

THE TRIPLE NICKEL

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Published exclusively for the members of

AMERICAN LEGION MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555
PELHAM, ALABAMA

VOLUME VII, ISSUE I

IN GOD WE TRUST

JANUARY 2020

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Christmas Caravan a huge success

By Nancy Waller
2nd Vice Commander

On December 10, 2019, the Birmingham VA Medical Center Christmas Caravan was a HUGE success for all of the Veterans at the Medical Center again this year. Post 555 members who participated this year were Frank Lakotich (Chairperson), Kenneth Pas-

chal, and Chic Cecchini. Tony Berenotto from the Department of Alabama was also there with other American Legion members, so it was good to see other Posts being represented. There were not as many volunteer groups represented this year, but that gave everyone else more room to maneuver in the room

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BE SURE TO ATTEND OUR JANUARY POST MEETING!

COMPLEMENTARY MEAL PROVIDED BY
JIMMY JOHN'S GOURMET SANDWICHES



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! I would like to wish the Triple Nickel Family a Happy New Year. May the New Year bless you with health, wealth, and happiness.

Thanks to the Post members that volunteered their time the last eight months in making the Triple Nickel one of the most active Posts within the 23rd District and state. I appreciate each of the Triple Nickel Family members and pray everyone continue to stay focused on The American Legion mission statement and seek volunteer and leadership opportunities in the coming months.

It is my strong wish and commitment that in the next 4-months our Post will continue to strive for excellence.

Membership: Congratulations to the following individuals that were presented the Post 555 Commander's Membership Award lapel pin during our December 5th Post meeting: **Richard Kaster** (23rd District Commander), **Mac Braid**, and **Commander Paschal**. Also, congratulations to 1st Vice Commander **Jerry McClain** for receiving the National Commander's Recruitment Pin of Excellence. Membership is the key ingredient to our success. **Remember, working together, we can achieve more!** Please continue to support the Triple Nickel entire family and programs by seeking volunteer opportunities.

January areas of interest:

- Auxiliary Unit 555 workshop and or coffee/tea.
- Second reading and approval of the Constitution and bylaws amendment 20191205.
- Each Post member seek Pro Rodeo sponsors. Questions regarding sponsorships, see the Pro Rodeo chairperson Jerry McClain.
- Establish a Pro Rodeo Committee Informational meeting date.
- High School Oratorical Scholarship Competition. Interested in volunteering, see chairperson Richard Kaster (also 23rd District Commander).
- Fourth partnership with Shelby County Character In Action by implementing The American Legion School Award Medal Program to Chelsea students on January 15th.
- Mid-Winter Conference January 16 – 19.
- Legion Family and committee heads start preparing for January 31st and February 1st Revitalization and Open House participation
- Each Legion Family is asked to setup and display an informational table during the Post Open House on February 1st.
- Each committee chairperson creating a draft continuity book.
- Monthly Buddy Checks
- Legion Family start researching job descriptions/responsibilities of interest for leadership roles for the 2019-2020 elections. I want to challenge new members and seasoned members to seek leadership positions for the upcoming Post elections.

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FROM THE COMMANDER'S DESK ... CONTINUED

(continued from page 3)

December at a Glance:

- University of Alabama (UA) Hockey Student Staff check presentation from their Military Appreciation Night camo jersey auction.
- Post Chaplain **Tom McMahon** presentation on "Your True Gift" and distribution of the Post 555 Interest Inventory Survey during the December 5th Post meeting. The Post 555 Interest Inventory Survey will be available for members during the next couple of Post meetings.
- Comrade **Eldon Woodie** participated in the City of Montevallo Christmas parade by pulling the Wreaths Across America float.
- Birmingham VA Medical Center Christmas Gift Caravan Project. Chairperson, **Frank Lakotich**.
- Wreaths Across America at the ALNC. Chairperson, **Chuck Kiser**.
- Third partnership with Shelby County Character In Action by implementing The American Legion School Award Medal Program (presented six medals and certificates to Montevallo and Vincent School students). Chairperson, Past Commander Barry Blount.
- Legion Riders Christmas party/gathering.

Communication – the importance of belonging: I ask all members and their guests to greet each other and share one thing with each other during the next Post meeting. Direct contact with veterans is a guaranteed way to boost membership and find out the concerns and issues that they have, creating a cohesive environment.

For God and Country!



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
James.thomas.billings@gmail.com

Post 555 delivers gift bags to hospitalized veterans

(continued from page 1)

downstairs where everyone gathered to receive instructions, etc. The floors on which we were allowed to visit were as busy as years past which is definitely a good thing. The Veterans that our Post 555 members visited and to whom were given a bag of "goodies" that included a pair of socks, shaving kit, soap, comb, toothpaste, shampoo, and three hand-made Christmas cards from several youth groups were all very grateful for not being forgotten during this special time of year. A HUGE thanks to Sherri Fuchs again this year for donating funds for ALL of the items in the gift bags!!!

On December 7, 2019, Frank Lakotich was joined by Kenneth Paschal, Jerry McClain (not shown in photo), Tom McDaniel, Larry Strayer, and Vashone Smith as well as two members of the Unit 555 Auxiliary, Becky Layfield and Linda Colvard, to fill a total of 100

bags to be given to the Veterans, and every single Veteran received a gift bag and all 100 bags were distributed to well-deserving folks!! We all hope that this continues to be an annual event for Post 555 because it is a very humbling and rewarding experience for all involved.



POST 555 OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, February 1, 2020, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

American Legion Post 555 gives Revitalization a new look during the 23rd District Revitalization efforts.



Blood Drive/Blood Pressure Check



Mobile Vet Centers (MVCs) of the Department of Veterans Affairs



Pro Rodeo Charity Fundraiser Ticket Sales



Open to the public. We hope to see you there! Spouses and children are welcome to attend.

2ND VICE'S CORNER



Nancy Waller
2nd Vice Commander

2019 is GONE, but an even better year in 2020 is in our sites. I trust that you had a wonderful Holiday Season and are looking forward to a Happy New Year in 2020 with friends and family close by to enjoy these times together.

I have several members who volunteered to help removing wreaths at the Alabama National Cemetery on January 7th, so please don't forget! If anyone else is interested in helping and did not have a chance to sign-up, we would love to have your help. We will start at 9:00 a.m. in Section 8 and if needed, may help in other sections. We unloaded 6,515 wreaths on December 12th and were honored to make sure they were staged on trailers to be taken to strategic locations in the cemetery for family members to put on their loved ones' graves, then for all Volunteers to continue placing them on every single grave. Wonderful tribute to our Fallen Heroes.

Richard Kaster is working on the Oratorical Scholarship Contests and his first one is at Pelham High School on January 10, 2020. **Frank Lakotich** has volunteered to be the Moderator, but there are a few other positions to fill, so please contact Richard if you are interested. I will be asking Post 555 Volunteers who have helped him in past years to see if they are interested again, but some "new blood" might be nice. Great chance to see some super-talented high school students in action!!

I would like to start off the New Year with some new members on my Monthly Station Form for R.S.V.P., so I will be looking for some new folks at the January 2, 2020 General Membership meeting who would like to complete the application. The only criteria is that you are 55+ years "young". I will also make a copy of the front of your driver's license as proof of your age (**Marvin Copes'** requirement). Please join and be a part of our goal of 10,000 hours (we have already exceeded 5,000 so we are on the climb to double that)!!!

Thank you all for your Volunteerism and smiling faces at our events and General Membership meetings. I love when I have a small amount of time at the podium to share some wisdom...or just have fun with the members who are present. There needs to be some FUN at our meetings as well as the required and necessary information, so I do my part to get a laugh or two. Happy New Year in 2020 and let's make it the best year yet for Post 555!!



ADJUTANT'S AREA



Ron Koonce
Post Adjutant

I hope everyone is enjoying the holidays with friends and family as we wind down 2019.

Even though we did not make our goal of 100% by end of 2019 with 75%, however I am confident that we will make 100% for 2020. Just be reminded that the 2019 memberships expire December 31, 2019. Those that have not renewed, your membership is an important part of The American Legion's and Post 555's Mission in serving our Veterans, Youth and Community in addition of many benefits you enjoy as a member.

You can renew online at www.legion.org. All you need is your membership number and Credit Card or mail your \$45 check payable to "Matthew Blount Post 555" to:

American Legion
50 Racquet Club Parkway
Pelham, AL 35124

Thanks to the great recruiting efforts of **Jerry McClain's** Membership Committee we have recruited 13 new members and 11 transfers to the Post during the first half of 2019-2020 year.

Join me in welcoming our additional members during December:

Transfers

Darrell Lawley

New Members

Yolanda Rancher

Jeffery Sullivan

Harvey C. Wilkins

Robert Braid, Jr

Membership applications can be accessed on the Post website www.alpost555.com. Contact Jerry McClain with the Membership Committee for membership materials that will help you recruit members.

The upcoming major events are the Alabama Department Mid-Winter Conference January 16-19, 2020 in Huntsville, AL and the Post 555's Open House on February 1, 2020. Watch for additional Open House information. For details contact Commander Paschal at commander@alpost555.com.

Hope to see you at the January 2, 2020 meeting. Guests are welcome. Bring a veteran with you.

For God and Country

Ron Koonce

Adjutant

THE AMERICAN LEGION



What The American Legion Does:

- ♦ Delivers, free of charge, all U.S. flags for the graves of American military personnel laid to rest at overseas cemeteries.
- ♦ Provides cash assistance to needy military and veteran families with children at home.
- ♦ Purchases comfort items and recreational opportunities, from loose-fitting sweat suits for burn victims to amusement park tickets for families of hospitalized military personnel recovering from wounds and illnesses.
- ♦ Provides volunteer hours and services at VA medical facilities at an estimated value of \$20 million.
- ♦ Fulfills needs and provides firsthand support for veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury through a variety of therapeutic programs that are not dependent on prescription drugs.
- ♦ Awards college scholarships to children of post-9/11 veterans who died on active duty, or have a combined VA disability rating of 50 percent or greater.
- ♦ Distributes urgent cash assistance to veterans whose homes have been badly damaged or destroyed by natural disasters.
- ♦ Distributes more than \$500,000 a year in grants to organizations that provide support for children in need.
- ♦ Sponsors and supports hundreds of youth programs, including more than 3,000 Scouting units, nearly 4,000 American Legion Baseball teams, dozens of Junior Shooting Sports clubs, Junior ROTC and Junior Law Cadet programs.
- ♦ Provides relief, support, shelter, training and compassion for homeless veterans.
- ♦ Supports and demands a full accounting and repatriation, when possible, of all U.S. military personnel listed as Prisoners of War or Missing in Action.

UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY 2020

Tuesday, January 7, 2020, 9:00 a.m.

What: Removal of Wreaths

Where: Alabama National Cemetery, 3133 Highway 119, Montevallo, AL 35115

Chairperson: Chuck Kiser

Co-Chairperson: Nancy Waller

Volunteers Needed: Yes! Volunteers will pick-up all the wreaths from the front of the headstones and deposit them at the street for the cemetery staff to pick-up and properly dispose of them. Gloves would be recommended!!

Friday, January 10, 2020, Time TBD

What: Pelham High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest

Where: 2500 Panther Circle, Pelham, AL 35124

Chairperson: Richard Kaster

Co-Chairperson: Frank Lakotich

Volunteers Needed: Yes! As time gets closer, Richard will be asking for several positions to be filled for this event, so if interested, let him know. Frank Lakotich will be the Moderator.

Friday, January 31, 2020, 9:00 a.m.

What: 23rd District Revitalization

Where: Pelham Senior Center, 50 Racquet Club Parkway, Pelham, AL 35124

Chairperson: Kenneth Paschal

Co-Chairperson: TBD

Volunteers Needed: Yes! Volunteers will be making phone calls to local American Legion members in the “administrative” Post to ask if they would like to be transferred to an active Post such as ours.



UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY 2020

Saturday, February 1, 2020, 9:00 a.m.

What: Post 555 Open House

Where: Pelham Senior Center, 50 Racquet Club Parkway, Pelham, AL 35124

Chairperson: Kenneth Paschal

Co-Chairperson: TBD

Volunteers Needed: We want everyone to come and see what is being offered during this event; LifeSouth will have their Bloodmobile for a Blood Drive and blood pressure checks, Post 555 information tables will be set-up for our upcoming events, the Mobile Vet Center from the Department of Veterans Affairs will be there, voter registration will be available by the Photo Voter ID Mobile Unit from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m., and many other resources for Veterans. The public is welcome so bring your friends and neighbors!!

Saturday, February 8, 2020, Time TBD

What: 23rd District High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest

Where: Pelham Senior Center, 50 Racquet Club Parkway, Pelham, AL 35124

Chairperson: Richard Kaster

Co-Chairperson: Frank Lakotich

Volunteers Needed: Yes! As time gets closer, Richard will be asking for several positions to be filled for this event, so if interested, let him know.

Friday and Saturday, March 27 and 28, 2020, Time TBD

What: Post 555 Southeastern Pro Rodeo Fundraiser

Where: 2000 Ball Park Road, Pelham, AL 35124

Chairperson: Jerry McClain

Co-Chairperson: TBD

Volunteers Needed: Yes! Contact Jerry McClain for a lot of Volunteer positions to help before, during, and after the rodeo.

Guest Speakers / Programs at Upcoming General Membership Meetings

January 2nd: Mayor Gary Waters and City Manager Gretchen DiFante, Status of City of Pelham (confirmed)

February 6th: Tammie Williams, Volunteer Coordinator, Comfort Care Hospice (confirmed)

March 5th: Tom Long (Post 555 Member), President of Blue Star Salute Foundation (confirmed)

April 2nd: Post 555 Officer Elections (no guest speaker or program)

May 7th: Installation of Newly Elected Officers (no guest speaker or program)

June 4th: TBD

July 2nd: TBD

Complimentary copies of

THE TRIPLE NICKEL

**Provided by the generous
courtesy of**



2659 Pelham Parkway

(205) 621-2722

Sponsorships and Volunteers Needed



Contact: Jerry McClain, American Legion Post 555 Pro Rodeo
Event Chairperson
Phone: (206) 412-3548
E-mail: rangerjermac@gmail.com
Website: www.alpost555.com

1ST VICE'S COMMENTS

By Jerry McClain
1st Vice Commander

There is
Plenty in Twen-
tyTwenty!!□

Let's make it
a great Year!



As we em-
bark on a new year, may we
prepare ourselves with plenty
of good works for the Triple
Nickel Post 555 and our grow-
ing community of new mem-
bers. May the values practiced
in the US military, continue
to be our guiding post in the
American Legion! It's called:
LDRSHIP: Loyalty, Duty, Re-
spect, Selfless service, Honor,
Integrity, and Personal cour-
age! In 2020 May these values
be our hallmark as leaders in
the Post 555. These values be-
come valuable when put in
practice. General George Pat-
ton said "Lead me, follow me,
or get out of my way."

Hermann Hesse said
"Some of us think holding on
makes us strong, but some-
times it is the letting go." I
leave you with a quote of my
own: "The best example of
leadership, is leadership by
example."

Father in Heaven, we re-
lease 2019 and embrace the
Plenty in Twenty/Twenty!
May the Lord bless our efforts
in the coming days to fund the
hosting of the 1st annual Triple
Nickel Pro Rodeo Charity
event!



Wreaths Across America

Dec. 14

Alabama National Cemetery, Montevallo



Post 555 Interest Inventory (PII) Survey

Below is a list of Matthew Blount Post 555 active committees and potential committees that support the four pillars of the American Legion. Check the area(s) of interest or area(s) you would like to learn more about. Remember, this is a self-evaluation; not a commitment to volunteer in any particular committee or team.

Name: (first) _____ (last) _____

Phone#: _____ Date: _____

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. <u>Telephone/Bubby Checks</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> 25. Website management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Sons of Legion Advisor | <input type="checkbox"/> 26. Mid-Winter Conference: <u>January 16-19, 2020</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Historian | <input type="checkbox"/> 27. <u>In-home care for veterans</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> 28. Soldiers and Family Support Deployment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Hospitality | <input type="checkbox"/> 29. Memorial Day Civil War Cannon Shoot |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Fundraising | <input type="checkbox"/> 30. Jr. Shooting Sports Program – youth program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Events | <input type="checkbox"/> 31. The Run for the Wall |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Training | <input type="checkbox"/> 32. <u>Service Officer</u> – directing veterans to resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Sgt.-At-Arms | <input type="checkbox"/> 33. Wreaths Across America Ceremony – <u>December 14th</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Seek grant writers | <input type="checkbox"/> 34. Birmingham VA Medical Center Christmas Gift Project |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 11. Awards and Recognition | <input type="checkbox"/> 35. The Home Depot - Veteran's Keepsake Box Workshop |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 12. Equipment Custodian | <input type="checkbox"/> 36. Helping U.S. veterans with critical home repairs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 13. Boys State – youth program | <input type="checkbox"/> 37. Girl State – youth program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 14. Baseball – youth program | <input type="checkbox"/> 38. <u>Oratorical contest</u> – youth program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15. Guest Speakers & Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> 39. School Award Medal Program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16. Public Relations/Publicity | <input type="checkbox"/> 40. JROTC Award program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 17. <u>Flag Replacement Team</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> 41. Fire on the Water – Oak Mountain |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18. Financial | <input type="checkbox"/> 42. Military Appreciation Night |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 19. Social Media | <input type="checkbox"/> 43. <u>Officer Nominations</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 20. Auxiliary | <input type="checkbox"/> 44. Veteran Day at Texas Roadhouse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21. Library | <input type="checkbox"/> 45. Post 555 1 st Open House: <u>February 1, 2020</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 22. Photography | <input type="checkbox"/> 46. Pro Rodeo Charity Fundraiser: <u>March 27-28, 2020</u> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 23. Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> 47. Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 24. Post Store | <input type="checkbox"/> 48. Other: _____ |

American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555 School Award Medal Program for youth



Presentation dates:

Wednesday, January 15, 2020, Time 8:30 am

What: Recognizing Shelby County School students Character-In-Act from Chelsea with the American Legion School Awards Medal

Where: Family Connection, 2 Walker Run, Alabaster, AL 35007

Monday, February 10, 2020, Time 5:30 pm

What: Recognizing Shelby County School students Character-In-Act from Alabaster with the American Legion School Awards Medal

Where: Alabaster City School Board Meeting, Alabaster, AL 35007

Wednesday, February 19, 2020, Time 8:30 am

What: Recognizing Shelby County School students Character-In-Act from Calera with the American Legion School Awards Medal

Where: Family Connection, 2 Walker Run, Alabaster, AL 35007

- Each awardee receives a certificate and a medal with the six qualities listed on the face of the medal.

Chairperson: Barry Blount (Past Post Commander) • Co-chair: Alan Miller

Construction starts on World War I memorial in DC

From The American Legion

On Dec. 12, key leaders gathered on the site of the new National World War I Memorial in Washington, D.C., to mark the start of construction, after the U.S. World War I Centennial Commission received a building permit from the National Park Service (NPS).

Those leaders included commission chair Terry Hamby, U.S. Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt, National Park Service acting director David Vela, commission special advisers Sen. John Warner and Adm. Mike Mullen, and American Legion representative to the commission Jack Monahan.

The first phase of construction will be a 360-day project

to rebuild the former Pershing Park, and prepare the site for the eventual installation of the memorial bronze sculpture when it is completed. The building permit was awarded after the memorial design was approved by the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission earlier in 2019. The memorial is being built under the commission's authority by the Doughboy Foundation.

Hamby was very pleased with the receipt of the building permit and start of construction. "Finally, the 4.7 million Americans who left their homes to deploy to a country most had never visited, fight in a war they did not start, and were willing to die for peace and liberty for peo-

ple they did not know, will be honored at this magnificent spot in our nation's capital," he said.

"The new, national World War I Memorial will join the other war memorials in Washington, D.C., each serving as a fitting tribute to the sacrifices that American men and women made to defend freedom throughout the world," Bernhardt added.

The memorial design of architect Joseph Weishaar, featuring a monumental bronze by sculptor Sabin Howard, was selected as the winner from among five finalists after an international design competition in 2015 which received over 350 entries from around the world.

American Legion Triple Nickel Pro Rodeo Charity Fundraiser Sponsors as of 12/27/2019

