



The Triple Nickel

Published Exclusively for the Members of American Legion & Matthew Blount Post 555

Volume 7 Issue 5
May 2020

Post elects new officers for 2020

*"In God We
Trust"*

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Commander
Barry Blount

1st Vice Commander
Jeff Monday

2nd Vice Commander
Nancy Waller

3-Year Trustee
Bill Blank

Barry Blount will lead Post 555 as Post commander for the next year. Members elected new officers for 2020-2021 at the April 4 meeting.

Motion to Elect 2020-2021 Nominees by Acclamation.

On March 5, 2020, the Post Nominating Committee and Post membership nominated the following Slate of Officers to serve in Matthew Blount Post 555 for the 2020-2021 term:

- Commander – Barry Blount
- First Vice Commander – Jeff Monday
- Second Vice Commander – Nancy Waller
- 3-Year Trustee – Bill Blank

Since we are in exceptional times and have been prevented by circumstances far beyond our control to have our regularly scheduled April meeting in which we would declare the slate of candidates duly elected, on March 26, 2020, the Executive Committee approved a motion to elect the 2020-2021 nominees by acclamation. See letter from the Judge Advocate's Desk for details.

"The newly elected officer will take office during the May 7, 2020 Annual Meeting. Note: The May 7, 2020 Annual Post meeting will be via Zoom Video Teleconference. Official note was sent to Post members via email and U.S. mail on April 24, 2020.

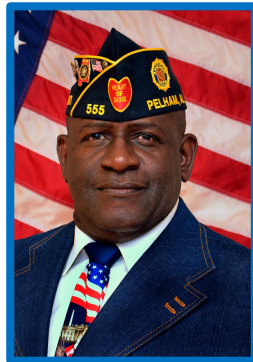


Executive Committee using online platform to do business during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic.



After COVID-19 eliminated the possibility of gathering in person to conduct business, I am proud to report that the Executive Committee conducted the business of the March Executive Committee meeting via teleconference. Since then, we have expanded by using video conferencing sessions over the course of three weeks. While we hope that we will be able to meet at our Post soon, we are grateful to know that we can access online platforms such as Zoom Video Teleconferencing in order to continue taking care of business and veterans when necessary.

Help for Legionnaires during the COVID-19 crisis. 1st Zoom Video/Conference – April 6th



Panelists provided an updated for Post members and veterans:
Conservation:

- Real-Time Access to Your VA Care Team Through VA Video Connect (<https://www.mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect>)
- Top 10 Most Common VA Disability Claims
- Buddy Checks
- Stay Connected with membership using the Post Directory and look for opportunities for membership online renewals.

Note: Before joining a Zoom meeting on a computer or mobile device, you can download the Zoom app from [our Download Center](#). Otherwise, you will be prompted to download and install Zoom when you click a join link.

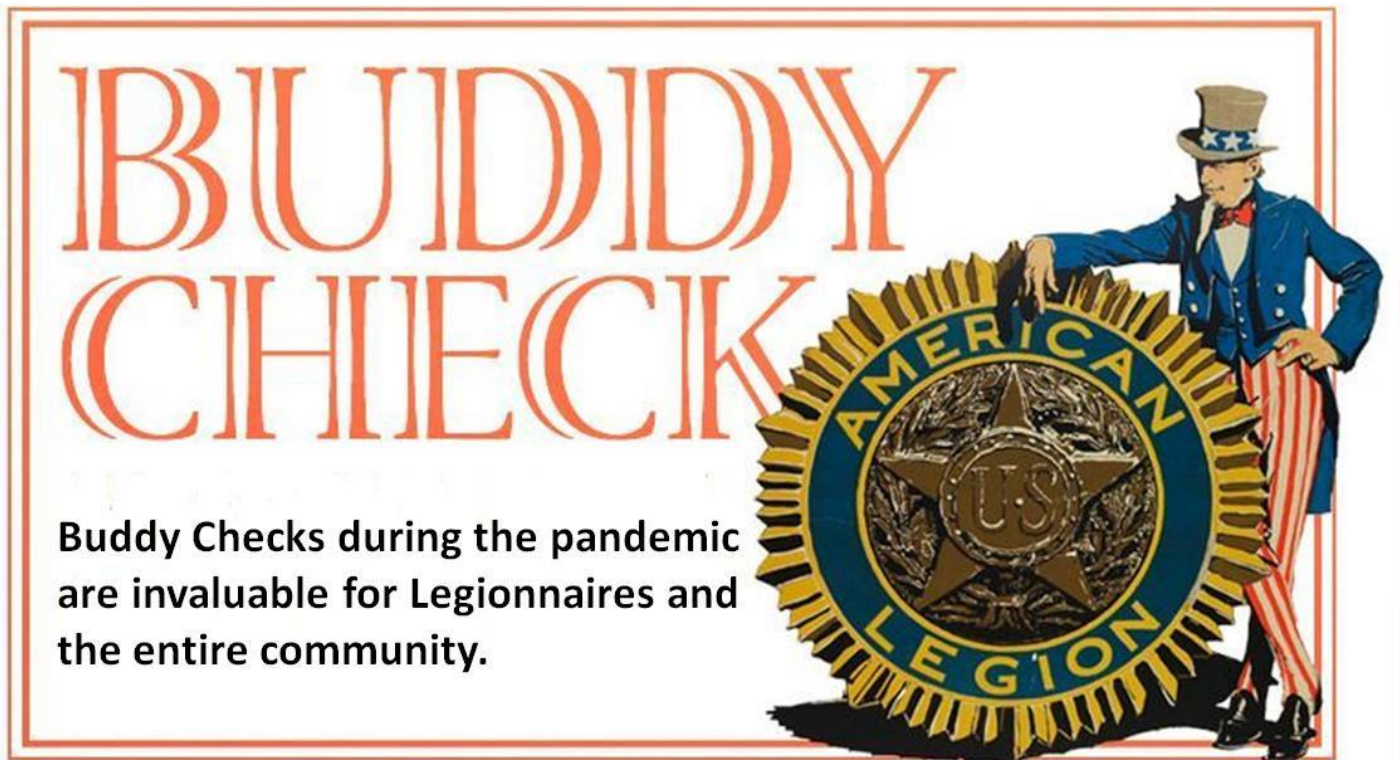
Post 555 In Action

Legionnaires continue serving during the COVID-19 crisis.

April 9th Chaplain Tom McMahon hosted Post 555 Monthly Buddy Check

Wellness check-ins with veterans

Phone calls made: 171



Legionnaires and community to perform a Buddy Check during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

- Buddy Checks serve as a way to reach out to Legionnaires and former members who may need help. During COVID-19, let's expand this effort by inviting the community to join by reaching out to others within the community.
- Your phone call/text may identify individuals' needs for financial assistance, transportation, prescription pickup and just hearing another person outside the home.
- Everyone knows someone. Encourage the community to phone or text two people outside your normal circle.

Sample of Post 555 Programs inside the Four Pillars

All Legionnaires should be familiar with the Post programs offered under each pillar.

I. Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation

1. Improved members accessing VA Health Care/benefits (Post Service Office Jerry McClain)
2. Introduced 1st Post 555 Resolution during the Department Convention in support of the Passage of the LEGION ACT with unanimous approved by the Department Convention.
3. *Active Service Officer handled more than 20 cases to assist Veterans.
 4. Service Officer Partnership - BVAMC Outreach Coordinator and regional Veteran Service Officers
 5. Members sharing about positive VA claim experience
 6. Created dual purpose information/recruitment card
 7. *Open House – Veterans Service Day (included Legion Family and Veterans resources)
 8. *Ceremonial Honors for Veterans: Assisted and spearheaded the burial of a Veteran with no family.-Hundreds of Veterans attended the funeral.
 9. Increased volunteering – 5,000+ RSVP hours (RSVP chairperson Nancy Waller)
 10. Veteran's Donuts hosted by Pelham Senior Center
 11. Member participated in Birmingham National Veterans' Awards Dinner

II. National Security

1. *Monthly Buddy Checks (Chaplain Tom McMahon)
2. Quality of Life: Facilitated members enrollment for VA health care benefits
3. *American Legion Blood Donor Program: Contributed to the donation of 12 pints of blood
4. Comfort Care Hospice of Pelham partners
5. Home visitations, Post Everlasting services, visit the ill, bereaved, shut-ins, disabled, and prospective members – Chaplain
6. Revitalized Auxiliary Unit 555 (Auxiliary Unit 555 President, Caroline Culpepper)
7. Heroes to Hometowns: Invited Mobile Vet Centers (MVCs) to Open House: help connect military personnel and veterans with local resources to help transition back to civilian and community life.

III. Americanism

1. Legion Baseball Triple Nickel 19U first appearance in State Tournament Championship game. (Jon Freeman, Coach)
- 2.*The American Legion School Award Program: presented 29 awards to students (Past Commander Blount, chair)
3. First Flag Placement for Veterans Day – Pelham Cemetery (SAL Bill Blank, chair)
4. Incorporated local Boys Scout into annual Veterans' Day Program, Texas Roadhouse (Chris Combs, chair)
 5. Conducted eight Flag Replacements/Education/U.S. Flag etiquette events (Shauna Hadley, chair)
 6. *Voter Registration and Participation (participated in Get Out The Vote)
 7. Legion Legacy Run: American Legion's Legacy Scholarship Ride (Jeff Monday, Rider Director)
 8. Junior Shooting Sports (Chris Vonderau, chair), Boys State (Past Commander McDaniel, Chair), Girls State (Caroline Culpepper, chair), High School Oratorical (Richard Kaster, chair)
 9. *participated in Vets in the Classroom for approximately 1,000 students.
 - Certificate of Appreciation presented to Excel and Jr. Excel Exchange Club at Jefferson Christian Academy (Frank Lakotich, chair); and Certificate of Appreciation presented during Meadow View Elementary School Live News Broadcast (852 students)

IV. Children & Youth

1. *Spearheaded the first Halloween Safety Day in Pelham (Proclamation from the City)
2. *Auxiliary Unit First "Trunk Or Treat" at Texas Roadhouse
3. Participated in Pelham Impact Team (Compact 2020): Prevent youth substance use)
4. Budgeted \$300 for C&Y Piggybank Fundraiser program
5. Operation Christmas Cards for Veterans at BVAMC

*First time activity/program included to The American Legion Consolidated Post Report (CPR)

Incumbent Commander's Corner

What we have done the last 12-months.

For God and Country! I would like to thank the members of The American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555 for electing me to serve as your commander for the last 12 months. I truly enjoyed my time in this position. I am very thankful for the gifts, talents, and opportunities the Lord has blessed me with. Thanks to the Executive Committee, and organizational committee members that hung in there the last 12 months and Legionnaires who supported the 2019-2020 command team efforts. Also, thanks to the Legion Family (Riders, SAL, Auxiliary), entire City of Pelham leaders, community, businesses, and partners; 23rd District Commander; and Department leaders/staff for their active support. Special thanks to the restaurants that provided a meal during our Post meetings.

In our June 2019 newsletter, I highlighted one area I wish to immediately improve upon – focusing on service to veterans and service members, and listed eighteen other areas of emphasis during my tenure as your Post Commander. Some ways we improved as a Post this year include:

- Increasing the number of members that completed the American Legion Basic Training Course to fifteen. This is a free self-paced online course to expand members' knowledge about The American Legion.
- The first Post member to attend and graduate the National American Legion College, First Vice Commander Jerry McClain (congratulations!!!). The American Legion National College prepares Legionnaires for leadership.
- Two Post members appointed by the American Legion National Commander to serve at the national level.

○Commander Kenneth Paschal, NEC Americanism Council.

○Past Commander Barry Blount, NEC Veterans Employment and Education Council.

(Click [here](#) or visit our website under publication to view the aforementioned in the June newsletter pages 3-4.) I'm proud to report, with your help - mission complete!

Among our many other accomplishments as a Post this past year, we can include the extraordinary fundraising abilities of our programs, such as the ones listed below:

1. Pro Rodeo Fundraiser donations: \$8,916.01. Thanks to Jerry McClain, Chairperson.
2. Military Appreciation Night: \$1,887.50. Commander Paschal chaired this event; special thanks to the UA



Hockey staff/team for making this fundraiser a success.

3. Texas Roadhouse Collection Cards Fundraiser: \$1,382.00. Thanks to Chris Combs,
4. Wreaths Across America: \$2,955. Thanks to Chuck Kiser, Chairman.
5. Texas Roadhouse "The Home of Veterans" banner: \$180. Thanks to Eldon Woodie for assisting in this project to display "The Home of Veterans" banner in the Pelham Texas Roadhouse waiting area.
5. 50 / 50 Raffle: \$411.50. Thanks to Ron McGriff for bringing this fundraiser idea before the Executive Committee for approval.
6. Texas Roadhouse "The Home of Veterans" banner: \$180. Thanks to Eldon Woodie for assisting in this project to display "The Home of Veterans" banner in the Pelham Texas Roadhouse waiting area.
7. Girls State: \$800. Thanks to Caroline Culpepper, Chairperson.
8. Post Store: \$200+: Thanks to Frank Lakotich, Chairperson.
9. Hospitality: \$500+: Thanks to Post membership
10. Boys State: \$1,255. Thanks to Past Commander Tom McDaniel, Chairperson.

We created a Post Commander's Recruitment pin and added 50+ new members to our Post membership roster. As a result, **four** Post members earned the American Legion National Commander's "A Foundation for the Future" membership excellence pin and **sixteen** Post members earned the Post Commander's membership pin! I'm also very proud to announce we'll continue the Post tradition of The American Legion's Post Excellence Award presented by the National Commander and The Department of Alabama's 100% Membership Goal Certificate for 2020.

Our Command and supporting team introduced into the Post and our Community several Legion programs not used before, as well as major improvements to the ways of carrying out a few existing programs. (**See enclosed four pillars charts and CPR for a snapshot of Post 555 accomplishments.**)

In closing, when your tenure is over, everything you did will be represented by a single **DASH** between two dates — what will that dash mean for The American Legion, other Veterans, Community, and Youths in the immediate and surrounding area? For a complete recap of 2019-2020, click the following video link here: <https://VIMEO.COM/382132443>.

As a charter member of this Post, I look forward to seeing the Post continue to strive for excellence under the next chain of command and encourage all members to focus on supporting the mission of The American Legion.

Remember, working together, we can achieve more!

For God and Country!

Kenneth Paschal , Commander

Matthew Blount Post 555
50 Racquet Club Parkway
Pelham, AL



Meets first Thursday of the month.

May 7, 2020 Meeting will
be held via Video/
Teleconference

Welcome to Post 555
New Family Members

Clint Bowden
Lynda Morris
James Posey
Charles Williams
Sylvester Evans

Programs at Upcoming General Membership
Meetings

May 7th: Video/Telephone Conference. Link will be emailed to each member.
June 4th: Law Enforcement and Firefighter of the Year Awards (no guest speaker)
July 2nd: Ms. Erin Garzelli, Case Manager with Volunteers of America: Veteran Homelessness



Post Leadership

Post Commander Kenneth Paschal	Post Trustees Bill Blank
1st Vice Commander Jerry McClain	Frank Lakotich
2nd Vice Commander Nancy Waller	Robert Horsley
Adjutant Ron Koonce	Auxiliary President Caroline Culpepper
Judge Advocate Larry Strayer	Historian Shaun Hadley
Financial Officer Joe Starnes	Sons Commander Jon Freeman
Chaplain Tom McMahon	Legion Riders Director
Sergeant-At-Arms Derek Winters	Jeff Monday
Post Service Officer Jerry McClain	Flag Team Coordinator
Historian Shauna Hadley	Shauna Hadley
Public Relations Officer	Webmaster Ron Koonce
Vacant	Triple Nickel Editor Yolanda Rancher
	Photography Frank Chacon
	Ron Koonce

The Triple Nickel

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 50 Racquet Club Parkway
 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

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Post 555

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THE TRIPLE NICKEL
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First Vice Commander's Report

I want to thank the Post Legionnaires who voted for me to become the 1st Vice commander 2019/2020. It has been a challenging but highly effective 12 months of service to the American Legion. I want to thank Commander Kenneth Paschal for his unwavering support and dedication to Post 555. Your leadership has been instrumental in creating program processes, good will, community relations, patriotism, food procurement, rodeo coordination, fundraisers and a professional environment for Post 555. When you took command of the post, I'd watched how you rose above the fray of negative issues in the transition. You have demonstrated that the way to overcome adversity is a successful conclusion to all your goals. The many successful programs and activities under your leadership are second to none. If you never hear it again, I'm saying it now; thank you for the incredible sacrifice you gave to this post. I am extremely grateful for your yeoman service to the Matthew Blount Post 555 the Triple Nickel.



I welcome the newly elected leadership and look forward to my role as the full-time Service Officer for Post 555. God bless the Triple Nickel and Let'er Buck! 🐎

Jerry McClain
First Vice Commander/Post Service Officer



**Join the American Legion Family
Helping Veterans and Troops
Serving the Community and
Youth**

**Matthew Blount Post 555
Auxiliary Unit 555
Sons of The American Legion
Legion Riders**

visit our website

alpost555.com
facebook.com/alpost555



- Heather Cuipepper, member of the Auxiliary Unit 555 Juniors; Hope Christian School
- Cody Monday, member of The Sons of the American Legion Squadron 555; Pelham High School

Post 555 Hosts District 23 Meeting via ZOOM April 25, 2020



23rd District Commander Kaster invited Triple Nickel Riders Director, Jeff Monday; and Post Service Officer, Jerry McClain as guest speakers.

Topic: Solutions for Veterans | Connected Care
Topic: Having Importance of having a Riders Chapter at the Post

Post members in attendance: Commander Paschal, First Vice Commander Jerry McClain, Trustee Bill Blank (District Sgt-at-Arms), Ron Koonce Adjutant, Richard Kaster (23rd

Second Vice Commander's Report

Nancy Waller



I am honestly not quite sure what to say for this month's edition of the Post 555 Newsletter because not too much has been going on since we have all been "trapped" in our homes by self-quarantining. Sparkie and I have been doing a lot of yard work and organizing his workshop, so that has taken up a good bit of time. My son has a job that enables him to remain in the workforce since he is a security guard for Wells Fargo which of course is still open and taking care of its clients. He is definitely one of the lucky ones to have a pay check continuing to come in. A very good friend of mine and a Soldier for many years is now offering financial assistance to one of his sons and wife since they were both deemed "non-essential" and are not receiving pay checks. He is blessed to have the ability to help out his family, but it is sad that COVID-19 took away his family's jobs.

Commander Paschal has become quite proficient with the "Zoom" videoconferencing program which he has used on several occasions. I am from the conference call days without having to worry about what I look like on the computer. I was in my pajamas for this past videoconference, but no one knew because I threw a sweatshirt on to cover it up!!! Sneaky, huh???

One last comment that may make you smile (which I think we all need). I am one of many people who gets a haircut every 4-6 weeks and have not had one since the quarantining. I have very thick hair and there is absolutely no way I can get my Post 555 garrison cap on. If my hair stylist doesn't come back to work soon, my husband said he would give me a haircut which is a very scary thought, so let's hope that Governor Ivey opens up our great state SOON so I can get a haircut!!! I know there are some of you in the same situation, so go ahead and smile along with me. Stay safe and healthy, and take care of your family, friends, neighbors, and fellow Legionnaires so we can all continue to enjoy the greatest nation in the world!!!

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY- JUNE-JULY 2020

Saturday, May 23, 2020, Time TBD

What: Flag Placement at Pelham City Cemetery for Memorial Day

Where: Pelham City Cemetery, Shelby County Highway 105 (Bearden Road), Pelham, AL 35124
Chairperson: Sponsored by the "Sons" (Bobby Horsley)

Co-Chairperson: TBD

Volunteers Needed: A small team of Volunteers will be needed to place flags at the graves of all Veterans; observance of the "social distancing" criteria is important, so only a few members are needed. Mayor Waters is in agreement with this plan.

Guest Speakers / Programs at Upcoming General Membership Meetings

May 7th : "Zoom" Virtual Post Meeting. Installation of Newly Elected Officers is postponed to a time the Post can meet as a group.(no guest speaker or program)

June 4th : Law Enforcement and Firefighter of the Year Awards (no guest speaker)

July 2nd : Erin Garzelli with Volunteers of America talking about Veteran Homelessness

Post 555 Youth Programs Postponed

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, these programs have been postponed; however, registration has been extended to June 15, 2020.

The American Legion Alabama Boys State has been postponed to May 2021. 2020 registered delegates will be able to attend the 2021 session and be eligible for all 2020 benefits and scholarships. See www.alpost555.com for details.

The American Legion Auxiliary Alabama Girls State has been postponed until July 25-31, 2020. Registration has been extended to June 15, 2020.

Adjutant's Area

We are thankful for our members being safe during the last six weeks. We have not had any report of any members being ill from COVID-19 so far. I encourage everyone to remain patient as much as you possibly can until it is a relatively safe environment in which to be venturing out.



I am pleased to report that we have met our 2020 membership goal of 100% as of April 29, 2020 with 103% which qualifies for the 2020 National Post Excellence Award.



The next goal to reach is 105%. I feel confident that we will be successful in meeting that goal. Many thanks to you, the members and the Membership Committee for efforts in meeting our goals.

If you still have not renewed your 2020 membership, now is the time to get it done. Your membership is very important to The American Legion and Post 555 even though you may not be able to participate in ongoing events and activities. You are still a part of the Post 555 Family. The Post is here for you.

Check your American Legion Membership Card to confirm if you have renewed for 2020. If not, you can renew either online at www.legion.org or mail your renewal fee of \$45 payable to "Matthew Blount Post 555" to *American Legion, Matthew Blount Post 555, 50 Racquet Club Parkway, Pelham, AL 35124*.

Even though the Post's face-to-face monthly meetings have been forced to be suspended, Post operations and support activities have not ceased with the use of teleconferencing and group video conferences.

The Post Executive Committee will continue to manage Post business via video conference calls; however, in the best interest of our members, **the May Post meeting will be available to everyone via "Zoom" video or telephone conference.** Detailed information has been distributed to the Post membership.

You can always contact me at ron.koonce@alpost555.com if you have questions about any of the above.

For God and Country
Ron Koonce,
Adjutant



Let me say right off that I believe in our Legionnaires at Post 555. I believe each and every one will be better for having gone through this situation of a medical scare. I believe you have faced the fire before. You have admirably borne up in crisis after crisis in time past. You are strong.

Nevertheless, we are challenged and often become uneasy in trying times. You will do well. You have met the challenge. I, and many of you, have been in touch with a number of our veterans. Thank you for making calls on your own and assisting me in our regularly scheduled Buddy Checks. By the way, our next regular Buddy Check will be Thursday, May 14th, beginning at 09:00 a.m. (for an hour or so) perhaps from home. May I go ahead and ask for volunteers for that date... Thank you, in advance.

Along with you, Commander Paschal and I have been privileged to help raise our spiritual awareness and keep our emphasis on God and Country as we all made efforts to serve veterans. Our Commander will share some awesome things that have been accomplished this past year so I will not say much on that. I would like to say, "thank you." for helping us do services for deceased veterans; make over 500 Buddy Checks (considerably more than officially reported); conduct a Post Everlasting; visitations to homes, shut-ins and hospitals; coffee times and countless other activities.

Looking ahead to May, I expect things to begin normalizing somewhat. I am anxious to see your face and get back to more closeness with friends and acquaintances.

Every coin has two sides. The confusing, tough and sometimes angry side of this mess we're in is obviously the dark negative side. It can bring on hopelessness and disparity if we let it. On the other side is light, patience, courage and hope. May I say, that I truly believe our God has kept us and will continue to be on our side as we keep the faith and follow Him. After all: "If God be for us, who can be against us?" May the Lord bless and keep you is my prayer.

For God and Country.

Sincerely,
Thomas McMahon,
Chaplain

Post 555 Member Spotlight

Lynda Morris - WWII WAC

Sieglynda Schumacher was born October 28, 1923 in Stuggart, Germany. Times were hard and jobs were scarce. Two of her aunts were able to be sponsored by an American family to be a cook and housekeeper in 1928. After they were established in America, they were able to sponsor their brother, Sieglynnda's father, in 1929. Leaving his wife and young daughter in Germany, he worked hard to earn enough to sponsor them. After a long year of separation, Sieglynnda and her mother were reunited with her father in 1930. Her dad became an U.S. citizen and, because Sieglynnda was a minor, she automatically became a citizen. Soon, her dad was able to open his own bakery in Chicago, IL.



School was then a bit of an issue. Sieglynnda was enrolled in a Jewish run school. All went well until news of the Germans declaring "war" on its Jewish citizens. At the suggestion of one of her teachers, Sieglynnda dropped the first four letters of her name and from then until now is best known as Lynda.

As WWII progressed, Lynda enlisted in the Women's Army Corp in 1942. She was stationed at Daytona Beach, FL for her basic training. Her first assignment sent her to Arkansas. Originally assigned as a dental assistant, it only took 2 weeks for her commander to realize Lynda's stomach was not adapting well to her assignment. She was reassigned to the motor pool as a driver at Camp Ellis in Illinois. After serving in the motor pool for a short time, she was reassigned as a recruiter. While recruiting for the Army, Staff Sargent Woodrow Wilson Hendley "recruited" Lynda to be his wife in 1944. Mr. Hendley was given the handle "Tex" since Texas was his home state.



All was going well for the young couple until Lynda's mother became seriously ill. Lynda was honorably discharged in 1945 to care for her mother. Tex remained in the Army until 1946.

In July 1947, Tex and Lynda became the proud parents of James "Jim" Michael Hendley. Their life seemed ideal until Tex was diagnosed with melanoma cancer which eventually claimed his life in 1953, leaving his wife of only 10 years to raise their 5 year old son alone. Lynda went to work as a bookkeeper for the A&P Food Company and later worked for the Domonic Food Company.

After her son, Jim, was grown and on his own, Lynda met and married Gerald Morris, from Arkansas, in 1972. The family moved to Foley, AL in 1980. In 2007, Gerald required constant care due to Alzheimer's and so Lynda moved to Montevallo, AL to be near the Bill Nichol's Veterans' Home in Alexander City where Gerald lived. In 2008, Lynda once again became a widow.

Lynda, at 92, lives on her own in a beautiful community in Montevallo. Her son, Jim, served in the Army and is a Viet Nam veteran. He is married to Peg and they have 3 children. One son, James Wilson Hendley, joined the Navy and served 3-4 tours in Afghanistan. He is currently a Full Commander stationed in California. He is married and he and his wife have 2 adorable adopted sons. Jim and Peg also have 2 daughters. Lynda is the proud great-grandmother of 3 boys and 1 girl. She attends St Thomas Catholic Church, enjoys reading and playing Spider Solitaire on her computer. Lynda attended Post 555 meetings regularly as long as her health permitted.

Lynda, thank you for your service to our great country and for instilling the love of country in your son and grandson. Your legacy will continue for many years to come.

WW II Member

Lynda S. Morris Women Army Corps



Barry K. Blount **Commander's Elect Report** **2020-2021**

First of all, I would like to thank Tom McDaniel and Kenneth Paschal for their hard work in leading Post 555, Triple Nickel, for the last three years into a growth in membership, and also the unsung heroes that helped make it happen. Matthew Blount Post 555 membership makes up almost half of District 23 in Alabama! The Post has grown to 250+ in the 6 years since we have been organized -- and how is that possible? I feel that we show where our hearts are, with our members and our fellow men and women that served our country. Action speaks louder than words. I pray that I can lead the "Triple Nickel" into another great year. With the members help, we will succeed.



Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, we are starting off with a challenge but when the gates are open, we will take off. Many of the committee chairpersons have already started with their plans. During this next term I plan to hi-light many of our unsung heroes and show what their team is doing, often in the background. Learning a few things from Past Commander Paschal, I plan to live streaming our Post meetings so that our shut-ins and out of state members can be a part of our meetings.

The stay-at-home request from the Governor has given me a lot of time to reflect on what started our Post. For those that aren't aware, Matthew Blount is my middle son who served in Iraq as a medic. When he was told that he had cancer and had only 90 days to live, he told the doctors that he appreciated their opinion, but he would wait until the Good Lord tells him it's time. Matt had a strong will and he had just found out that he was going to be dad a month earlier and he wanted to leave a legacy for his daughter to follow. "Don't give up". A door will shut but another will open. He lived another two years. Please take time to read his bio on our website www.alpost555.com

My wife and I had an opportunity last fall to go backstage to meet vocal band **Home Free**, a country-tinged a cappella group, one on one. I shared with them that their music helped me through some tough times after the death of my son. They told me they were working on a video I would probably like. It has since come out and is worth a listen. I hope you enjoy it as I much as I do. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a6_I_Kzb1HE Please take a moment to watch it.



Looking forward to getting to work... Love you all.

Barry K. Blount
In-Coming Commander
2020 -2021

Special Thanks

The Post would like to thank the following local restaurants that provided meals at this year's Post meeting meals.



Gulf War Era Benefits & Programs

A guide for veterans and their families

Basic benefits for Gulf War veterans and families

Military service distinguishes some of America's men and women who were willing to sacrifice their time – and perhaps much more – when the nation called. Veterans who served on active duty during the Gulf War era are eligible for the same benefits offered to U.S. veterans of other wartime periods.

The government has a wide variety of programs that acknowledge the contributions of veterans. These benefits are available to the men and women who served on active military service in the Southwest Asia theater of military operations. This includes Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the neutral zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea and the airspace above these locations, during the Gulf War era (Aug. 2, 1990-present) or in Afghanistan on or after Sept. 19, 2001.

Basics on benefits

To find out what benefits you are eligible for contact an American Legion department service officer.

Search for one at www.legion.org/serviceofficers.

Education – Honorable discharge is a must. Various GI Bill benefits are available. www.gibill.va.gov

GI Bill home loans – Certificate of eligibility must be obtained. www.homeloans.va.gov

Insurance – Veterans can convert their Servicemembers Group Life Insurance (SGLI) to Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI) within 120 days of discharge without a medical exam.

An application for VGLI after the 120-day period

must be accompanied by proof of good health and be submitted within one year after SGLI. www.insurance.va.gov

VA pension – Economically disadvantaged veterans who are permanently and totally disabled from non-service related disabilities and served during an official period of war may be eligible to receive annual payments. www.benefits.va.gov/pension

Veterans preference – 'This gives eligible veterans preference in appointments to federal positions. It does not apply to internal agency actions such as promotions, transfers, reassignments, and reinstatements.

Upgraded discharges – A discharge that is not officially stamped "honorable" can limit access to VA benefits and affect employment opportunities. For assistance, call The American Legion at (202) 861-2700.

Presumptive conditions

VA has listed presumptive conditions as a result of active duty service in the Southwest Asia theater of military operations. These are conditions either diagnosed or undiagnosed that began during active military service (during Southwest Asia theater of military operations) or before Dec. 31, 2016. VA presumes the following certain chronic symptoms existing for six months or more as related to Gulf War service. These presumptive diagnosed conditions are:

- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome
- Fibromyalgia
- Functional gastrointestinal disorders. Symptoms may include but not be limited to irritable bowel syndrome,

dyspepsia, vomiting, constipation, bloating, abdominal pain syndrome and dysphagia.

Undiagnosed illnesses with symptoms considered as "medically unexplained, chronic (lasting six months or more) multi-symptom illnesses."

These symptoms may include fatigue, skin irritations, headache, muscle or joint, neurological issues, neuropsychological distress, upper and lower respiratory issues, sleep disturbances, gastrointestinal distress, abnormal weight loss, menstrual disorders or cardiovascular irregularities.

VA provides a free Gulf War Registry health exam to eligible veterans and provides alerts to long-term health problems that may be associated with environmental exposures during service. www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/gulfwar/registry

Returning servicemembers

Veterans who have served in the region of combat after Nov. 11, 1998, are eligible for an extended period of eligibility for health care for five years after discharge. The five-year eligibility period begins on the date of discharge and/or separation from active duty service.

Reservists and members of the National Guard are eligible if they served on active duty in a combat theater after Nov. 11, 1998, and were discharged under other than dishonorable conditions. For information regarding health-care eligibility, go to www.va.gov/healthbenefits/apply/returning-servicemembers.asp

Annual Report of Post 555 Activities

2019-2020

Post adjutants are the key to how well The American Legion reports to the American people its actual accomplishments for the past year. **Thanks to Adjutants Ron Koonce for his hard work and timely submission of our annual CPR.**

Information from CPR forms is frequently shared with members of Congress, giving them a snapshot of the valuable community service provided by American Legion, Auxiliary and SAL members. **Below are excerpts from Post 555 CPR.**



THE AMERICAN LEGION | CONSOLIDATED POST REPORT

2019 - 2020

as of: 4/23/2020

Department of (1) Alabama Post No. (2) 555 District No. (3) 23

VETERANS AFFAIRS AND REHABILITATION

7 58 no. of cases handled by service officer(s)
 9 10 no. of volunteer hours recorded at VA hospitals
 11 ☒ has a *VA Voluntary Service* coordinator
 12 1 no. of *VA Voluntary Service* volunteers

NATIONAL SECURITY

13 12 *Blood Donor program* - no. of pints donated
 14 12 *Blood Donor program*: no. of blood donors
 20 ☒ has a *POW/MIA* chairperson
 21 ☒ has *Law Enforcement of the Year* program
 22 ☒ has *Fire Fighter of the Year* program

PUBLIC RELATIONS

25 ☒ maintains a website
 29 5 no. of times post mentioned on radio
 31 1 no. of times post mentioned on cable access TV
 24 ☒ produces a post publication
 26 60 no. of annual community events post participates
 28 1 no. of post social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
 30 1 no. of times post mentioned on TV
 32 12 no. of times post mentioned in newspaper (stories)

CEREMONIAL HONORS FOR VETERANS - POST SPONSORS:

36 1 no. of funeral honors provided for veterans

VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

42 ☒ participates in career fairs

AMERICANISM

56 6 *Boys State*: no. of boys sponsored
 60 ☒ *Baseball: American Legion Baseball* team sponsored
 68 3 no. of local Oratorical contestants
 70 ☒ participates in *School Award* program
 72 ☒ participates in *American Education Week*
 76 ☒ participates in *Vets in the Classroom*
 78 ☒ participates in *Flag Day*
 80 ☒ participates in *Veterans Day*
 82 ☒ participates in *American Legion Birthday*
 84 4 *Community Service*: Estimated no. of hours of service
 86 1 *Jr Shooting Sports Prog Club*: no. of clubs

57 \$ 1300 *Boys State*: cost to post
 61 \$ 26,000 cost of baseball team sponsorship
 67 ☒ *Oratorical Contest*: sponsored local contest
 69 \$ 600 Oratorical cost to post
 71 29 no. of awards presented
 73 \$ 55 cost of *American Education Week*
 79 ☒ participates in *Get Out The Vote*
 81 ☒ participates in *Memorial Day*
 87 11 *Jr Shooting Sports Prog Club*: no. of youth involved

CHILDREN & YOUTH (C&Y)

93 2 no. of C&Y activities held
 95 \$ 25 value of goods given to children (reasonable estimate)
 97 20 no. of volunteer hours for C&Y programs and activities
 96 25 no. of children given aid (cash or goods)
 98 ☒ participates in *Halloween Safety*
 101 ☒ participates in *Health & Child Safety*

INTERNAL AFFAIRS & MEMBERSHIP

111 ☒ *American Legion Riders*: has Riders group
 113 ☒ participate in *Legion Riders Legacy Run*
 115 ☒ *Sons of American Legion*: has squadron
 119 ☒ participate in *Support Our Troops*
 121 15 *Support Our Troops*: no. of volunteers
 123 ☐ *American Legion Amateur Radio Club*: has radio club
 125 ☒ Participated in *Buddy Check*
 127 ☒ Participated in *Veterans Service Days*
 112 23 no. of Legion family members in Riders group
 114 \$ 600 *Legacy Run*: cost to post
 116 27 *Sons of American Legion*: no. of Sons in squadron
 120 \$ 100 *Support our Troops*: cost to post
 122 10 *Support Our Troops*: no. of volunteer hours
 126 486 Number of members contacted
 128 1 Number of events hosted

Special thanks to the businesses/donors that made a financial contribution in support of the Triple Nickel Pro Rodeo Fundraiser that was cancelled due to COVID-19



Fundraising is important for nonprofits because it supports the main cause with financial revenue and sets up opportunities for future engagement with donors.



- Post 555's operating budget is supported entirely by charitable donations from friends, family, and businesses who have previously expressed an interest in veterans, family, community and youth. Annually Post 555 conducts more than forty Veterans, youth, and community projects.



Mr. and Mrs. Gene Smith



**C & H
MECHANICAL
SERVICES, INC.**



**Tom and Jean
McMahon**



**Starnes &
Company,
Professional LLC**



**Bill Blank
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