



# THE TRIPLE NICKEL



*Published exclusively for the members of*  
**AMERICAN LEGION MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555**  
**PELHAM, ALABAMA**

VOLUME V, ISSUE VI

IN GOD WE TRUST

JUNE 2018

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## Officers installed for 2018-2019

Post 555 installed new officers for the next year at the May 3 meeting. Division 2 commander Tony Berenot-to administered the oath of office.

*Front row, left to right: Tom McDaniel, post commander; Anita Bennett, 2<sup>nd</sup> vice commander; James Billings, public relations officer; Nancy Waller, trustee; Jackie Lucas, historian;*

*Robert Davis, service officer; Ron Koonce, adjutant.. Back row, left to right: Richard Kaster, 1<sup>st</sup> vice commander; Jeff Monday, American Legion Riders director; David Coram, trustee; Chuck Kiser, judge advocate; Ron McGriff, sergeant-at-arms; Frank Lakotich, trustee; Will Hayes, Sons of the American Legion commander; Chris Vonderau, chaplain.*

# COMMANDER'S COMMENTS



**Tom McDaniel**

*Post Commander*

You know every month, I know I need to write the commander's comments for the newsletter. For the life of me, most of the time I have to think real hard on what to write but I miraculously come up with something of interest to write about. This month starts out to be the same way, what to write about. I have been so busy with projects and programs we are involved in talking to this person and that person, some I know some I don't know, planning this and planning that and it dawned on me that's my topic. Here is an example of what I mean.

Nancy Waller was just selected to be our Events Coordinator which can be an exasperating job. After seeing some of her emails to various people about different activities, I figured I would take pity on her and call her to see if I could be of any help. When I got her on the phone, I sort of whimsically asked, are you having fun yet? To my surprise she said, "Oh yes, that's why I joined your post — because you guys are involved in so much.

"It's been challenging," she said, "but I like it that way and everything is going fine. If I need your help, I will let you know."

You know, that was just what I needed to hear. I need to keep in my mind why I am doing what I am for the post rather than sort of back-handedly feeling sorry for having so much to do. I realized, I do enjoy the activities old and new that we elect to participate in and that it's not for my benefit but for the welfare of all veterans and their families. We need to ensure that the challenges they face are kept to a minimum and never become overbearing. As a plus, we get to contribute to our community and the youth in the community. What a good feeling you get when you do something for someone who really needs your help

and appreciates it. It's like the feeling you get at Christmas when you give someone a gift they really like.

So Nancy, I just have this to say: Thank you for your service, thank you for your attitude and thank you for your continued desire to serve and personally, thank you for your inspiration.



*Nancy Waller, our new events coordinator, also serves on the Post 555 Flag Team.*



# 1ST VICE'S COMMENTS



**Richard Kaster**

*1st Vice Commander*

Three members of Matthew Blount Post 555 attended Senior Awards Night at Pelham High School on May 10. Post Commander Tom McDaniel and I represented the post, and Patrick Kennedy represented the 23rd District.

We presented and congratulated this year's Pelham High School Oratorical winner Mason Herrington and 2nd place winner Addison Fuller. Tom McDaniel presented the certificate of distinction and scholarship money check.

Mason Herrington and Addison Fuller also participated in the 23rd District contest and Addison Fuller won 1st place and Mason Herrington won 2nd place. Patrick Kennedy presented a certificate of distinction and scholarship money check.

Tom McDaniel presented Principal Amanda Wilbanks with a special plaque that we present each year with the names engraved of the current and past Oratorical program 1st place winners. We asked that she display this plaque where the students, guests and faculty can see it. Thank you, Amanda, for all your assistance.

Patrick Kennedy and Tom McDaniel presented Certificates of Appreciation to the Boys and Girls State attendees from Pelham High School for 2017 that Post 555 sponsored.

Congratulations to all the Seniors graduating in class of 2018.





# Memorial Day 2018 at Alabama National Cemetery





## 2ND VICE'S CORNER



**Anita Bennett**

*2nd Vice Commander*

On May 3rd, I was privileged to present a certificate of appreciation to the Pelham High School Choir, under the direction of Elizabeth Vise. They have assisted the Triple Nickel for the past four years by singing our National Anthem during Veterans Day at Texas Roadhouse in Pelham. It is always a proud moment to witness our youth give of their time and talents to support such important events in our community. It is my hope that they will continue to do so for many years to come.

As Post 555 members, it is important for us to attend and support events such as these. The community needs to know that we support not only the events we host, but also events that we are invited to attend. Please try to attend as many events to show your support for our efforts. Other veterans in the communities see us and it makes for a great time to talk with them and share who we are and what we do. This can encourage them to do the same. It is always exciting to me when I look around and see American Legion caps in a crowd. It lets me know that I am not only am I not alone and that I am supporting other veterans, but also that I am in the company of fellow Veterans who are supporting me!





# SAL leads flag placement at Pelham Cemetery





## ADJUTANT'S AREA



**Ron Koonce**

*Post Adjutant*

A big thank you to all that supported Post activities this month. May has been an especially busy month with Flag Team ceremonies, Great American Cookout, The Sons' Flag Placement Ceremony at the Pelham Cemetery and the Memorial Day activities. The Post sponsored four young men that attended American Legion Alabama Boys State held at the University of Alabama beginning May 27, 2018. The Auxiliary Unit 555 will also sponsor two young ladies to attend American Legion Auxiliary's Girls State in June. This time next month we will begin a new fiscal year with more exciting activities

for the 2018-2019 year.

You have done a great job in increasing our membership renewal numbers up to over 120 percent with an increase of 16 new members to The American Legion and the Post. We met our goal of having 200 members on the roster by the end of the year. Thanks for all you have done to help this happen.

July marks the start of the 2019 membership renewal campaign. Expect to receive your renewal statement from the national headquarters during the month of July. You can either mail your renewal dues to the Post address that will appear on the statement or you can renew on line at [www.legion.org](http://www.legion.org). As every year, our goal is to achieve 100 percent renewals by Dec, 31 at which time the 2018 memberships will expire. Thank you in advance for being an "early bird" and getting your renewal in early.

At the June 7 meeting the DAR will present a special program recognizing Vietnam era veterans. If you served during this time, make a special effort to attend this meeting. Thank you for your service.



## 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.

**Send email to:**

**[Editor@alpost555.com](mailto:Editor@alpost555.com)**



# Post 555 sends four to Alabama Boys State

Post 555 has selected four boys to attend Alabama Boys State this year.

They are:

- **Jose Jaramillo**, Pelham High School;
- **Patrick Durr**, Pelham High School;
- **Kaleb Hinds**, Pelham High School; and
- **Justin Watkins**, Evangel Christian School.

Boys State is held May 27 through June 2 on the campus of the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

Alabama Boys State is one of the highest honors granted to Alabama students.



**Jaramillo**

Students from across the state are chosen based on their demonstration of leadership, hard work, strong morals, and motivation in school and community activities.

Boys State week is a full and active week held on the campus of The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

At Boys State, student delegates will find the opportunity to build new friendships, participate in a mock government, and hear from and meet a diverse array of Alabama leaders such as Congressmen, state elected offi-



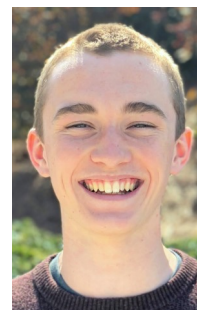
cials, business leaders, civic leaders, and others. Delegates will have the opportunity to join interest groups



**Durr**

that focus on their individual areas of interest such as law school, fire college, law enforcement academy, aerospace academy, lobbyists, city government, county government, constitutional convention, engineer/computer academy, and environmental

interest group. Delegates will also have activity time during which they can participate in recreational activities such as basketball, volleyball, softball, soccer, academic bowl, etc.



**Watkins**

The American Legion believes there is no better way to assure the survival of our republic than to train our young people in the ideals and objectives of American government.



# JUDGE ADVOCATE'S CORNER



**Chuck Kiser**

*Judge Advocate*

As summer approaches, I remind all our members and their families to be safe in your travels and activities. We want to see all of you throughout the summer and this coming Fall. Get out to Post meetings and activities as frequently as you can and bring a new member with you.

We are still looking for members to serve as Committee chairpersons or committee members of several Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees. We need your participations to make the Post strong and to be able to continue to offer programs to support our veterans and our community. Please review this list and get involved by contacting myself or any other Officer.

## **Standing Committee Chairs and Committee members:**

Americanism  
Membership  
Post Activities  
Communications  
Legal  
Veteran's Affairs  
Children & Youth  
Economic  
Uniformed Groups (Flag Replacement Detail)  
National Security

## **AdHoc Committee Chairs and Committee members:**

Boys State  
Girls State  
Fund Raising  
Events

Oratorical  
Social Media – Facebook  
Social Media – Website  
Newsletter  
Legion Baseball  
Photography  
Nominating  
Veteran's Recognition  
Emergency Preparedness

With these many opportunities to become involved in the life of the Post, everyone should be able to find an area of interest to them. Contact any Post Officer with questions, or to express your interest in participating in one or more committees. If the Post is to continue to grow and increase its reach into the community, **WE NEED YOUR ASSISTANCE AND INVOLVEMENT!**

Step up and let us know of your interests and we will get you in touch with the proper people

**PLEASE, GET OUT AND SUPPORT  
YOUR POST IN 2018!**





# TRIPLE NICKEL RIDERS



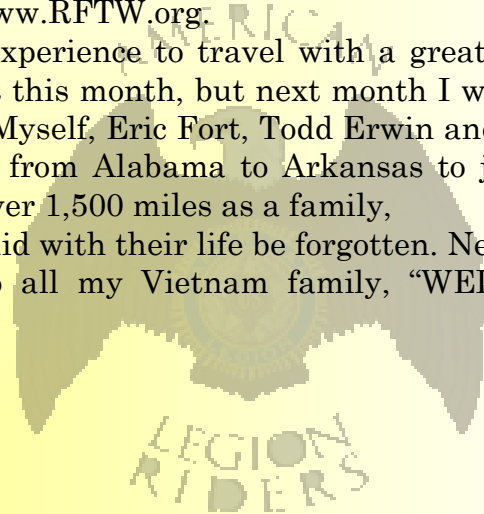
**Jeff Monday**

*Director, Triple Nickel Riders*

Hope everyone is doing well. I am writing to you from Washington, D.C. Yes, we made the trip with the Run For The Wall (RFTW). You can read more about this organization at [www.RFTW.org](http://www.RFTW.org).

It has been a very humbling experience to travel with a great RFTW family. I am going to keep it short this month, but next month I will have many pictures and stories to tell. Myself, Eric Fort, Todd Erwin and David and Linda Lee made the journey from Alabama to Arkansas to join the ride this year. We have traveled over 1,500 miles as a family,

In closing, never forget and never let those who paid with their life be forgotten. Never forget until everyone is home and accounted for. To all my Vietnam family, "WELCOME HOME"!





## CHAPLAIN'S THOUGHTS



**Chris Vonderau**

*Post Chaplain*

I was visiting a friend last week. His mother lives with him and is battling Alzheimer's. He and his wife had just visited the doctor where they found out his wife was diagnosed with the early signs of this horrible disease. He had a lot of questions about God and His goodness. What would you tell your friend? God has taught me over the years, that sometimes its best to sit quietly and let Him answer the questions.

Are you going through something you just don't understand? I know The One who does. If you are His, He's made you some promises. A quick search through His Word and they pop off the pages. Words like Rejoice, Be Glad, He knows the plan... God has you right where He wants you and is walking you through this storm. If you are not His, could He be trying to get your attention?

Whether you are His or not His, God is inviting you to draw close to Him so He can give you life. Real life. Not the stuff of this world, but life that extends into eternity. Turn your eyes to the cross of Jesus Christ, we are one day closer to home.

Your Chaplain,

*Chris Vonderau*

(205) 966-1364

## *Get ready for American Legion Baseball!*

American Legion Post 555 is forming baseball teams in the 19U, Varsity and Junior Varsity divisions for the 2018 Summer season. The teams plan to play 18-22 league game and tournament schedule. The season begins after Memorial Day and ends in mid-July.

The American Legion was chartered and incorporated by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic veterans' organization devoted to mutual helpfulness. It is the nation's largest war-time service organization, committed to mentoring youth and sponsorship of wholesome

programs in our communities, advocating patriotism



and honor, promoting strong national security, and contin-

ue devotion to our fellow service members and veterans.

Online registration for players can be found at: [www.alabamaamericanlegionbaseball.com](http://www.alabamaamericanlegionbaseball.com).

### Points of Contact:

Jon Freeman 205-365-4794  
cell, email: [triplenickelbaseball@gmail.com](mailto:triplenickelbaseball@gmail.com)

Kyle Phillips 205-381-3713  
cell, email: [kphillips1421@yahoo.com](mailto:kphillips1421@yahoo.com)



# Bessemer Airport Flag Replacement and Cookout







If you have any questions contact Comrade Bill Blank [bhbpac@yahoo.com](mailto:bhbpac@yahoo.com)

Post 555 Family (**Legionnaires, Auxiliary, S.A.L., Riders**) members have been invited to attend July 1st Fire on the Water; Independence Day Celebration.

We will be at the Oak Mountain Beach area, the same location as last year. This is a wonderful set up to view the fireworks, so bring your folding chairs and all the family.

- The fireworks are scheduled to start at dark, about 9:00 p.m. A word of caution, the sooner you can get there the better because of parking.
- Come early and join in the fun. We will start setting up our Post Event tent and information table at 3:00 pm.
- Let's have a good representation from our Post family. There will be vendors there also selling food and drinks. See you there.
- Honored Guest Pass Oak Mountain will be available to allow Post 555 members to get in free. This is done to honor your service to your country. (Distribution will be coordinated prior to July 1st).
- Dress comfortable. Include any of your Legion attire.

**Location:** Oak Mountain State Park, 200 Terrace Dr. Pelham, AL 35124

**When:** Sunday, July 1st at 4 pm to 9 pm





## THE AMERICAN LEGION EDUCATION INSTITUTE

# Have you taken **BASIC TRAINING** yet?

The American Legion's official training program for officers, members, Legion College applicants and those who simply want to expand their knowledge of the nation's largest veterans service organization is now available online.

The American Legion Extension Institute has been rewritten, updated, streamlined and enhanced with videos, digital photos, clickable links, a historical timeline and additional features. The program should take less than two hours to complete. It is divided into six sections, with a quiz at the end of each one, followed by a final exam.

### Topics

- ♦ History & Organization
- ♦ Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
- ♦ National Security
- ♦ Americanism
- ♦ Children & Youth
- ♦ Course Conclusion



# WWW.LEGION.ORG/TRAINING