



# DISTRICT 23 DISPATCH

*Published specifically for the members of Department of Alabama District 23*

Winter 2023

Volume II , Issue I

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## Member Posts

- Post 6 -Clanton
- Post 17 -Talladega
- Post 45 -Sylacauga
- Post 47 -W. Blockton
- Post 68 -Childersburg
- Post 105 -Goodwater
- Post 131-Columbiana
- Post 138 -Alabaster
- Post 195 -Sterrett
- Post 216- -Clanton
- Post 343 -Clanton
- Post 555 -Pelham



## District 23 American Legion High School Oratorical Contest

District 23 is currently ramping up for the 2023 Oratorical  
Scholarship

Competition Saturday, February 18, 2023

Official start time 9:am

Pelham Senior Center

District volunteers report 8:00am Pelham Senior Center

**The main purpose of the American Legion High School oratorical scholarship program is to develop a deeper knowledge and appreciation of the US Constitution among students.**

### A scholarship opportunity:

For students seeking an academic challenge, and an opportunity to earn college scholarship money, the American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program is a natural fit. For more than 80 years, this constitutional speech discussed additional speech contest has educated youth on our nation's founding document, with an emphasis on citizenship.

Learn more about the American Legion High School Oratorical scholarship program at [legion.org/oratorical](http://legion.org/oratorical).

Thank you





## *From the Commander's Desk*

The Annual Department of Alabama Mid-Winter Conference was held on 19-22 January in Mobile. The conference location is rotated among the three Divisions (North, Central, and South Alabama). I felt that the conference was invaluable in presenting meaningful information that helps us, as leaders, do our jobs better in the American Legion.

Attendance was high, and that is a sign that our Department membership is strong and eager to learn and grow. I was particularly proud to accept the 100% membership certificates for Posts 47 131, 138 and 195. This recognition was given for meeting, or exceeding, the 100% membership goal before 31 December 2022. Congratulations to all those Posts.



Commander Buddy Keen and NEC Ron Bradstreet presents certificates to District 23 Commander Paul Gonthier.

The Mid-Winter Conference is also a time where members announce their intentions to run for Department officer positions. I was proud to submit my name as a candidate for Division 2 Commander. I hope that I have, or will, earn your Post's vote. My platform is simple:



1. Always BE THE ONE. We must end Veteran suicides. Nothing else is more important.
2. MEMBERSHIP. Without proper management and leadership of our members, we are nothing. We must continue to renew our members while at the same time gathering new members.
3. EDUCATION. Every Legionnaire, but particularly Commanders, Vice Commanders, and Adjutants should take the American Legion online Basic Training course. If seeking Command positions above a post, then they should apply for the Alabama Yellowhammer Legion College to obtain the knowledge necessary to succeed at the higher Command levels.
4. And finally, COMMUNICATIONS and TEAMWORK. We must continue to crosstalk amongst Posts, Districts and Divisions. It is surprising how much one can learn from a bit of networking with other Posts. Helping fledgling Posts succeed, supporting the District, Division and Department, and yes, sometimes questioning their actions, all contribute to a successful team.

I encourage all of you, particularly Post Commanders and Officers, to attend as many Department conferences/conventions as you can. We shape and build our own futures through these vital events, and we learn how to be better leaders. Our Post members, their families, and our communities, deserve no less than being the best.

*Paul Gonthier  
Commander, District 23*





## Judge Advocate Update



I wanted to share with each of you a short story about service right here in our community. I have been honored to ride with the Patriot Guard Riders for a few years now. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the PGR and rather



than providing my feeble attempt to explain their function, etc., I will just provide you with their website. <https://www.patriotguard.org>.



Many people are unfamiliar with the mission of PGR. “The Patriot Guard Riders is a 100% Volunteer Federally Registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization which ensures dignity and respect at memorial services honoring Fallen Military Heroes, First Responders and Honorably Discharged Veterans.”

Additionally, some of you who know of the organization incorrectly believe that you must own a motorcycle and be a Veteran. Both are incorrect. While it is true that many members are both motorcycle owners and Veterans, not all are. Those members who aren’t are no less committed to the mission than those who ride or are Veterans.



Roy Brook

This short article highlights one such man. In the past he owned and rode a motorcycle, but he never served in the Armed Forces, yet he is as dedicated and appreciated as any of us who did serve, maybe more so than some. He spends a significant amount of his time standing silently with his American Flag at many, many services, many times more than one a day. His patriotism and service to our great Republic is obvious in his manner, commitment, and steadfast desire to honor Veterans and first responders. Many of you, if not most,



Roy Brook

will know who I am talking about. He never seeks the limelight and quietly and reverently stands for those who gave so much for our country. Back to the purpose of this article. To highlight someone in our midst who may not be a Veteran but through his service honors us all with his dedication and patriotism. Thank you, Roy Brook. My friend.

Tom Long  
District 23 Judge Advocate  
Assistant Judge Advocate American Legion  
Department of Alabama



# When to use the Legion emblem and brand mark

When it comes to designing products for American Legion events and programs, National Headquarters has developed a style guide to help you create design that matches our existing brand and brand mark. This guide walks you through color, font and layout specifications amount others. It also will walk you through when to use the emblem versus the brand mark. To access the style guide list [www.legion.org/brand](http://www.legion.org/brand).

The brand mark is to be used in all marketing communications applications (e.g., lifestyle apparel, fundraising, sponsorship, digital media, social media, and event announcement) while the emblem should be reserved for official documents and communications (e.g., press releases, business card, post signage and official letterhead).

The American Legion emblem and other legally protected logos of The American Legion Family are restricted and typically may not be used without permission from National Headquarters.

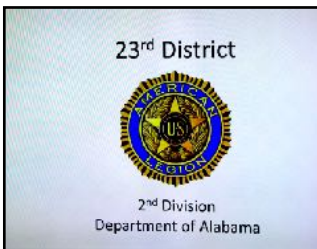
The use of the emblem by an individual Legionnaire is limited to wearing of the official insignia and to the possession of authorized jewelry or merchandise bearing

the insignia. Posts are confined to using the emblem or reproduction of the emblem on stationery, Post publications, notices, posters or place cards, or matters of similar character used in the ordinary routine and conduct of the legitimate Post business. Departments are similarly limited.

Any other use of the name “The American Legion” or the emblems shall be subject to the approval of the National adjutant at [www.legion.org/emblem/request](http://www.legion.org/emblem/request).



## *District 23 Fall Meeting Post 131 Columbiana, AL*





Post and Sons of The American Legion members from District 23 attended the Alabama Department Mid-Winter Conference on January 19-22, 2023 held at The Admiral Hotel in Mobile, AL.



Alan Phillips- Baseball Commissioner



Paul Gonthier- Dist 23 Commander



Don Walker, Sqd 555 Vice Commander,  
Curtis Orse Post 555 SO,  
Nancy Waller, Post 555 Adjutant

### *Sons of The American Legion*

The Sons held their mid-winter meeting on January 21, 2023. A number of Legion Current and Past Officers spoke to the group. Past Department Adjutant gave an update on the Alabama War Memorial. Past Department Commander, Ron Haygood, recognized the importance of the Sons' Legion Dual members. SAL National Vice Commander of the Central Region, David Mennel, gave an update on regional membership success, the National Commander's two main priorities for 2023: Support The American Legion's "Be the One" program, and the Veterans and Children Foundation.

Other topics were presented by American Legion Auxiliary Arletha Tucker, NEC Glander, Alt. NEC Miles, SAL National Chaplain Gibson, Department Senior Vice Commander Marsh.







## Public Relations Update

### *DISTRICT 23 DISPATCH*

*Published specifically for the members of Department of Alabama District 23*

The District 23 Quarterly welcomes articles from Posts within the District to be published.

Recommended subject matter is past and future activities of your Post or any American Legion or Veteran-related subject matter.

The articles need to be proofed and “print ready” prior to sending to the editor for publication. If the article includes graphics or photos, it is helpful to include additional separate photos in Jpeg format along with your article.

The newsletter will be published on the first of the quarter prior to the meeting month. Deadline for articles will be two weeks prior to the publishing date. A reminder will be sent to each Post prior to deadline.

Items for publication are accepted on Executive Committee approval, available space and American Legion regulations. Please submit articles via email to Ron Koonce, Editor at:

[americanlegion.ala.23@gmail.com](mailto:americanlegion.ala.23@gmail.com)

*For God & Country*  
*Ron Koonce*  
*Public Relations Officer*

*Follow the District 23 news on Facebook*  
[https://www.facebook.com/  
alabama23district](https://www.facebook.com/alabama23district)

## Next District Meeting

### Winter District 23 Meeting 2023

**When:** Saturday February 11, 2023  
9:00 am-12:00 pm

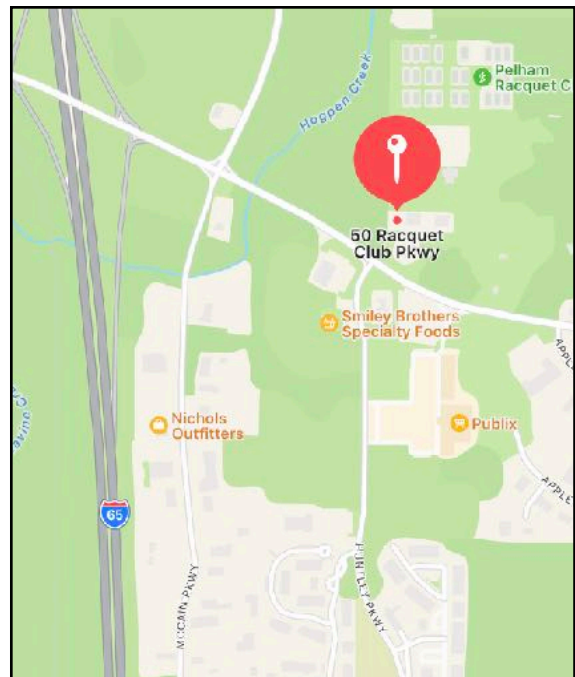
**Where:** Matthew Blount Post 555  
Pelham Senior Center.



### Directions to Meeting Location

#### The American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555

Exit I-65 at 242 on to County Rd 52 West to Racquet Club Parkway . (CVS Drugs at this intersection) Take Racquet Club Parkway the first parking lot on the right. Watch for Senior Center sign.



### Future Scheduled Meeting

May 20, 2023 - Alabaster Post 138

## Membership Excellence

### “Be the one” Pin

#### Expired Membership Incentive V.E.T.S. Pin

To qualify for National Commander Vincent J. “Jim” Troiola’s V.E.T.S. (Veterans, education, teamwork and sponsor) expired membership incentive pin, American Legion members will need to reinstate five expired members into The American Legion for the 2023 membership year who were not a member during the 2022 membership year.



Please make sure that members have been processed before submission of this award. Pins will not be mailed until they are verified on the national database.

Forward the names of Sons of The American Legion members or Auxiliary members to your squadron or unit for use in their respective incentive programs.

American Legion National Commander Vincent J. “Jim” Troiola will award his 100% American Legion Family Ribbon to any American Legion Family that achieves 100 percent membership by the 2023 100% membership target date. For this award, the Legion Family is defined as a Post and/or any combination of an Auxiliary Unit or Sons Squadron. Each must achieve 100% membership to qualify for the award.



The Department Adjutant will transmit information to:

The American Legion National Headquarters  
Attn: Internal Affairs & Membership Division  
P.O. Box 1055  
Indianapolis, IN 46206-1055



KEEP THE LEGION STRONG

*The District 23 Dispatch* is published quarterly for the members of American Legion Alabama District 23. Items for publication are accepted on the Executive Committee approval and available space.

Submit articles prior to the 10th of the month for publication the prior to the month of the quarterly meeting. 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 re-quest. Send email to: [americanlegion.ala.23@gmail.com](mailto:americanlegion.ala.23@gmail.com)

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## *Establishing a Sons of The American Legion Squadron*

If your Post does not have a Sons of The American Legion Squadron, you are encouraged to establish one at your Post.

### **Eligibility**

All male descendants, adopted sons, and stepsons of members of The American Legion, and such male descendants of Veterans who died in service during World War I, or December 7, 1941, to date, as set forth in Article IV, Section 1, of the National Constitution of The American Legion, or who died subsequent to their honorable discharge from such service, shall be eligible for membership in the Sons of The American Legion.

### **Squadron Organization**

Those who desire to form a Squadron of the Sons of The American Legion shall make application for a charter to the Post Commander of the local Post of The American Legion in the area in which they reside. Upon approval by the Post Commander the application shall be forwarded to the Department Commander of The American Legion, and upon his approval it shall be forwarded to the National Headquarters of The American Legion, where the charter may be issued by the National Commander and the National Adjutant of The American Legion in the same manner as prescribed for the issuance of charters for Posts of The American Legion.

The minimum membership for the formation of a Squadron of the Sons of The American Legion shall be (ten) 10. There shall be no more than one Squadron of the Sons of The American Legion for each Post of The American Legion. Squadrons may be organized into sections based upon age.

The Sons of The American Legion shall be organized under the jurisdiction of the local post of The American Legion and shall bear the name and number of the Post.

One of the Sons' primary mission components is to support The American Legion Post in their programs in support of Veterans, community and Youth.

### **Ten Ideals of the Sons of The American Legion**

<b>Patriotism</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Training</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Honor</b>
<b>Faith</b>	<b>Helpfulness</b>	<b>Courtesy</b>	<b>Reverence</b>	<b>Comradeship</b>

A copy of the Sons of The American Legion Squadron Handbook and Charter application can be downloaded from [legion.org](http://legion.org) website. Search for " Sons of The American Legion"

Contact Andrew Cherry , Alabama Detachment for any questions you may have.

Andrew Cherry, Alabama Detachment Adjutant- [saldacherry@aol.com](mailto:saldacherry@aol.com)  
or George Krigbaum, Detachment Commander - [georgekrigbaum@gmail.com](mailto:georgekrigbaum@gmail.com)

*Ron Koonce,  
Americanism Chair  
Alabama Detachment  
Sons of The American Legion*



## *Shirley-Holloway Post 131 Activities Columbiana, Alabama*

Post 131 has stayed busy during the past quarter. Started out with a booth in Columbiana's Monster Walk at Halloween. Gave out a LOT of candy. Some estimates from city was around 4,000 people came through the lines. They had to extend stopping time by over a half an hour just to accommodate the people.



Next activity was hosting the District meeting. This was the weekend before Veterans Day and we were going to put out flags after the meeting but we postponed it due to rain. We managed to put them out the next week. Placed over 600 flags on Veterans' graves in 10 cemeteries. We also held a Veterans Day breakfast and lunch for Vets and families at the Recreation Building in Columbiana. Had a good turnout for the first time. Gained two new members.

VA Outreach Coordinator, John Pinion, spoke at our November meeting. He talked about the new CARES Act and also met one-on-one with members with questions or problems.

Auxiliary and Riders held a cookout at the Cedar Ridge Veterans' Home in Chilton County.

Post 131 had a float in the Columbiana Christmas parade.

The Post is pleased that it met its 100% membership goal by end of year.

Many more activities are in the planning stage for the upcoming months.

*Matthew Blount Post 555  
Pelham, Alabama*

**Matthew Blount Post 555 Receives RSVP Award**



Post 555 received recognition from the Shelby County Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) for its 5,000+ hours of volunteer service during 2022.  
L-R: Frank Lakotich, Bill Blank, Eldon Woodie, Nancy Waller, Ron Koence, Harry Sessaman, Tom McDaniel.

**Matthew Blount Post 555  
Matthew Blount Squadron 555**

City of Pelham, Alabama  
November 7, 2022

Squadron 555 Sons of the American Legion, Detachment 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, Koence, SAL Adjutant, Donald Walker, SAL Vice Commander; Bill Blank, SAL Commander, Mayor Gary Waters, Vashone Smith, Post 555.



*Sons of The American Legion*

December 10, 2022 The City of Pelham, Alabama held their annual Christmas Parade.

Squadron 555 along with Post 555 participated in the annual event with an American Legion Matthew Blount float. Members of Squadron 555 rode on the float with the Triple Nickel Riders trailing along behind.

Squadron members riding on the float were, Jeff Monday, A.J. Blount, Nathan Waller, Jessie Blount and Allas Gomez.

View Parade Photos at <https://alpcsl555.smugmug.com/12-10-2022-Pelham-Christmas-Parade/>



*Triple Nickel Riders*

**Squadron Christmas Family Project**

The mission of Squadron 555 is to support the American Legion Post 555 programs in support of Veterans, Youth and Community.

The Squadron continues to support American Legion charity programs, Children Welfare Foundation and 100 Miles programs. This year the squadron has expanded its efforts in adopting a needy family in our community for Christmas.

With the help of the Pelham First Baptist Church, Rev. Randy Atkinson and Patti Sisk, the squadron has provided to a single mother with a 3 year old daughter and a 5 year old son with toys and clothing wrapped to go under the Christmas tree. The balance of the \$770 raised for this project, \$500 in Walmart gift cards were given to the mother to help with expenses for food, household and personal items. We thank all that helped and supported this project.



*City of Pelham Christmas Parade*



Ron Koence  
SAL Advisor/Adjutant



Patti Sisk receives gifts on behalf of the family from Ron Koence, SAL Advisor

**Post 555 Participates in 2022 VA Hospital  
Christmas Caravan**



Post 555 Trustee, Frank Lakotich and Post 555 Adjutant, Nancy Waller deliver 100 gift bags to VA Hospital patients during the 2022 VA Christmas Caravan.





## *Post 138's "Be The One" Christmas*

Goodwin-Lee Post 138 participated in the 1st Annual Festival of Trees for the City of Alabaster, AL. Over 50 trees were sponsored and decorated by local businesses and nonprofit organizations. Post 138 decorated their tree with a "Be The One" theme by putting cards with messages on the tree that encouraged people to "Be The One" to help end Veteran suicides. Although Post 138 did not win an award, or bragging rights for the best tree, its only goal was to make the public aware of being the one to end Veteran suicides.



### *District Elections in May 2023*

The 23<sup>rd</sup> District elections for Commander, Vice Commander, and Department Executive Committeeman (DEC) will be held at the final District meeting on 13 May 2023. If you would like to run for election to any of these positions, please submit your Resolution, signed by your Post Commander and Adjutant, to District Adjutant Holly Boslet ([Holly.Boslet@gmail.com](mailto:Holly.Boslet@gmail.com)) not later than 30 April 2023. All other District positions are appointed by the incoming District Commander.

*Paul Gonthier*  
23<sup>rd</sup> District Commander/Post 138 Commander  
2<sup>nd</sup> Division, Department of Alabama  
American Legion  
205-728-5700