



**AMERICAN
LEGION**

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

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THE TRIPLE NICKEL

INSIDE ...

Commander's Desk	2
2nd Vice's Comments	3
Adjutant's Area	4
Adjutant's Area (contd)	5
Chaplain's Uplift	6
Sons of the Am. Legion	7
Post Leadership	8
Trick or Trunk Celeb.	9
WAA 2023 Campaign	10



IN GOD WE TRUST



Matthew Blount Post 555

"2022 WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA CAMPAIGN A HUGE SUCCESS!!!"

Thanks to all the members and contributors as listed later in this article, we met and exceeded the goal that we set in the beginning of this year. If you recall, our goal was \$5,000. With the help from Post 555 members and some wonderful community supporters, we gave a check to the Blue Star Salute Foundation, Inc. for a total of **\$7,622!** Unbelievable accomplishment from the entire Post 555 Family, so to the following people (in no certain order), we all say a **HUGE** thank you.

Charles Kiser, Ron Koonce, Conrad Stempel, Dorian Ross, Mac Braid, Tom McMahon, Cheryl Gilliam, Nancy Waller, John Zeiss, Henry Smith, Coy Cambron, Vashone Smith, Chic Cecchini, Joe Dunn, Steven Loftin, Derek Winters, Skip Mize, Frank Lakotich, Steven Watson, Leroy Raymond, Ray Pata, Anita Bennett, Alan Phillips, Kenneth Fox, Eldon Woodie, Bill Blank, Karryl Anderson, Gary Wright, and Richard Kaster. Also, Rachel Sills from the Unit 555 Auxiliary helped out, as well as the collection for the raffle that was coordinated by Unit 555 President Caroline Culpepper at the Thanksgiving Dinner/Meeting. Community contributors were Samuel Patterson, Carol Helms, C&B Piping (Chad Estes), Shamrock Investments (Dennis O'Brien), Richard Welch, Sawyer Solutions (our CPA Firm), Deborah Bennett, Barbara Lawley (on behalf of Darrell Lawley, a Post 555 member and the coach for the Jr. Shooters), and Joshua Grimm who represented the Jr. Shooters at the Thanksgiving Dinner/Meeting and told Adjutant Nancy Waller that he always wanted to show his support for Post 555 and this is the way he wanted to do it this year. **How cool is that???**

See the full article from Commander Jeff Monday on page 2...

COMMANDER'S CORNER



Jeff Monday
Post Commander



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Nancy Waller that he always wanted to show his support for Post 555 and this is the way he wanted to do it this year. **How cool is that???** Let's not forget about the work that our Legion Riders did for us. At one of their events back in September, Riders Director Doug McDaniel collected a **TON** of money for the Riders and donated it to the WAA Campaign. Some of the people involved in that were Timothy Brockdorf, David Morrison, Steve Godwin, and several more who donated anonymously with cash. You've heard the expression "Teamwork Makes the Dream Work", this came true thanks to the tremendous teamwork of the entire Post 555 Family as well as from our community supporters.

As I stated in our last couple of meetings, we are going to start in January 2023 with donations for the 2023 WAA Campaign so that we don't wait until a few months out and make it hard for our members and community supporters around that time of the year, so whenever we have our General Membership Meetings, start planning your finances for the next 11 months so we can meet or **EXCEED** what we did for 2022. Thank you all and I wish you and your family members, friends, and fellow Veterans a very Happy Holiday Season; stay safe and healthy and let us know if we can do anything for you; **WE ARE A FAMILY!!!**

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

(See the updated WAA donation form for 2023 on the last page; the new campaign is on)



2nd Vice's Eldon Woodie



Fellow Triple Nickel members, it is always an honor to be a member of the Matthew Blount Post. I know our namesake would be proud of this unit. Public thanks to the Blount Family for funding this year's Post 555 Annual Thanksgiving Dinner held on November 4, 2022 at the Pelham First Baptist Church Annex. We need to send a HUGE thank you to the church members for their support by offering their wonderful location for our event. Our local community knows about our Post because we are invested in our youth, our Veterans, and our First Responders. Great turnout from our Post members and from our community leaders. We appreciate our civic leaders for attending and for their support throughout the year. In attendance from the City of Pelham were David Coram, City Council President Pro Tempore; Larry Palmer, City Council member; Brian Cooper, new Parks and Recreation Director; and Pelham Fire Chief, Michael Reid. Representing Shelby County, we were glad to have Erin Welborn, Children's Policy Council of Shelby County; Leann Rigney, Shelby County Juvenile Court, Chief Juveniles Probation Officer; Pamela Nichols, Chairman of the Support Committee for the Alabama National Cemetery; MAJ Jay Fondren, Shelby County Sheriff's Office; and Harry Sessamen, Secretary/Agent for BSSF. Representing The American Legion Department of Alabama were Charles Marsh, Sr. Vice Commander; Tina Bush, Immediate Past Commander; and Donna Hinkle, Auxiliary President. At the 2nd District level, we were glad to have Commander Richard Kaster who is also a member of Post 555. Representing District 23, we welcomed Paul Gonther, Commander; Holly Boslet, Adjutant; and several members of Post 555 who also serve at the District level who are Tom Long, Judge Advocate; Ron Koonce, Public Relations Officer; and Bill Blank, Sergeant-at-Arms. Representing the SCSSA Jr. Shooters we had Sam Richardson, Director; Joshua Grimm, Jr. Shooter; and Emily Buck, highly decorated Jr. Shooter. We were also very proud to have The American Legion National Oratorical Scholarship Contest winner, Ms. Emma Noble who received a very exuberant round of applause. Another individual who we were honored to have with us was Retired Pelham Firefighter Jim Terrell who was the 2022 Shelby County Firefighter of the Year as well as The 2022 American Legion Department Firefighter of the Year. Another key partner with Post 555 to help with events was Michael DeSantis, Manager of the Heart of Dixie Harley Davidson Dealership. Our final VIP who we were very proud to have with us is Mrs. Sherri Fuchs who facilitated numerous events/programs throughout the year. Without her help, these events may not have happened.

All in attendance were very supportive of Commander Jeff Monday's choice for awarding Chic Cecchini as the 2022 Patriot of the Year. We are all proud to be associated with such a humble servant leader. When something needs to be done, Chic is there. He is an encourager and a Post member who leads by example. Congratulations, Chic!

Reviewing the year, the following accomplishments stand out: Awarding the Firefighter, Police Officer, and Deputy Sheriff of the Year; provided key support for the American Legion Regional Baseball Tournament; continued our sponsorship and fundraising for the Jr. Shooting program; the High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest; JROTC awards; American Legion Unit 555 Auxiliary, Sons of the American Legion Squadron, and our awesome American Legion Riders.

In November, we also had great turnout for all the local Veterans Day events. Flag Placement at the Alabama National Cemetery, providing a speaker at the Pelham Seniors Center, Texas Roadhouse Veterans Day Ceremony, 75th Veterans Day Parade in downtown Birmingham, the Birmingham Veterans Day Awards Banquet at the Sheraton Downtown, and taking down the Avenue of Flags and picking-up the gravesite flags at the Alabama National Cemetery.

Thanks to Chaplain Joe Dunn for shepherding our Post and supervising the monthly "buddy checks." We wish each and all a blessed Thanksgiving. The holidays can be stressful, so take care of yourselves, your family members, and friends.

The purpose of Veterans in The American Legion is to strengthen the United States of America through programs, services, compassion, and actions that have proven vital, timeless, and life-changing for over a century. Keep up the good work!

*For God and Country,
Eldon Woodie
2nd Vice Commander*

 **AMERICAN
LEGION**

ADJUTANT'S AREA



Nancy Waller
Adjutant

Before I get to my Adjutant “business”, I would like to ask you to join us at the December 1, 2022 General Membership Meeting in your favorite casual Christmas attire, even if it is your Christmas sweater that ever won an “Ugly Sweater Contest”..... We will have two or three guest speakers to change-up the meeting a little before the Christmas holidays. The first guest speaker is representing “CaptionCall”. She presented this product to us at the 23rd District Quarterly Meeting at Post 131 in Columbiana on November 5, 2022 and Commander Monday and I agreed that it would be beneficial for everyone to hear. In a nutshell, this is a federally-funded company that provides captioning telephones at **NO COST** to people with a hearing loss or who struggle to hear over the phone. She will have a phone with her to demonstrate and will give you an opportunity to set-up a visit for the installer to come to your home. The second guest speaker is going to talk to us about the “Hands-Free Bill” regarding distracted driving. She has first-hand experience with the loss of a loved one from texting and driving, so I think she will be sharing some good information that all of us need to hear. We may have one more guest speaker, but not confirmed as of yet. Please put this date on your calendar and join us for our fellowship meal at 6:00 p.m. and the guest speakers after our “protocol” that we do at every Post 555 meeting. Hope to see you!!!

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. 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 goal of 65%, but do NOT give up; RE-NEW!!!

Cut-off Dates:

July 31st = 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 = 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)

December 31st (Happy New Year) = 80% membership (need 180 members renewed/joined)

January 31st = 85% membership (need 191 members renewed/joined)

February 28th = 90% membership (need 202 members renewed/joined)

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)

As of today (November 13, 2022), we have 140 members (62.22%) which means we need 28 renewals and/or new members to meet the November 30th goal. If you want to be one of these **VERY IMPORTANT** 28 members, **PLEASE** renew either by mail or on-line at mylegion.org. I check the on-line renewals very frequently and would be **THRILLED** to see several names on there for November. So far, Jeffrey Ward renewed on-line on November 8th—YEAH—and the following members renewed by either mailing their renewals to the Post address or giving me their payments in person: Anita Bennett, Bobby Byram, David Coram Jr., Mark Sawyer, and Gerald Schrader—YEAH!!! I want to give credit to several members who renewed in October as well because every renewal COUNTS: Karryl Anderson, Jason Bailey, Andrew Burrell, Edward Eagle, George Jones, Richard Mazzone, Aretha McGraw, James Mann IV, Alan Phillips, Karla Reagin-Young, and Daniel Topping—YEAH!!! Wouldn't you like to see your name in print for renewing in November, too?????

(The Adjutant's article continues on the next page ...)

*ADJUTANT'S AREA continues*

Nancy Waller
Adjutant

Those of you who are members of the RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program), you should have already received a post card from Pamela Raines inviting you to the Shelby County RSVP Volunteer Recognition and Christmas Brunch at the Pelham Civic Complex on Tues., December 6, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. I attended the last several events and they are really a lot of fun. If you want to join those of us who have already replied to Mrs. Raines that we would be attending, please either send her an e-mail or call her to let her know. Last year we had a full table for Post 555 so hopefully we can fill two tables this year; that would be excellent!!!

During the Thurs., December 1, 2022 General Membership Meeting, do not forget to have Frank Lakotich help you record your November volunteer hours. Every hour counts, so be sure to fill in your hours and sign the form. Thanks!!! If you are not yet an RSVP member, the only criteria is that you are age 55+ years young, have

a current driver's license that I can take a photo of on my phone to send to Pamela Raines, and complete an application. No paper copy of your driver's license needed anymore. 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.

For God and Country,
Nancy J. Waller
Adjutant



CHAPLAIN'S UPLIFT



Joe Dunn
Post Chaplain



I'm sure that all of us would agree that God wants us to be **thankful**. In fact, that's exactly what the Bible says: "Be **thankful**." When I was growing up and at this time of year, if you had asked me if I was **thankful**, I would have told you that I was absolutely **thankful**. I was **thankful** that I got two days off of school for the holiday called "**Thanksgiving!**" But I really wasn't **thankful** for much of anything. Rather, like most kids, I had an attitude of expectation.

All I remember about **Thanksgiving** from school was:

- 1) the name of the ship, "The Mayflower"
- 2) the people on it were called the Pilgrims
- 3) the Indians helped them learn to plant things
- 4) and I guess they held the 1st informal "**Thanksgiving**" because they made the trip.

That's about all I remember.

Here's what I didn't know: Wikipedia writes that,

- 1) The sleeping quarters for the 102 passengers was about 1,600 square feet!

(There were also 30 crew members.) I think, though, that they were **thankful** just to be on the ship.

- 2) They made it to the new world, **thankfully** enduring a tremendous storm, while only 1 passenger died and 1 baby was born. One other man was swept over-board and retrieved! I sure he was very **thankful**.

- 3) Arriving in November of 1620, the first winter saw 49 of the 102 die! In the Spring, the remaining 53 were very **thankful** to still be alive. I'm sure they were also **thankful** for the Indians' help. Otherwise, more would have surely died.

- 4) The first "**Thanksgiving**" of sorts, although unofficial, lasted for 3 days and was held sometime between September and November in 1621.

I'm sure the Pilgrims totally understood 2 Corinthians 4:15, which says that when there are many who are **thankful**, it gives GREAT GLORY to God!

Compared to the Pilgrims, we have much to be **thankful** for. May I challenge us this Thanksgiving to take the time to think of how blessed we really are, and maybe share it before or after you eat your meal.

By the way, as a kid I wasn't thankfulness at all, because true thankfulness comes from the heart.

For God and Country,

Chaplain Joe



Sons of The American Legion

Matthew Blount Squadron 555 was recognized by the City of Pelham Alabama City Council and Mayor Gary Waters with a

Proclamation naming November 9, 2022 as Sons of The American Legion Squadron 555 Day.

Matthew Blount Post 555 Matthew Blount Squadron 555

City of Pelham, Alabama
November 7, 2022

Squadron 555 Sons of the American Legion , Detachment of of Alabama, received recognition by the City of Pelham and Mayor Gary Waters proclaiming November 9, 2022 as Sons of The American Legion Squadron 555 Day.



Back row: Pelham City Council
Front Row L-R: Ron, Koonce, SAL Adjutant, Donald Walker, SAL Vice Commander, Bill Blank, SAL Commander, Mayor Gary Waters, Vashone Smith, Post 555.



The squadron's Facebook page is acquiring a large number of visitors. You are invited to visit and "Like" our page at www.facebook.com/alabamaSAL555 if you have not had the opportunity. The Facebook page share's current events and activities of the squadron and the Alabama Detachment.

MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555



Meets first Thursday of the Month.

The next Membership Meeting will be at the Pelham Senior Center on Thursday 1 December 2022

Please come for dinner at 6:15PM followed by the meeting at 7PM

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR
DECEMBER MEMBERS**

Harold B. Nale, 12/04
Daniel G. Manuel, 12/05
Ferrell F. Stephens Jr., 12/08
Daniel M. Kerins, 12/09
Kenneth Paschal, 12/09
Donald "Wayne" Fitts, 12/12
Yolanda F. Rancher, 12/13
James E. Aaron Sr., 12/18
Henry L. Crist, 12/23
Steven Smith, 12/23
Stanley Francis, 12/28
Thomas M. McDaniel Jr., 12/28
Daniel C. Topping, 12/28

Post Leadership 2022/2023

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

The Triple Nickel

is published monthly for members of Matthew Blount Post 555.

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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: Editor@alpost555.com

Photos by Chic Cecchini, Post 555

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American Legion Post 555

If your birthday is in December 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

This year's "Trunk or Treat" was a successful community event. Approximately 75 local youth and their families had a safe environment to celebrate Halloween courtesy the Matthew Blount American Legion Post, the Pelham Fire Department and the very gracious, Texas Roadhouse restaurant. The event was held Monday, October 24, 2022 between 4 and 7 PM. Our Post 555 chairperson was Vashone Smith. The following American Legion Post and American Legion Auxiliary members participated: Chic Cecchini, Bill Blank, Caroline Culpepper, Linda Johnston, Curtis Orse, Barry Blount, and A.J. Blount with 10-year-old son, Jessie, and 8-year-old daughter, Victoria. The children visited with Legion Members, Auxiliary Members, and Firefighters while getting sweets and firefighter hats. Vashone Smith reported very positive reviews from the children, their parents, and all volunteers. The children and family members left the event knowing their local Matthew Blount American Legion Post, Auxiliary Unit 555, and local First Responders care about them. Special salute to Chic Cecchini for his wonderful photographs.

Eldon Woodie



Barry, one of the big kids there!



Sorry about the photo reversal ...



...you want more candy?

15th Annual Wreaths Across America Campaign
Alabama National Cemetery
Montevallo, Alabama

Saturday, December 16, 2023



The cost to sponsor each wreath is \$15.00. This year we are hoping for at least 10,000 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 Dorian Ross, Post 555 WAA Chairperson @ 205-624-4548. Thank you in advance for your show of support to our Fallen Heroes and their family members during the 2023 Christmas Season.

-----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): _____

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____