



**AMERICAN
LEGION**

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

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THE TRIPLE NICKEL

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IN GOD WE TRUST



Matthew Blount Post 555

KEEPING THE SPIRIT OF 45 ALIVE!



John Little and George Hamilton, WWII veterans, saluting the wreath

An important component of this ceremony (at ALNC) was the wreath-laying in honor of those who lost their lives during The Great War, as well as the many World War II Veterans who have passed away since the end of the War. The wreath was laid by Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Little and honored with a sharp salute from both men. One person missing from the event this year was a Post 555 Honorary Life Member, William C. Jones, Jr. who passed away on July 10, 2022. His son, Billy Jones, was present, and I privately presented him with his father's Post 555 membership card for 2023 to him to keep with the other mementos from his father. William Jones was present at the 2021 "Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive" ceremony and was missed by several this year.

Read the details by Nancy Waller, and more photos, on pages 5 and 6

1ST VICE'S COMMENTS



Bill Blank
1st Vice Commander



Good day to all those reading the newsletter and of course everyone.

Not too much to write about just a quick brief on this summer's activities. It all started in June with baseball that was a fairly good baseball season. There were the usual adversities like weather but we got through it okay.

Enter July and the state championship. Troy, post 70 won the state championship and advanced to the Mid-South tournament. Then came the World games hosted by Birmingham and surrounding communities. Hoover hosted the girls' softball; their Oak Mountain hosted the water sports. There were many more competitions around the area but the games in Hoover and Oak Mountain were the events in our area and we were all proud of that.

Here comes August and the end of baseball season, and what a bang of an end to a great season! The city of Pelham and Pelham high school once again hosted the Mid-South regional tournaments. The tournament was well planned and it did show. There were a lot of wonderful compliments from visitors as well as our own local folks. So, for me I would like to shout out a great and a well done by all. To top it all off, Troy's own post 70 won the Mid-South Tournament and advanced to the American Legions World Series National championship. Guess what? You

guessed it! Post 70 of Troy, Alabama won that championship; won it all by a score of 6 to 5 in the bottom of the 7th inning. I will say this it was a nail biter to say the least, as well as a fun game to watch.

Well folks that is my brief of all that went on in baseball and other sporting events.

I want to thank all those who volunteered their time to make this baseball season and post season a wonderful experience, both for the fans and the American Legion youth baseball teams. hope to see most of you next season.

Bill Blank
1st Vice Commander
Post 555





2nd Vice's Eldon Woodie



Mrs. Kerry Richardson, daughter of Mr. Newton Duke, former Korean War POW, reached out for assistance with yardwork at Mr. Duke's residence. Mr. Duke has long looked after his fellow Veterans in this community. For many years, he supported The American Legion and POW functions as well as actively participating with Veteran Ceremonies at the Alabama National Cemetery. At 9:00 am on August 20th, 2022, the following members of Matthew Blount Post 555 participated; Chic Cecchini, A.J. Blount (with son Jessie Blount), Larry Strayer, Jimmy Mann, Eldon Woodie and Bonnie Woodie. Volunteers from other organizations also volunteered. They were John Windham and his son, Cliff Windham (Scout Troop 404), and Rick Brandt (The American Legion Post 107, Patriot Guard and Missing in America Project). It was an honor to assist this American hero; a courageous warrior who gave so much to our Nation. A.J. Blount is going to further support efforts for Mr. Duke to help him maintain his small engine lawn tools and pressure wash his handicap ramp. Mr. Duke expressed his appreciation for the support, and those involved were honored, blessed, and had fun.

Photos:

L/R: On the deck Bonnie Woodie and Newton Duke; on the ground are Chic Cecchini, John Windham, Cliff Windham L/Jimmy Mann, and Larry Strayer.



Chic Cecchini getting ready for "round two" with more fuel.



Upstairs is Mr. Newton Duke supervising. L/R on the ground Rick Brandt, Jessie Blount, and AJ Blount.



ADJUTANT'S AREA

Nancy Waller
Adjutant

Effective July 1, 2022, our new membership drive began. The Department of Alabama gave all Adjutants a list of goals between July 31, 2022 and May 31, 2023. Here is what they are asking us to do as far as membership, alone with an update for July and August's goals.

Cut-off Dates:

July 31st = 40% membership (86.4 or 87 members renewed/joined) – WE MET AND EXCEEDED THIS GOAL BY ACHIEVING 42.04% WITH 95 MEMBERS RENEWING FOR 2023—THANKS!!!

August 31st = 50% membership (108 members renewed/joined) – AS OF THE WRITING OF THIS ARTICLE, WE HAVE 108 MEMBERS RENEWED; WE NEED FIVE MORE TO MAKE 50%!!!

April 30th = 100% membership (216 members renewed/joined)

May 31st (Happy Memorial Day) = 103% membership (222.48 or 223 members renewed/joined)

September 30th = 55% membership (118.9 or 119 members renewed/joined)

October 31st (Happy Halloween) = 65% membership (140.4 or 141 members renewed/joined)

November 30th = 75% membership (162 members renewed/joined)

December 31st (Happy New Year) = 80% membership (172.8 or 173 members renewed/joined)

January 31st = 85% membership (183.6 or 184 members renewed/joined)

February 28th = 90% membership (194.4 or 195 members renewed/joined)

March 31st = 95% membership (205.2 or 206 members renewed/joined)

In my August article, I mentioned these being “lofty” goals, but we are doing a great job in having our members renewing each month, so please continue doing so. The 23rd District Commander told us at our quarterly meeting on August 20, 2022 to “not focus on the monthly percentages, but to do our best to make it to 100% by December 31, 2022”. There is a report that comes out at the end of each month from the Department and they are tracking these monthly percentages for everyone to see so to not focus on these monthly goals is not the way we are in Post 555. We are a GREAT group of Veterans and members and I want us to continue to SHINE by meeting or

exceeding each monthly goal so that we can show everyone in the state that Post 555 is the BEST!!! Keep those renewals coming in either via USPS or online. I believe in YOU!!!

On that note, I need to let you know that all of the renewals that I have received were processed immediately in MyLegion.org, but the next part of my job as the Adjutant to get the 2023 membership cards and my “thank you” letters out, has not happened as of yet. I will not make any excuses, but will let you know that I have been busy preparing for my annual National Guard Conference and then attending the conference in Little Rock, Arkansas for over a week, BUT I am back at home and will be working hard to get all of the cards and letters out ASAP. If you mailed a check to the Post or joined on-line, you are good-to-go; no worries. I have been the one who has been slow in taking care of this very important job as your Adjutant, and for that I am very sorry, and hope you understand and know that you are ALL important to me.

If you are a current R.S.V.P. (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) member, don't forget to report your volunteer hours for the month of August when you come to the September 1, 2022 Post 555 meeting. If you cannot attend the meeting, call me or send me an e-mail with your hours. I was given approval to report your hours with a notation that they were reported “telephonically”. I don't want to miss any hours!! I submit the hours by the 10th of the month, so contact me before then. If you are not yet an R.S.V.P. 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 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*

 **AMERICAN
LEGION**

KEEPING THE SPIRIT OF '45 ALIVE ... IN ALABAMA!

On Saturday, August 13, 2022, 6:30 p.m., two members of Post 555 took part in the actual program for "Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive" held at the Alabama National Cemetery in Montevallo. Nathan Waller was the emcee, and I, Nancy Waller, had a small part in the script. The audience was made up mostly of descendants of World War II Veterans, and they looked on as the emcee, Nathan Waller, attired in a World War II era Soldier's uniform, welcomed those who had come to share memories of heroes and honor both those who made the ultimate sacrifice and those who served so long ago.

Since I read part of the script while Nathan walked amongst the members of the audience so they could see the uniform items he was wearing and that I was describing, when I was not speaking, I had what I consider a huge honor to be seated on one of the benches up front with our two guests of honor who were both Veterans of World War II. They were Mr. George Hamilton, U.S. Navy, age 100; and Mr. John Little, U.S. Army, age 98. The ceremony had us standing and sitting on several occasions, so Mr. Hamilton and I assisted Mr. Little each time. I overhead Mr. Hamilton whispering to Mr. Little, "Let me help you, John; I've got you".

There were several other key players in this ceremony that I would like to mention, because without them, the event would not have been as great as it was for all of us. U.S. Navy Veteran and SCALNC Chaplain, Duke Martin, shared a special prayer of remembrance. The Bessemer Squadron Civil Air Patrol Cadets presented the Nation's Colors as well as unfolded, displayed, and re-folded a World War II era flag given to Pam Nichols, the SCALNC Chairman; the National Anthem was beautifully sung by Rob Robinson; and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Miss Erin Sides, a member of Helena Girl Scout Troop 30648. All did a wonderful job.

As you all know, events like this do not just "happen" without the valued help of Volunteers, and this event was no different. To give the family members and Veterans a beautiful presentation down the main road into the cemetery, several Volunteers put up the "Avenue of Flags". These Volunteers included Ray Pata, Eldon Woodie, and Conrad Stempel. The Patriot

Guard "Flag Line" was manned by Tom Long, Ray Pata, and Doug McDaniel (along with many others). The photographer was, of course, our very own Chic Cecchini, and I saw two other Post members present to observe the ceremony, James Darden and Bill Blank. One more member who was there videotaping the entire ceremony was another Post 555 member, my husband, Sparkie Waller. So as you can see, Post 555 was well-represented AGAIN at yet another community event.

An important component of this ceremony was the wreath-laying in honor of those who lost their lives during The Great War, as well as the many World War II Veterans who have passed away since the end of the War. The wreath was laid by Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Little and honored with a sharp salute from both men. One person missing from the event this year was a Post 555 Honorary Life Member, William C. Jones, Jr. who passed away on July 10, 2022. His son, Billy Jones, was present, and I privately presented him with his father's Post 555 membership card for 2023 to him to keep with the other mementos from his father. William Jones was present at the 2021 "Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive" ceremony and was missed by several this year.

At 7:00 p.m. "Eastern War Time" on August 14, 1945, President Harry Truman revealed Japan's unconditional surrender, marking the end of the deadliest war in history. To mark that moment in time, the Spirit of '45 ceremony concluded at 7:00 p.m. with the playing of Taps by Jim Quakenbush, U.S. Marine Veteran from Bugles Across America, followed by a moment of silence.

Both World War II Veterans vowed to be back for next year's ceremony. "Given the perseverance of the Greatest Generation, I fully expect to share this time with them again next year," stated Pam Nichols, SCALNC Chairman.

*For God and Country,
Nancy J. Waller
Acting Second Vice Commander*

(see photos of the event on the next page)

KEEPING THE SPIRIT OF 45 ALIVE ... IN ALABAMA!



Nathan Waller & Jim Quakenbush,



Bill Blank & Sparkie Waller



Ray Pata and helper!



John Little & George Hamilton



Doug McDaniel

CHAPLAIN'S UPLIFT



Joe Dunn
Post Chaplain



twc29520581 Barewalls



The tribal people in Papua New Guinea, who live in the jungle, understand very well what it means to **work hard**. They have no money, but they have rich soil which grows all the fruit and vegetables they need to feed their families. But they must work the land for if they don't, they will die. And so, they do not understand "white skins," as they called us, who are lazy and won't do hard work. Let me explain:

Two times our missionaries went into one particular tribe to learn their language and to translate the New Testament for them. Both times, everyone quit in the middle of the project. Then, new young, and eager missionaries came who wanted to go back into that tribe and start over. The village elders of that village told our mission leaders: "If these people are going to come and 'plant a garden,'" (which means to start learning the language and so as to translate the New Testament),

"If they do that, but don't gather the vegetables and let us eat it with them" (which means if the missionaries don't fin-

ish the work this time (and tell them about this 'Big Talk' which 'Papa God' wants them to know, namely how to get to heaven) then "tell them not to come!" They had no place in their tribe for lazy people.

They would understand very well the meaning of Labor Day. Our country was built upon the hard work of civilians and the hard work of a strong military. For Vets, it was the hard work of training and preparation. For some, it was the hard work of battle. And for others it was the hard work of steeling one's nerves and facing death.

Hence when we say "FOR GOD AND COUNTRY," we should mean 'whatever it takes' THAT, my Papua New Guinean friends, would understand.

Chaplain Joe



People of Papua New Guinea





Hi Everyone,

Thank you so much for those who came to our first meeting in a long time. Buck Creek Coffee as generously agreed to allow us to use their space to hold our meetings. They will be held on the Sunday before the post executive meetings at 12:30 at Buck Creek Coffee in Pelham. The meeting dates for the next few months are Sept 25, Oct 23rd, and possibly Nov 20th. We would love to have more in attendance and the food and coffee there is excellent. If you go there, please thank them for their hospitality.

We are in our membership drive, so please go ahead and send me your dues to my address so we can get it all turned in. Adults are \$30.00 and juniors are \$6.00. If you write a check, please make it out to American Legion Auxiliary unit 555. Thank you in advance.

We have a few changes in our leadership. I will stay on as President. Rachel Sills has graciously accepted the Vice President/Secretary position, and Linda Johnson has graciously accepted the Treasury position. I want to thank Linda Colvard and Frances Grissett for their time in leadership rolls. I appreciate your service. I look forward to get moving again.

Sincerely,
Caroline Culpepper,
Unit 555 President



MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555



(USUALLY) Meets first Thursday of the month.

The next Membership Meeting will be at the Pelham Senior Center on September 1, 2022
Please come for dinner at 6:15PM followed by the meeting at 7PM

September Member Birthdays

Happy Birthdays y'all!

Chris Vonderau, 09/01
John J. Zeiss, 09/01
Jacqueline "Rena" Echedom, 09/02
Steven J. Watson, 09/02
James E. Weldon, 09/03
James L. Jones, 09/04
Kyle D. McLain, 09/04
Kenneth A. Cleveland, 09/06
Caroline J. Culpepper, 09/06
Curtis Orse, 09/06
James H. Patton, 09/09
Durall Dobbins, 09/10
Joyce Franklin, 09/12
Richard L. Kaster, 09/12
David N. Whitney, 09/13
Sammy L. Merritt, 09/15
Richard P. Morris, 09/15
James R. Mann IV, 09/16
Michael W. Mathews, 09/16
James E. Dunaway, 09/20
Paul E. Jensen, 09/20
Charles W. Ackley, 09/22
Quinntel W. Walker, 09/23

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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Happy Labor Day



14th Annual Wreaths Across America Campaign
Alabama National Cemetery

Montevallo, Alabama

Saturday, December 17, 2022



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 3, 2022***, 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 2022 Christmas Season.

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

14TH 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: _____