



Published exclusively for the members of

AMERICAN LEGION MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555

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THE TRIPLE NICKEL

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Matthew Blount Post 555

March 15, 2023 is the 104th Birthday of the American Legion. Since March 15, 1919 "The American Legion," an organization of wartime veterans. An amazing string of accomplishments would follow over the next 99 years. Equally amazing was how quickly the organization took root as a powerful national and community force. The American Legion's founders served in World War I and they were "still serving" when their successors fought the second world war— just as every generation of Legionnaires has served its comrades from all wars since. But serving fellow veterans is just one of the many ways that The American Legion assists in communities and serving the youth of America. Ninety-nine years ago this month, members of the American Expeditionary Force were asked to "determine the scope of the work and carry forth the objects of this association." The association was The American Legion. They surpassed all expectations. Legionnaires continue to do so today, with a vision for tomorrow.



Free online American Legion Training

A new mobile-friendly online training program for members of The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion and Auxiliary is now available free of charge, replacing the former American legion Extension Institute. "Basic Training" is a five-part lesson housed on the The American Legion Education Institute site at www.legion.org/training. Topics covered are History & Organization, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth. A 40-question exam is provided. Graduates can download and print a certificate of completion and order a Basic Training Graduate pin from Emblem Sales. All officers and members are encouraged to complete the training accordingly. Check-in is at 4 p.m. with check-out at 11 a.m. For more information, contact Christy Jone at the Department Headquarters. christy.jones@legional.org Select Link to Agenda



Department Convention set for June 22-25, 2023

This year's Annual Convention will be held at the Embassy Suites in Montgomery, 300 Tallapoosa St. The daily rate is \$139, with parking for \$20 a day. The cutoff for room reservations is May 25. Call (334) 269-5055 to make reservations. Use discount code ALD or tell agent that you are attending the Alabama Department of The American Legion Conference. Reservations deadline is May 22, 2023. This hotel does not accept checks, so please plan accordingly. Check-in is at 4 p.m. with check-out at 11 a.m. For more information, contact Christy Jones at the Department Headquarters. christy.jones@legional.org Select Link to Agenda



IN GOD WE TRUST



COMMANDER'S CORNER



Jeff Monday
Post Commander



By now, you should have heard or read about the “BE THE ONE” Campaign initiated by The American Legion National Commander. This program encourages American Legion Family Members, Veterans, Service Members, and others to take action when they believe a Veteran is at risk of suicide.

The program’s primary goal is to reduce the number of Veteran suicides. It will do so by destigmatizing the simple act of asking for mental health support, providing peer-to-peer support and resources in local communities, and educating people on how they can “Be The One”.

For us as Post 555 Veterans, talk with fellow Veterans about how you are feeling. Ask for help when you think you need it. Know that there are millions of people who are ready to help you. Remember that your family and friends care.

If you are a Veteran experiencing a crisis, the VA has resources available 24/7. Also, recently a new way to call for help is to **dial 988 and press 1**. You can also text 838255 or visit veteranscrisisline.net.

No matter what method you choose, **FOLLOW THROUGH AND ASK FOR HELP!!!!** **You** are vital to fellow Post members, family members, friends, co-workers, clergy, etc., etc. and you need to seek help immediately upon having feelings that you cannot handle whatever is going on. Do NOT continue with these feelings, but reach-out; call 988; call a fellow Veteran; or call a close family member who understands what you have been going through so that they can help you work through the tough spots to get you the help you desperately need. There are **SO MANY** ways to get help, so do not deny your family and friends the **privilege** of having you with them for many years to come; **YOU MATTER!!!!!!**

*For God and Country,
Jeffrey H. Monday
Commander*



1ST VICE'S COMMENTS



Bill Blank

1st Vice Commander



Hello everyone who reads the newsletter.

I am on this date the delinquent first vice actually submitting an article. I have been absent for the past two months and thought I better get with it. I do hope this newsletter finds everyone in good health and happy with their life.

The first thing I want to do is thank everyone for their condolences for the passing of my sister. The out pouring of sympathy from post members was tremendous. From my heart I want to thank everyone who acknowledged the loss of my sister one more time.

Now on to today's event. Today is the district Oratorical and Lucas Kalba is representing Post 555 in the district. We should all wish him good luck in today's event (2/18). He is a great young man and did a very good job in the first Oratorical. I think Lucas will go far in this competition.

I want to bring forward a subject that most may not want to read about and that is the mission of the American legion. We are veterans and patriots who have served our country in many

ways. All of us have given our time in the service of our country and now we are all serving our communities, youth and our veterans. To do these things we need support through volunteers. People like you and I are what is needed to complete our mission. Even if you volunteer for only one event it would be a great offering to our mission. Please the next time you see an event coming up or you get a call requesting your support just go ahead and volunteer it would mean so much to our mission and to Post 555.

THANK YOU!

Bill Blank

1st Vice Commander Post 555



*2nd Vice's
Eldon Woodie*

Second Vice Commander's Comments

The Second Vice Commander, Eldon Woodie, recently had eye and knee surgeries, so just in case he is still recovering, I thought I would add an article on his behalf of some events that happened in February and what is planned for April and May.

Flag Raising at Sage Bar and Grill, Calera

On Sat., February 4, 2023, First Vice Commander Bill Blank was the facilitator and had quite a few members of Post 555 do a Flag Raising at the request of the owners of the Sage Bar and Grill in Calera, Alabama. The old flag was in such bad shape that they had already lowered it, so the event was a lot quicker than what we usually have. It was a very large flag (6' x 10') so it took more members than normal to make sure it was raised without touching the ground.

They all did a great job. Our Volunteers were **Bill Blank, Paul Borge (new member), Jeff Bryan, Ronald Koonce, Skip Mize, Timothy Vincelette, Donald Walker (representing the Sons of The American Legion), and John Zeiss**. Representing The American Legion Riders was **Barry Blount, Eric Fort, Doug McDaniel, Jeffrey Monday, and Ray Pata**. In the photos you will notice a beautifully dressed woman by the name of Lillian Jones whose husband served in the USMC, and she received the honor deserved as the spouse of a Veteran to be in our photos. She used to work at the restaurant so she was glad to be present for the Flag Raising.



L/R (front): Bill Blank, Jeffrey Monday, Timothy Vincelette, Lillian Jones (holding the new flag), Ron Koonce, Skip Mize, and Paul Borge.

L/R (back): Eric Fort, John Zeiss, Barry Blount, Jeff Bryan, Don Walker, Ray Pata, and Doug McDaniel



L/R: Jeff Bryan (tan jacket), Skip Mize (dark jacket to the left of Jeff), John Zeiss, Donald Walker (holding new flag), and Paul Borge (getting the lanyard ready).

Mission Accomplished; JOB WELL DONE TO ALL!!!!



ADJUTANT'S AREA

Nancy Waller
Adjutant



Children's of Alabama Indy Grand Prix and Regions Tradition (PGA Tour Champions)

I received two opportunities for Post 555 members to volunteer to help with one or both of these upcoming events, and for the Post to receive a donation for our efforts from the Bruno Events Team. I sent a Post-wide e-mail out on February 15, 2023 and only heard from a small group of Volunteers, so I am reaching-out for more Volunteers to fill a TON of slots.

For the "Children's of Alabama Indy Grand Prix" event, they are looking for **Tram Riders** to ensure the event guests are safe as they ride on the trams 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.

The "Regions Tradition" is a PGA Tour Champions Event scheduled for May 10-14, 2023 at the Greystone Golf and Country Club in Birmingham. There are two shifts which are 7:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. They are asking for **Patron Control Volunteers** (checking tickets at the entrance of hospitality venues and making sure the patron has the correct ticket to enter, and then putting-on a wristband) and **Hole Marshalls** (deployed on a specific hole and monitor the crowd to make sure they are silent when the golfer is about to tee off, and help locate any golf balls that may have been hit off of the course).

Contact me @ 251-554-6986 or send me an e-mail to wallernj@gmail.com to sign-up for any or several of these positions. **NOTE: When you contact me, be sure you give me the event, date(s) you prefer, and shift(s) you prefer.** Don't just say you want to help because I have two rosters to make sure that the event staff has

your names and shifts for which you are volunteering. Please check your calendars and see what you can do to help; THANKS!!!!

23rd District High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest

The second level of the High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest was held at the Pelham Senior Center on Sat., February 18, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. The winner of the 23rd District High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest was 9th grader Lucas Kalba. He will advance to the 2nd Division High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest on Sat., March 4, 2023 at Post 135 in Phenix City, Alabama. Lucas' entire family was there to witness both of his orations, as were several members of Post 555 and District 23.

Representing Post 555 were **Jerry McClain (Post 555 Oratorical Chairman), Escort; and Nancy Waller (Adjutant), Moderator**. Representing District 23 were **Holly Boslet (Adjutant), Timekeeper; Charles Duncan (District Executive Committeeman), Judge; Ronald Koonce (Public Relations Officer), Usher; Charles Knight (Vice Commander), Facilitator; Dee Long (spouse of Tom Long), Timekeeper; and Tom Long (Judge Advocate), Judge**. It was wonderful to listen to this young man as he shared his Prepared Oration as well as the Assigned Topic. We all wished him well as he takes part in the third level of competition.

Nancy J. Waller
Adjutant



ADJUTANT'S AREA
CONTINUES

fective 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. Here is what they are asking us to do as far as membership numbers. You will notice that unfortunately I had to use the red highlighting because we fell short of the October, November, and December goals, but do NOT give up; **RENEW!!!**

Check out January's results after the red highlighting—HOOAH!!!

Cut-off Dates:

July 31st (virtual green... could not get the color transferred)= 40% membership (need 90 members renewed/joined) – WE MET AND EXCEEDED THIS GOAL BY ACHIEVING 42.22% WITH 95 MEMBERS RENEWING FOR 2023—THANKS!!!

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

September 30th = 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 31st (virtual red... could not get it transferred)= 65% membership (need 146 members renewed/joined) – AS OF THE DEADLINE, WE HAD 61.33% WITH 138 MEMBERS RENEWING FOR 2023. WE NEEDED EIGHT MORE, SO WE MISSED THIS ONE. LET'S SEE HOW WE DO WITH THE NOVEMBER 30TH GOAL OF 75%.

November 30th = 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 31st (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 31st (again, virtual green for the reasons above)= 85% membership (need 191 members renewed/joined) – AS OF JANUARY 26, 2023, WE HAVE 85.78% WITH 193 MEMBERS SO WE MET AND EXCEEDED THE GOAL!!!! I WANT TO THANK MICHAEL MAY, CURTIS ORSE, AND ELDON WOODIE FOR VOLUNTEERING TO CONTACT ALL 2022 EXPIRED MEMBERS TO

Adjutant's area continues

*(virtual green continues all the way to the end of February)***ENCOURAGE THEM TO RETURN, AND QUITE A FEW DID; THANK YOU TO THESE THREE VOLUNTEERS AND A HUGE THANK YOU TO THE RETURNING MEMBERS!!!**

February 28th = 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 RENEWALS!!!

March 31st = 95% membership (need 213 members renewed/joined)

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

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

I would like to highlight the members who returned to us. Everyone was mailed a nice welcome letter and new 2023 membership card, in hopes that some of them will continue attending our monthly meetings and perhaps get involved in some of our events. The members who renewed in February after being contacted either via phone, e-mail, or replied to the renewal that was mailed to them were as follows: **Donald W. Fitts, Patrick E. Kennedy, Earl W. Littlefield Jr., Daniel G. Manuel, A.W. Munch Jr., Brian K. Newton, and Octavio Samper.** THANKS TO ALL!!!

I also want to thank Mr. Littlefield for asking for help with his online renewal. We worked together on the phone to get it accomplished for him by using MyLegion.org and a credit/debit card, so if anyone would like help with an online renewal to save time, 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

SERVICE OFFICER NOTES

Service Officer

Hello post 555

This is your P O S for post 555
here are a few things that may be a help to some.
Vietnam War Vets. the pact act expands health care
eligibility for vets of the Era. For those who are
having trouble getting paid travel pay, go to the V.
A. window for help. (Depression vs. Blues know
the difference) if you want to know, let me know
and I'll get you the info.

Also, V.A. has what they call Pop-UP PitStop it's
for those who have a wheelchair of any kind,
and they are in need of repairs, etc. aka a tune-up,
come to the clinic at the parking deck. Hours are
9am to 2:30 pm. It's a walk in, no appointment is
needed # is 205-428-3495 etc. 347980

(Curtis Orse)

va.alabama.gov



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
**VETERANS
AFFAIRS**

CHAPLAIN'S UPLIFT



Joe Dunn
Post Chaplain



"SOMETIMES THE TAIL WAGS THE DOG"

Have you ever used that term? Do you know what it means? That is a term that I have often used overseas while working in a foreign culture. Perhaps you know what I am talking about, but you have chosen to express it another way. For instance, my son worked for years at the Olive Garden. At times I have called him, and he would say, "Dad, I can't talk right now, I'm in the weeds." I knew exactly what he meant. He was overrun with customers. It was a situation that he did not create, nor could he control, even though it was for his good. Once the night ended, he would collect more tips at his job than normal, because of so many customers. For a while, though, "the tail was wagging the dog."

As a Vet, you would understand how many times in battle a G.I. has radioed in for help and saying, "We're being overrun!" The term simply means that you have found yourself in the middle of a hard situation that was not of your doing, nor can you control what is coming at you. It is simply a case of, to use the term, "the tail is wagging the dog." You can, tough, control the outcome, because it's at that point that you have two choices. You can either give up, or you can face the problem and work your way through it.

I realize that none of our Vets at the Triple Nickel are fighting battles in war, but every one of us find ourselves at times where our schedules, our problems, or our responsibilities are putting such pressure on us, that we have to dig deeper than normal to get through the situation we are facing. It is then we understand that, "the tail is wagging dog." That is, we are not in control of what is going on in our lives, and we have to ask ourselves the ques-

tion, "How do I get through this?"

At that point, the only mature thing to do is to give proper leadership to the situation that we find ourselves in. One might say that they are not a leader. Actually, though, everyone is a leader in one way or another and to one degree or another. That being the case then, such a leader must be able to do two things:

- 1- He must be able to look farther down the road than others and see what the results might be of a decision **made**.
- 2- She must be able to look farther down the road than others and see what the results will be of a decision **not made**.
- 3- We all must realize that the decisions we make have consequences, and that doing nothing **is** a decision.

People are watching more than we realize, and all of our choices affect us personally, and often other people as well. Others look up to us and often need us, **especially** when "the tail is wagging the dog."

For God and Country,

Chaplain Joe

MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555

Post Leadership 2023/2024



(USUALLY) Meets first Thursday of the month.

The next Membership Meeting will be on March 1st at the Pelham Senior Center
Please come for dinner at 6:15PM followed by the meeting at 7PM

Happy March Birthdays!

- David C. Lee, 03/01
- Nancy J. Waller, 03/01
- Robert E. Genry, 03/03
- Eddie E. Eagle, 03/05
- Gerald L. Schrader, 03/05
- Stephen M. Combs, 03/07
- Vashone L. Smith, 03/08
- Paul G. Walker, 03/08
- Jeffrey A. Bryan, 03/11
- John Gaydon, 03/11
- John S. Atwell Jr., 03/12
- Tom W. McMahan, 03/13
- Jerry L. McClain, 03/19
- Christopher N. Combs, 03/20
- A. Ronald "Ron" Koonce, 03/20
- Harry L. DeArman, 03/22
- A.W. Munch Jr., 03/22
- Aretha M. McGraw, 03/24
- Andrew Richard, 03/26
- Leo A. "Chic" Cecchini, 03/30

If your birthday is in February 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 J. Waller
Adjutant

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



The Triple Nickel

is published monthly for members of Matthew Blount Post 555.
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Pelham, AL 35124
205-678-1375

commander@ALpost555.com

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: Editor@alpost555.com
or frakchacon@gmail.com

Photos by Chic Cecchini, Post 555

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American Legion Post 555



Sons of the American Legion

The Squadron continues to meet on the second Tuesday of the month at the Pelham Senior Center, 7:00 pm. You are encouraged to attend and be a part of the activities. We look forward in seeing you on March 14th .

For God & Country

Membership renewals are now at 30 of the 41 target at 73%. If you have not renewed your 2023 membership, we miss having you a members of our family.

The squadron participated in a flag replacement ceremony along with Post 555 and Triple Nickel Riders at

the Sage Bar & Grill in Calera on February 4, 20

Ron Koonce Adjutant



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-----

15TH 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): _____