



 **AMERICAN
LEGION**

Published exclusively for the members of

THE AMERICAN LEGION MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555

VOLUME XII, ISSUE II

FEBRUARY, MARCH, AND APRIL 2025

THE TRIPLE NICKEL

NEWSLETTER SWITCHING TO QUARTERLY EDITIONS

Our new Commander, Harry B. "Skip" Mize IV (he goes by Skip) asked me to get back to doing the Post 555 Newsletters since the last one I sent was for January 2025. Yes, I have been remiss in doing the newsletters because it takes a lot of time to generate articles, insert photos, and edit my work. I enjoy them, but there is a lot involved in making them look as nice as I can to honor all of our members who are mentioned in the articles as well as ALL members who choose to read them. I will continue to prepare hard copies for the few members who do not have e-mail because they deserve to see what we are doing at Post 555 just as much as those of us with e-mail addresses.

So, here is the first quarterly newsletter that will cover February, March, and April 2025 events, meetings, and anything else that should hopefully be of interest to all Post 555 members. As soon as this one is finished, I will start on the next quarterly edition which will cover May, June, and July 2025, and yes, the next edition will be August, September, and October 2025. The last one for 2025 will only cover November and December 2025 so I can get back on-track with what "quarterly" actually means..... If anyone ever has an article they would like me to consider, do not hesitate sending it to my e-mail which is wallernj@gmail.com. THANKS!!!

OH, THAT TONGUE OF YOUR'S!!!

Recently I was in a meeting with a few men, when the person in charge (I'll call him Fred) made a comment that offended one of the other men (I'll call him Sam). Sam thought that the leader, Fred, was disagreeing with him publicly in front of us all about a belief that he, Sam, held dear to his heart, and he expressed it with all of us in the room.

Yes, Fred had made the comment to Sam openly, that he saw things a bit differently. Suddenly Sam, with a raised voice, said to Fred, "This is not the first you've taken issue with something I've said in front of a group! Sam knew the principle that Jesus taught which says, "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him **in private**," but he wasn't thinking of that.

Sam just spewed out his anger against Fred without thinking. It was obvious to me that Sam was still nursing a wound from the last time Fred publicly expressed a difference of opinion with Sam in a meeting. (They should have talked it over then!) Fred immediately said that he was sorry and asked Sam to forgive him. Sam just hung his head in his hands. I thought he might be praying, but it could have been feelings of disgust.

At any rate, I felt the need to immediately diffuse the situation, so I spoke up and said, "Guys, here we have Sam who was making a point on a subject which he believed in strongly,

and here we have Fred who saw things a bit differently and expressed it openly.” So I pointed out two principles taught in the Bible.

#1: In the book of James, God says that we stumble **a lot**, and the context is the tongue. That means that we do indeed offend each other in what we say, and at times we don’t even know it!

#2: The Bible also says that we are to be **kind, patient** with each other, and **forgiving** each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone. Just as the Lord forgave His own, so should we.

After hearing the Scriptures, Fred walked over and hugged Sam. Oh, the beauty of humility, even in men! ’Nuff Said! You get the point.

*For God And Country,
Chapain Joe*

JUNIOR SHOOTERS’ FUNDRAISER FOR SUPER BOWL FESTIVITIES A HUGE SUCCESS!!

Our Junior Shooters’ got back into the “meat smoking business” and offered butts, briskets, and chicken breasts for you and your family to enjoy during the Super Bowl game that was played on Sun., February 9, 2025.

The meat prices were the same as in past fundraisers (\$40 for butts, \$60 for briskets, and \$35 for 5 ea. chicken breasts). I am proud to report that members and two of Bill Blank’s neighbors donated a total of \$1,610 to the SCSSA, and to top it all off, Post 555 was the highest donator by 12 meat orders—WAY TO GO, POST 555!!!

I want to thank the following members for being a part of this event: **Karryl Anderson, Rich Argo, Bill Blank, Barry Blount, George Brown, John Clopton III, Joe Dunn, Bill Hanks (one of Bill Blank’s neighbors), Tom Long, Harry “Skip” Mize, Helen Moman, Curtis Orse, Mary Lynn Porter (the other neighbor of Bill Blank), Leroy Raymond, Dorian Ross, Harry Sessamen, Nancy Waller, Pete Williams, Eldon Woodie, and John Zeiss.**

I will not mention how many phone calls I needed to make when members “forgot” to pick-up their meat orders.....luckily I did not have anything scheduled later that afternoon, right?

GREAT JOB TO ALL MEMBERS WHO PARTICIPATED TO HELP OUR JUNIOR SHOOTERS!!

MONTHLY ROVEO LUNCHEON AT NEW RESTAURANT IN PELHAM

On Thurs., February 11, 2025, the following ROVEOs (if you do not recall what the acronym stands for, it is “Relatively Old Veterans Eating Out”) gathered at a brand new restaurant in Pelham with the name of “La Gran Riviera” serving Mexican food. I had a delicious dish with rice and chicken, and there were many other positive comments from the ROVEOs who were there such as **Karryl Anderson, Randy Ferguson and his daughter, Ray Pata, Robert Sanders, Tim Vincelette, Nancy Waller, and Pete Williams.** The atmosphere was very nice and we received top-notch service from who I think was the owner. I recommend it to anyone interested in soliciting a new restaurant to the Pelham area to show them that Post 555 welcomes them. We were so busy eating and talking that I forgot to get any photos, so you have to trust my article that all of us were there.....



FUNERAL SERVICE FOR LUTHER STRICKLAND; NO FAMILY OR FRIENDS IN ATTENDANCE, BUT POST 555 MEMBERS WERE THERE

On Thurs., February 13, 2025, six members of Post 555 attended a funeral service for Mr. Luther Strickland. Mr. Strickland had no family or friends in attendance, so I passed the word to see if anyone from Post 555 would like to join me in honoring him with a small service at the Alabama National Cemetery (ALNC) at 10:15 a.m. that morning. Cassie from the VA (a family member of William C. Jones Jr. who was a Post member) had notified me of this situation and hoped that we could have some Veterans there so she could have a service for him.

When I arrived at the ALNC, I checked with the cemetery staff to see where the service was going to be held, and one gentleman stated that there were no family members coming so a service was not scheduled. I was very surprised. While I was still in the ALNC administration offices, Herman Watkins came to see what was going on. I explained the situation to him and he immediately went to the first gentleman with whom I had spoken and told him that there would indeed be a service for Mr. Strickland since Post 555 members were in attendance.

We gathered at the Committal Shelter with Cassy and had a very nice service for Mr. Strickland. Post 555 members who took time out of their days were **Frank Chacon, Randy Ferguson, Vashone Smith, Conrad Stempel, Jimmy Watson, and Nancy Waller**. After the service, we followed the hearse to the burial site where I played Taps on my phone for all to hear as Mr. Strickland was lowered into the vault. It was very special for all of us to be able to pay tribute to a fellow Veteran who had no one left behind. I will always remember that day.



ALNC Rep handing the flag
to Cassie from the VA.

L/R: Frank Chacon, Nancy Waller, Cassie, Vashone
Smith, Jimmy Watson, Randy Ferguson, and
Conrad Stempel in the back.

FUNERAL FOR POST 555 MEMBER DONALD H. BONER

On Mon., February 24, 2025 at 1:15 p.m., five Post 555 members had the honor of being present at the funeral for Donald H. Boner, one of our last Korean War Veterans. There were a lot of family members and friends, and we were proud to be there to represent Post 555. The members who attended were **Bill Blank, Henry Crist, Nancy Waller, Bonnie Woodie, and Eldon Woodie**. It was a very emotional ceremony for the family members, but very well done by the ALNC staff.

Being a fellow member of the Alabama Army National Guard for 29 years, I approached one of the Honor Guard Soldiers and asked him about his National Guard unit, etc. We talked for a short while, then I asked both Soldiers if they would allow me to add them to this article about Mr. Boner's funeral. After going through the right channels, I was given approval to do so.

SGT Nick Young serves in the 135th Expeditionary Sustainment Command based in Homewood, Alabama, and SGT Houston Martin serves in D Co, 1-131st Aviation based in Hope Hull, Alabama. I made sure to tell SGT Martin who played Taps that it was phenomenal. Every single note was perfect, and I thanked him for demonstrating his expertise with the bugle. They both represented the Alabama Funeral Honors organization, and I was proud to be there with some fellow members of the National Guard as they honored Mr. Boner's passing.

We will be honoring Mr. Boner at the next scheduled Post Everlasting Ceremony when we get the family members together. They were very interested in attending our ceremony, but with so many family members, it was a bit of a challenge to get everyone there at one time. We will wait and see.



Honor Guards folding the flag; transferring the flag; presenting the flag to Mrs. Boner.

NATIONAL VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY COMMEMORATION AND RESCUE AT "DOG'S HEAD" MONUMENT DEDICATION CEREMONY AT THE ALNC

On Fri., March 28, 2025 several Post 555 members joined together to help with loading the trailers with flags, chairs, sound equipment, etc. I want to thank the following members for stepping-up that day; **Chic Cecchini, Ray Pata, Conrad Stempel, and Eldon Woodie**.

On Sat., March 29, 2025, the actual ceremony was held at 10:00 a.m. at the Ceremonial Flag Pole. We had a TON of members present to show their respect to our Vietnam War

Veterans; they were **Bill Blank (flag detail)**, **Chic Cecchini (photographer)**, **Richard Kunath (Rider and flag detail)**, **Ray Pata (Rider and flag detail)**, **Vashone Smith (Rider and flag detail)**, **Conrad Stempel**, **Nancy Waller**, **Jimmy Watson (Rider and flag detail)**, **Bonnie Woodie**, and **Eldon Woodie**. Members who were present were **Henry Crist**, **Jim Darden**, **Ronnie McGriff**, **Frank Lakotich**, **Kenneth Paschal**, **Dorian Ross**, **Larry Strayer**, and **Pete Williams**. Thank you to all who helped with the preparations and for those who attended to show their support. **(Check SmugMug for photos taken by our own Chic Cecchini.)**

UNIT 555 AUXILIARY FUNDRAISER AT TEXAS ROADHOUSE

On Tues., April 1, 2025, Commander **Bill Blank** was found hugging the Easter Bunny in the foyer of the Pelham Texas Roadhouse Restaurant!!! You shouldn't be surprised because Bill is a "hugger", no matter who the target is. **Vashone Smith**, President of the Unit 555 Auxiliary reported that the fundraiser raised \$171 from donations of 10% from meals being served!! Great job to Bill and Vashone!!



MOTOAMERICA SUPERBIKES EVENT AT BARBER MOTORSPORTS PARK

Thanks to having a wonderful relationship with Ms. Kourtney Cowart at the Barber Motorsports Park, we were invited to help as "Tram Safety Riders" at this event that was held April 4-6, 2025. We had a small showing of Volunteers, but I want to thank the following Post 555 Volunteers to show Ms. Cowart that we are there to help whenever asked; **Bill Blank (worked three shifts)**, **Andy Burell (worked one shift)**, **John Clopton III (worked two shifts)**, and **Tim Vincelette (also worked two shifts)**. As some of you may know, when we have Volunteers working events at the Barber Motorsports Park, Eventive Sports donates funds to us for our service. Our Volunteers were able to have us receive a check for \$400, so a HUGE thank you to these four Volunteers.

ROVEO LUNCHEON FOR APRIL HAD A LOT OF ROVEOs SHOW-UP

Time for another ROVEO Luncheon, and this one was held on Tues., April 8, 2025 at the Golden City Restaurant (Chinese cuisine). We had almost a full table of members, as well as Tim Vincelette coming in for take-out! The ROVEOs present were **Karryl Anderson, Ron Koonce, Ray Pata, Robert Sanders, Nancy Waller, and Eldon Woodie**. I always vote for us returning to this restaurant due to their egg drop soup that is AWESOME as well as the hibachi-cooked lunches. Highly recommend it to anyone who enjoys Chinese cuisine prepared professionally.



L/R: Eldon Woodie and Nancy Waller.

L/R: Karryl Anderson, Ray Pata, Ron Koonce, Robert Sanders, and Eldon Woodie really leaning into the photo; Nancy Waller is behind the camera (that is why I added the photo with Eldon and I as proof that I was actually there).

CHARACTER IN ACTION AWARDS

Being that we are the sponsors of the certificates and medals for the Character in Action award recipients, we had a great turn-out this quarter on Thurs., April 17, 2025 at the Post 555 table, as well as on the stage; members present were **Skip Mize and Frank Lakotich** on the stage doing the presentations, and enjoying the meal with the “high speed” people was **Barry Blount**, and the rest of the members were **Chic and Rita Cecchini (Chic taking photos, of course...), Lillian Jones (Auxiliary member), Judge Patrick Kennedy, Kenneth Paschal, Alan and Beth Phillips, Conrad Stempel, Donald Walker (Sons Commander), Nancy Waller, Pete Williams, and Bonnie and Eldon Woodie**. I think this is everyone I noticed in Chic’s photos, but if I missed anyone, my apologies.

There were a total of 14 award recipients from schools all over Shelby County. Each one received a certificate and a medal from Skip Mize and Frank Lakotich as they and their family members walked across the stage, stopped for photos, then returned to their tables. Everyone appeared to have a nice time, and surely the students will remember this event for a good while. (Check SmugMug for photos taken by our own Chic Cecchini.)

MARCH, APRIL, AND MAY BIRTHDAY WISHES

March: Bryan, Jeffrey A., 03/11
Cecchini, Leo A. “Chic”, 03/30
Combs, Christopher N., 03/20

McMahon, Tom, 03/13
Munch, A.W. Jr., 03/22
Richard, Andrew, 03/26

DeArman, Harry L., 03/22
Koonce, A. Ronald "Ron", 03/20
McClain, Jerry L., 03/19
McGraw, Aretha M., 03/24

Schrader, Gerald L., 03/05
Schrader, Gerald L., 03/05
Waller, Nancy J., 03/01

April:

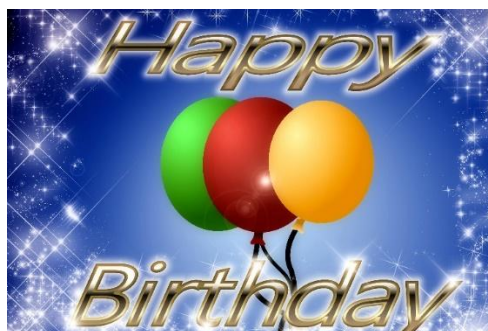
Blank, Bill H., 04/08
Geter, Charles, 04/14
Gilliam, Cheryl, 04/10
Gofourth, Ronald W., 04/12
Johnston, Clarence J., 04/16
Kiser, Charles F. "Chuck", 04/15

Kunath, Richard A., 04/15
Lucas, Jacqueline M., 04/19
Murrell, Stan D., 04/23
Smith, Glennis D., 04/29
Swindle, Gerald L., 04/24
Vandiver, Joshua M., 04/21

May:

Dulaney, Michael A., 05/04
Ginn, Gerald G., 05/16
Hermany, Sandra "Sandy", 05/13

Maull, Kimball, 05/02
Wilkins, Harvey C., 05/06



If your birthday is in March, April, or May and your name is not on this list, it is because it is not listed in your profile in MyLegion.org. Please send me your birthday so you can be included in future Happy Birthday wishes!!

POST LEADERSHIP FOR 2024 – 2025

Post Commander

Bill Blank

First Vice Commander

Harry "Skip" Mize IV

Second Vice Commander

Dorian Ross

Adjutant

Nancy Waller

Judge Advocate

Helen Moman

Finance Officer

Ron Koonce

Chaplain

Joe Dunn

Sons of The American Legion

Donald Walker, Commander

Ron Koonce, Advisor/Adjutant

American Legion Rider's Director

Vacant / Needs to be Filled

Flag Team Coordinator

Bill Blank

Boy Scout Troop 404 Coordinator

David Coram

Jr. Shooters

Sam Richardson, Director

Darrell Lawley, Coach

Sergeant-at-Arms

Jerry McClain

Service Officer

Curtis Orse

Historian

Nancy Waller

Public Relations Officer

Nancy Waller

Post Trustees

Tom McDaniel (1 Yr.)

Vashone Smith (2 Yr.)

Frank Lakotich (3 Yr.)

Baseball Director

Kyle Phillips

School Awards Program

Barry Blount, Chairman

Frank Lakotich, Co-Chairman

Post Awards Program

Nancy Waller, Chairman

Webmaster

Ron Koonce

The Triple Nickel

is published monthly or bi-monthly (dependent upon number of articles submitted) for members of Matthew Blount
Post 555

50 Racquet Club Parkway

Pelham, AL 35124

205-678-1375

wallernj@gmail.com

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: wallernj@gmail.com

Photos by Chic Cecchini, Post 555

Copyright 2022, American Legion Post 555