

AMERICAN LEGION MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555

PELHAM, ALABAMA

VOLUME VI, ISSUE X

IN GOD WE TRUST

OCTOBER 2019

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Legacy ride honors Matthew Blount

Members of Post 555 participated in the Riders' Legacy Scholarship Ride on Saturday, Sept. 21.

The ride honored post namesake Matthew Blount. It also raised money to provide college scholarships to post-9/11 veterans who died on active duty or have at least a 50-percent disability.

The ride began at Heart of Dixie Harley-Davidson in Pelham and continued to the Alabama National Cemetery in Montevallo.

Matthew's widow, Terrie, and their daughter, Audrey, attended a small ceremony at the cemetery. Together with Matthew's father, former post commander Barry Blount, they laid flowers at Matthew's grave.

The event concluded at Main Street Tavern in Montevallo, where participants gathered to share memories and enjoy fellowship. There was also a 50-50 drawing that raised additional funds.



Past commander Barry Blount and his granddaughter Audrey lay flowers at the grave of his son and her father, Matthew Blount.

Triple Nickel Riders Director Jeff Monday said the ride is an annual event to honor Blount's memory and to help provide scholarship opportunities for fellow veterans.

BE SURE TO ATTEND OUR OCTOBER POST MEETING!

COMPLEMENTARY MEAL PROVIDED BY

FULL MOON BAR-B-QUE



DINNER BEGINS AT 6:15 P.M. MEETING AT 7 P.M. PELHAM SENIOR CENTER 50 RACQUET CLUB PARKWAY, PELHAM COME JOIN YOUR FELLOW LEGIONNAIRES!

FROM THE COMMANDER'S DESK



Kenneth Paschal Post Commander

For God and Country!

The season has changed but our mission has not. Fall is here but things are still hot within the Triple Nickel. Hot meaning, we're still working hard and heavy in making a positive change for Veterans, their families, youth, and the community.

Let's continue to increase our Legion Family membership and renewal. I had the opportunity to meet with several of the Auxiliary Unit 555 members the last couple of weeks and am happy to share the following: Those interested in the Auxiliary Unit 555 are invited

to attend the Oct. 3rd Post General Membership meeting. There will be an opportunity for those interested in learning more about the Auxiliary to use the adjacent meeting room to discuss their revitalization efforts.

The Commander's Membership Award lapel pins are in. I look forward to the opportunity to personally recognize the hard work of our recruiters during the upcoming and future Post meetings.

Our annual Thanksgiving Family Dinner is 6:00 pm on November 7th at the Pelham Civic Complex and Ice Arena banquet hall. This event is free for the American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555 (Legion Family). For the purpose of the annual Thanksgiving Dinner meal, Immediate Family is defined as "the Legion Family's member spouse and children. See enclosed flyer to RSVP as soon as possible.

October areas of interest:

- Reminder: Single chair committees need a backup person called assistant chairperson.
- Promoting volunteer opportunities during Post meetings by having committee heads display informational tables for Post members to visit during fellowship/meal time and after the meeting.
- Assist 2nd Vice Commander/Events Coordinator in filling the following co-chair positions:
- Texas Roadhouse Veterans Day program
- Oratorical program
- University of Alabama Hockey Military Appreciation Night
- Renewal Membership Campaign.
- <u>American Legion Self-improvement</u>: Below are two powerful tools to enhance your knowledge of the Legion.
- ALPOST555.com
- LEGION.ORG/ALEI [Take the Basic Training (self-paced online) course]
- Application for VA benefits success stories.

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FROM THE COMMANDER'S DESK ... CONTINUED

(continued from page 3)

September at a Glance:

- The Scenic Overlook Groundbreaking Ceremony at the ALNC. Congratulations to the ALNC, SCALNC, and Overlook Committee. Great to see the following Post members during this special event: Eldon Woodie, Bonnie Woodie, James Darden, Chic Cecchini, Eric Fort, and Gary Waters.
- September 7th SAL DEC meeting.
- The 23rd District meeting hosted by Chilton Co. Post 216 at St. Vincent's Hospital on September 14th was very productive.
- Matthew Blount Legacy Ride/Ride for Legion Legacy Scholarship (giving back to all the great fallen heroes Families).
- Welcome Comrade Chris Combs as the Post Veterans Day Texas Roadhouse program chairperson.
- The American Legion School Award Medal Program for youth committee meeting. (Chairperson Barry Blount and Comrade Alan Miller, committee member)
- University of Alabama Hockey coach and staff meeting to discuss the upcoming Military Appreciation Night continued partnership opportunity.
- Working to revamp the Auxiliary Unit 555
- Open House at Pelham High School
- Department Leadership Conference (Montgomery), September 27 28

Communication – November is full of activities, will be demanding and require the volunteer support of as many as possible Post members and their families. Additional details are enclosed throughout the newsletter.

Reminder: The Post members' directory is for internal distribution and use; not for outside Post functions or organizations.

Remember, working together, we can achieve more!

For God and Country!



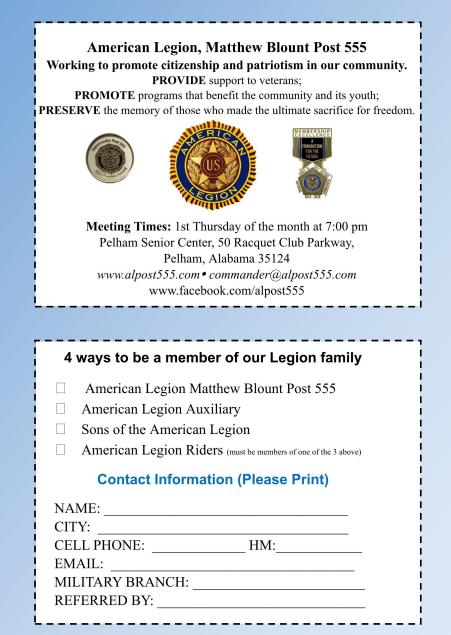
1ST VICE'S COMMENTS



Jerry McClain

1st Vice Commander

The 'Find one Ask one' Membership campaign is off and running and we are adding new members every month to our Post! I'm Looking forward to our Post Commander pinning that recruitment pin on you at the next general session! We have a new recruiting tool that will be available so the membership committee can assist you!



2ND VICE'S CORNER



Nancy Waller

2nd Vice Commander

I had the pleasure this morning of having a tooth extracted, and am now feeling the effects of that "experience" as the feeling comes back to my mouth and face. Time to head for the bottle of Aleve. Please feel sorry for me.

We are heading for a busy, busy month in November, but not before we have one event in October. The Annual Pelham Police Department National Night Out was fun last year, so I am looking forward to another great event this year. It is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 1, 6-8 p.m. in the Publix parking lot on Huntley Parkway. Please join us at our tent along with several members of the Riders to have their great motorcycles for the visitors to see.

November has a ton of events with something for everyone. Instead of listing them all here, be sure to check the Events Schedule in the newsletter for the event, date, time, location, etc. Also, I will have information and sign-up sheets at the tables set-up around the perimeter of the meeting room at our meetings on Oct. 3 and Nov. 7, so come see me and we will get you signed-up to participate.

Our guest speaker for the Oct.3 General Membership Meeting is confirmed and very excited about being with us to share information about ServiceDogs Alabama, and Scott Landreth will be joined by his own service dog, Rambo. I met Scott and Rambo at the Career Resource Fair several months ago and just had to ask him to come and share what he does for the community and for fellow Veterans. I hope you enjoy meeting both he and Rambo as much as I did.

If you are a new member of Post 555 and/or just hit the "young age of 55", please allow me to offer you an R.S.V.P. (Retired Seniors Volunteer Program) Volunteer Application so you can sign-up with many of our Post members to record your volunteer hours each month. Even if you only attend a meeting each month, the time counts from when you leave your home and return, so you could be adding about 2-3 hours a month to our list! I have plenty of applications so please ask for one. I will also need to make a copy of the front of your driver's license as proof of age, and I can do that right at the Pelham Senior Center for you.

I look forward to seeing your smiling faces at the Oct.3 General Membership Meeting so please be sure to come and meet Scott and Rambo!!!"



ADJUTANT'S AREA



Ron Koonce Post Adjutant

Many thanks to the ones that have submitted their 2020 membership renewals. We are on track to meet our 100% goal by December 31, 2019 but yet still have a ways to go.

Through our first three months of the campaign, we are at 49.5%, meeting our District 23 target. I am counting on those that have not renewed already to get us to our goal. All that is needed is an average of thirty-six renewals and/or new members in each of the next three months. You can start with bringing a veteran to the

October Post meeting. Contact Jerry McClain with the Membership Committee for membership materials that will help you recruit members.

You can renewal online at <u>www.legion.org</u>. All you need is your membership number and Credit Card or by mail your \$45 check payable to "Matthew Blount Post 555" a to[:] American Legion 50 Racquet Club Parkway Pelham, AL 35124

Join me in welcoming our September new and transferred members : Donald Broxson, Tye Johnson III, Adrian Riggins, Aretha Riley, and Gerald Thomas

Hope to see you at the October 3rd meeting.

For God and Country

Ron Koonce

Adjutant



THE TRIPLE NICKEL

is published monthly for members of Matthew Blount Post 555. 50 Racquet Club Parkway, Pelham, AL 35124 (205) 678-1375

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 submission for the purpose of publication. Letters to the Editor must include name, address & telephone number. Names will be withheld upon request.

James Billings, Editor

CAREER FAIR and VETERANS' RESOURCE FAIR

THURSDAY, November 7, 2019 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM THE FINLEY CENTER (Behind The Hoover) 1000 RV Trace, Hoover, Alabama 35244

All Job Seekers Are Welcome & Encouraged To Attend

Civilians ***** Veterans ***** National Guard ***** Reservists ***** Active Duty



UNEMPLOYEDUNDEREMPLOYEDEMPLOYED, BUT YOU DON'T LIKE YOUR JOB

Don't have a <u>Resume</u>, or is it <u>Old</u> and in <u>Need of Updating</u>?

Birmingham Career Center, 3216 4th Ave. S. (205-582-5200 Jasper Career Center, 2604 Viking Dr. (205-221-2576 Tuscaloosa Career Center, 202 Skyland Blvd. (205-758-7591 Talladega Career Center, 1005 So. Street E. (256-493-0865) GadsdenCareer Center, 216 North 5th Street (256-546-4667) Jeff State One-Stop Career Center, 2601 Carson Rd. (205-856-8538) AlabasterCareer Center, 109 Plaza Circle (205-663-2542) Lawson State Career Center, 1100 9th Ave. S., Bessemer (205-929-3485) Anniston Career Center, 1731 Coleman Road (256-832-0147)

• Update your resumes (Bring many copies) • Dress appropriately to meet company recruiters

 To Pre-Register & View a List of Participating Companies & Veterans' Resources

 LOGON: <u>https://www.evenbrite.com/</u> and enter info below:

 Looking for
 In

 Career Fair
 Hoover











LETTER TO LEGIONNAIRES CONCERNING REVITALIZING THE POST AUXILIARY UNIT 555 BEFORE THE ANNUAL THANKSGIVING FAMILY DINNER



Dear Legionnaires and Legion Family,

Time and again it has been demonstrated that the most successful Posts are the ones who work cooperatively with their Auxiliary Units. With this in mind, our Post is very interested in reforming our Auxiliary Unit 555 as we realize the positive effect a Unit can have on a Post. We hope to build a family organization of Legion and Auxiliary members volunteering together to enable us to do more for our veterans, our youth and the community.

Do you have female family, relatives, friends, even co-workers, or spouse (male or female) who enjoy volunteering? Would they enjoy helping the Auxiliary Unit 555 in the betterment of our veterans, youth and our community? Are these women and spouses eligible for membership in the American Legion Auxiliary? If so, will you please share this information in this letter with them?

Mothers, spouses (males and females), daughters, sisters, granddaughters, greatgranddaughters and grandmothers of members of The American Legion, and deceased veterans having served since 1941 (See LEGION Act). Step-relatives are also eligible. Women who of their own right are eligible for membership in The American Legion are eligible to join the American Legion Auxiliary.

There will be an informational meeting of interested women and spouses (male and female) next Post meeting Thursday, October 3, 2019.

Auxiliary representatives from Unit 555 and the Past Department Auxiliary President Gloria Haygood will be present at this meeting to provide information on programs and activities, dues, possible meeting date, officers etc. They will also be there to answer any questions you may have. There will be an opportunity to join the Auxiliary Unit 555 and renew membership on site. Auxiliary dues for seniors (18 and over) is \$25 and juniors ((birth – 17) \$6.

Having a strong Auxiliary Unit 555 to work closely with our Post will strengthen our commitment to this community.

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCTOBER 2019

Tuesday, Oct. 1, 6-8 p.m.

What: Pelham Police – National Night Out

Where: Adjacent to the Publix shopping center on Huntley Parkway, Pelham, AL

Chairperson: Nancy Waller

Co-Chairperson: Sparkie Waller

Volunteers Needed: Yes! Frank Lakotich has already volunteered, but we will need help to set-up our information table, American Legion Riders will be there, lots of other exhibitors there to visit, and lots of visitors to come by our tent! Plenty of food vendors as well, so come hungry!!

NOVEMBER 2019

Wednesday, Nov. 6, 10 a.m.

What: Flag Placement on Gravesites

Where: Alabama National Cemetery, 3133 Highway 119, Montevallo, AL Chairperson: Chuck Kiser

Co-Chairperson: Nancy Waller

Volunteers Needed: Yes! We are responsible for the flags being placed at all of the gravesites in Section 8 where the Post namesake, Matthew Blount, is laid to rest. Not sure if the holes will be pre-dug or not, but will find that out ahead of time.

Saturday, Nov. 9, 10 a.m.

What: Flag Placement on Gravesites

Where: Pelham Cemetery, Shelby County Highway 105 (Bearden Road), Pelham, AL

Chairperson: John Atwell (SAL)

Co-Chairperson: Ron Koonce (SAL Advisor)

Volunteers Needed: Yes! There are about 70 Veterans' graves that will need a flag placed, so anyone who would like to help with that is certainly welcome. Chris Combs offered the help of his Boy Scout Troop, so thanks for that, Chris!!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, Nov. 11, 2019, 10:30 a.m.

What: National Veterans' Day at Texas Roadhouse
Where: Texas Roadhouse Restaurant, 60 Drivers Mart Way, Pelham, AL
Chairperson: TBD
Co-Chairperson: TBD
Volunteers Needed: Yes!

Tuesday, Nov. 12, 10 a.m.

What: Flag Retrieval from Gravesites
Where: Alabama National Cemetery, 3133 Highway 119, Montevallo, AL
Chairperson: Chuck Kiser
Co-Chairperson: Nancy Waller
Volunteers Needed: Yes! Each flag needs to be removed from the hole in front of the gravesite, wiped clean of dirt and/or moisture, put into a bundle of ten each with a rubber band, then placed stick end up (to dry) in the plastic bins located at

Thursday, Nov. 14, 2019, 2:30 p.m.

the road sides.

What: "Saluting Those Who Served" Thanksgiving Dinner Where: Hope Christian School Key Club, 419 Philippians Boulevard, Pelham, AL Chairperson: Nancy Waller Co-Chairperson: N/A

Volunteers Needed: Yes! Anyone interested in attending this event can RSVP to <u>keyclub@hopechristian.net</u>, and please let me know as well so I can keep up with the headcount.

Saturday, Nov. 16, 7 p.m.

What: Military Appreciation Night – University of Alabama HockeyWhere: Pelham Civic Complex and Ice Arena, 500 Amphitheater Road, PelhamChairperson: Kenneth Paschal

Co-Chairperson: TBD

Volunteers Needed: Yes! As the information becomes available, Kenneth will be able to share the exact need for Volunteers, so check with him.

GUEST SPEAKERS / PROGRAMS

Oct. 3: ServicDogs Alabama represented by Scott Landreth and Rambo (confirmed)

Nov. 7: Thanksgiving Family Meal and Update on Post 555 (confirmed)

Dec. 5: Speaker/Program/Topic TBD

Jan. 2: Mayor Gary Waters and City Manager Gretchen DiFante, Status of City of Pelham (tentative)

Post 911 honors memory of fallen namesake

By Henry Howard

The American Legion

American Legion Post 911 in Hoover, Ala., has experienced a tenfold membership increase since it renamed itself after Ryan Winslow, who was killed in Iraq.

"We were 911 before 9/11 when the Twin Towers were hit," said Ginger Branson, commander of both Post 911 and Jefferson County for District 21. "Ryan Winslow was a Hoover boy. He is also memorialized at Hoover High School, where he was a student."

Winslow enlisted in the Marine Corps in January 2005 and completed boot camp that May. On March 25, 2006, Winslow was deployed to Iraq with the 2nd Marine Division. He was killed on April 15 when his vehicle hit an IED.

Past commander Ron Bradstreet came up with the idea to rename the post after Winslow and relocate it to Hoover. That turned out to be a jump-start for the post, which used to meet in a trailer. At that time, the post struggled with membership.

"I figured that's what we needed to do, honor a hometown hero," said Bradstreet, who is now Department of Alabama commander. "So we re-flagged here. Then we went to work on membership. We attend all the events



Ryan Winslow Post 911 Commander Ginger Branson, left, laughs with former post Adjutant Chrystal Jones in Hoover, Ala., on Tuesday, Sept. 17, 2019. (Photo by Ben Mikesell/The American Legion)

in the city and try to be part of the community."

Bradstreet said that members draw inspiration from two special members of Post 911.

"When you are in a post meeting and his mom and dad are sitting there, you don't have to ask yourself why you are doing this," Bradstreet said. "You see them right there. Those Gold Star families don't want their loved one to be forgotten. And Ryan will never be forgotten here."

As the post grew in size it eventually received permission to use a room at Hoover Tactical Firearms to hold meetings and other smallscale events.

"The change re-ignited passions among membership," Branson explained. "What happened since then is that we went from 40 members to over 400 members."

And with that renewed passion, Post 911 members participate in various Hoover community events throughout the year, including a breast cancer awareness program at the local VA clinic and an upcoming 5K run with Team Red White and Blue.

"It doesn't hurt for The American Legion to have a face in the community," Branson said. "Everybody needs to know about The American Legion."

Chase Hersey, a post-9/11 veteran who served as a Navy corpsman, helps promote that message. He was commander

(Continued on page 14)

Complimentary copies of

THE TRIPLE NICKEL

were provided during the September meeting of Post 555 by



2659 Pelham Parkway

(205) 621-2722

Hoover post remembers hometown hero Ryan Winslow

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at Post 107 but transferred earlier this year to Post 911 to help rev up the Riders program and their efforts to engage younger veterans.

Hersey credits Branson and Bradstreet with mentoring him. Now, he says, it's his time to give back and provide leadership at their post. "Come see what we're all about," he describes his pitch to a younger veteran. "Come to a meeting. It's not like the old days. Just come out, give it a shot and try."

Post 911 not only embraces younger veterans, he says, it encourages the implementation of new ideas.

"That's one of the reasons why I decided to come over to this post," Hersey said. "They are open to new suggestions. They are open to new ways. They want to grow and be involved in the community. They want to get younger veterans involved."

Chrystal Jones knows full well about the support that members of Post 911 can provide to younger veterans.

Jones is now a member of Post 338 in Brighton, about 20 miles away. One year when she was adjutant at Post 911, she was even further away from Hoover.

"Post members here are really dear; they really kept me grounded when I was over in Afghanistan," said Jones, who served as post adjutant during her 2009-2010 deployment with the Army Reserve. "I went through quite a lot. When events would happen, Ron Bradstreet would give me that reassurance I needed. We went through a lot of tragedies, losing one or two soldiers a day. It was some rocky times."

Jones was stationed at Bagram but traveled throughout the country. "I would check on the soldiers to make sure they had everything they needed and get them things they did need. It was a good experience." Now she continues her service with the Legion on U.S. soil.

"The American Legion cares about veterans," Jones says. "There are a lot of organizations that say they do. But in my time in The American Legion, I have literally seen them come to aid in times of disasters, come to the aid to someone who lost everything in a fire or lost stuff in a tornado. Or set up facilities for those who are going through post-traumatic stress disorder. They just do so much more than most people are aware of like scholarships. I love the way that they are a family organization."

ATTENTION MEMBERS

<u>POST 555 Thanksgiving Dinner</u> <u>Location:</u> Pelham Civic Center <u>Date:</u> Thursday, November 07, 2019

Time: 6 PM

For us to make sure we have enough meals at the meeting. We need for the Post Members to RSVP. **Please email**: Nancy Waller: **wallernj@gmail.com**

Example Email format: Barry Blount plus 2 (name plus number of immediate family members coming)

Cut off for making Reservation: Thursday, Oct. 24



Annual Triple Nickel Thanksgiving Dinner Invitation

Dinner

with the American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555

At Pelham Civic Complex (500 Amphitheater Road, Pelham, AL 35124 November 07, 2019 (Thursday) <u>6:00 PM</u> (This is the Post's regular monthly meeting)

You and your immediate family are welcome but, we need a headcount including you and your family members to reserve the meals and tables.

<u>You must RSVP by October 20, 2019</u> to <u>Commander@alpost555.com</u>, and Commander Paschal will reply when he receives your request.

Please do not wait until the last minute!!!

Membership Renew Campaign



Post 555 success depends entirely on active membership, participation and volunteerism.

Renew Your Membership Today

Three easy renewal options:

1. Renew your membership online

[https://www.members.legion.org/renewal]

- 1) Enter your Legion ID#;
- 2) Enter your last name;
- 3) Enter your Billing Information; and
- 4) Submit

2. Mail your \$45.00 check or money order payable to: American Legion Post 555

Mail to:

American Legion Post 555

50 Racquet Club Parkway Pelham, AL35124

3. Bring your \$45.00 renewal payment to the next Post meeting.

National Veterans Award Dinner Invitation to Post 555



Veterans Day Dinner • NOV. 10th • RSVP by Oct. 3rd

The Birmingham Veterans Day Committee is busy planning this year's Parade and Awards Dinner. This year's Birmingham National Veterans Awards Dinner is Sunday evening, 10 November 2019 at 6:00 PM in the "Birmingham Ballroom" in the Sheraton Inn Downtown. A reception will begin at 5:00 PM. Tickets are \$45.00 each.

This year, there will not be a World Peace Luncheon on Veterans Day so the Veterans Day planning committee is expecting a full house, and they are encouraging everyone to register as soon as possible. In year's past, the Support Committee for the Alabama National Cemetery (which includes members of Post 555) has had enough attendees to reserve a table (or 2) and we would like to invite Post members and possibly **reserve three (3)** table for this year. Therefore, if you would like to attend and sit at a reserved table for the American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555 table, please let me know no later than September 5th. Once we have a committed number, I will ask you to send a check or pay your \$45 at our next gathering, and we will send in one check with a list of names for a table.

Thank you for your interest and support of National Veterans Day in Birmingham. I look forward to hearing back from you soon.

More about the National Veterans Award Dinner:

A perpetual National Veterans Award was created in Birmingham for America's first official National Veterans Day observance November 11, 1954 as authorized by Congress. Its purpose is to honor an outstanding veteran in the United States each year who has made the greatest contribution to further the patriotic interests of veterans and veteran organizations throughout the country. Every year, the award is presented at the National Veterans Award Dinner in Birmingham.

The National Veterans Award Dinner supports the Post Goals and Objective:

- Support Community service project that include local youth and legionnaires
- Participation in local community support activities
- Conduct Community activity that connects the local community with the American Legion

<u>You must RSVP by October 3, 2019</u> to <u>bkblount@gmail.com</u>, and Past Commander Blount will reply when he receives your request.

Coat and tie for males and Semi-Formal for females.

Triple Nickel Presents Our Monthly



1 ticket = \$1 7 ticket = \$5

How it works!

- 1. You buy your 50/50 raffle tickets, and they are put in a bin.
- 2. At the end of the Post Meeting a ticket is pulled.
- 3. That person wins 50% of the money collected. The other 50% goes directly to support the Post Goal and Objectives.

Winner needs to be present to be eligible

*The proceeds will go toward supporting the American Legion veteran's programs such as Military Appreciation Night, community and youth programs.



Post Store Price List

(Proceeds Benefits Post 555 and Department Programs)

