



Published exclusively for the members of

AMERICAN LEGION MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555 PELHAM, ALABAMA

VOLUME VII, ISSUE VIII

AUGUST 2020

INSIDE ...

<i>Commander's Corner</i>	2
<i>1st Vice's Comments</i>	3
<i>2nd Vice's Comments</i>	4
<i>Adjutant Area</i>	5
<i>Service Officer Update</i>	6
<i>Chaplain</i>	7
<i>AL Riders Auxiliary Sons</i>	8
<i>Post information</i>	9
<i>WAA</i>	10
<i>WAA Donation Form</i>	11



In God We Trust

Post 555 Member Opportunity

Legion's Virtual Membership Workshop Starts Aug. 3

Restrictions and uncertainties related to the global COVID-19 pandemic forced The American Legion National Headquarters to cancel summer events and programs, including the annual National Membership Workshop held in Indianapolis in August.

A Virtual session of the 57th Annual National Membership Workshop will now be held Aug. 3-6. The theme this year is "Growing a Post."

This Virtual National Membership Workshop is open to anyone; it is not specifically geared around any one position at the post as the goal is to provide a broader knowledge of the organization at the post level.

The workshop will be hosted live through Microsoft Teams. National Headquarters staff will be the presenters and moderators.



Take the course at www.legion.org/training.

COMMANDER'S CORNER



For God and Country!
Barry Blount
Commander

As many of you can tell, I do not like to write articles, but I do like to talk! I have a strong commitment to write about this particular matter...VOTING! We as Veterans have an obligation to VOTE.

About 50 percent or less vote and those people are the ones that make decisions for the rest of us if we don't get out and vote. Then we have to live with those decisions until the next voting cycle. As a good example, Gary Waters, our Mayor, lost the first election he ran in by seven or less votes. We as Veterans fought for the rights to vote and if we do not take the opportunity to vote, then shame on us. Your vote does count. Pelham City election is set for Tuesday, 25 August 2020. We have a few pro-American Legion Councilmembers running and you need to know who they are. Do your homework on all candidates.

I know that the TV is burning up with the "he said" and "she said" Look through the fog and choose the best candidates. Do not take the attitude that your vote does not count. If you've kept up with the nightly news cycles, you know that this year, is important to vote. Let's be prudent and pay attention to what is going on to keep our country going forward as **One Nation Under God!** Vote November 03, 2020. Please vote!

PELHAM — Officer Al Sanders, recently retired from the Pelham Police Department, was recognized as the 2020 American Legion Post 555 Police Officer of the Year on July 17. Barry Blount, Post 555 Commander, is pictured at the presentation ceremony of the American Legion's Post 555 recognition as Pelham Police Officer of the year 2020. Sanders began his law enforcement career in 1985 with the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Police Department. He was hired by Birmingham Police Department in 1988 and worked there until 1990, when he was hired by the Pelham Police Department. He was a member of the Pelham Police Department Tactical Team for several years, after completing a Basic SWAT training course. "Throughout his career, Officer Sanders has proven himself to be valuable to our agency and to the community, based on his love of people and servant's heart," said Pelham Po-

lice Chief Pat Cheatwood.

Sanders announced his retirement, effective Feb. 14, after 35 years of police service. Cheatwood said the agency will greatly miss Sanders and his smile, along with his positive outlook on life and the community. "On Jan. 31 of this year, I tasked the Morale Board with naming the American Legion Post 555 Officer of the Year for 2020.





Jeff Monday
First Vice Commander

First Vice Commander's Comments

Hope everyone is doing well, and hope everyone is staying safe. Legionnaires. just a friendly reminder that the post is moving along and we have not stopped. The mission of the Post must carry on no matter what life has handed each one of us. Please stay involved by contacting each other; let us not ever forget about each other in these times when we cannot always see each other face to face. Use your

phones! Call someone daily if not weekly. Make it someone different; encourage them to get on board to pass the phone jester along to other members. I hope to see everyone face to face soon!

“Be the kind of person who dares to face life’s challenges and overcome them rather than dodging them”

Roy T.Bennet





Nancy Waller
2nd Vice Commander

Second Vice Commander's Comments

.I was working out in our yard this afternoon trying to “disassemble” a dead tree that had fallen when I started hearing some thunder in the distance. I kept an eye on the sky and it didn't appear to be an issue UNTIL a bolt of lightning hit very close by because the thunder was instantaneous!!! I knew I still had the capability of running, but didn't know how fast I could go until then. I bolted out of the woods and was in the back door within about 30 seconds, which was a very long 30 seconds. My ears were still ringing and my hands were shaking. What a scary thing!!! It makes me have a greater respect for Mother Nature and what she can do for people who do not take heed when they hear and see a storm approaching.

I hope that everyone reading this newsletter is doing well and staying involved in some type of activities

safely so you don't become couch potatoes. Laziness is a hard thing to escape unless you really make an effort, so if you are able to get up and around and at least go for a walk (take your dog with you; he/she will love it), make the effort. I guarantee you will feel better when you return. I highly recommend you go early in the morning or late afternoon when the temperatures and humidity are lower.

Until the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted, there are no events scheduled as of right now, but Past Commander Paschal is working with the University of Alabama for the November 14, 2020 Military Appreciation Night at the Pelham Civic Complex. Put that on your calendar in hopes that restrictions have been eliminated and we can get back to doing what we love to do—interact with each other and members of the community.



American Legion, Matthew Blount Post 555

Working to promote citizenship and patriotism in our community.

PROVIDE support to veterans;

PROMOTE programs that benefit the community and its youth;

PRESERVE the memory of those who made the ultimate sacrifice for freedom.



Meeting Times: 1st Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm
Pelham Senior Center, 50 Racquet Club Parkway,
Pelham, Alabama 35124

www.alpost555.com • commander@alpost555.com
www.facebook.com/alpost555



*For God and
Country
Ron Koonce
Adjutant*

Adjutant Area

Even when having to deal with COVID-19, The Post has not discontinued its function in the Community and Americanism.

The monthly Zoom meetings are averaging about 34 attendees per meeting, and the three baseball teams are doing well. The Varsity team will be playing in the End of Season Championship Tournament July 31-August 2nd. Shelby County Sheriff Deputy, Pelham Police Officer and Pelham Fireman of The Year awards were presented during the month of June. Oratorical Scholarships were presented to the first and second place winners of the Pelham High School Oratorical Scholarship Competition.

Post is was pleased to recognize six WWII Veteran members for their service to our country as an American Legion Honorary Life Member. Certificates were presented to Bill Best, Billy Crocker, Horace J. Crutchfield, William C. Jones, Lynda H. Morris, and Dick Paxton. We thank you for your service.

The emotional impact of the previous month is that Comrades Butch Gassner and Harlan Phillips have transferred to the Post Everlasting. Both are interred at the Alabama National Cemetery in Montevallo, AL. Post Everlasting Ceremony is planned in remembrance when the Post can meet again at the Pelham Senior Center. Please keep the families in your prayers for God's strength, comfort and peace.

July has been a great start with the 2021 membership campaign with 62 American Legion renewals, one new Sons of American Legion member and six renewals. This is a good start to meet our 100% goal by December 31-2020, however this goal cannot be met without your support and not waiting to submit your 2021 membership renewal. The 2020 memberships expire January 1, 2021. 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 August Post meeting will be held via ZOOM video & telephone conferencing on August 6, 2020 at 7:00pm. Access links will be emailed to members and guests. Share link with a Veteran guest.

Hope to see you on August 6, 2020.

*For God and Country
Ron Koonce
Adjutant*



REASONS TO RENEW TODAY

Because together, we make differences.

- Because your dues help more than 700,000 veterans and their families who need accredited assistance get the benefits they have earned
- Comfort items for hospitalized military personnel
- Honor guard services and memorial tributes for our fallen comrades
- Youth mentorship through programs including Boys State, Oratoricals, Shooting Sports, Baseball and more
- Millions of volunteer hours and services at VA medical facilities at an estimated annual value of \$20 million
- The nation's strongest voice for veterans in Washington, D.C.
- Grants for military families in need

And so much more.
Visit www.legion.org/renew to renew your membership today.



Alabama Legion Department Veteran of the Year

Post Service Officer's Update



*Jerry McClain, Post
Service Officer*

Private Medical Evidence

The Department of Veterans Affairs encourages all Veterans to submit their private medical records for consideration during the processing of their benefits claim. VA values evidence from your private treatment providers because they are familiar with your medical history, often over a long period of time. VA appreciates the trusted and special relationship between private treatment providers and their Veteran/patients.

How To Submit Private Medical Evidence for Your VA Claim

Talk to your healthcare provider (family physician, urgent care visits, any Tricare-covered treatment after discharge) and explain that you are filing a claim for VA benefits; discuss the conditions for which you are filing a claim.

- If required, complete your healthcare provider's release of information form, obtain your records, and submit with your claim, OR
- Complete VA Form 21-4142, Authorization to Disclose Information to the De-

How To Incorporate Federal Records with Your VA Claim

Tell us about your Federal records (from any federal agency*) and we will gather these on your behalf. If you received treatment at a military hospital or clinic after your discharge, please include facility information and the date ranges of your medical treatment records for your claimed conditions when completing VA Forms 21-4142 and 21-4142a.

*It is not necessary for you to submit your Service Treatment Records (STRs) or treatment records from a VA medical facility as we have access to these records.

Claims Assistance

We encourage all Veterans to work with an accredited organization for assistance in completing claims for VA benefits. A list of accredited organizations can be found on the Office of General Counsel site at this link: Search the VA Office of the General Counsel's list.

va.alabama.gov



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
**VETERANS
AFFAIRS**

CHAPLAIN



Tom McMahon
Post Chaplain



IN GOD WE TRUST

The last act of Congress ever signed by President Lincoln was one requiring that the motto... 'IN GOD WE TRUST' should hereafter be inscribed upon all our national coin.

Reagan stated at a White House observance of National Day of Prayer, May 6, 1982: *"Our faith in God is a mighty source of strength. Our Pledge of Allegiance states that we are 'one nation under God,' and our currency bears the motto, "IN GOD WE TRUST."*

Of the Bible, Andrew Jackson, known as 'Old Hickory,' stated: *"That book, Sir, is the Rock upon which our Republic rests."*

Amidst the chaos now occurring we Patriots of wars fought and heritage gained, must strengthen our hold on the basic tenants given to us by Divine Providence. By His grace, we shall stand and not fall.

Post 555 continues American Legion's tradition of supporting fellow Veterans and interests conducive to Americanism. We appreciate Commander Blount going ahead with his duties and keeping activities moving along. Also, a 'high five' to every Officer and group maintaining necessary functions. [Too many to name here.]

The Chaplain and his great Buddy Check team are very happy to report communications with members as can possibly be contacted. Report for the month of July: Memorial in Illinois for Army/Marine. Funeral for Korean Veteran, Tuscaloosa. Calls; 266, Actual conversations or Left messages; 158, Needs noted and followed up on; 4. Big 'Thank you' to: Jerry McClain, Ron McGriff, Melvin Grisset and my wife Jean for hours spent.



Triple Nickel Riders



The Triple Nickel Riders do not have an update for this newsletter

Auxiliary Unit 555



Hi to all,

I hope everyone is staying safe and healthy. I would like your thoughts on trying to get together, maybe at a park outside, and be able to have fellowship and social distance at the same time. I have been missing that fellowship but do not want anyone to feel unsafe. Please e-mail me or call me with your thoughts.

It is also time to renew our memberships. Since we are apart, if you would mail your dues to me at home, I will get with Linda Colvart at the bank. Our dues this year are \$30 for Adults and \$6 for Junior members. Please make out the check to American Legion Auxiliary Unit 555.

My mailing address is 1214 Bennett Circle, Alabaster, AL. 35007. If you have a question please call me at 205/419-4549, or e-mail me at the address below. Missing y'all now. Caroline

Contact Caroline Culpepper, Unit 555 President, for membership information. Carolinec@charter.com



Sons of The American Legion

Squadron 555 was represented at the quarterly Alabama Detachment Executive Committee teleconference meeting on June 20, 2020 .



2020-2021 Squadron Leadership

Bobby Horsley-Commander

Ron Koonce— Adjutant/Financial Officer

Ron McGriff— Sgt.-At-Arms

Jeff Monday - Chaplain

The Squadron is twenty eight member strong and always open for new members. Any son or grandson of a The American Legion member is eligible or any son, or grandson of a deceased Veteran is also eligible. Both requires appropriate documentation. Annual membership fee is just \$20.

Visit the Post website www.alpost555.com for information about the Sons and to print membership application.

MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555

Post Leadership



Meets first Thursday of the month.

August 6th. 2020 Meeting
will be held
via Video/Teleconference

Earn Commanders Recruiting Pin



Recruiting is a personal assignment for every American Legion member.

Contact Jeff Monday, Membership Chair, for leads for contacting eligible individuals.

jhmonday@gmail.com

Post Commander
Barry Blount
1st Vice Commander
Jeff Monday
2nd Vice Commander
Nancy Waller
Adjutant
Ron Koonce
Asst Adjutant
Shauna Hadley
Judge Advocate
Larry Strayer
Financial Officer
Joe Starnes
Chaplain
Tom McMahon
Sergeant-At-Arms
Derek Winters
Anita Bennett
Post Service Officer
Jerry McClain
Historian
Shauna Hadley
Public Relations Officer

Vacant
Post Trustees
Bill Blank
Frank Lakotich
Robert Horsley
Auxiliary President
Caroline Culpepper
Sons Commander
Robert Horsley
Legion Riders Director
Doug McDaniel
Flag Team Coordinator
Ron McGriff
Webmaster
Ron Koonce
Triple Nickel Editor
Frank Chacon
Photography
Frank Chacon
Ron Koonce

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

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Post 555*

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American Legion Post 555

THE
AMERICAN
LEGION

FAMILY

Matthew Blount
Post 555
Alpost555.com
205-678-1375



1st Thursday each month at 7pm
Meeting Location: Pelham Senior Center

Supporting our veterans and our communities.

Wreaths Across America

Wreaths Across America Co-Chair

Nancy J. Waller

As WAA Chairman, Chuck Kiser, mentioned last month, August is my turn to submit an article in the newsletter to update you about the 2020 WAA Campaign, so here goes.

During July, in cooperation with Ron Koonce, there is now a Wreaths Across America tab on the Post 555 website under "Programs". When opened, this tab includes a write-up on the background of the Wreaths Across America Program as well as a copy of the current donation form that can be downloaded. Anyone wishing to make a donation can download and complete the form, fill-out their check as indicated along the left margin of the form, and mail it to the Post address. Chuck will make sure it gets processed.

One very important thing I want to point out is the fact that we more than likely will NOT be having our annual Thanksgiving Dinner/Meeting due to the COVID-19 restriction of not allowing a large group of people together in one place. We typically receive 40-50% of our contributions during this event, and Chuck, Eldon, and I are all very concerned that we will not be able to meet our goal of \$3,600. With this in mind, please do the best you can to send in your donations ASAP that you normally might have submitted at that event. Chuck reported to me that we have received \$600 or 16.67% of our goal as of July 19, 2020 (refer to the WAA Campaign Summary prepared by Chuck Kiser), but a little birdie told me that there was a check for an additional \$200 on its way, so that will adjust our figures in the positive direction for sure!!

Let's really try to dig deep into our pockets and send in your forms and donations. If you can only do a little bit each month between now and the cam-

2020 Wreaths Across America Post 555 Donation Campaign Summary			
Data as of 7/19/2020			
Year	2019	2020	Change
Wreaths used/needed	6475	7750	19.7%
Post 555 donations total	\$2955	\$600	-80%
2020 Donations goal	00	3600	
Percent goal received to date		16.7%	
Donations received over/(under) goal		(\$3000)	

Wreaths Across America Donation Form

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., (BSSFI) 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 BSSFI 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 _____

_____ For names to be included on the BSSFI "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: _____

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.