailer to City Park. The person who will take charge of this task will meet with me at the senior center 05-19-2022 and I will go over everything with him/her. I will give that person the keys to the trailer. We need volunteers to set up and break down. Also, we will need people to man the information table; two people are needed for each 2-hour shift. If you have any questions, please call me at (214)476-7074 or email me at bhbpac@yahoo.com. Just leave a message if I do not answer my phone.

Third, but not least, there is baseball. We have not received a schedule yet but will let you know as soon as one comes out. We need people, warm bodies who will be willing to give a couple hours of their time to support the young ball players of the American Legion post 555 and community. All home games we are covering, are played at the Pelham High School field. Proceeds of the ticket sales help to pay the functional expenses of the game.

If you have any questions please call me, Bill Blank at (214) 476-7074 or e-mail me at bhbpac@yahoo.com. If I do not answer my phone please leave a message, I will return your call.

Bill Blank
1st Vice Commander

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2nd Vice's Interim Report Nancy Waller

I have been keeping you up-to-date on the events surrounding The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Contests and with how well Ms. Emma Noble has been doing.

NEWS FLASH!!!

I just heard from Jerry McClain, who is up in Indianapolis, Indiana at the National High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest. He informed me that Emma has made it to the semifinals!!! If she makes it through the semifinals, she will move on to the finals and have a chance of winning the top scholarship!!!! Here is how the process works at the National level.

The contest got underway Sat., April 23, 2022 at the Wyndham Indianapolis West Hotel with the high school orators competing in the quarterfinals; the top nine contestants will advance to the semifinals (which Emma did). The top three semifinal contestants (hopefully one will be Emma) will advance to the championship finals which were held Sun., April 24, 2022 at 10:00 a.m. EDT (9:00 a.m. CST for us), and was streamed live on The American Legion National Headquarters Facebook page and YouTube Channel. Since I am writing this article the evening of April 23rd, I will not be able to report the outcome from April 24th, but I am sure you will see several e-mails from me and the Department on the outcome. Best of luck to Emma!!!

The next event in which Post 555 will be participating is on Sat., May 21, 2022 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the "Trail System" at the Pelham Parks and Recreation Center. The event is entitled "Palooza in the Park". I sent out a Post-wide e-mail this past week asking for Volunteers to help with the equipment and being at our booth that day, so let me know if you are interested. I unfortunately will be in Montgomery attending some annual required training with ESGR (Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve) and cannot attend, so I will definitely miss it. I have been to several in years past and had a great time. If you do not want to volunteer, at least come to the event and have fun with food trucks, artisan vendors, live music, a dog park (that would be my favorite place),

cornhole tournament, etc. Should be a fun time for all.

In preparation for Memorial Day at the Alabama National Cemetery in Montevallo, there will be flags placed in front of each headstone and at the columbariums. If you would like to place flags on Sat., May 28, 2022 at 9:00 a.m., let me know and I will contact Pam Nichols and put you on the list. The flags and hole-punchers will be staged at each of the sections of the cemetery, and you can go to any section you prefer. I always go to Section 8 where our namesake, Matthew Blount, rests in peace. Pam suggested you bring gloves and perhaps water. I will be there early to help with the flags and hole-punchers, and will look for my Post 555 comrades to join me in Section 8.

There are a zillion events going on for Memorial Day, but I would like to invite you to the Alabama National Cemetery on Mon., May 30, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. ALNC Support Committee members already received an e-mail from Chairman Pam Nichols about help needed earlier that day, so I will be looking for my Support Committee buddies. The ceremony will include a flyover of one or more planes, wreath-layings for each of the branches of service, and guess who will be the guest speaker? EMMA NOBLE!!! As some of you know, she is an excellent and eloquent speaker, so this will be a treat. See you there!!!

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



ADJUTANT'S AREA



Nancy Waller
Adjutant



Last week, Past Commander Barry Blount asked me to provide him with the names of the Post 555 members who had not renewed their memberships for 2022 as of yet, so I sent him a roster of 56 members. That is WAY too many to not have renewed!!! He contacted quite a few and asked me to send those members their Member ID# so they could renew on legion.org, so I did.

Unfortunately, I only had one member renew, and I am proud to say that person was Chris Vonderau who currently resides in Talladega. Since he lives so far from Pelham, it is not feasible for him to attend our meetings, yet he thought it was important enough for him **AND** for Post 555 to maintain his membership. That is what I am hoping that the other 55 members might consider.

After these efforts, I sent a huge e-mail to the 55 members with a "plea" to help us meet the Department's goal of 100% membership for 2022 (the total needs to be 218) by May 11, 2022. We are very, very close, but I don't want to tell you how close because you might say to yourself, "Well, Nancy only needs a few memberships, so I am sure that out of those 55, she will receive enough, so I am not going to worry about it." THAT IS NOT THE RIGHT MINDSET!!! If you can financially afford \$45.00 and have a connection to Post 555 like Chris Vonderau (and a ton of other members) has, please go to legion.org, click on "Renew", and put in your last name and Member ID# which would be on the top of your 2021 membership card. If you need it, I will be ecstatic to give it to you, so like Alexander Shunnarah says on his commercials, "CALL ME, POST 555 MEMBERS"!!! My cell is 251-554-6986. Please be a part of meeting the 100% challenge; thank you all.

You can also renew by mailing a \$45.00 check made payable to **Matthew Blount Post 555** to 50 Racquet Club Parkway, Pelham, AL 35124. Ron Koonce will get your check out of the mailbox at the Pelham Senior Center, deposit your check, and send me a notification of your payment so I can 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**!!!

hours for the month of April when you come to the May 5, 2022 Post 555 meeting. If you cannot attend the meeting, call me or send me an e-mail with your hours. I was given approval to report your hours with a notation that they were reported "telephonically". I don't want to miss any hours!! I submit the hours by the 10th of the month, so contact me before then. 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. 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!!

NOTE: I have some information regarding the requirement for providing a copy of your drivers license. There have been some concerns from several members about doing this, so when I mentioned their concerns to Mrs. Pamela Raines, the RSVP Director, she offered to do a quick briefing about why this is needed. She will be coming to Post 555 in June to do another briefing about a program entitled "Yellow Dot Program" and will take a few extra minutes to help us all understand about the RSVP requirement. Please be present at the June meeting to hear about the Yellow Dot Program as well as the explanation for our current and future RSVP members.

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

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If you are a current R.S.V.P. (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) member, don't forget to report your volunteer

SERVICE OFFICER NOTES



Jerry McClain
Service Officer

Update for benefits.

Military OneSource counseling and other services

Discharged service members, retired service members, their immediate families and surviving spouses can continue to take advantage of the extensive counseling and support services offered by Military OneSource – for 365 days after transitioning out and some for longer.

Leaving no one behind

If you or someone you know is struggling with homelessness or is at imminent risk of becoming homeless, the VA can help. Contact your local VA medical center by calling 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838) or visiting va.gov/homeless to connect with the care that will get you back on your feet.

Military Funeral Honors program

A Military Funeral Honors ceremony will be provided to eligible beneficiaries upon request at no cost to the family.

- The Military Funeral Honors ceremony consists of, at a minimum, the folding and presentation of the U.S. flag and the sounding of Taps by a detail of two uniformed members of the military services. At least one of the detail's members will be from the parent service of the eligible beneficiary.
- Depending on resources, availability and the veteran's eligibility, additional elements of honors such as firing parties and pallbearers may be included in the funeral honors ceremony. Local veterans' organizations and chapters may be used to augment the service honors detail.

Military funeral honors may be requested by contacting the appropriate service coordinator to organize the details. It is common for a funeral director or funeral planner to make the arrangements on behalf of the family. For more information about the Military Funeral Honors program and eligibility, review the MilLife Learning eTutorial.

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👉 Ranger J.Mc

va.alabama.gov



**ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
VETERANS
AFFAIRS**

CHAPLAIN'S UPLIFT



Joe Dunn
Post Chaplain



"For God and Country..."

Every Vet has to come to grips in his or her own heart what they mean when they say those words. What exactly is it "...for Country?" Surely, it at least means commitment to this country far more than any other. In fact, no other country even holds a candle to the USA! And then again, what do we believe, really believe, when we say, "For God...?" May I say that for **Country**, there's a commitment to be made, but for **God**, there's a message to be believed. Let me explain.

Jesus commanded in John 14:1, "*Believe in God, and Believe also in Me,*" Why in Him? Jesus explains Himself in verse six. 1) "*I am the WAY*" (the way to Heaven and to My Father.) 2) "*I am the TRUTH,*" (the very truth itself.) 3) "*I am the LIFE.*" John 10:27-28 "*I give My sheep eternal life.*"

Eternal life, life forever, does not come from following a religion, or rules, nor is it even a gift you hold in your hand. It is a **person**! In John 17:3, Jesus is praying to His Father as He says, "*This IS Eternal Life: (Father) to know YOU, the ONE TRUE God, and JESUS CHRIST, whom YOU have sent.*"

Fellow Vets, sorry but I'm not interested in knowing "Your truth" or "My truth." I am interested in only one thing: the TRUTH! People often say that Jesus sounds SO arrogant by saying what He does say. It may be so, unless it's true, and **GOD** is the one who decides. What does **HE** think? Want a hint? EASTER! It's in the Spring, the time of the year when we cele-

brate new life after the dead of winter, and the raising of Christ from the dead.

One last thought. Romans 4:24 promises you that forgiveness forever will be put to your account if you believe in HIM (God the Father), who raised up Jesus the Lord from the dead. If you believe that, then there is hope for you who think there is no hope. And I only have one thing to say to you: **HAPPY EASTER!**

For God and Country

Chaplain Joe



POST 555 WORK AREAS



Start moving and track those miles: the 100 Mile for Hope challenge is back for its third year of promoting fitness and wellness and support American Legion Veterans & Children Foundation.

SIX THINGS TO KNOW

REGISTER Visit Emblem Sales at www.emblem.legion.org to sign up.

For \$30 registration fee, participants will receive a tech shirt and a certificate of achievement for the download upon completion. All proceeds go to V&CF.

Track Miles There are two options to track miles, regardless of your activity. Walking, cycling, rowing, running, rucking, canoeing, riding a motorcycle and many other activities all count.

Visit www.legion.org/100miles to learn how.

Raise Funds This year, it's even easier for participants to request support for their 100-mile journeys through donations from family members, friend, and others.

Go to www.legion.org/100miles for how-to instructions and a step-by-step video.

Go all the way Last year, special one-month challenges were created for departments and American Legion Riders. This year's, those challenges occur throughout the entire 100 miles Challenge.

The challenge is underway now and ends September 5, 2022.

Visit legion.org/100miles for full details.

MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555



Meets first Thursday of the month.

The next Post 555 Membership Meeting will take place at the Pelham Senior Center on Thursday May 10

Come for Free dinner and fellowship at 6PM, and election meeting at 7PM

The election of Post 555 Executive Officers for 2022/2023 is at this meeting. Nominations from the floor will be accepted. Please inquire with your nominee if will serve

Post Commander Jeff Monday	Caroline Culpepper
1st Vice Commander Bill Blank	Sons of The American Legion Bill Blank, Comm.
2nd Vice Commander TBD	Ron Koonce, Advisor
Adjutant Nancy Waller	American 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.
Post Service Officer Jerry McClain	Awards Program Barry Blount, Chr.
Historian Shauna Hadley	Webmaster Ron Koonce
Public Relations Officer Dorian Ross	Triple Nickel Editor Frank Chacon
Post Trustees Frank Lakotich	Photography Chic Cecchini
Robert Horsley	
Chris Combs	
Auxiliary President	

The Triple Nickel

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50 Racquet Club Parkway
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205-678-1375

commander@ALpost555.com

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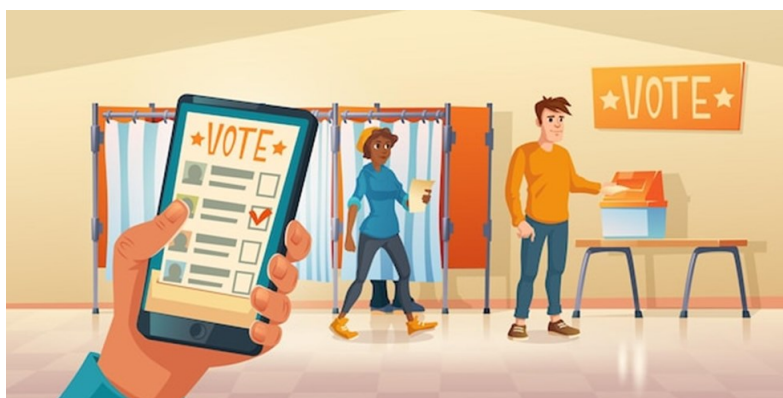
Submit articles prior to the 10th of the month for publication the following month. We reserve the right to edit any submissions for the purpose of publication.

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 Cecchini, Post 555

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**AMERICAN
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Sons of The American Legion Squadron 555

The Squadron has gained one new member in April with **Harry Sessamen** joining our family on April 22, 2022. We continue to recruit new members. Join me in welcoming Harry to The Sons of The American Legion.

Applications for membership to The Sons of American Legion can be found on the "Home" page of the Post website, www.Alpost555.com. Scroll down to the "join" section. Select: "Join the Sons". Print the application and follow the instructions on the form.

The Squadron will hold election of the 2023 officers at the meeting on May 10, 2022 for nominees to fill the following positions:

Commander
1st Vice Commander
Adjutant
Financial Officer
Chaplain

Some of the future activities in which the squadron plans to participate in the coming months are PALOOZA May 21, 2022, Memorial Day, Baseball Support starting in June, and Veterans Day. The Flag Day event, to be held on June 12, 2022, has been cancelled due to construction at the venue. Those who are interested in participating in any of these activities, please contact Commander Bill Blank at bhbpac@yahoo.com or Adjutant Ron Koonce at ron.koonce@alpost555.com.

There is a need for participants to help with representing the Sons of American Legion at the Post 555 Welcome Center during the Pelham Palooza. Contact Bill Blank before May 19, 2022. The event is from 10 am-4 pm. Any time you can help is welcomed.

Commander Bill Blank, Adjutant Ron Koonce and Son Donald Walker, attended the Spring session of the Alabama Detachment Executive Committee in Montgomery April 9th. This same group will be attending the Yellowhammer Legion College to be held May 20-22, 2022, at the Alabaster Veterans Center.

Next Squadron meeting is May 10, 2022, at the Pelham Senior Center, 50 Racket Club Pkwy, at 7:00pm

All active members are encouraged to attend this important meeting as we prepare to close out the 2021-2022 year.

Ron Koonce

Adjutant



The American Legion's 83rd National Oratorical Contest finals got underway Sunday April 24, 2022 in Indianapolis where three finalist high school orators from across the country spoke on the U.S. Constitution. At the end of competition, Emma Noble of Birmingham, Alabama, sponsored by Matthew Blount Post 555, Pelham Alabama, wins first place and a \$25,000 scholarship.

Noble, a junior at Alabama School of Fine Arts, participated in theater as a young child so entertaining listeners about the U.S. Constitution is how she came up with her prepared oration title, "The Power of the Executive Order: Because I Said So!" "

To earn a spot in the National Oratorical Contest, the 50 contestants won their respective American Legion post, district and department contest. The top 18, advanced to the semifinal round to again present their prepared speeches. Noble, edged out the competition in the final round placing First Place.

Congratulations to Emma on an outstanding performance.