



**AMERICAN  
LEGION**

*Published exclusively for the members of*  
**THE AMERICAN LEGION MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555**

VOLUME X, ISSUE VIII      SEPTEMBER 2023

THE TRIPLE NICKEL

**WE BID A FOND FAREWELL TO POST 555  
MEMBER, JOHN GAYDON**



You may have seen my e-mail sent Post-wide letting you know of the passing of one of our members, John Gaydon, on August 20, 2023. I attended a very nice memorial service at the Alabama National Cemetery on Thurs., August 25, 2023 along with several Post members.

John's wife, Sharon Gaydon, was surrounded by friends and family who joined her to honor John with several certificates and flags. An "American Legion Post Everlasting Resolution" was read and presented to Mrs. Gaydon by Adjutant Nancy Waller on behalf of Post 555, a Resolution from Governor Kay Ivey was read along with the presentation of a state flag that was flown over the capitol by Representative Kenneth Paschal, and of course an American flag was presented by two members of the U.S. Air Force based at Maxwell Air Force Base. They performed the unfolding and refolding of the American flag with unbelievable precision and dignity, and offered the flag to Mrs. Gaydon with the utmost of respect and caring for her loss. It was a tremendous show of how much John was loved by everyone. He will be missed by everyone at Post 555.

# CHAPLAIN'S UPLIFT

"What is wrong with our country?" "What is going on?" "I've never seen people so full of hatred!" Our grandkids will not grow up in the country that we once knew." And on and on it goes. The statements seem endless. What IS going on with our country—actually not just our country, but the whole world? The Bible offers answers.

And yet in so many places, when you mention the Bible, there are those who are quick to say, "The Bible?! Oh that's just religion." REALLY? And if it offers truthful answers to exactly what is going on and why, to those who are truly confused and asking questions about what is wrong with our world today, would we consider its answer? Most people in the world would not. They simply do NOT want in ANY WAY to believe that they are responsible, and yet when they say such things like, "I don't believe the Bible," they are simply making God a liar!

In the Book of 2Timothy 3:1, we are told that in the last days, perilous (Biblical synonym "furious") times will come. Also, Matthew 24:12 tells us that because sin is SO rampant, the love of many will grow cold. A famous poet, Robert Frost, wrote a poem below about the contrasting ideas as to how the world will end. According to the Bible it will be by **fire**, 2Peter 3:12. Yet because the author sees the effects that intense hatred has on the human beings, he sees that it is that kind of hatred that is making men's and women's hearts become as cold as **ice** in these last days, and that we are destroying ourselves from within.

## ***Fire and Ice***

*Some say the world will end in **fire**, some say in **ice**.  
From what I've tasted of desire, I hold with those who favor **fire**.  
But if it had to perish twice, I think I know enough of **hate**,  
To say that for destruction, **ice** is also great and would suffice.*

I am simply offering answers this month to what is really going on in the world and why. Here is one more offer. The truth is not meant to lead us to despair, but rather to help us to realize that God offers Eternal, Divine Forgiveness, and Mercy to every single person who realizes that they are lost, forever and accepts God's wonderful offer by faith. There is NOTHING like forgiveness my fellow Vets!

*Be Encouraged My Fellow Vets,  
Chaplain Joe*

## **ROVEO LUNCHEON LOCATION CHANGED "AGAIN" (keeping things interesting and fun)**

Those of us who regularly attend the ROVEO (Relatively Old Veterans Eating Out) monthly luncheons enjoyed a good time at "Wok On In" on Tues., August 8, 2023. There were eight Post 555 members and one spouse of a member. The restaurant was fairly small, so we had to move two tables together to fit all nine of us. Food was O.K., but not really enough room if we ever have a larger group, hence the discussion of a different location for September's luncheon.



**L/R Around the Table: Rita Cecchini (guess where Chic is???), Steve Loftin, Robert Sanders, Nancy Waller, Karryl Anderson, Frank Chacon, Eldon Woodie, and Bonnie Woodie.**



**L/R Around the Other Side of the Table: Karryl Anderson, Frank Chacon, Eldon Woodie, Bonnie Woodie, Chic Cecchini, Rita Cecchini, Steve Loftin, and Robert Sanders. It is my turn (Nancy Waller) to be behind the camera so that Chic can be in a photo!!**

The next ROVEO luncheon will be held on **Tues., September 12, 2023, 11:30 a.m., at Margarita Grill.** In case you do not know this, the owner of Margarita Grill is Javier Jerez, a Post 555 member, so I expect we will more than likely be treated like royalty by him (if he is there that day) and his staff. They are a wonderful group of people, and the food is GREAT!!! Please join us!!

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



## Sons of The American Legion Squadron 555

I hope that everyone is having a great summer and staying cool.

I would like to congratulate Tom Long on his recent completion of the Alabama Yellowhammer Legion College, making him the fourth member of SAL Squadron 555 to become an alum of this great leadership program alongside First Vice Commander Blank, Adjutant Koonce, and myself. Having four members among the ranks of AYLC graduates is something to be proud of, especially when there are only a couple dozen graduates statewide. Squadron 555 continues its AYLC involvement with Adjutant Koonce serving as the program's Historian while I again delivered the SAL portion of the course for AYLC Class 7-23. We should all be excited that members of the Triple Nickel family are bringing these valuable lessons back to help grow the potential impact that our organization can have.

With the 2023 baseball season behind us, I would also like to express my appreciation to the SAL members who supported that program – particularly Bill Blank, Kyle Phillips, and Skip Mize, who put in a lot of organizational, leadership, and logistical effort during the regular season and throughout our third and final iteration of hosting the Regional Tournament.

Squadron 555 continues to plan activities in support of our mission to serve the Post and our community. We completed our first test-run of a Triple Nickel Fitness Brigade (TNFB) challenge and, while we are not sure if the Pacer app is the right tool for that job, it can be a great motivational tool while we continue to look for ways to promote the overall well-being of our 555 family. If you want to check out the TNFB group, you can join us in the Pacer app using group code "V42570347".

We are also exploring a number of opportunities for potential activities around the area to increase camaraderie among Triple Nickel family members and the Veteran community at large. Work also continues on developing education programs to help instill the patriotic values of the Four Pillars in our youth members.

SAL members will join other members of the 555 family in a volunteer opportunity arranged by squadron member Kyle Phillips at the Barber Vintage Festival. If you can spare the time for one or more half-day shifts October 6-8 for a fun time that greatly benefits the Post, Post 555 Adjutant Nancy Waller still has many open spots on the roster. Give her a call @ 251-554-6986 or send an e-mail ([wallernj@gmail.com](mailto:wallernj@gmail.com)) to be a volunteer!!!

Recruitment for the 2024 year has begun. If you have not done so already, I would like to encourage you to join or renew ASAP to avoid any interruptions in continuous-year status. Do not forget about any SAL members that you may be sponsoring, like children and grandchildren. If you are eligible for dual-membership of both TAL and SAL but have not yet joined the Sons, we would love to have you. Likewise, if you know of any eligible potential members (male descendants of either current TAL members or of Veterans who have passed away), Squadron 555 would be glad to have them join us!

Squadron 555 has plans to offer membership card lamination for a small fee that will go toward the SAL. This can be done at the regular Post or Squadron meetings. As an incentive to renew early, the lamination cost may increase as we get closer to the end of the year!

Our next meeting will be at 19:00 on 12 September at the Pelham Senior Center with remote access via Microsoft Teams. All are encouraged to attend; I hope to see you there!

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

## PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

On Mon., August 14, 2023, the Alabama National Cemetery in Montevallo held an abbreviated "Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive" ceremony. The memory board was kept at Committal Shelter 3 for the entire week for all to come to see. The Support Committee voted to keep a small remembrance of the end of WWII, but due to extreme heat being an issue, the ceremony was shortened. Our Photographer, Chic Cecchini, was there to document the event a good number of Post 555 members were in attendance. **Thank you to Karryl Anderson, Chic Cecchini, Frank Lakotich, Kenneth Paschal, Ray Pata, Conrad Stempel, Jimmy Watson, and Eldon Woodie.** Our dear friend George Hamilton, WWII Veteran, was present to honor the WWII Wreath of Honor. Below are a few photos to enjoy.



**WWII Veteran, George Hamilton (left) honoring the WWII Memorial Wreath with a smart salute.**



L/R: Frank Lakotich and Eldon Woodie.



Ray Pata (left) reading about the WWII Veterans on the Support Committee Memory Board.

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

## ADJUTANT'S AREA

Our membership for the 2023-2024 membership year is already up to **110** renewals!!! We met the 50% membership goal set by the Department of Alabama by the end of August, so thanks to everyone who has renewed so far! I would love to list everyone, but I think I would run out of room, but my sincerest THANKS goes to each and every one who renewed, and another THANKS to those who will be renewing SOON so we can keep Post 555 the best in the 23<sup>rd</sup> District!!!! We are certainly the largest Post, and at the recent 23<sup>rd</sup> District Quarterly Meeting, out of the 12 Posts in this district, Post 555 was one of six Posts who achieved 50%, so those of us who were in attendance (Commander Blount, Judge Advocate Long, Finance Officer Koonce, and I) were VERY proud of this achievement thanks to EACH OF YOU WHO RENEWED!!!!

If you don't want to continue to receive monthly renewal notices, you might consider making your membership "auto renew". Refer to the attachment for more details. Just a thought.

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

## **SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAY WISHES FOR OUR "FALL" BABIES**

Vonderau, Chris, 09/01  
Zeiss, John J., 09/01  
Watson, Steve J. "Jimmy", 09/02  
Jones, James L., 09/04  
McLain, Kyle D., 09/04  
Cleveland, Kenneth A. "Ken", 09/06  
Orse, Curtis R., 09/06  
Patton, James H., 09/09  
Dobbins, Durall P., 09/10  
Echedom, Jacqueline R. "Rena", 09/12

Franklin, Joyce, 09/12  
Kaster, Richard L., 09/12  
Whitney, David N., 09/13  
Merritt, Sammy L., 09/15  
Morris, Richard P. "Rick", 09/15  
Mann IV, James R. "Jimmy", 09/16  
Dunaway, James E., 09/20  
Jensen, Paul E., 09/20  
Ackley, Charles W., 09/22  
Walker, Quinttel W., 09/23



***If your birthday is in September 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, so our next meeting is scheduled for **September 7, 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. We have a guest speaker from Service Dogs of Alabama, and yes, he will be bringing his service dog, so dog lovers, DON'T MISS THIS!!!

## 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*



# ***The Triple Nickel***

is published monthly for members of Matthew Blount Post 555  
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Items for publication are accepted upon Executive Committee approval and available space. Submit articles prior to the 10<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:editor@alpost555.com)

Photos by Chic Cecchini, Post 555

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