



The Triple Nickel

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

Volume 5- Issue 1

January 2018

“For God & Country”

In This Issue

Officer Reports Member Renewal Legion Training Triple	2-3
Nickel Riders	4
1st Vice Cmdr Report Mid-Winter Department Meeting	5
Post Information	6
Post Opportunities	7
Presentations	8
Coming Events	9
Post Store	10
Flag Team	11
Veteran Spotlight Did You Know?	12



Matthew Blount Post 555 wishes you a Happy New Year 2018. With your continued support, we look forward to continued success in meeting our mission in supporting our veterans, community, youth and the values of the American Legion.



January 2018

Ad Adjutant Area

Congratulations to the entire Post family for another successful year in 2017.



The Post exceed its 100% renewal goal by December 31, 2017 at 107%. It has also met the Goal of achieving 200 members by end of June 2018 in December 2017 with 200 active members. However, we still have a ways to go to meet our next goal of 110% by February 2018. Do not wait. Send your 2018 renewal in as soon as possible. Your 2017 membership expired on December 31, 2017.

The Sons also have exceeded its goal of 100% renewal by December 31, 2017 with 110% while gaining 4 new members.

Congratulations to Comrade Ron Jefferson in receiving the ESGR Seven Seals Award presented by Nancy Waller, ESGR Regional Chair.

Next major event is the Pelham High School Oratorical Scholarship Competition on January 10, 2018. A large group of contestants are expected this year which means more volunteers are needed as escorts. I encourage you to contact First Vice Commander Richard Kaster and sign up to help with this outstanding event for our youth.

In December the Post Family welcomed 6 additional members . Welcome Aboard!

*Ron Koonce,
Adjutant*

Second Vice Commander



Happy New Year
Comrades! I hope every one of you had a great Christmas and were able to spend time with your loved ones I want to give a special "Thank You!" to Trustee David Coram Jr. as he and his family were instrumental in getting the gift bags completed and delivered to the V. A. Medical Center. Due to unforeseen weather issues, the bags were not ready to be delivered on the intended date of December 12th. They were delivered to the hospital staff a couple days afterwards! I also want to give a special "Thank You!" to Trustee Frank Lakotich for helping me raise donations for this effort and also Ladies Auxiliary member Peggy Hendley, for donating socks! I am excited to see what 2018 holds for us all!

*Anita Bennett
Second Vice Commander*

Commander's Corner



I HOPE EVERYONE HAD A MERRY CHRISTMAS. I SURE DID, TOO MUCH FOOD AND A LOT OF EXCITEMENT AROUND THE GRANDCHILDREN. THE NEW YEAR IS UPON US AND THE TIME TO SET MORE NEW HOPEFUL RESOLUTIONS IS HERE. I SAY HOPEFULLY, BECAUSE MOST OF MY NEW RESOLUTIONS DON'T LAST LONG. I DO TRY TO PICK OUT THE ONE THAT MEANS THE MOST TO ME AND DO THE BEST I CAN TO MAKE IT WORK. EVERY MEMBER OF OUR POST HAS CONTRIBUTED IN SOME WAY THIS YEAR IN MAKING THE MATTHEW BLOUNT AMERICAN LEGION POST 555, ONE OF THE BEST AMERICAN LEGION POST IN THE STATE. YOU ALL CAN BE VERY PROUD OF THIS ACCOMPLISHMENT. WHETHER YOU HELPED BY RENEWING YOUR YEARLY DUES OR MAKING A MORE DEFINED CONTRIBUTION, YOU ALL HAVE BEEN A VALUABLE PART IN OUR POST'S SUCCESS.

I WOULD LIKE TO CHALLENGE YOU THIS YEAR TO MOVE AHEAD AND MAKE A NEW YEARS RESOLUTION TO FIND SOME PROGRAM IN OUR POST THAT YOU ARE INTERESTED IN AND BECOME MORE INVOLVED. BEING ABLE TO MAN AN INFORMATION TABLE AT ONE OF OUR EVENTS OR BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE FLAG RETIREMENT PROGRAM OR EVEN MORE, CHAIRING AN EVENT. WE HAVE ROOM FOR ALL VOLUNTEERS AND WELCOME YOU IN HELPING US TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS FOR THE COMING YEAR.

I WILL LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL AT OUR NEXT POST MEETING ON JANUARY 4, 2018. LETS START THIS NEW YEAR OFF WITH RENEWED ENTHUSIASM TO DOING EVEN BETTER THINGS FOR POST 555.

BE SAFE AND SEE YOU SOON.

*Tom McDaniel
Commander*



January 2018

Chaplain's Thoughts



I share this from Max Lucado's When God Whispers Your Name -

The Spiritual Life comes from the Spirit! Your parents may have given you genes, but God give you grace. Your parents may be responsible for your body, but God has taken charge of your soul. You may get your looks from your mother, but you get eternity from your Father, your heavenly Father.

God has not left you adrift on a sea of heredity. You cannot control the way your forefathers responded to God. But you can control the way you respond to Him. The past does not have to be your prison. You have a voice in your destiny. You have a say in your life. You have a choice in the path you take.

Choose well and someday - generations from now - your grandchildren and great-grandchildren will thank God for the seeds you sowed.

Turn your eyes to the cross of Jesus Christ comrades, we are one day closer to home!

Chris Vonderau
Chaplain

MEMBERSHIP

Legion Family members eligible for 'Family First' incentive pin

American Legion National Commander Denise H. Rohan is extending her "Family First!" membership incentive pin to the entire American Legion Family.

Rohan will award her national commander incentive pin to any American Legion Family member who obtains any combination of three eligible new members into the Legion Family (The American Legion, Sons of The American Legion or American Legion Auxiliary).

A new member is any eligible person joining for the 2018 membership year who was not a member of the American Legion Family during the 2017 membership year.

To maintain the integrity of the national commander's pin incentive program, only one pin will be awarded per individual.

Upon receipt, national membership staff will confirm the names and mail the pin directly to the person who earned it. Rohan's incentive program will end June 30, 2018, or when supplies are exhausted.

 www.legion.org/commander/pin



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.

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

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!

Please continue to stand with the American Legion in supporting fellow veterans, today's service members, their families, communities and our nation.

Triple Nickel Riders



Happy New Years!! December was a very busy month, we were keeping the chrome clean and the rubber on the pavement. The month started out with the escort of the Wreaths Across America. On 12 December 2017 the Patriot Guard Riders and the American Legion Riders of Alabama escorted the wreaths from the state line of Mississippi to the Alabama National Cemetery. Hot coffee and a lot of leather the mission was completed, truck unloaded, and wreaths prepared. The 12th thru 16th was very busy, but as always, we fit in the yearly Riders Christmas party. Very proud to say on the 14th we had 36 in attendance for family fun and great door prizes, for the 2nd year David Blount walked away with a nice 50-dollar gifted card to Publix, congratulations David.

To close out the month we rode in as a group to the WAA, it was a early morning of waffles and coffee, some jokes and war stories. The group of five rode to Veterans Park Alabaster to meet up with the Patriot Guard Riders, as group we rode in the Alabama National Cemetery. The last step to complete the day for the Riders is to complete a Flag line. The Flag Line is very important to protect the families during the time of paying respect to their fallen Hero. To read more about the Flag Line and the Patriot Guard Rides go to www.patriotguard.org



Triple Nickel Riders' Christmas Party



L-R: Eric Fort, Alan Farmer, Will Hayes. Jeff Monday, John Atwell

January 2018

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! WE ARE
PROUD TO RIDE!! AND WE
RIDE FOR THOSE THAT CAN'T.**



First Vice Commander Comments

"As we look at our Membership Management, we want to know how we have been doing over the past year.

Post 555 has improved the total membership to 200 members in good standing for 2017.



- Target goal for 2018 Renewals has been met. As we have exceeded the goal of 124 well before December 31, 2017. We are at 133 = 107%. We have done well thanks to all of you.
- There were 2 new members for November. were 2
- There were 3 new members for December.
- There was 1 new Sons member in December.
- Revitalization Retention program had successful results with 27 transfers.

Oratorical update - the Pelham City High School Counselor, Michelle LeSueur, has reported that 13 students have applied for the competition in January. This is an outstanding show of interest in participation. We are working out the details, however, we are going to need a lot of Post members to support this January 10th Event. We are also hosting the 23rd District Oratorical Scholarship Contest on February 3rd, 2018.

New fundraiser for the High School Oratorical Scholarship contest- Blue Rain Car Wash.

As many of you already know that our Post does not have an ongoing revenue stream or income. We don't have a café, bar or restaurant, therefore what we have managed to have in our bank account is funds to pay for our different expenses involved in our many activities has been attained through donations and fundraisers. For instance, the Hangar Fests and the Beach Bashes events

Therefore, we are going to need money to fund for the High School Oratorical Contest winners and for administrative costs to operate these contests. The first level of competition will take place Pelham City High School on January 10th 2018. In order to fundraise this money, we are working with the manager of Blue Rain Car Wash in Pelham. He has offered us discounted car wash coupon cards for

resale as a fundraiser. The Post Executive Committee has given permission to offer to our members members and the general public at events like Military Appreciation and other events the opportunity to purchase the basic car wash coupon cards. This card is a \$7 value, that we are selling each Card for \$5. Proceeds will go directly into the High School Oratorical Scholarship Fund account. Also, you can use this card to get a discount off of an upgrade car wash to a higher value wax and other features. So, if you want to help fund our High School Oratorical Scholarship contest please see me after each meeting to purchase a couple car wash coupons and participate in our fundraiser.

Mid-Winter Conference Decatur, Alabama

When: January 18-21, 2018

Where: DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel
Decatur

Riverfront, 1101 6th Ave NE,

Decatur, AL 35601, USA

Hotel Reservations: 256-355-3150

Single \$106 Suite \$119

Deadline for discounts: December 28, 2017

Meeting Registration: \$15 (Legion, Auxiliary,
Sons , Riders)

Banquet: Evening of January 20, 2018
Reservations required - \$15

For Agenda, Banquet form go to: [https://
www.legional.org/publications.html](https://www.legional.org/publications.html) or contact the
Adjutant at ron.koonce@alpost555.com

Send meeting registration payable to Matthew Blount
Post 555 to Post address found on page 6.

Banquet reservations are to be sent directly to the
Alabama Department.





Matthew Blount Post 555
50 Racquet Club Parkway
Pelham, AL

Meets first Thursday of the month.
Next Meeting January 4, 2017
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 Ron Gofourth	Legion Riders Director
Chaplain Chris Vonderau	Jeff Monday
Sergeant-At-Arms Ron McGriff	Honor Guard 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

Annual Oratorical Scholarship Competition
1/10/2018
Pelham High School
9:00 am

Annual Military Appreciation Night
University of Alabama Hockey
1/19/2018
7:00 pm
Pelham Ice Arena

Welcome to Post 555 Newest Family Members

Post 555

John Atwell
Jim Darden
Gerry Ginn
Charles Hunt
Harlan Phillips
Nancy Waller

Sons of American Legion

Jon Freeman

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

Copyright 2017
American Legion Post 555



Post 555 Needs You to Participate!

Please consider joining one of our committees?



Below are the available Committees to join. What's your gift? Select One!!!

1. Membership
2. Events
3. Fund Raising
4. Meeting Program
5. Oratorical
6. Baseball
7. Boys State
8. By-laws
9. Nominating
10. Veteran Recognition
11. Social Media/Web
12. Photography
13. Newsletter
14. Budget
15. Post Service Officer
16. Historian
17. Son of Legion
18. Legion Riders

Join the Discussion!

Post 555 is no longer a “start-up Post. Membership has grown to over 200 members. The Post has exceeded the number of community & veterans events that it had this time last year with much more to come. The Executive Board encourages all members to get involved and contribute to our 2018 success.

The ongoing Post activities is centered around the Events Committee. The Post has participated in or hosted over 170 events in the last 3 years. Two major annual events in January are the Pelham High School Oratorical Scholarship Competition and the Military Appreciation Night at the Pelham Civic Complex hosted by Post 555 and the University of Alabama Frozen Ice Hockey Organization. Members are encouraged to support by their participating in attendance and/or help work the event.

Contact Richard Kaster for Oratorical at richardkaster@bellsouth.net and Kenneth Paschal at 1sgpaschal@gmail.com for Military Appreciation night.

Share your talents and skills in the on-going operations of the Post. Contact commander@alpost5555.com for other opportunities.

Post Member Receives ESGR Award



Ronald Jefferson receives ESGR Seven Seals Award from Nancy Waller, ESGR Regional Chairman.

MSG(Ret) Ron Jefferson received the Seven Seals Award presented by Employers Support of the Guard and Reserve Regional Chair, Nancy Waller.

The Seven Seals Award is the broadest and most inclusive award given by ESGR and is presented at the discretion of the State Chair or by ESGR senior leadership. It is in recognition of significant individual or organizational achievement, initiative, or support that promotes and supports the ESGR mission.

Ron entered the U.S. Navy as a cook in 1962 at the age of 17, and served honorably until he was discharged in 1974 in the rank of Master Sergeant.

He went from being a cook in Germany in the U.S. Navy to a door gunner on a helicopter in Vietnam. He was a Green Beret with the 5th Special Forces and served from 1965-1971 in Vietnam. He only returned home one time during those five years,

After returning from Vietnam, Master Sergeant (Retired) Jefferson had a very successful business career. He spends his days mentoring young men who have returned from Afghanistan and Iraq as well as older Veterans, helping them acclimate back into society. Master Sergeant (Retired) Jefferson is a demanded speaker and works with PTSD groups at the Birmingham VA Medical Center. He stated that he was there with no help upon returning from war, so he feels his job is to help young Veterans and to help people in his war."

Triple Nickel Riders Presents Honorary Membership



L-R: Jeff Monday, ALR Director, Ron Koonce, Adjutant, Frank Lakotich, Post Trustee

Jeff Monday, ALR Director, recognized Frank Lakotich, Post Trustee and Ron Koonce, Post Adjutant, expressing the Rider's appreciation for their 100% support during the 2017 year to the Veteran and the Motorcycle Community and making them an Honorary Triple Nickel Rider.

Post 555 Recognized for Service



Barry Blount, Past Commander, accepts the RSVP Achievement Station Award on behalf of Post 555 recognizing the 5000 Plus hours of volunteer service to veterans and the community.

Coming Events



ARMY | MARINES | NAVY | AIR FORCE | COAST GUARD

★★★★★ MILITARY ★★★★★ APPRECIATION

NIGHT

FRIDAY @ 7:00 PM

Opening ceremony @ 6:45 PM



JANUARY 19TH

Alabama Hockey

VS

Illinois State



HOSTED BY

The University of Alabama Hockey Program
and

American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555

Veterans and Active military personnel and all who have honorably served free admission. Must present valid Military ID or proof of service.

500 Amphitheater Rd, Pelham, AL 35124

Veterans and active military receive free admission to the game. There will be gifts for veterans and military. Registration for Door Prize will be at the Post 555 welcoming area.

Bring your family and friends and enjoy the game and a night of fun.

MILITARY ARMED FORCES VETRANS APPRECIATION DAY
SATURDAY FEBRUARY 24, 2018
5:00 P.M.

WARD CHAPEL A.M.E. WORSHIP CENTER

765 West STREET
MONTEVALLO, ALABAMA



PLEASE COME CELEBRATE WITH THE YOUTH OF WARD

CHAPEL A.M.E. WORSHIP CENTER

THEY WILL BE HONORING THE MILITARY MEN AND
WOMEN OF MONTEVALLO AND SURROUNDING AREAS FOR
THEIR DEDICATED SERVICE

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO WEAR YOUR MILITARY

UNIFORM, PLEASE DO

ALL WILL BE RECOGNIZED IN UNIFORM OR NOT

LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE

SPEAKER: REV. MONTY A. ROYSTER, PASTOR

WARD CHAPEL A.M.E. WORSHIP CENTER

Post 555 members, Kenneth Paschal, Past 1st Vice Commander and David Coram, Jr., past Post Chaplain, will conduct the Fallen Hero Table Ceremony in Honor and Remembrance of those who have served and not returned.

All are invited and encouraged to attend.



January 2018

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 January 4th 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

My Account Help About Contact

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



Flag Ceremony City of Montevallo



Post 555 Flag Team conducted a flag ceremony to dedicate the new flag pole at the City Hall of Montevallo, Alabama on December 15, 2017. The U.S. Colors were raised to bugle call Reveille followed by the playing of the National Anthem. An overview of the meaning of the ceremony was presented by Frank Lakotich during which miniature U.S. Flags were presented to all in attendance.

The Mayor of Montebello, Hollie Cost, presented comments and lead the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance. The ceremony was concluded with the playing of the Stars and Strips March.

Flag Team L-R: Anita Bennett, Frank Lakotich, Ron Jefferson, Tom McDaniel, Ron McGriff, Nancy Waller, Jerry McClain, Bobby Horsley, Ron Gofourth, Ron Koonce (not pictured)



January 2018

Commander Blount Named Veteran of the Week

"The American Village joined the Shelby County reporter in recognizing Command Sergeant Major(Ret) Barry K. Blount as Veteran of the week. He is representative of hundreds of thousands of Alabamians who have risked it all for the sake of our country and its freedom.



Command Sergeant Major(Ret) Barry K. Blount was born in Tupelo, MS in 1955; He calls Pelham his hometown Pelham, however he currently lives in Alabaster, AL. He served in the U S Army for 1976 to 2005. Blount is a veteran of the Persian Gulf War. During his career, he rose through the ranks to Command Sergeant Major, the high non-commissioned rank in the Army. Blount retired in 2005 after a major heart attack with many awards including the Legion of Merit. Blount's three son's Matthew, AJ and David, joined the Army, following in their father's foot steps. However, Matthew promising life was cut short when he developed cancer after two tours in Iraq. In memory of his son , in September 2014, Blount and other veterans formed the American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555, based in Pelham, AL, to serve the community and to keep Matthew's name alive. Blount was the first commander of the Post and served in that capacity until 2017.



In his own words: "If I had it to do over again, I would. " A Soldier's Request" For no heart in all the world is more loyal than the heart of an American Soldier. Train me, Sergeant, that one day I too can be called Sergeant, trainer of soldiers, the backbone of the Army. Train me to accept those responsibilities that are yours. Train me to train soldiers to be the greatest defenders of freedom in the world."

CSM(Ret) Blount now serves as Commander of The American Legion Alabama District 23, overseeing the operations of sixteen American Legion Posts.

Source: Shelby County Reporter

DID YOU KNOW?

- The American Legion has a number of discounts offered exclusively to Legionnaires and Sons of The American Legion members. These member discounts are good for auto rentals, moving and relocation, travel, and lodging, and more. For more information visit www.legion.org/benefits
- The American Legion national website offers a state-by-state directory of veterans benefits. From health-care services to hunting and fishing license exemptions and free passes to state parks, the online guide details state and federal benefits alike for those who have served the nation in uniform, and their families. In some states, different benefits are available for veterans with service-connected disabilities. Visit the web page at www.legion.org/veteransbenefits/state
- More than 245,800 American Legion members renewed their membership online in 2017 which was an increase of 33,263 for 2016. To date, 143,612 members have renewed online for the 2018 membership year. **To easily and safely renew online**, go to web page www.legion.org/renew
- American Legion and Sons of The American Legion Garrison Caps and much more can be purchased online from American Legion Emblem Sales at <https://emblem.legion.org>

