



The Triple Nickel

*Published Exclusively for the Members of
American Legion & Matthew Blount Post 555*

Volume 5-Issue 3

"In God We Trust"

**Post Everlasting in Remembrance
of Fallen Comrades**

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Matthew Blount Post 555 conducted its third bi-annual Post Everlasting Ceremony on February 1, 2018 in remembrance of fallen Post members, Thomas j. Mazzone, U.S. Navy, WWII and Bruce Craig Bennett, Sons of The American Legion, Squadron 555. The ceremony was conducted by Chaplain, Chris Vonderau and Commander, Tom McDaniel. The ceremony was concluded with the playing of TAPS. Family members, Rick Mazzone, son of Thomas Mazzone and Anita Bennett, widow of Craig Bennett spoke following the ceremony.

See more photos: <https://alpost555.smugmug.com/2-1-2018-Regular-Meeting/>

March 2018



Adjutant Area

How time passes when you are having fun. Where has this year gone? We are already into month nine of the 2017-2018 year.

It is time again to begin the election process of our 2018-2019 officers. The nominating committee is hard at work assembling a slate for Commander, First Vice Commander, Second Vice Command and a three year Trustee position. If you are interested or would like to recommend someone for any of these positions, contact Chuck Kiser or any member of the nominating Committee, Patrick Kennedy, Dick Paxton or Nancy Waller. Nominations will be taken from the floor only at the March meeting.

February was a busy month for the Post's Oratorical winner of the January local contest, Addison Fuller. She was the first place winner in the District 23 competition and the Division 2 competition. She was also the Guest speaker at February Post meeting. Congratulations to Addison.

The Flag Team remain busy. They conducted a flag replacement ceremony for the MacLean Power Systems to a large crowd of staff, Post and community members. Great Job!!

Our next big activities are First Responders Recognition, Baseball, Shooting Team Commander's Cup and Boys State.

*Ron Koonce,
Adjutant*



Second Vice Commander

February has been another busy month with Addison Fuller winning both the District 23 and Division 2 Oratorical Scholarships and advancing to the State level in March. Congratulations to Addison.

The Flag team did another outstanding job with the flag replacement ceremony at MacLean Powers Systems in Pelham on February 14, 2018.

The Post is pleased to have Ron Bradstreet, Commander, Post 911 in Hoover as program speaker at the March 1, 2018 meeting.

*Anita Bennett
Second Vice Commander*



Free online American Legion Training

A new mobile-friendly online training program for members of The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion and Auxiliary is now available free of charge, replacing the former American legion Extension Institute.

"Basic Training" is a five-part lesson housed on the The American Legion Education Institute site at www.legion.org/training. Topics covered are History & Organization, Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation, National Security, Americanism, and Children & Youth.

A 40-question exam is provided. Graduates can download and print a certificate of completion and order a Basic Training Graduate pin from Emblem Sales.

All officers and members are encouraged to complete the training.



*Join the American Legion Family
Helping Veterans and Troops
Serving the Community and Youth*

*Matthew Blount Post 555
Auxiliary Unit 555
Sons of The American Legion
Legion Riders*

visit our website

*alpost555.com
facebook.com/alpost555*

*Contact
Ron Koonce, Adjutant
Ron.Koonce@alpost555.com*

First Vice Commander

Post 555 has a total of 201 members. 2018 Renewals so far are 144= 116%. There were three transfers from other Posts – Wayne Curtis, Claude Marsh and John Zeiss. Join me in welcoming them to the Post Family.



Oratorical update – We completed the High School Oratorical contest on January 10th. We had a record of 10 contestants to participate in this event that took 4 hours to complete. This is an outstanding show of participation.

The judges selected three winners, 1st place winner Mason Herrington, 2nd place winner Addison Fuller, 3rd place winner Dylan Kirk.

Thanks to the following Post members, Richard Kaster was the moderator, Tom McDaniel Timekeeper, Escorts: Frank Lakotich, Anita Bennett, Chris Vonderau, Jim Billings photographer,

The Two winners, Mason Herrington and Addison Fuller participated in the 23rd District Oratorical Contest on February 3rd, held in the First Baptist Church of Pelham in the Choir room at 10 am. The judges selected Addison Fuller as the 1st place winner, of the 23rd District and advanced to 2nd Division Oratorical Contest on February 17, 2018 at Shades Crest Baptist Church in Bluff Park where she also was the first-place winner. She will now she compete in the State Oratorical Contest in Montgomery, AL. on March 10, 2018 at 10 am.

The 23rd District Commander, Barry Blount, officiated. Richard Kaster was the coordinator with our Post members assisting.

We want to thank the following Post 555 members for their support: Gene Rowling was moderator, Frank Lakotich was timekeeper, escorts Anita Bennett, Ray Adams, Ron McGriff, Tabulators Tom McDaniel and Chuck Kiser, and photographer Jim Billings.

Remember we have an ongoing fundraiser for the High School Oratorical scholarship contest- Blue Rain Car Wash coupons available for \$5.00.

Richard Kaster
First Vice Commander

Judge Advocate

Chuck Kiser



The new year brings with it several annual activities in the life of the Post. Among them are:

- 1) **Post elections.** This year we will elect a Commander, First Vice Commander, Second Vice Commander and a Trustee for a three-year term. The Nominations Committee has been hard at work on a slate of nominees and they will reveal that slate at the March Post meeting.
 - a. Nominations from the floor for these positions will be accepted provided they comply with the Post Constitution and Bylaws. These documents require that the person being nominated 1. Be a Post member in good standing and be present at the March meeting; 2. That they agree to serve in the nominated capacity if elected; 3. Their nomination must be seconded by ten members in good standing to be eligible to be put on the ballot.
 - b. Elections will take place at the April Post meeting and installation of Officers will take place at the May Post meeting.
- 1) **Partisan Politics.** The annual reminder from the Department of AL regarding Legion guidelines and requirements pertaining to Partisan Politics in an election year and the wearing of the Legion cap and emblem have been received. I have attached copies of the Department directives on these two items for your information.

PLEASE, GET OUT AND SUPPORT YOUR POST IN 2018!

Veterans Recognition CommitteeSupport Committee for the Alabama National Cemetery (SCALNC) and Blue Star Salute Foundation

The Activities calendar for the Blue Star Salute Foundation and Support Committee for the Alabama National Cemetery is attached. Please look it over and try to participate in at least two activities during the remainder of 2018

SCALNC & Blue Star Salute Meetings –Held monthly at Liberty Hall – American Village in Montevallo.

Both the Blue Star Salute Foundation and the Support Committee for the National Cemetery (SCALNC) are gearing up for a busy Spring and Summer schedule of events. A quick glance at the attached event calendar will bear that out. We need your help to make these events successful. If you can, please participate as much as possible. See page 5.

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

March 2018

American Legion on Partisan Politics

The policy is made crystal clear by 36 US Code §21706 (part of The American Legion Corporate Charter), which states:

“The corporation shall be nonpolitical and may not promote the candidacy of an individual seeking public office.”

This is further emphasized by the provisions of Article II, Section 2 of the National Constitution which provides:

“The American Legion shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment.”

The American Legion takes positions on issues and lobbies for veteran's benefits and a strong America. This is clearly permitted. What is not permitted is the endorsement of any candidate or the donation of funds by The American Legion to a candidate. The American Legion takes positions on issues and its members being citizens need to be informed on the issues. Hence, American Legion programs such as candidate nights are fully authorized as long as all candidates are invited on the same terms and conditions. It would be illegal to invite the one you support with advance notice, but the one you oppose with no notice at all. When Legionnaires wear their pins and hats to political rallies, the media often try to reach the wrong conclusions. This can be very embarrassing to the Legionnaire. Hence, we normally recommend that Legionnaires do not wear their caps to partisan political rallies. There is no rule against doing this so long as the Legionnaire makes it clear there is no endorsement.

Likewise, we recommend that Legion publications not accept paid political ads. However, if they do, the paid political advertisements must be made on the same terms and conditions for all candidates and should be labeled “Paid Political Advertisement” at both the top and bottom.

As noted above, those who violate the partisan political activities prohibition put the Legion charter of their post at risk as well as its tax exempt status.

The Wearing of the Cap and Usage of American Legion Emblem

According to Article II, Section 2, of the Constitution of The American Legion, “The American Legion shall be absolutely nonpolitical and shall not be used for the dissemination of partisan principles nor for the promotion of the candidacy of any person seeking public office or preferment.” The National Charter, approved by Congress, also stipulates The American Legion as an organization is nonpolitical* which has been interpreted by the National Judge Advocate as “nonpartisan” in modern lingo. Therefore, The American Legion as an organization is prohibited from contributing, helping or endorsing a candidate. However, a member, as a private citizen, and not representing the organization, can employ whatever legal and ethical means to advance his or her candidate.

The Legion cap is considered the official Legion uniform (**see p. 42**). It is not an individual Legion member's decision on the appropriate usage of the cap and emblem. If attending a political event, The American Legion cap, or any clothing with the emblem visible, should be removed so as not to imply endorsement by The American Legion. The problem is the assumption of endorsement by those who see the emblem or name worn at in improper location, such as a partisan rally.

When using post facilities to host candidates, post should remove emblem and Legion flag to avoid any impression of endorsements. Candidates for all parties must be presented equal opportunity at the same time to use the facilities on the same terms and conditions as other competing candidates.

If financial contributions are offered by candidates for political office, campaigns, political action committees or political parties, The American Legion should politely decline. Accepting these contributions may be perfectly legal, but The American Legion must avoid any perception of supporting any candidate or political party.

The American Legion values its independence and effectiveness on veterans' issues. This stance is best maintained by neutrality on individual candidates or political parties. The American Legion by legal definition is non-partisan and supports only issues which impact your Four Pillars..

** This means “non-partisan” in today's society. The American Legion is allowed by Congress to lobby for veterans benefits and a strong United States of America. (NJA, October 25, 2012)*

Support Committee for the Alabama National Cemetery (SCALNC)
Participation Calendar of Events
(February 13, 2018)

Date	Time	Event	Location	Notes
February 15 (Thursday)	2:00 pm	SCALNC Membership Meeting	American Village Liberty Hall	OPEN TO PUBLIC
February 21 (Wednesday)	10:00 am – 12:00 pm	VA Outreach (Heart Health)	Birmingham VA Medical Clinic	SC will have table
February 24 (Saturday)	6:00 pm – 11:00 pm	2 nd Annual Patriots Ball of Alabama	Stone Bridge Farms, Cullman	SC is Co-host with display table (Proceeds to Overlook)
March 10 (Saturday)	11:30 am	ALSDAR National Defense Luncheon (Patriotism Luncheon)	Auburn	SC will have table
March 14 (Wednesday)	2:00 pm	SCALNC Membership Meeting	American Village Liberty Hall	OPEN TO PUBLIC
March 17-18 (Saturday - Sunday)	9 am—5 pm 10 am—4 pm	Alabama Gun Collectors Birmingham Gun Show	Hoover Met Complex	SC will have table
March 29 (Thursday)	10:00 am ?	VA Outreach (National Honor Vietnam Vets Day)	Birmingham VA Medical Clinic	SC will have table
April 11 (Wednesday)	2:00 pm	SCALNC Membership Meeting	American Village Liberty Hall	OPEN TO PUBLIC
April 21 (Saturday)	6—10 pm	3 rd Annual Spring Fling/Silent Auction Fundraiser	Southern Museum of Flight in BHM	Entertainment by Streetkar! (Tickets \$30 each)
April 26 (Thursday)	8:30 am – 1:00 pm	Shelby County RSVP Senior Picnic in Columbiana	Shelby County Exhibition Center	SC will have table
April 28 (Saturday)	11 am – 3 pm	Celebrate Hoover Day	Hoover Veterans Park	SC will have table & tent
May 19 (Saturday)	7:30 am	Alabama's 14 th Annual Blue Star Salute	USS AL Battleship Memorial Park	



Matthew Blount Post 555
50 Racquet Club Parkway
Pelham, AL

Meets first Thursday of the month.
Next Meeting March 1, 2018
Meal served at 6:15pm
Meeting at 7:00 pm

Post Leadership

Post Commander Tom McDaniel	Post Trustees David Coram, Jr.
1st Vice Commander Richard Kaster	Frank Lakotich
2nd Vice Commander Anita Bennett	Ray Adams
Adjutant Ron Koonce	Auxiliary President Stephanie Monday
Judge Advocate Chuck Kiser	Sons Commander Will Hayes
Financial Officer Barry Blount	Legion Riders Director
Chaplain Chris Vonderau	Jeff Monday
Sergeant-At-Arms Ron McGriff	Flag Team Commander
Post Service Officer Robert Davis	Jerry McClain
Historian Jackie Lucas	Webmaster David Blount
Public Relations Officer	Triple Nickel Editor Ron Koonce
Jim Billings	Photography Chic Cecchini
	Jim Billings
	Ron Koonce
	Eric Fort

Coming Activities

Alabama American Legion Commander's Cup Shooting Match

3/3/2018 -Noon
 Anniston CMP Facility
 1470 Sentinel Dr, Anniston, AL
 36207

State Oratorical Scholarship Competition

3/10/18
 Montgomery State House
 10:00 pm

Flag Replacement Ceremony

3/10/18 - 11:00 am
 Brunette Farm Market
 Highway 261
 Pelham

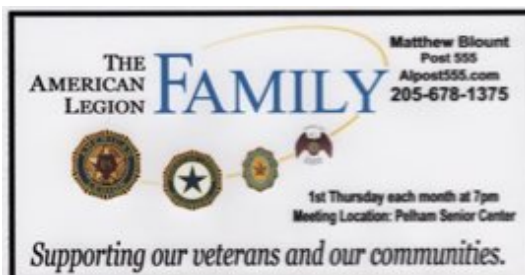
Boys State

May 27- June 2, 2018
 University of Alabama
 Registration Deadline
 April 15, 2018

Welcome to Post 555 Newest Family Members

Post 555

Wayne Curtis
 Claude Marsh
 John Zeiss.



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 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
 205-222-4495

*Photos by Chic Cecchini /Ron Koonce/
 Jim Billings/Eric Fort- Post 555*

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 American Legion Post 555



Commander's Corner



This month has been very interesting. We had several programs going on and to say the least all provided surprises.

First, the Flag retirement squad was to retire the flag at MacLean Power Systems on Highway 31 and after several cancellations due to the flu and rain they finally were able to retire the flag on Thursday February 14th but not without a problem cropping up that seemed it would delay the ceremony once again. When running through a practice run, the rope which raised and lowered the flag came apart and one end went all the way to the top. This pole is quite large and it seemed we would be stalled again until we could figure out how to get the rope down. As luck would have it, they saw a bucket truck sitting in the adjacent parking lot. Several of our legionnaires went over and asked them if they would come over and rescue our rope. The three workers from All South Sign Company drove the truck over and retrieved the rope. Thanks to them the ceremony was held and on time.

As usual the Flag Retirement team performed the flag retirement ceremony perfectly and the employees from MacLean Power were very complementary and pleased.

I want to say what a great day it was on Saturday, February 17, when our District Oratorical winner, Addison Fuller, competed in the Division Oratorical Contest.

There were three contestants from each of three districts in our division. All contestants were superb and each one could have easily won. The judges selected were all court judges. How fitting to judge an oratorical contest on the Constitution of the United States. When the winner was finally announced, Addison Fuller, our representative from our district, was the winner. Congratulation to Addison as she will move on the state contest. We can be very proud that the winner came from Pelham High School and represented us so capably. Congratulation to Richard Kaster, our Oratorical Chairperson. Richard has been in charge of producing the Oratorical Program from the beginning and has done a fantastic job. Thanks Richard for all your hard work.

I will look for you all at our next meeting on Thursday March 1, 2018. We have more great programs coming up. If you would like to be involved in some of these programs, please let me or an officer know.

Tom McDaniel
Commander

March 15, 2018 is the 99th Birthday of the American Legion.



Since March 15, 1919 "The American Legion," an organization of wartime veterans.

An amazing string of accomplishments would follow over the next 99 years. Equally amazing was how quickly the organization took root as a powerful national and community force.

The American Legion's founders served in World War I and they were "still serving" when their successors fought the second world war— just as every generation of Legionnaires has served its comrades from all wars since. But serving fellow veterans is just one of the many ways that The American Legion assists in communities and serving the youth of America.

Ninety-nine years ago this month, members of the American Expeditionary Force were asked to "determine the scope of the work and carry forth the objects of this association." The association was The American Legion.

They surpassed all expectations. Legionnaires continue to do so today, with a vision for tomorrow.



March 2018

Addison Fuller Advances to State Level

Congratulations to Addison Fuller, a senior at Pelham High School for winning First Place in the American Legion Division 2 Oratorical Scholarship competition on February 17, 2018. She will advance to the Alabama State competition in March to compete with the other two Divisional winners.

Addison began her journey with winning first place in the Pelham High School competition hosted by the Matthew Blount Post 555 in January 2018.

On February 3, 2018 she was one of three contestants that competed in the District 23 Oratorical competition, finishing in first place receiving a second scholarship.



PHS 1st PI- Commander McDaniel, Addison Fuller



Dist 23 1st PI- Addison Fuller, Commander Blount



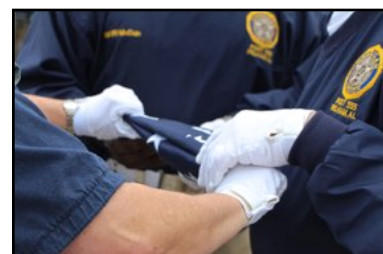
Div 2 1st PI- Commander Bradstreet, Addison Fuller

Flag Team Replacement Ceremony

Post 555 Flag Team conducted a formal flag replacement ceremony at the business of MacLean Power Systems located in Pelham, AL on February 14, 2018 to a large crowd of company staff, Post 555 and community members.

The event is hosted by Post 555 as a part of the American Legion Flag Rewards Program. Contact team coordinator, Ronnie McGriff for more information at flagdetail@alpost555.com

See more Photos at: <https://alpost555.smugmug.com/MacLean-Power-Systems-Flag-Replacement-2142018/>



March 2018

The Alabama War Memorial

Order a
Memorial Brick
Today!



120 North Jackson Street, Montgomery Alabama

The Alabama War Memorial Walk Brick Order Form

Brick Type	Cost	Quantity	Total
Memorial Brick w/ 1 Miniature Brick	\$85.00		
Additional Miniature Bricks	\$25.00		

See Payment Options Below. Please submit Payment in the amount of:

Brick Guidelines: Each inscription may contain a maximum of three lines of text, with 18 characters available on each line. Please include all letters, punctuation and spaces on the form. Brick orders are limited to individuals only. If you wish to purchase multiple bricks, please fill out and submit a separate form for each individual brick order. For those who wish to pay with credit cards, TAL uses PayPal to process orders. If purchasing multiple bricks you need only submit one check, money order or PayPal payment for the total amount due for all bricks and mini-bricks. Be sure to submit all brick order forms associated with the total purchase price. A paid invoice will be sent to all purchasers showing engravings, with request to verify information.

Engraving Instructions

American Legion: Post/ Squadron /Unit #

Line 1 Inscription:

CIRCLE ONE

Line 2 Inscription:

Line 3 Inscription:

Mail Form with Check or Money Order To:
The American Legion, Dept. of AL.
P.O. Box 1069
Montgomery, AL 36101

Pay Now by Secure PayPal: www.LegionAL.org
Then email form to: ALwarmemorial@legional.org
Fax to: 334-262-9694 * Call 334-262-6638 to pay with CC

Name: _____
Billing Address: _____
City: _____ State _____ ZIP _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Card # _____
Name on Card _____
Exp Date _____ Signature _____

Department Use Only
Received _____ Ordered _____ Payment Rec _____

Post 555 Store

Drop by at Monthly Meeting

American Legion
Souvenir Patriotic Cup



Help Support
Matthew Blount Post 555
Veterans and Youth
Programs
Limited Number Available

\$10



CAR WASH Fundraiser

\$5 /COUPONS

Proceeds goes towards Youth Program Scholarships.

Boys State and Oratorical

American Legion Centennial Pins

Limited pins are now available in the Post
Store for \$5.00 each at the March 1st
meeting.

Proceeds will go toward the Alabama War
Memorial Renovation Project.



Triple Nickel T-Shirts

Matthew Blount Post 555 are selling custom designed Patriotic T-Shirts to provide a way to take pride in our American Legion Post Family and raise funds in support of Wreaths Across America and other Post projects, Military Deployment Support Program, VA Medical Center Christmas Gift Program, Oratorical and Boys State scholarships.

ORDER YOURS TODAY. COST IS ONLY \$20, PRE-PAY OR PAYABLE AT THE TIME THE SHIRT IS DELIVERED. Get one while you can and help support our Active Duty Personnel, Veterans and Youth Programs.

100% Cotton Color: White Graphic on Navy Blue

TRIPLE NICKEL T-SHIRT ORDER FORM

NAME _____ PHONE _____

EMAIL _____ SIZE: [] Small Qty _____ [] Med Qty _____

[] Lrg Qty _____ [] XLrg QTY _____ @ \$20 each

[] XXLrg Qty _____ [] XXXLrg Qty _____ @ \$22 each

Standard Sizes Qty _____ @ \$20 Total _____

Extra Large Sizes Qty _____ @ \$22 Total _____

Date: _____ Amount Due _____ Amount Paid _____



Back



Front Pocket

American Legion Uniform Cap Order Form - American Legion Flag & Emblem

5/6/15, 9:28 PM



(888) 453-4466

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Product Search

0 Item(s) • Subtotal: \$0.00

Go

Patriotic American Legion Auxiliary Sons (SAL)

Resources

Click here for cap etiquette guidelines

American Legion Uniform Cap Order Form

Please allow up to 8 weeks for delivery!

- For help ordering uniform caps, click [here](#).
- For info about cap prices, click [here](#).
- For a list of Departments that require mandatory insignias, click [here](#).
- When you purchase a cap from a Department that requires an insignia, that insignia is automatically added to your cap and included in the price of your cap.

STEP ONE

Please select your Department:

A cap for a starred Department requires a mandatory insignia.

STEP TWO

Please select your style: ☐ State

☐ City

☐ County

☐ District

