



Published exclusively for the members of

**AMERICAN LEGION MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555
PELHAM, ALABAMA**

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OCTOBER 2020

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IN GOD WE TRUST



Matthew Blount Post 555

**Legion Family
Honor Ribbon**

American Legion National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford will award his 100 percent American Legion Family Ribbon to any American Legion Family that achieves 100 percent membership by June 30, 2021.

For this award, the Legion Family is defined as a post and any combination of an Auxiliary unit, Sons of The American Legion squadron or Legion Riders chapter.

Each branch must achieve 100 percent membership to qualify for the award.



The Post received this recognition a couple years back with 100% membership for all three Legion Family units: Post 555, Sons of The American Legion Squadron 555, and The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 555.

If you are a member of any of these units and have not renewed your membership for 2021, let's all work together toward getting another one of these awards for the Post Family.

COMMANDER'S CORNER



Barry Blount
Post Commander

ALABAMA NATIONAL CEMETERY, MONTEVALLO

Alabama Donation through American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555 Pelham, Alabama

The Executive Committee of Post 555 made a commitment several years ago to consolidate donations and forward them to the Blue Star Salute Foundation Inc. (BSSFI).

The thought of making one large contribution, while still acknowledging individual contributors and memorial designations, would allow the American Legion commitment to make a single payment in support of Veterans and their families.

That is the basis for the Triple Nickel program. The deadline for individual contributions is October 29, 2020.

Dec. 19, 2020 is National Wreaths Across America Day. It is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization formed in 2007 as an extension of The Arlington Wreath Project, with over 1,500 participating locations in all 50 states, and 24 national veteran cemeteries on foreign soils. The Wreaths Across America program is a part of the Blue Star Salute Foundation Inc. The BSSFI is responsible for seeking and gathering donations from individuals and organizations to fund the annual purchase of wreaths to be placed at the National Cemeteries

The purchase price is \$15 for each wreath and the purchase is made by BSSFI for the annual ceremony at the Alabama National Cemetery in Montevallo.

The wreath-laying is still held annually, on the second or third Saturday of December. WAA's annual pilgrimage from Harrington, Maine to Arlington National Cemetery has become known as the world's largest veterans' parade, stopping at schools, monuments, veterans' homes and communities all along the way to remind people how important it is to:

***Remember our fallen U.S. Veterans,
Honor those who serve and
Teach your children the value of freedom.***

The US Military VET Motorcycle Club - Alabama Chapter Donated \$580. I can't say enough about our Riders and the support they provide to the Post. Thank you again, US Military Vet Motorcycle Club for your support and respect you show us. Doug McDaniel, Jr - aka "3-D" - American Legion Riders Director Post 555 Roque Carmona - aka "Scrappy" - US Military VET Riders.

Barry Blount

Editor's note: Please respond to our call for help in December, when we need volunteers at the National Cemetery, for unloading the wreaths from trucks, and later help in placing them on the graves.

1ST VICE'S COMMENTS



Jeff Monday
1st Vice Commander

Hope this finds everyone doing well, I know it seems like groundhog's day over and over. 'Hope that we can all meet very soon in person.

I would like to thank everyone for keeping in contact with the buddy checks. These checks are so important during this crazy time. Get out when you can and if you cannot, pick the phone up and call each other

A big shout out from everyone goes to Post 555

Legion Riders. The group raised a little over a thousand dollars donated to the post's Wreaths Across America campaign for 2020.

Just a reminder: We are in the middle of renewal time. If you need information, please email the post or contact via phone. We will assist you with your renewal for 2021. Thank you and please stay safe. I hope to see everyone very soon.

The 555 Riders came up to Lawly, AL this previous month, where they found on site was an outstanding traveling display called Eyes of Freedom, it's a very moving tribute to one's unit Fallen Heroes. Read it on page 8 and see below.





2nd Vice's Report

Nancy Waller
2nd Vice Commander

This October, two of the Wallers (all of us are Post 555 members as you may know) will be celebrating birthdays! My wonderful husband, Sparkie, will hit 70 years of age on October 24th and my very "entertaining" son, Nathan, will turn 33 years of age on October 3rd. How time flies!!!

With the COVID-19 restrictions still in place, there are still no formal activities scheduled either within the Post itself or in the community. The only "event" that has been taking place (and will continue until the beginning of November) is the Wreaths Across America Campaign. This will be mentioned several times in this newsletter from some very concerned members of your Post's leadership literally begging for your help to sponsor one or more wreaths. We are a little over 75% toward our goal of \$3,600, thanks in part to two unbelievable contributions from the American Legion Riders from rides held on September 12th and 19th. Thank you Doug and the rest of the Riders!!!

Even with Doug's support, we are still coming up short, so please dig deep in your pockets to sponsor at least one wreath for \$15.00 if you are able. As of right now, there is possibly only one more place that Eldon Woodie and I will be visiting (Hoover Tactical) to have a table in the front entrance to try to encourage the patrons to contribute to the WAA Campaign on behalf of Post 555. Fingers crossed!!!

There is one more thing I would like to mention. The Support Committee of the Alabama National Cemetery (of which I am now honored to be serving as the Secretary) is into their 2020-2021 Membership Drive. I would love to have some of our Post members join as Support Committee Members for a membership fee of \$25.00. The Support Committee is a non-profit organization, so memberships are a huge part of how they acquire and spend their money. If you would like to be involved in

there are many ways to do so BUT if you do not care to be actively involved, your membership is still greatly appreciated by showing your support as a new member. You can contact me via e-mail (wallernj@gmail.com) or via my cell (251-554-6986).

If anyone is interested in becoming a Support Committee member, please let me know and I will get a form to you either via e-mail or mail. I would love to have you join me as a member. By the way, during our last Post 555 Executive Committee meeting, Commander Blount asked the committee members for their approval to have the Post join as an "Organization"! It was unanimous, and I was pleased to send in their fee to have the whole Post as a "member".

Take care to all, and please continue to stay safe and healthy during the pandemic that is hopefully dwindling away so that we can return to getting involved with events in the community such as flag replacements. Those are always fun events. Hope to see you at our next General Membership Meeting IN PERSON on Thurs., October 1, 2020, 7:00 p.m. at the Harley Davidson meeting room immediately behind the store. Meal will be served at 6:00 p.m.!!! Come one; come all!!!

Nancy Waller



ADJUTANT'S AREA



Ron Koonce

For God and Country

Fall is on its way as we continue to deal with COVID-19. However, Post 555 is busy processing 2021 membership renewals/new members and completing the budget for 2021.

We continue to take a month-to-month approach in determining when it is safe to return to our monthly face-to-face meetings. At this point, we will continue the Zoom Video/Teleconference for the October meeting. The annual November Thanksgiving Family Night Dinner has been canceled for this year.

The 2021 membership renewals are going well for the first couple of months ending September with 42% which is falling short of our 50% goal by the end of September. Our next goal is to achieve 100% by December 31, 2020. Even though we are a little behind, it is still achievable. Take advantage of earning a National Commander's Recruiting Pin by recruiting at least three new members during 2020-2021. Applications are available at www.alpost555.com.

Let us keep up the momentum in meeting our 100% goal by December 31, 2020; however this goal cannot be reached without your support and not waiting to submit your 2021 membership renewal. The 2020 memberships expire on January 1, 2021.

As a reminder, if you have any benefit programs through the American Legion, such as various types of insurance, it is only valid as long you are in good standing with your membership.

The annual fee remains \$45 payable to **Matthew Blount Post 555**, mailed to **American Legion, 50 Racquet Club Parkway, Pelham, AL 35124**. You can also renew online at www.legion.org.

The October Post meeting will be a face-to-face meeting at the Heart of Dixie Harley Davidson HOG Club House located at 333 Cahaba Valley Parkway North. Meal will be served at 6:00 pm, with meeting beginning at 7:00 pm. Masks are required and Social Distancing will be observed.

Join me in welcoming new member Scott Fields recruited by Richard Kaster during the month of September.

Hope to **see you** on October 1st.

For God and Country

Ron Koonce

Adjutant

Recruit three new members for 'A Foundation for the Future' pin

American Legion National Commander James W. "Bill" Oxford will award his national commander "A Foundation for the Future" membership excellence pin to any Legionnaire who obtains three new members into The American Legion.

A new member is any eligible person joining for the 2021 membership year who was not a member of The American Legion during the 2020 membership year.

Each member listed must be eligible for membership in The American Legion. Forward names of Sons of The American Legion members or Auxiliary members to your detachment or unit for use in their respective incentive programs.

Only one pin will be awarded per individual. Upon receipt, national membership staff will confirm the names and mail the pin directly to the person who earned it.



SERVICE OFFICER NOTES



Jerry McClain
Service Officer

Suicide Prevention

The highest priority with the Veterans Health Administration is Suicide Prevention. Many of you know the alarming statistics about Veteran Suicide. The month of September is Suicide Prevention Month. The VA provides a wonderful Suicide Prevention Program. We also know that most Veterans that commit suicide are not enrolled in the VA. I have included some resources you can share with Veterans you serve.

Suicide is preventable, and special training is not needed to prevent suicide. Everyone can play a role by learning to recognize warning signs, showing compassion to Veterans in need and offering support. Listed are actions anyone can take to Be There:

- Reach out to Veterans to show them you care. Send a check-in text, cook them dinner or simply ask, "How are you?"
- Learn the warning signs of suicide, found on the Veterans Crisis Line website.
- Watch the free S.A.V.E. training video to equip yourself to respond with care and compassion if someone you know indicates they are having thoughts of suicide.

- Check out VA's Social Media Safety Toolkit to learn how to recognize and respond to social media posts that may indicate emotional distress, feelings of crisis or thoughts of suicide.

- Contact VA's Coaching into Care program when worried about a Veteran or loved one. A licensed psychologist or social worker will provide guidance on motivating your loved one to seek support.

Learn more about the #BeThere campaign and access resources to help support Veterans at [BeThereForVeterans.com](https://www.BeThereForVeterans.com).

Veterans who are in crisis or having thoughts of suicide and those who know a Veteran in crisis, can call the Veterans Crisis Line for confidential support available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and 365 days a year.

Call 800-273-8255 and Press 1, text to 838255 or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](https://www.VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat).

Jerry McClain

va.alabama.gov



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
**VETERANS
AFFAIRS**

CHAPLAIN



Tom McMahon
Post Chaplain



"Inside the Bible's pages lie all the answers to all of the problems man has ever known... The Bible can touch our hearts, order our minds, and refresh our souls." --

Ronald Reagan 40th President

"The fundamental basis of this nation's laws was given to Moses on the Mount. The fundamental basis of our Bill of Rights comes from the teachings we get from Exodus and Saint Matthew, from Isaiah and Saint Paul... If we don't have a proper fundamental moral background, we will finally end up with a totalitarian government which does not believe in rights for anybody except the State!" --Harry S. Truman, 33rd President

"The state of our nation today suggests we have strayed from God's wisdom. We – as individuals and corporately as a nation – must seek God and His righteousness if we are to continue in His grace." --Patrick Henry

Let a few of the great men of our Country speak in my place for this article. Please re-read and share their words. May we, as citizens have

courage and fighting spirit enough to stand and hold fast the heritage given to us. *"...freely you have received, freely give."* – Jesus. God has given us great gifts. We must strive to keep them from evil sources which fight hard to take them away. Often we are called upon to give sacrificially of ourselves. I believe our Veterans truly understand this.

Our Triple Nickel team of Super Volunteers has made at least 248 Call Attempts, 204 Contacts and 7 members needing follow-up. Special thanks to: Melvin G., Bill B., Frank C., Jerry Mc., Eldon W., Jean Mc., Ron K., Ronnie Mc., Eldon E. and so on...

Let me confess; I actually meet with Veterans and family wanting closer fellowship. If any of you need and want that kind of contact, I am available for coffee and maybe a donut! Please do not think I am brave. However, I feel that my faith is growing...

"For God and Country."

Chaplain McMahon

POST 555 WORK AREAS

Triple Nickel Riders



Well my fellow Legionnaires, it has been an active month for the Triple Nickel Riders. We received an invite from Carmona "Scrappy" Roque, ride coordinator the US Military Vets MC, to join them on their annual charity ride on September 12th. We met up with all the riders at Veteran Park in Alabaster. We rode to the National Crematory for a few moments of reflection about our fellow veterans who have passed on. The ride continued on to Lawly, AL for some music, food and great comradery. On display was an outstanding traveling display called Eyes of Freedom, it's a very moving tribute to one's unit Fallen Heroes. Scrappy gathered all riders and guest together and thanked everyone for coming out and supporting them. They collected \$580 worth of donations in which they honored us by donating the money to the Triple Nickel Riders to add to our efforts to raise money for Wreaths Across America. The donation was greatly welcomed and appreciated.



The Triple Nickel Riders hosted our annual Matthew Blount Memorial Ride on September 19th. The ride began at Heart of Dixie Harley Davidson. Our Road Captain, Will Hayes led us on a fantastic and smooth route to the National Cemetery

and on to Beef O'Bradys. Barry Blount and Mrs. Terrie Blount placed flowers at Matthew's headstone and Barry a very heartfelt story of our post namesake. The riders continued on our journey to our final stop at Beef O'Bradys, where we gave out prizes and ate lunch all the while engaging in great conversation. The 555 riders were able to collect \$544 in donations to go toward our endeavor to purchase wreaths for our veterans at the national cemetery.

I like to say a big THANKS to everyone that made all this happen. It was a team effort!!

--
Doug McDaniel

Auxiliary Unit 555



Hello Legion Family,

I hope that all of you are well. Please feel free to email or call me if I can help you in any way. We are still in our membership drive and I am grateful to everyone who has renewed membership and our new memberships. We would love to have more people join us. Once this Covid stuff gets under control and we can feel safer again, it will be nice to get back to normal. I truly miss all of you.

We have an opportunity from the City of Pelham to do a Scarecrow/fall theme site at the park. I have the actual email with the information that hopefully you have already seen. Please let me know if this would be a project that we would like to do. I have to give the application before Oct. 12. I know some still may not feel comfortable mingling, but I still want your opinion about it.

Also, I would like to encourage you to do your homework and get ready to cast your vote. I, like everyone, have my opinion who I feel is the best candidates for this election. Please use your God given freedom, remembering those who in times past gave up their life, and get to the ballot box in November. God Bless You All and God Bless The USA.

Caroline

Sons of The American Legion



MATTHEW BLOUNT
SQUADRON 555

JOIN OR
RENEW
TODAY

Visit alpost555.com and select the "About" tab for applications

Mission: The Sons of The American Legion (S.A.L.) exists to honor the service and sacrifice of Legionnaires. The S.A.L. is made up of all male descendants, adopted sons and stepsons of members of The American Legion or of deceased veterans, during times specified by the **American Legion**.

MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555



1 October 2020 Meeting
will be held at
The Heart of Dixie Harley
Davidson HOG Club House
6PM Free Meal, 7PM Meeting

Welcome to Post 555
New Family Members

Scott Fields

Post Leadership

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>Post Commander
Barry Blount</p> <p>1st Vice Commander
Jeff Monday</p> <p>2nd Vice Commander
Nancy Waller</p> <p>Adjutant
Ron Koonce</p> <p>Asst Adjutant
Shauna Hadley</p> <p>Judge Advocate
Larry Strayer</p> <p>Financial Officer
Chuck Kiser</p> <p>Chaplain
Tom McMahon</p> <p>Sergeant-At-Arms
Derek Winters
Anita Bennett</p> <p>Post Service Officer
Jerry McClain</p> <p>Historian
Shauna Hadley</p> <p>Public Relations Officer
Vacant</p> <p>Post Trustees
Bill Blank
Frank Lakotich
Robert Horsley</p> | <p>Auxiliary President
Caroline Culpepper</p> <p>Sons Commander
Robert Horsley</p> <p>Webmaster
Ron Koonce</p> <p>Legion Riders Director
Doug McDaniel</p> <p>Triple Nickel Editor
Frank Chacon</p> <p>Photography
Frank Chacon</p> <p>Ron Koonce</p> <p>Committees:</p> <p>Boy State
Tom McDaniel</p> <p>Police/Firemen Awards
Barry K Blount</p> <p>Jr. Shooting Sports
Darrell Lawley</p> <p>Oratorical
Barry K Blount</p> <p>Baseball
Jon Freeman</p> <p>School Awards
Frank Lakotich
Alan Miller</p> <p>Flag Team Detail
Ron McGriff</p> |
|---|---|

The Triple Nickel

is published monthly for members of Matthew Blount Post 555.
 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

Photos by Frank Chacon /Ron Koonce Post 555



Guidelines for Wearing of The American Legion Cap

The left side (emblem side) of the cap is reserved only for the Legion emblem, city, county, district, or state lettering.

If desired, the following items must be placed on the right side of the cap:

Additional lettering, restricted to either the name of a Post or to an officer title, such as Past Commander

Cap insignias or badges for past or present officers

Consecutive membership insignia, membership stars, and/or authorized Legion or military service decorations

Names or nicknames of individual members cannot be used on caps.

The Legion uniform cap should be worn by its members only when in attendance at official Legion m [Grab your reader's attention with a great quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point. To place this text box anywhere on the page, just drag it.]

Greetings or ceremonies or as official guests at patriotic or other civil functions or by individuals when officially representing The American Legion on public occasions.

A member is considered to be in uniform if wearing an official Legion uniform cap. Therefore, it is not proper to wear the cap while eating a meal at an official Legion or civic luncheon or dinner.

The cap should be worn in a place of worship only by the Guard of Honor, Color Guard, and Commander of same while in marching order or standing guard. When returned to and seated in pews, the cap should be removed.

Legion posts marching in formation into a place of worship should uncover at the door, hold the cap with the right hand over the heart until the arrival in the pews and commanded to take seats, remaining uncovered during the entire service. At the close of the service, upon command, the post shall arise, the members holding the cap with the right hand over the heart will march out of the place of worship and recover after marching through the door.

Legion members not in formation will uncover entering the place of worship and remain uncovered upon after leaving the place of worship.

When at a funeral, the cap should be held over the heart as one approaches the casket and is not at any time worn in a place of worship (except by the Guard of Honor, Color Guard, or Commander of same while in marching order or standing guard.) At the graveside, the cap should be held in the right hand over the heart during the entire service. In cold and inclement weather, the cap should not be worn.

In Legion meetings, the cap should be worn except during moments of the Pledge of Allegiance, prayer, and when standing in silent reverence in memory of departed comrades, when the cap should be held with the right hand over the heart.

Female members of the Legion should wear their caps in the manner prescribed for



WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

The 2020 Wreaths Across America fundraising campaign is entering its final month!

This year's campaign has faced unforeseen challenges; just as we all have, due to the COVID-19 virus. This year it is expected that we will need between 7,500 and 8,000 wreaths at the National Cemetery in Montevallo. In years past, we have relied on donations made at our annual Thanksgiving family dinner for between 40% & 50% of our annual campaign total.

Unfortunately, we will not have the dinner this year due to COVID and limited Post financial resources. This has forced the campaign leadership team to seek other ways to make up the shortfall.

We have been blessed with an outstanding campaign leadership team this year including Nancy Waller, Eldon Woodie, and myself.

We have been fortunate to have partnered with the Exchange Club of Shelby County, the US Military Vets Motorcycle Club, and our own Triple Nickel Riders all of which have allowed us to reach our current level of donations.

Our campaign goal for this year is \$3,600.00. As of September 19th, our total donations received stands at \$2,759.00 or 76.6% of our goal.

What we are missing this year, are donations from the Post membership. With only a handful of Post members having donated to the campaign, the membership has largely been MIA! Where are you? Have you participated in this significant effort to support veterans who have gone to the Post Everlasting?

Wreaths cost \$15.00 each. While we recognize that this is a difficult financial year for some folks, we ask that you consider donating at least one wreath before November 1st. I must send in all collected funds, as well as all In Honor and In Memory designations, to the Blue Star Salute at that time.

A donation form can be found attached to this newsletter as well as on the Post website. These donations can be completed and mailed to the Post address shown in the form. Make checks payable to Matthew Blount Post 555 and write Wreaths Across America in the memo line. **Be sure to mail them so that they are received before November 1st.**

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING TO THIS WORTHWHILE CAUSE. Thank you.

Chuck Kiser



WREATHS -*across*- AMERICA

Matthew Blount Post 555 will again offer to consolidate donations and forward them, along with all memorial designations, to The Blue Star Salute Foundation. Checks should be payable to Matthew Blount Post 555 with Wreaths Across America written in the memo line. Donation forms and checks should be sent to: American Legion Post 555, 50 Racquet Club Parkway, Pelham AL 35124.

**Twelfth Annual Wreaths Across America – 19 December 2020
Alabama National Cemetery
Montevallo, Alabama**



*Remember - Honor - Teach
Updated 18 Jan 2020*

The Blue Star Salute Foundation, Inc., (BSSF) needs sponsors for our 12th Annual Wreaths Across America project -- a nationwide fundraising endeavor to provide a live Maine Balsam Wreath for each Veteran's grave each Christmas season. Wreaths sponsored by this BSSF endeavor are for Veterans graves in the Alabama National Cemetery (ALNC), located on HWY 119 in Montevallo. The 2020 Remembrance Ceremony will be held at 11AM on December 19, 2020. The cost to sponsor a wreath is \$15.00. In 2020, we will need approximately 7,500-8,000 wreaths for our Cemetery. All wreath sponsors as well as family members of those buried within ALNC are invited and strongly encouraged to attend and participate in the wreath-laying ceremony.

To sponsor wreaths for the ALNC, please complete this form and return it, along with your payment to [redacted]. For names to be included on the BSSF "In Honor/In Memory" display for 2020, forms must be received no later than November 5, 2020. Wreath sponsorships are accepted throughout the year. Each sponsorship is tax deductible. For sponsorships of \$250 or more, a donation acknowledgment will be sent to the email address indicated below, if requested. For more information, please visit our website www.bluestarsalute.org.

**Wreaths Across America - Sponsorship Form
The American Legion, Matthew Blount Post 555**

Please print clearly

Printed Name of Individual/Organization: _____
 Mailing Address: _____
 Email address: _____
 Phone Number: _____ Sponsorship Amount: _____
 In Honor of (living): _____
 In Memory of (deceased): _____
 Signature: _____ Date: _____



2020 Wreaths Across America Post 555 Donation Campaign Summary			
Data as of 8/18/2020			
Year	2019	2020	Change
Wreaths used/needed	6475	7750	19.7%
Post 555 donations total	\$2955	\$2789	-6.6%
2020 Donations goal	00	\$3600	
Percent goal received to date		76.6%	
Donations received over/(under) goal		(\$841)	