



THE TRIPLE NICKEL



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AMERICAN LEGION MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555
PELHAM, ALABAMA

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IN GOD WE TRUST

JULY 2018

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Legion Baseball back for 2018

American Legion Baseball is back for 2018!

Opening Day ceremonies on June 2 included Triple Nickel Riders escorting the game ball from Leeds to Pelham High School. The Bessemer Composite Civil Air Patrol presented the colors.

Mayor Gary Waters, a member of Post 555, threw out the ceremonial game ball

for the game against Post 24 from Leeds. Post 555 won the first game, 10-0.



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COMMANDER'S COMMENTS



Tom McDaniel

Post Commander

What does the American Legion do? If someone asked you this question, could you answer them? Of course, everyone knows that we are dedicated to service to our veterans our community and to our youth, but could you go any further than that? Service to our veterans, community and our youth is a very broad statement without clarification of how we do it.

Our post, Matthew Blount American Legion Post 555, is charged with the “how” portion of your answer. All posts that have had their charter approved by the National and State departments are required to complete certain obligations which leads to our fulfilment of our obligations to our veterans, community and youth. At our recent State Convention, Post 555 received the 2018 Post Excellence Award. Post 555 was the only post to successfully complete all the requirements this past year and receive this prestigious award. I might add, this is the fourth straight year we have achieved this recognition.

This award is not possible unless we have Legionnaires who dedicate their time and abilities to insure the programs that we have in place are successful. My comments would have to be several pages long if I listed all our programs but I would like to mention a few I’m sure you are familiar with.

We are in “full swing” with our American Legion Baseball Program. If you have not seen a game yet, consult the schedule and come on down. Admission to Legionnaires is free.

We just finished our statewide Student Oratorical Program and I am proud to say our Post 555 representative from Pelham High School, Addison Fuller, won the District and the Division Oratorical Contests and came in third in the state competition. As a result of this, she received over \$3,000 in scholarship money. Addison also received a four-year scholarship to Huntingdon College as a result of her scholastic endeavors. We also sent four young men to Boys State and two young ladies to Girls State.

Coming up in December, we will deliver bags filled with various health related items such as soap, shaving cream, deodorant, combs, socks and handkerchiefs to our veterans at the Veterans Hospital in downtown Birmingham.

In community service, our Flag Retirement group has been busy, voluntarily retiring worn and torn flags in our community and replacing them with new flags.

You see, I can go on and on about what we do as an American Legion Post. Come to our next meeting on July 5th at the Pelham Senior Center and join us for fellowship at 6:15 and our meeting to follow at 7:00. Our speaker will be Alaina Contestabile, a student finishing up at UAB. She will talk about Veterans Mental Health and also on PTSB. Ms. Contestabile has worked with the VA in Birmingham and should provide for an interesting meeting. See you there.



Triple Nickel honored at Dept. Convention



MONTGOMERY, Ala. — Post 555 was honored at the 99th annual Department of Alabama Convention June 14-17.

For the third consecutive year, Post 555 received the Post Excellence Award. It was the only post in Alabama to receive this prestigious award.

The award is based on membership accomplishments, as well as service to veterans and support for the community and youth programs. Post Adjutant Ron Koonce said Post 555 exceeded the award criteria in all categories.

The post also received a third-place History Award, based on the post's journal of

events throughout the year. The department and national headquarters have strict requirements for how post history journals must be maintained.



Also at the convention, Shelby County Sheriff's Deputy Rachel Ivey was named Law Enforcement Officer of the Year for the Department of Alabama. Ivey received the same honor at the post level in April.

Ivey is a traffic homicide investigator and has served as a school resource officer.



2ND VICE'S CORNER



Anita Bennett

2nd Vice Commander

I hope everyone is having a great summer. Post 555 continues to amaze me with the amount of activities and events we are involved in and I especially want to thank the Cahaba Valley Elks Club again this year for another wonderful Flag Day celebration! It was an emotional time when the Howlin' Mad Smith Marine Detachment from Birmingham, presented a reenactment of the American flag raising at Iwo Jima! I don't believe there was a dry eye in the house. I believe the significance of that day was not lost on any Veteran in attendance regardless of age or campaign.

I also want to remind everyone about the opportunity we have now, for those of us that do not have a military retired status, to shop online at the military exchanges. You can use one of the two listed links below:

<https://www.shopmyexchange.com> (Army, Air Force)

<http://www.mymcx.com> (Marines)

<https://www.mynavyexchange.com> (Navy)

<https://shopcgx.com> (Coast Guard)



These links will connect you to the VetVerify.org website if additional information is needed.

Post membership renewal campaign starts July 1

Please be aware that your 2018 membership expires on Dec. 31st, 2018, and your Post privileges will be suspended on Jan. 1, 2019 if you do not renew prior to this date.

You can submit **your dues directly to the Post** or renew online via www.Legion.org. The Post has your new 2019 membership card and it will be forwarded to you once your 2019 dues are received by the Post. The Post will forward your 2019 credentials if paid

online once we receive confirmation for National.

Annual Dues remain at \$45 payable to: American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555.

You may submit your payment at the monthly meetings or mail your renewal payment directly to:

American Legion
Matthew Blount Post 555
50 Racquet Club Parkway
Pelham, AL 35124

The Post now has the ability to receive payment via Credit Card at the Post meeting.

If you have any questions about membership renewal, email your questions to Ron Koonce at: ron.koonce@alpost555.com or call 205-222-4495.

Target Goals: 50 percent renewals completed by Sept. 6, 2018

100 percent renewals by Dec. 31, 2018.

ADJUTANT'S AREA



Ron Koonce

Post Adjutant

The Post starts a new 2018-2019 fiscal year in July with another successful year in the books.

As we look back to the 2017-2018 year, The Post met all its major goals that included serving our veterans, growing in the community and furthering educational experiences for our youth.

On behalf of the Post, I thank all those that contributed to these accomplishments. Together we can continue to improve our programs in the months to come while providing numerous opportunities for participation.

Over the next six months, you will hear a lot about 2019 membership renewals. The campaign begins July 1. Each of you will be receiving a 2019 renewal statement in the mail during the month of July. You may mail your \$45 renewal fee payable to Matthew Blount Post 555, renew online at www.legion.org or pay in person at a Post meeting. I will have the 2019 membership cards at the July 5 Post meeting for those that want to renew early. We now can receive your renewal by credit card at the Post meetings. The goal is to achieve 100 percent renewals by Dec. 31. I can report that we are off to a good start with 11 renewals already received before July 1st.

Congratulations to the Memorial Day Gun Crews for a fourth year of success. It gets better each year. The same goes for the Flag Team that have conducted over 20 flag replacement ceremonies in the past two years. In 2018, the Triple Nickel Riders were incorporated into the program by providing a flag escort and delivering the flag to the Flag Detail. A special recognition will be made to Flag Team participating members at the July Post meeting. Plan to be there.

For God & Country

Ron Koonce

Adjutant

THE TRIPLE NICKEL

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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**

JUDGE ADVOCATE'S CORNER



Chuck Kiser

Judge Advocate

Summer is upon us with a vengeance! 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.

As you will read elsewhere, it is time again to renew your membership. See Richard Kaster or Ron Koonce and be a membership leader by renewing soon!

We are still looking for members to serve as Committee chairpersons or committee members of several Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees. With the 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!

VETERANS RECOGNITION COMMITTEE

Support Committee for the Alabama National Cemetery (SCALNC) & Blue Star Salute Meetings –Held monthly at Liberty Hall – American Village in Montevallo.

I am pleased to announce that beginning next month Bonnie Woodie will be taking over this column. In this capacity, she will keep Post members advised of Veteran Recognition events at the ALNC, American Village, Blue Star Salute and other organizations. She will provide a unique perspective and is a terrific addition to the Post leadership team. Welcome aboard Bonnie!

On July 4th, the American Village will host its annual celebration of the Nation's Birthday beginning at 10:30 a.m. This always a great event for all and recognizes veterans and their families since the beginning of the country.

The ALNC Support Committee will be the sponsor of the "Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive" program celebrating the end of WWII on Aug. 11th at 6:30 p.m.. All WWII veterans and their families are invited to attend. All veterans are encouraged to attend.

Your assistance and participation in Veteran's Recognition events during 2018 would be appreciated.

TRIPLE NICKEL RIDERS



Jeff Monday

Director, Triple Nickel Riders

National PTSD Awareness Day is a day dedicated to creating awareness regarding PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). It is acknowledged annually on the 27th of June. The U.S. Senate officially designated this day in 2010. In 2014, the Senate designated the whole month of June as PTSD Awareness Month. In the United States, 6.8 percent of adults will experience PTSD in their lifetimes with women twice as likely as men to experience it (10.4 percent to 5 percent) frequently as a result of sexual trauma. Veterans are another group highly likely to experience PTSD during their lives, with Vietnam War veterans at 30 percent, Gulf War veterans at 10 percent, and Iraq War veterans at 14 percent.

On July 21st, the Post 555 ALR will host the 2nd annual Lone Warrior Benefit Ride and Pancake Breakfast. Pancake Breakfast will be at the Pelham Applebee's 8 a.m.-10 a.m., \$5 a ticket. Come support this great event.

Lone Warriors: What they are all about!!

The mission of this program is to provide a healthy and positive form of therapy outside of but complementing that of the traditional clinical therapy or support settings. Through photography, we are able to provide another form of healing to Veterans suffering from PTSD, moral injury of transition anxiety. The pace that we are growing is humbling exciting and amazing! But we need your help! We currently have qualified US Armed Forces Veterans waiting to begin participating in Operation TheraPic. Unfortunately, we do not have the funding to outfit them. The support we have been receiving is phenomenal and we cannot begin to thank everyone enough for the kindness and generosity they have shown Lone Warriors Since we began almost three years ago. Each of these men and women freely chose to join a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces and defend this country and the freedoms we often take for granted. Now it is our time to rally together and help support our Veterans. Every dollar helps and 100 percent of your donation goes directly into providing camera equipment to these more than deserving Veterans. You can visit our website at www.lonewarriors.org.

**PLEASE COME OUT AND
SUPPORT YOUR TRIPLE
NICKEL RIDERS!**



CHAPLAIN'S THOUGHTS



Chris Vonderau

Post Chaplain

In John 14:2-3, Jesus tells his disciples that His Father's home has many rooms and if He goes to prepare a place for us, He will come back and take us home to be with Him. (vonder-version)

I'm from Evergreen, Ala. Moved there when I was in the 6th grade from Fort Wayne, Ind. I tell people I was born a Yankee but raised Southern by the grace of God.

I was in Evergreen this week. A friend's father passed away and I went to the viewing the night before the funeral. My friend's father was the sole UPS delivery man when I was growing up there. If Mr. Johnny stopped in front of your home, it was a big

deal! Mr. Johnny took me under his wing and guided me in the way of the South - hunting, fishing, football, treating ladies with respect, etc., everything a little Yankee would need to know in order to survive in South Alabama.

He was well loved. 1/2 the town was there at the viewing. It's been a while since I had last visited, so when people realized it was me, there was a lot of hugging and "Oh Mying" going on. (I want to believe that I got that reaction because I am so handsome, but I'm afraid I got that reaction due to the extra pounds I'm carrying around)

My friend's earthly father is home with our Heavenly Father. Jesus prepared a place for him and came and took him home. One day, Mr. Johnny will show me around our new home just like he did when I was in the 6th grade. Turn your eyes to the cross, we are one day closer to home. If you are not sure what I mean by that - call me 205 966-1364. It really matters.

Your Chaplain,

Chris Vonderau

National Desert Storm memorial site selected

From The American Legion

The site for the future national memorial to those who served during the first Gulf War conflict has been selected.

The National Desert Storm War Memorial Association (NDSWMA) announced in June that final approval

had been given for the memorial to be constructed at 23rd Street NW and Constitution Avenue NW in Washington, D.C., very close to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Lincoln Memorial in what is known as Area I. According to the U.S. Code, Area I is only ap-

proved if "the subject of the commemorative work is of pre-eminent historical and lasting significance to the United States."

Fundraising efforts continue; no tax dollars or government money will be used for construction.



June 2018 Meeting Highlights



Flag Day celebration in Pelham June 10

