



**AMERICAN
LEGION**

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THE AMERICAN LEGION MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555

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THE TRIPLE NICKEL

**2023-2024 OFFICERS “INSTALLED” BY THE
AMERICAN LEGION DEPARTMENT OF
ALABAMA JUDGE ADVOCATE**



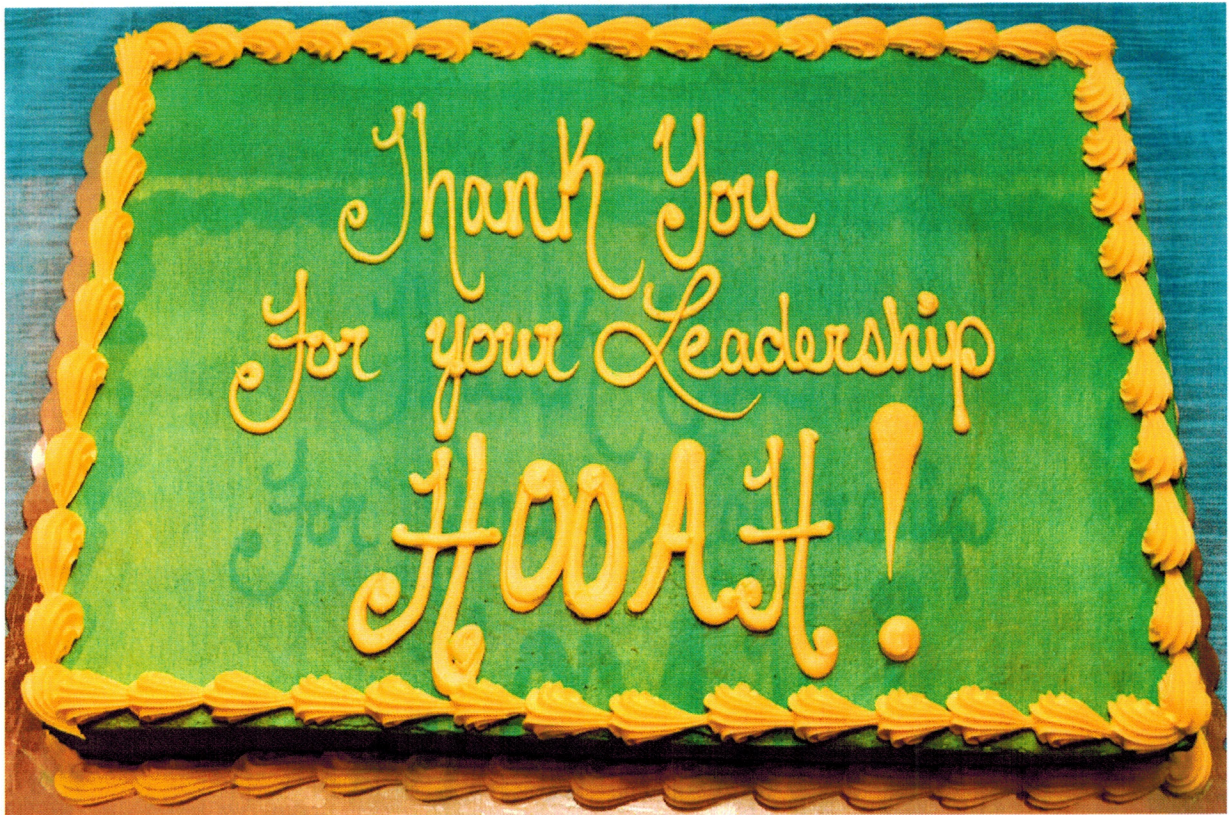
L/R: Officiated by Tony Berenotto (at podium); line of officers being installed are Anita Bennett, Skip Mize, Tom McDaniel, Vashone Smith, Curtis Orse, Joe Dunn, Nancy Waller, Dorian Ross, and Bill Blank.

At the May 4, 2023 General Membership Meeting, the new Post 555 officers were installed into their respective offices for the 2023-2024 year. We were honored to have Department of Alabama Judge Advocate Tony Berenotto do the ceremony. You may notice one very important person missing from the photo; the past and now current Commander Barry Blount. As some of you may know, Barry has been having some health issues and was unable to attend the installation, so Tony Berenotto offered to do Barry's installation in his hospital room, which he did!!!! Now that is dedication to Barry and Post 555 to have someone take the extra time out of their day to do this for Barry.

Congratulations to everyone who will be serving you for the next membership year!!!!

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

THANK YOU TO POST 555 OUTGOING COMMANDER JEFFREY MONDAY



After all of the pomp and circumstance (and the normal meeting protocol) was over, everyone thanked Outgoing Post Commander Jeffrey Monday for his leadership, and enjoyed a piece of his cake. Jeff told me he is not going anywhere, and will be more involved in the Riders. He wants to be able to enjoy the Post instead of leading it, and I know he deserves that.



L/R: Outgoing Post Commander Jeffrey Monday being congratulated for his service and leadership to Post 555 by Department of Alabama Judge Advocate Tony Berenotto. Job well done, Jeff!!!

LEGIONNAIRE OF THE YEAR, VASHONE SMITH



L/R: Outgoing Post Commander Jeffrey Monday and Vashone Smith (Bill Blank is hiding in the background).

Jeffrey Monday had some very kind words to say about Vashone, but throughout his comment, he did not say her name. So, when it came down to actually announcing who the Legionnaire of the Year was, I think she was caught off-guard!!! Jeff said she always gets involved, she took on the Veterans Day Ceremony at the Texas Roadhouse with nothing other than her wonderful initiative and a Continuity Book. She got a good group of Volunteers together, one of which was her son, and did a great job. The weather was not very kind (the Thompson High School JROTC Color Guard and the Scouts of Boy Scout Troop 404 got rained on), but every single person stayed for the entire ceremony. It was unfortunately not well-attended since the time had been changed and the word did not get out to the community, so lessons learned for next year. Congratulations to you, Vashone!!!

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

JROTC MEDALS PROGRAM

The American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555 proudly participated in presenting American Legion medals to local Junior ROTC Cadets. Eldon Woodie coordinated with Vincent Army JROTC instructors, MSG (Ret) Marshall Thomas and SFC (Ret) Timothy Gilbert. MSG (Ret) Thomas facilitate this event on April 26, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. in the Vincent High School gymnasium. The ceremony was well-attended by the Vincent High School Principal, Lauren Yancey along with teachers, parents, and approximately 60 JROTC Cadets.

Eldon presented senior student Major Carter Carroll (heading to UAB) with the Scholastic Excellence Award. Eldon also presented senior student Major Mitchell Kidd (heading to the University of Alabama—**ROLL TIDE!!!**) with the Leadership Award. Both sets of parents were very pleased to have their children recognized by The American Legion, and Principal Yancey commended the students and praised the JROTC program. Recognizing these students encouraged citizenship training, scholastic achievement, and leadership in our youth.



L/R: Cadet Major Mitchell and Cadet Major Carter Carroll.

The next JROTC Awards Ceremony was at Thompson High School, May 4, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. Eldon Woodie coordinated with Thompson High School instructors Lt Col (Ret) Jason Davis and CMSgt (Ret) Keith Long. Attendees at this event included Thompson High School Principal Mr. Wesley Hester, approximately 70 high school Cadets, 130 family members, and presenters from several organizations including the Sons of Union Soldiers, Daughters of the American Revolution, and The American Legion.

The American Legion Scholarship Award was presented to Cadet Jonah Timothy Sturdivant. Eldon also presented The American Legion General Military Excellence Award for Leadership to Cadet Ruelas Alejandro Amador. Both sets of parents were very pleased to have their sons recognized by The American Legion. Principal Hester commended the students and praised the AFJROTC program. The recognition of these students encouraged citizenship training, scholarship achievement, and leadership in our local youth. It was a great evening celebrating accomplishments of these young men.



L/R: Eldon Woodie and Cadet Jonah Timothy Sturdivant



L/R: Eldon Woodie and Cadet Ruelas Alejandro Amador

ADJUTANT'S AREA

I think those of you who actually read our newsletter do not need to see the detailed results from July 31, 2022 anymore. I am re-capping to save space and make it easier to track.

July 31st – Goal was 40%; we achieved 42.22% (**exceeded the goal**)

August 31st – Goal was 50%; we achieved 52.44% (**exceeded the goal**)

September 30th – Goal was 55%; we achieved 55.56% (**exceeded the goal**)

October 31st – Goal was 65%; we achieved 61.33% (missed the goal)

November 30th – Goal was 75%; we achieved 65.77% (missed the goal)

December 31st – Goal was 80%; we achieved 72% (missed the goal)

January 31st – Goal was 85%; we achieved 85.78% (**exceeded the goal**)

February 28th – Goal was 90%; we achieved 90.1% (**exceeded the goal**)

March 31st – Goal was 95%; we achieved 93.3% (missed the goal)

April 30th – Goal was 100%; we are currently at 95.56% and I have one more renewal to input, so it will be a little higher but definitely not meeting or exceeding the goal.

May 31st – We finished the month of May at 95.56%, but we gave it our all. Perhaps next year will be better. Thank you to everyone who helped contact our expired members, and even had a few stay with us—HOOAH!!!

As I mentioned in past newsletters, 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

“Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that spoil the vineyards, for our vineyard is in full bloom”.
Son of Solomon 2:15

Imagine, if you can, what it must have been like for these two generals to work together constantly under pressure in wartime. Pressures from without and within; from the attacks of the enemy, and from seeing the thousands of their own Soldiers who were either KIA or WIA. They had no time for PTS and the like. They had to work through problems, differences, and difficulties, and lay out their strategies and tactics for the next battle. But OH what a tremendous strain! It must have been that way for they were just men. What is amazing, though, is that in spite of it all, they must have remained friends.

General Jackson absolutely submitted to every final order that General Lee gave. It was not in his nature to do otherwise. And Lee allowed Jackson to do things strategically and tactically that were astounding! General Lee showed absolute and complete trust in Stonewall's ability to accomplish the mission. And when Jackson lost

his left arm, Lee is quoted as saying, "Give General Jackson my affectionate regards, and say to him: He has lost his left arm, but I my right."

How does my titles to this article relate to the brief insight into history? It is because he context of the verse above has to do with a relationship between two people. In other words, they realize that for them like all of us, it is the little things called "little foxes" that can come up between us in our relationships and fester, causing grea damage if we let it. These great generals did not have time to allow such problems to remain. Their men's lives were at stake!

God uses this imagery in the Song of Solomon to teach us that we must: 1) "CATCH the "little foxes," that is, to DEAL WITH them or put a stop to them. 2) "These "FOXES" are little, but real. God is telling us that even small and seemingly insignificant problems in life can cause great damage if left unchecked. 3) "The VINEYARD is in full blossom." The "vineyard" is their relationship and it is in "full bloom." That is to say, their relationship is strong, and they are determined to not even let little petty things destroy it. They know the damage that can be done.

Let us think of ourselves, my fellow Vets, about our own "Vineyards" where even "little foxes" have been allowed to eat away at the fruit of a good relationship. We have all seen the destruction and decay that comes from that, which in the end nothing leaves nothing but decay and stagnant growth. And often, it is only our PRIDE that keeps us from starting over again and "replanting the vineyard." So it is in all relationships. But maturity knows that it is COMMITMENT and the swallowing of one's pride that says, "I will NOT let little foxes destroy our vineyard." And if they have, for me I take my hat off to the person big enough who says, "Let's replant," let's start again. I am sure you get the picture.



"They supplemented each other, and together with any fair advantage, they were absolutely invincible." Jefferson Davis.

*For God and Country,
Chaplain Joe*



1st Annual
Blue Star Salute Charity Ride



THE BLUE STAR SALUTE FOUNDATION, INC
Bluestarsalute.org a 501c(3) charitable organization

**Starting at Heart of Dixie Harley Davidson including
slow ride through the Alabama National Cemetery
ending at Rio's Bar & Grill**

SATURDAY
JUNE 10, 2023

Registration @ 9:00 AM
KSU @ 10:00 AM



\$20.00 Rider \$5.00 Passenger

Prize Drawings at Rio's

ALL PROCEEDS GO TO SUPPORT THE
Joel Adkins Veterans Assistance Fund
Providing Assistance to Veterans & Their Families

Questions forward to: Scan QR Code, Events

Bluestarsalute.org

tlongbluestarsalute@gmail.com or (205)451-8880

Post 555 Judge Advocate and Blue Star Salute President Tom Long wanted you to know about this 1st Annual Blue Star Salute Charity Ride. Check it out!!



Sons of The American Legion Squadron 555

SAL Squadron 555 has been busy with several projects and is looking forward to more events and activities in the coming months

On the weekend of 28-30 April, a number of Squadron 555 members participated in the volunteer opportunity at Barber Motorsports Park during the Children's of Alabama Indy Grand Prix race. Throughout the weekend, the Post 555 family acted as Tram Safety Personnel, helping to ensure that race fans stayed safe as they made their way around the Motorsports Park. Sons members who signed up to help included First Vice Bill Blank, Adjutant Ron Koonce, Mike Walker, and Commander Don Walker. A special thanks to Sons member Kyle Phillips for helping to secure the opportunity to help at the track and earn a donation to the Post.

Boy Scout Troop 404 will not have availability to help with the U.S. Flag Replacement for the Pelham Senior Center flag in the near term. SAL 555 is working to find an alternate date soon and will announce once a date is determined. Although not as big as the flag at Sage Bar & Grill, it is larger than the standard 3'x5', so we will be looking for Volunteers to help with lowering and folding the old flag and raising the new flag, as well as members to attend the ceremony.

The scout troop has the flag retirement box that Adjutant Koonce secured and reported that it has been refinished and painted and is awaiting application of the patriotic graphics. We look forward to seeing the final product, which will serve as a way for community members to retire their worn flags with the reverence they deserve.

The SAL National Commander's two focus projects this year are the Legion's "Be the One" suicide prevention campaign and the Veterans and Children Foundation (V&CF), which helps Vets and their families who have fallen on hard times. Last year we supported V&CF through American Legion's 100 Miles for Hope, with SAL 555 participants single-handedly putting Alabama in second place in the inter-department challenge for our region (just short of first place). The 100MFH program is not taking place this year, so Squadron 555 is working on alternative efforts to support this great cause. We hope to incorporate a fitness/step challenge into the fundraising activity over the course of late spring and summer and will announce once plans are made so that others can participate.

In addition to the above projects, we have several other irons in the fire which will be discussed at our regular Squadron meetings on the second Tuesday of each month at the Pelham Senior Center. Our next meeting will be at 7:00 p.m. on 9 May, but due to the planned absence of some Squadron officers, this meeting will take place remotely.

Check your SAL e-mail or contact Donald Walker for information on attending. We hope to incorporate this technology into future meetings to provide a hybrid meeting environment that allows those who cannot attend in-person to attend remotely.

On one final note, male descendants of Veterans who are either a) current American Legion members, or b) would be eligible but have died, are eligible for SAL membership. Many of our Post members are eligible for dual-membership and/or have sons and grandsons who would be eligible to join Squadron 555 and we would love to have them among our ranks. If you or someone you know might be interested in joining SAL 555, send them our way!

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

MAY AND JUNE BIRTHDAY WISHES FOR OUR MEMBERS

Davis, Andrew C., 05/02
Maul, Kimball, 05/02
Dulaney, Michael A., 05/04
Miller, Alan B., 05/13
Ginn, Gerald G., 05/16
Dunn, Joseph A., 06/01
Wheatley, William, 06/03
Cody, Daniel P., 06/06
Pata, Bernard R. "Ray", 06/06
Braid, Malcolm "Mac", 06/07

Quebodeaux, Jimmy, 06/08
Kennedy, Patrick E. Jr., 06/15
Winters, Derek P. Sr., 06/15
Thomas, Robert H, 06/17
Rathbone, Gary, 06/18
Wright, Gary E., 06/19
Lawley, Darrell K., 06/20
Stempel, Conrad F., 06/24
Parker, Johnnie, 06/25
Lakotich, Frank J. Jr., 06/26



If your birthday is in May or June 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*

NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

We meet the first Thursday of the month, and our next meeting is scheduled for June 1, 2023 with our fellowship meal at 6:15 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 will be honoring several Post 555 Volunteers who helped with the Children's of Alabama Indy Grand Prix event and the MotoAmerica event, along with a presentation of a check from the University of Alabama Ice Hockey Military Appreciation Night. Please join us!!!

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

Triple Nickel Editor

Frank Chacon

The Triple Nickel

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Letters to the Editor must include name, address, and telephone number. Names will be withheld upon request.

Send e-mail to: editor@alpost555.com

Photos by Chic Cecchini, Post 555

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