



Published exclusively for the members of

AMERICAN LEGION MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555

VOLUME X, ISSUE IV APRIL 2023

THE TRIPLE NICKEL

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Matthew Blount Post 555

The American Legion Alabama Commander's Cup & CMP 3-Position Air Rifle Junior Olympic Qualifier

For the third year in a row, The American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555 "Triple Nickel" and Shelby County Sport Shooting Association (SCSSA) Junior Shooters won 1st place in the Commander's Cup event that was held on Saturday, March 4, 2023 at the Anniston Civilian Marksman Program (CMP). There was a total of six teams competing and this team sponsored by the "Triple Nickel" had a tremendous showing of talent for both the "Precision" and "Sporters" teams. Present to observe the event and show their support were several key leaders in The American Legion Department of Alabama. We were honored to have Commander Buddy Keen, Sr. Vice Commander Charles Marsh, and Jr. Vice Commander Don Madden. The Past Commander of Matthew Blount Post 555, Barry Blount, was also present and very proud of how the Triple Nickel shooters acted and performed.

The "Precision" shooters won 1st and 4th places in the team event, and the "Precision" individual places were won by sponsored members of The American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555 as follows: 1st place went to Carley Seabrooke, 2nd place went to Bryce Newman, and 3rd place went to Emily Buck.

The "Sporters" at the SCSSA are an up-and-coming group of dedicated young shooters who represented themselves, the SCSSA, and the "Triple Nickel" very well. Their names are Lainey Bowden, Maggie Bailey, Jenna Huggins, and Tessa Huggins. They were safe, handled their rifles and equipment properly and with care, learned a lot while exhibiting good sportsmanship, and above all, had fun. I overheard Jenna Huggins (who had a huge smile on her face) whisper to her father in the stands that she shot a bull's eye. Her father was just as proud as she was, especially since this was her first competition.

With this competition also a qualifier for the 3-Position Air Rifle Junior Olympics, Carley Seabrooke and Marley Bowden made the "cut-score" (584 points or better) for individual invitations. The 1st place "Precision" team scored a total of 2325 points which exceeded the "cut-score" of 2280 to receive an invitation to the Nationals. A team invite means they can skip the Regionals and take five shooters to the CMP National Championship in July at Camp Perry, Ohio. This is a big event with scholarships as well as having college coaches present.

One more important note to mention was that Marley Bowden should get Silver Level (4 points) Excellence in Competition (EIC) points toward her Distinguished Badge. These are her first points with steps along the way.

For an overview of the entire event, every single shooter followed instructions by the Range Officer and did exactly what they were instructed to do at all times to ensure the maximum level of safety required to participant in an event of this caliber. The sportsmanship was evident with all participants which gives credit to the shooters, their coaches, and their parents. This sport at the SCSSA is family-oriented and the parents are very involved with their shooters. It was a great event from start to finish, and congratulations again to the "Triple Nickel" shooters for their third win in a row of the Commander's Cup (they did win another event several years ago to make a total of four wins)!!!

Nancy J. Waller Adjutant

See photos on page 2



IN GOD WE TRUST





Carley Seabrooke won 1<sup>st</sup> place competing at the Commander's Cup at the CMP in Anniston, Alabama, March 4, 2023.

L/R: Emily Buck, Bryce Newman, Carley Seabrooke, and Barry Blount. Carley Seabrooke is proudly holding the Commander's Cup won by these three superb Junior Shooters.



The "Triple Nickel" Shooters won the Commander's Cup for the third year in a row!!

## LUCAS KALBA WINS 2<sup>ND</sup> PLACE AT THE AMERICAN LEGION 2<sup>ND</sup> DIVISION HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Division held the third level of The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest on Saturday, March 4, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. at American Legion Post 135 in Phenix City, Alabama. Lucas Kalba, winner of the 23<sup>rd</sup> District High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest competed exceptionally well and took 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division contest. Out of the three contestants, Lucas far exceeded expectations being a freshman student at Pelham High School as well as a first-time participant. Lucas's family and Post 555 Legionnaire Jerry McClain (also his coach and mentor) accompanied Lucas to this event. The contest winner will move on to compete at the Alabama Department contest in Montgomery, Alabama on March 11, 2023.

Jerry McClain Post 555 Oratorical Scholarship Contest Chairman

L/R: Lucas Kalba (2<sup>nd</sup> Place Winner), Sarah E. Wilson (1<sup>st</sup> Place Winner), and Henry Halgen (3<sup>rd</sup> Place Winner). Congratulations to Lucas on this great accomplishment at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division level of The American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest as a Freshman; many more years to come in this competition for him!!!





## FIRST VICE COMMANDER

*Bill Blank*

To those who are taking the time to read this wonderful newsletter, welcome aboard and enjoy the journey. Hope this newsletter reaches everyone in good health and good spirits.

I really do not have a lot to add to this but maybe some significant information that will be a benefit to all.

Post 555 has reached the membership level of 92.89 %. Our membership renewals are at 209 and our goal is to reach 225. We are 16 renewals away from reaching that final goal. So, if there is anyone out there reading this who has yet to renew, please give this your attention as soon as possible.

As we all know the American legion is a large family comprised of the Post, Auxiliary and the Sons. We have all served our country and some are sons and wives of those who have served. Our purpose is to continue to serve our communities and country and for the most part our reason for joining the American Legion. So, I ask of each of you to please consider this mission of our post when asked to help support our many activities, to consider volunteering to support one or more of them. Thank you.

Just couple of upcoming spring events:  
Pelham Palooza is an event that is put on by the city of Pelham, an event that brings the people of Pelham together with local business. What a great way to get to know the businesses of Pelham! Every year our post takes part in this community activity. Come join us, let me know if you would like to participate. The Sons of the American legion will also be a part of this event.

The next event is the American legion fundrais-

ing program supporting the American Legion's Children's Fund. It is an event that the Sons of the American legion also supports. It is, the American legion 100miles fundraiser. If you are interested, please contact me, Bill Blank (214) 476-7074.

Last but not least is American Legion Baseball. I am in charge of the support group for our baseball team. We can use all the happy smiley faces we can get. Our group collects the money to pay the referees. Not only do we look for folks to work at the games but would also invite people to just come and watch the games. The sons will also participate in supporting our home teams of post 555. If you have an interest in working a game or two, give me a ring up and we can get you signed up. It really is a good time for everyone. Again, my name is Bill Blank (214) 476-7074; looking forward to hearing from you.

Bill Blank  
1st vice Commander  
Post 555

 AMERICAN  
LEGION



## *2nd Vice's Eldon Woodie*

### **Third Monthly Children's of Alabama Indy Grand Prix at Barber Motorsports Park**

I already sent this information about a good while ago but will continue to make sure you have an opportunity to be a Volunteer if you so choose. We will be **Tram Riders** to ensure the event guests are safe as they ride on the trams as they travel throughout the Barber Motorsports Park in Leeds. The dates are April 28-30, 2023; two shifts are 7:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and 12:00 – 5:00 p.m. There are still plenty of slots for both shifts, so let me (Adjutant Waller) know if you would like to join **Anita Bennett, Bill Blank, Paul Borge, Ron Koonce, Doug McDaniel, Skip Mize, Curtis Orse, Dorian Ross, Vashone Smith, Don Walker, and myself**. Contact me @ 251-554-6986 or send me an e-mail to [wallernej@gmail.com](mailto:wallernej@gmail.com) to sign-up for this event. **NOTE: When you contact me, be sure you give me the event, date(s) you prefer, and shift(s) you prefer.** Please check your calendars and see what you can do to help; THANKS!!!!

### **New Pelham Police Chief, Brent Sugg**

Some of you may have heard that we have a new Police Chief in Pelham, Brent Sugg. The main reason I am mentioning this is so that you know that with the 2023 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year packet already given to retiring Police Chief Pat Cheatwood, I needed you to know that the packet has already been given to the "right people" during this transition, so hopefully the two officers who stepped-up to facilitate this process will be sure to get the paperwork completed and back to us by May 1, 2023. The recipient of the award will be honored at one of our upcoming General Membership Meetings.

### **Junior Shooters' Fundraiser for Memorial Day**

I just heard from Mr. Sam Richardson (SCSSA Director) that the Junior Shooters are having another fundraiser to give you the opportunity to purchase some Memorial Day "goodies" such as "BBC" (**Butts, Briskets, and Chicken breasts**). I sent an e-mail and flyer today (March 23, 2023) and already received four orders. The costs are the same as the last fundraiser (butts are \$40, briskets are \$60, and five boneless/skinless chicken breasts are \$35). I will have sign-up sheets at the April and May General Membership Meetings, and you can send me an e-mail ([wallernej@gmail.com](mailto:wallernej@gmail.com)) or call me @ 251-554-6986 to

place your order. The deadline is Mon., May 22, 2023. The meat will be ready for pick-up at the Pelham Senior Center at 1:00 p.m. on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Please refer to the flyer for more details. Let's continue to be the great supporters of our Junior Shooters that we have in the past, so place your order!!!

### **"ROVEO's" Lunch a Success**

We had our third monthly "ROVEO's" lunch at Café Trentuno in Pelham and it was the largest group so far. We had 15 Post 555 members present and had a great time with all of the little conversations that were going all over the room. With us on March 7, 2023 was **Kar-ryl Anderson, Chic Cecchini, Henry Crist, Nancy Crist, Joe Dunn, Ron Koonce, Rick Morris, Curtis Orse, Ray Pata, Robert Sanders, Vashone Smith, Tim Vincelette, Nancy Waller, Sparkie Waller, and Eldon Woodie**. If you want to become a part of this honorable group of Veterans and spouses, join us for the fourth monthly lunch on Tues., April 11, 2023, 11:30 a.m., Café Trentuno in Pelham (in the same strip mall as the Dollar General). Mark your calendars for the first Tuesday after the General Membership Meetings and join us!! The food is great, but the company is the BEST!!!



Nancy J. Waller for Eldon

## ADJUTANT'S AREA



*Nancy Waller*  
Adjutant

NOTE: You will notice the color is gone. I think that the versions of "Word" are different for me and Editor Chacon. Just pay attention to the percentages and you will see the good months versus the "not so good" months. Thanks!!

Effective July 1, 2022, our new membership drive began. The Department of Alabama gave all Adjutants a list of goals to strive to reach or exceed between July 31, 2022 and May 31, 2023. We struggled in October, November, and December, but came through after that; if you have not renewed, **PLEASE RENEW to help us out!!!**

**Check out January's and February's results—  
HOOAH!!!**

Cut-off Dates:

**July 31<sup>st</sup> = 40% membership (need 90 members renewed/joined)**

**– WE EXCEEDED THIS GOAL BY ACHIEVING 42.22% WITH 95 MEMBERS RENEWING FOR 2023— THANKS!!!**

**August 31<sup>st</sup> = 50% membership (need 113 members renewed/joined) – WE EXCEEDED THIS GOAL BY ACHIEVING 52.44% WITH 118 MEMBERS RENEWING FOR 2023— THANKS AGAIN!!!**

**September 30<sup>th</sup> = 55% membership (need 124 members renewed/joined) – AS OF THE WRITING OF THIS ARTICLE, WE HAVE 55.56% WITH 125 MEMBERS RENEWING FOR 2023—WE DID IT AGAIN!!!**

**October 31<sup>st</sup> = 65% membership (need 146 members renewed/joined) – AS OF THE DEADLINE, WE HAD 61.33% WITH 138 MEMBERS RE-**

**NEWING FOR 2023. WE NEEDED EIGHT MORE, SO WE MISSED THIS ONE. LET'S SEE HOW WE DO WITH THE NOVEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup> GOAL OF 75%.**

**November 30<sup>th</sup> = 75% membership (need 168 members renewed/ joined – AS OF THE DEADLINE, WE HAD 65.77% WITH 148 MEMBERS RENEWING FOR 2023. WE NEEDED 20 MORE, SO WE MISSED THIS ONE, BUT WE ARE MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION!!!**

**December 31<sup>st</sup> (Happy New Year) = 80% membership (need 180 members renewed/joined) – AS OF DECEMBER 24, 2022, WE HAVE 72% WITH 162 MEMBERS, SO WE MISSED THIS ONE BY ONLY 8%. WE NEED 18 MORE MEMBERS, WHICH IS A CHALLENGE, BUT I SENT E-MAILS OUT TO EVERY MEMBER WHO IS PAID THROUGH 2022 TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO RENEW ASAP TO RETAIN THEIR CONTINUOUS YEARS AND ALL LEGION BENEFITS. SO FAR, MARCUS LOWE AND ALAN FARMER RENEWED—THANKS TO BOTH—AND THERE IS STILL A WEEK UNTIL THE END OF THE YEAR TO GET CLOSER TO THE DEPARTMENT GOAL; THERE IS HOPE!!!**

**January 31<sup>st</sup> = 85% membership (need 191 members renewed/joined) – AS OF JANUARY 26, 2023, WE HAD 85.78% WITH 193 MEMBERS SO WE EXCEEDED THE GOAL!!!! I WANT TO THANK MICHAEL MAY, CURTIS ORSE, AND ELDON WOODIE FOR VOLUNTEERING TO CONTACT ALL 2022 EXPIRED MEMBERS TO ENCOURAGE THEM TO RETURN, AND QUITE A FEW DID; THANK YOU TO THESE THREE VOLUNTEERS AND A HUGE THANK YOU**



*Nancy Waller*  
Adjutant (continues)

**February 28<sup>th</sup> = 90% membership (need 202 members renewed/ joined) – AS OF THE WRITING OF THIS ARTICLE (FEBRUARY 18, 2023), WE HAVE 90.1% WITH 204 MEMBERS SO WE EXCEEDED THE GOAL WITH OVER ONE AND A HALF WEEKS LEFT, SO LET'S GET SOME MORE NEW MEMBERS OR RE-NEWALS!!!**

**March 31<sup>st</sup> = 95% membership (need 213 members renewed/joined)**

**- AS OF THE WRITING OF THIS ARTICLE (MARCH 24, 2023), WE HAVE 93.3% WITH 210 MEMBERS SO WITH ONE WEEK LEFT, WE MAY INDEED MEET OR EXCEED THE GOAL OF 213 MEMBERS.**

April 30<sup>th</sup> = 100% membership (225 members renewed/joined)

May 31<sup>st</sup> (Happy Memorial Day) = 103% membership (231 members renewed/joined)

Our next membership challenge was to contact the final 29 expired members and I am proud to report that **Eldon Woodie** took on 24 of these names and if all goes as well as he reported to me, we may have five members staying with us. Eldon left quite a

few messages, found some bad phone numbers (which helps me keep up the Membership Directory), and sent several e-mails. These five members promised to either send a renewal check or come to the April meeting and pay then. I have my fingers and toes crossed that all five of them come through. If they do, they will be highlighted in the May 2023 newsletter.

As I mentioned in the March 2023 newsletter, if you need help renewing your membership and would like to do it online with me, contact me @ 251-554-6986. We will log into MyLegion.org together and walk through the renewal process to get you back on the Post 555 rolls!!!

*For God and Country,*

*Nancy J. Waller*

*Adjutant*

## CHAPLAIN'S UPLIFT



**Joe Dunn**  
*Post Chaplain*



I absolutely love the Spring, especially the beginning of it. For one thing, it means that another season of cold, wet, and dreary days, along with the brown scenery is gone. Not to mention colds and the flu season. I know everyone has their favorite season, but Spring is mine.

I love seeing nature suddenly come alive again and everything turning **green**, as well as seeing the new life of baby birds at my bird feeder. It is also much more enjoyable going to the park or on a picnic or even just taking a walk. I especially like the fact that the Spring means there will be several months before Winter comes again.

Perhaps you never thought about it, but in the Bible God made King David lie down in **green** pastures for a reason. In Psalm 23:1,2 David wrote, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in **green** pastures..." I searched online about the effect of various colors on the human psyche, and it stated that **green** was a quiet, restful, and soothing color that can, 1) invite harmony into our lives, and 2) can diffuse anxiety.

**Green** can also affect our relationships as well as our physical health. Even King David's son, King Solomon, wrote in his book in the Bible, the Song of Solomon 1:16, that his very own bed was **green**. With 700 wives and 300 concubines, if anyone ever needed to diffuse anxiety with the color **green**, it was him!

The internet also pointed out that **green** promotes mental health. In 1946, it was the "**green** month" of

May that was designated as Mental Health Month. And interestingly, **green** is often a part of the decor in medical facilities, purposely designed to bring calm to those who have come to visit a doctor.

After God created Adam and Eve, the very first thing He did to show His love for them was to plant a huge green garden, called the Garden of Eden, Genesis 2:8. It is interesting that God spent time with Adam and Eve, walking in the Garden in the cool of the day, and everything around them was **green**. There was not even a blue sky at that point!

I think I can say with a degree of certainty that God certainly knew what He was doing when He gave us the color **green**. It is a color that signifies new Life, new Growth, and new Beginnings. And it is the Springtime that brings that to us once again every year.

It is as though God shows us through His creation that He is not only a God of the second chance, but the God of the second hundredth chance! His followers know that well, and they Love Him for it. And as for the whole world, the Bible ends with one hopeful last offer of Divine forgiveness. Revelation 22:15 says that both God and the Bride of Jesus (His true followers) say—well—I'll let you read good news for yourself!

*For God and Country*

Chaplain Joe Dunn

# SERVICE OFFICER NOTES

*Service Officer Acting  
Curtis Orse*

Hello post 555 members. VA is now providing more benefits for veterans of Vietnam, and some of the problems that they could not have been taken care of in the past. And for all others who have had problems in the past, with other things also, so look into the pact act if you have questions. The VA is now calling people and asking if they have anything they want to report about their past problems.

Curtis Orse

**[va.alabama.gov](http://va.alabama.gov)**



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF  
**VETERANS  
AFFAIRS**



MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555



**(USUALLY) Meets first Thursday of the month.**

The next Membership Meeting will be on Thursday 4/6/23 at the Pelham Senior Center  
Please come for dinner at 6:15PM followed by the meeting at 7PM

**HAPPY ..... BIRTHDAYS TO:**

- Blank, Billy H., 04/08
- Geter, Charles, 04/10
- Gofourth, Ronald W., 04/12
- Kiser, Chuck F., 04/15
- Johnston, Clarence, 04/16
- Lucas, Jacqueline M., 04/19
- Vandiver, Joshua M., 04/21
- Murrell, Stan D., 04/23
- DiFante, Gretchen, 04/28
- Bishop, David W., 04/29
- Smith, Glennis D., 04/29

*If your birthday is in April 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!!!*

Nancy Waller

*Post Leadership 2023/2024*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Post Commander</b><br>Jeff Monday  | <b>Sons of The American Legion</b><br>Bill Blank, Comm.<br>Ron Koonce, Advisor |
| <b>1st Vice Commander</b><br>Bill Blank   | <b>American Legion Riders-Director</b><br>Doug McDaniel                        |
| <b>2nd Vice Commander</b><br>Eldon Woodie   | <b>Flag Team Coordinator</b><br>Vacant   |
| <b>Adjutant</b><br>Nancy Waller   | <b>Boy Scouts Coordinator</b><br>David Coram Jr.                               |
| <b>Asst. Adjutant</b><br>Ron Koonce   | <b>Jr. Shooting Director</b><br>Darrell Lawley                                 |
| <b>Judge Advocate</b><br>Tom Long   | <b>Baseball Director</b><br>Kyle Phillips                                      |
| <b>Finance Officer</b><br>Andrew Blount   | <b>School Awards Program</b><br>Frank Lakotich, Chr.                           |
| <b>Chaplain</b><br>Joe Dunn   | <b>Awards Program</b><br>Barry Blount, Chr.                                    |
| <b>Sergeant-At- Arms</b><br>Derek Winters   | Nancy Waller, Asst. Chr.   |
| <b>Post Service Officer</b><br>Vacant   | <b>Webmaster</b><br>Ron Koonce   |
| <b>Historian</b><br>Shauna Hadley   | <b>Triple Nickel Editor</b><br>Frank Chacon                                    |
| <b>Public Relations Officer</b><br>Dorian Ross  | <b>Photography</b><br>Chic Cecchini  |
| <b>Post Trustees</b><br>Frank Lakotich (1 yr)<br>Chris Combs (2 yr)<br>Tom McDaniel (3yr) | <b>23rd District Commander</b><br>Paul Gonthier                                |
| <b>Auxiliary President</b><br>Caroline Culpepper  | <b>2nd Division Commander</b><br>Richard Kaster                                |



*The Triple Nickel*

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Items for publication are accepted on Executive Committee approval and available space.

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:**

Frakchacon@gmail.com  
Or Editor@alpost555.com

*Photos by Chic Cecchini, Post 555*

*15th Annual Wreaths Across America Campaign**Alabama National Cemetery**Montevallo, Alabama**Saturday, December 16, 2023*

The cost to sponsor each wreath is \$17.00. This year we are hoping for at least 11,000 wreaths. All wreath sponsors and family members of those interred at the Alabama National Cemetery are invited and strongly encouraged to attend and participate in the wreath-laying ceremony.

**To sponsor wreaths, please complete the information below and mail it Matthew Blount Post 555, 50 Racquet Club Parkway, Pelham, AL 35124.** Make your checks or money orders payable to "Matthew Blount Post 555" and put "Wreaths Across America (WAA)" on the memo line. The deadline for donations is **November 2, 2023**, so please act on this request as soon as you are financially able. Each sponsorship is tax deductible. For more information and/or questions, please contact Nancy Waller, Adjutant & Post 555 WAA Chairperson @ 251-554-6986. Thank you in advance for your show of support to our Fallen Heroes and their family members during the 2023 Christmas Season.

Donor requests for the names provided below (in honor of and memory of) will be included in the virtual "Honor/Memory" display for 2023 at <https://scalnc.org/waa-at alnc>. We will insure these names are sent to the appropriate person prior to the deadline of November 30, 2023.

The Support Committee for the Alabama National Cemetery (SCALNC) is the host of the ceremony. Inquiries regarding the ceremony, volunteering, and wreath placement are to be directed to the SCALNC website: SCALNC.org or e-mailed to supportcommitteealnc@gmail.com

-----CUT HERE-----

## 15<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA DONATION FORM

PRINT NAME OF INDIVIDUAL / ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ SPONSORSHIP AMOUNT: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

IN HONOR OF (LIVING): \_\_\_\_\_

IN MEMORY OF (DECEASED): \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_