



THE TRIPLE NICKEL



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AMERICAN LEGION MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555
PELHAM, ALABAMA

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IN GOD WE TRUST

JANUARY 2019

INSIDE ...

Commander's Comments.....	2
Packing Gift Bags.....	3
1st Vice's Comments.....	4
Delivering Gift Bags.....	5
2nd Vice's Corner	6
Wreaths Across America....	7
Adjutant's Area	8
Upcoming Events.....	9
Judge Advocate.....	10
Chaplain.....	10
National Cemetery.....	11
Legion Riders.....	11
Alabama Hockey.....	12



Spreading Christmas cheer at Shelby Ridge

Members of Post 555 gathered at Shelby Ridge Rehab Select in Alabaster Dec. 19 to deliver gift bags and spread some Christmas cheer for veteran residents.

As residents who have served in the military gathered in the cafeteria, Sergeant-at-Arms Ronnie

McGriff welcomed them and explained why they were being honored with gift bags. Two staff members who are also veterans also received gift bags.

Joining McGriff were Post members Tom McDaniel, Jim Billings, Nancy Waller, and Frank Lakotich.

COMMANDER'S COMMENTS



Tom McDaniel

Post Commander

I hope you all had a Merry Christmas and I wish you a very Happy New Year. As a post we have had a very good year. Looking back at all we accomplished as an American Legion Post, you can be very proud of the collective effort everyone exhibited. If you were an active committee member, a volunteer at one or more of our projects or just attended our monthly post meetings, you were an important part of making this post function as it should.

I am not going to go over all we have done, I'm sure you have heard it multiple times at our monthly post meetings and in our newsletters. You know the effort that goes into our programs. I do want to pass on congratulations to Kenneth Paschal and everyone who helped on the Texas Road House fund raiser. Again, a group of our post members volunteered to do what was necessary to raise the funds necessary to help make the upcoming Veterans Appreciation Night in February successful. Be sure to watch the newsletter for information on this event, you will want to be there.

Our next meeting is on Jan. 3, 2019. I actually put in 2018, I sure that won't be the last time. Be sure to be there by 6:15 for our dinner and social time. Meeting to start at 7 p.m. sharp. Be careful and safe over the remainder of the holidays and we will see you on the 3rd of January.

Best wishes to all for a great New Year.

Legion to keep fighting for Blue Water Navy veterans

From The American Legion

Incoming House Committee on Veterans Affairs Chairman Mark Takano, D-Calif., promised in a bipartisan Dec. 20 press conference that the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act will resurface early when the 116th Congress begins Jan. 3.

A top priority of the Republican he is replacing as chairman of the committee, Dr. Phil Roe of Tennessee, Takano said the measure – which affects some 90,000 Vietnam War veterans exposed to the toxic defoliant Agent Orange who served on surface

ships during the war – will also be high on his agenda.

“We will keep working on the issue of toxic exposures,” Takano said at the conference, called by Roe in an effort to persuade a full floor vote in the waning days of the 115th Congress after the measure was blocked on Dec. 10 primarily by two senators who objected, one on the basis of cost and the other who questioned the science.

“I look forward to working with all my colleagues ... to continue making this a priority,” Takano said.

The act passed the House by a 382-0 vote last June.

American Legion Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division Director Chanin Nuntavong joined lawmakers and other veterans service organizations in a chorus of complaint that just two opponents in the Senate could sink the bill, which would restore Agent Orange-related benefits that were stripped away by administrative action in 2002.

“It is unfortunate to be standing here today under a massive cloud of disappointment,” Nuntavong said at the press conference.

Packing Gift Bags



Dec. 8



1ST VICE'S COMMENTS



Richard Kaster

1st Vice Commander

Happy New Year! It will not be long and we will be closing out the 2018 year and facing another new year 2019. It seems like this past year has flown by so quickly.

As we enter this new year, we will have a lot on our Post activities platters to do. In the very beginning, we will have the American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Program. Followed in February by Military Appreciation Night at Pelham Civic Center.

So for a brief update on this program:

We will be sponsoring and hosting the following scheduled events of the Oratorical Contests for the next 3 months: American Legion Oratorical Contests

- 1) The Pelham High School auditorium on Jan. 16th at 9 a.m.
- 2) The 23rd District at Pelham City Senior Center on Feb. 9th at 10 a.m.
- 3) The 2nd Division at Pelham First Baptist Church on Feb. 23rd at 10 a.m.

We really will need your support and attendance at any and all of these events.

Please consider taking a few minutes to sign up on the date and time the event schedule that you want to support.

We need Legionnaires to be ushers and escorts for the contestants, you will be fully briefed at the event.

The dress is a coat and tie with your garrison cap.

We would like for you to come at least 30 mins prior in order to assist with the seating and meet your contestant.

Richard Kaster

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*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**

Delivering
Christmas Gift
Bags

Dec. 11

Birmingham VA



2ND VICE'S CORNER



Nancy Waller
2nd Vice Commander

Happy New Year in 2019 to all members, and I hope everyone had an enjoyable and possibly restful Holiday Season. Our tradition for Christmas dinner is a standing rib roast which was enjoyed by all around my dinner table, and unfortunately no leftovers. That is usually the best part!!!

I would like to start by letting you know about the first volunteer event on our 2019 calendar which is retrieving the Christmas wreaths at the Alabama National Cemetery on Tuesday, Jan. 8 at 9 a.m. Chuck Kiser, Chic Cecchini, and I were part of the unloading of the wreaths from a 53-foot semi-trailer onto four smaller trailers to be staged around the cemetery so we know there are a LOT of wreaths to retrieve, so the more volunteers from Post 555, the better we will all be. Just show-up on the 8th and you will be given direction on where the help is most needed; thank you in advance!

I want to thank those of you who offered some suggested topics of interest for future Post 555 meetings. I received 11 topics such as "VA Information", "History of the American Legion", "Veterans and the Legal System", "Medical Care for Vets", "Vets and PTSD; Treatment Programs", "What is the Alabama State Government Doing?", "What is our State Representative Doing (Congressman Gary Palmer)?", "Triple Nickel Shooters", "Compensation and Pension", and "HUD/VA Social Worker". Lots of great topics that I will research for future meetings. If you feel something else would be helpful to our Post members, please let me know any time and I will see what I can do. We are here for our Post members, so your input is important and vital!!

The Birmingham VA Christmas Caravan was a huge success!! Tom McDaniel, Frank Lakotich, Vashone Smith, Aretha Riley, Chic Cecchini, Rita Cecchini, and I went from floor to floor, room to room, to visit as many Veterans as we were given permission to visit, and were able to meet 100 of them the evening of Dec. 11. There were several other volunteer organizations in the hospital with us, and even Santa and Mrs. Claus were there! Every single Veteran we met was glad to see us and very appreciative of our gift bags that were assembled with care by Richard Kaster, Anita Bennett, Leroy Raymond, Mrs. Raymond, and Larry Strayer on Dec. 8. Since 150 gift bags were assembled and we only gave out 100 at the VA, we needed to decide what to do with the other 50 so Tom McDaniel asked Ron McGriff to see if he could get a group together to visit Shelby Ridge Rehab Select in Alabaster where there were several Veterans. Tom McDaniel, Frank Lakotich, Ron McGriff, Jim Billings, and I took the trip to Shelby Ridge and had another great time with several resident Veterans as well as a few staff members who had served, each of who received a gift bag. Another good time for all.

I encourage you to keep your eyes and ears open for future events that Post 555 facilitates or takes part in if you are interested in being a Volunteer. There is a lot of joy when you put yourself out there for fellow Veterans and members of our communities, so join us whenever an event "sounds good to you". Thank you for your service, and have a very Happy New Year!!!!

REMEMBER HONOR TEACH



WREATHS
— across —
AMERICA



Dec. 15



Alabama National Cemetery
Montevallo



ADJUTANT'S AREA



Ron Koonce

Post Adjutant

Hope every one had a Happy Holiday and a Merry Christmas. Many thanks to everyone for your support in making 2018 another successful year for Matthew Blount Post 555.

The Post has participated or hosted over 40 Veteran, Youth and Community events during the year among many other non-event activities and awards received. It all happens because of you, the members. Working together, 2019 can be even better.

The Post is always looking for new leadership among its ranks. If you are interested in getting more involved with the operations of the Post, now is the time with election of

new officers and appointments to administrative positions coming up in early 2019. Contact Chuck Kiser or myself if you want to discuss what you may be interested in doing.

The Post excelled in a lot of areas this year with the exception of not meeting our 100 percent 2019 renewals by Dec. 31. This is the first time in the Post's existence we have not met this goal, and we missed it by 25 percent. However, it is not too late to achieve 100 percent by June 2019. The 2018 memberships expire Jan. 1, 2019. So, do not delay in getting your renewal in.

The renewal fee is still just \$45 payable to Matthew Blount Post 555.

You can mail to:

American Legion

Matthew Blount Post 555

50 Racquet Club Parkway

Pelham, AL 35124



We have a number of members that have a good start in recruiting new members, but we are about 50 percent of where we were this time last year. Bring a veteran friend to Post meetings and encourage them to join the Post 555 family.

Hope to see you at the Jan. 3 meeting, 6:15 pm.

Adjutant

Ron Koonce

UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY 2019

Wednesday, Jan. 16

9 a.m.: American Legion High School Oratorical Contest

Where: Pelham High School Auditorium

Post 555 members needed to support, coordinate, and moderate the event:

Escorts (number depends on the number of contestants)

Two Timekeepers

One Usher

One Moderator

(Event Chairman Richard Kaster)

FEBRUARY 2019

Saturday, Feb. 9

10 a.m.: 23rd District American Legion Oratorical Scholarship Contest

Where: Pelham Senior Center

Post 555 will host and moderate this event; Volunteers needed as follows:

Three Escorts

One Timekeeper

One Usher

One Moderator

One Photographer

(Event Chairman Richard Kaster)

7 p.m.: University of Alabama Hockey Team Military Appreciation Night

Where: Pelham Civic Complex

UA versus Missouri State

Post 555 Volunteers needed for set-up, etc.

(Event Chairman Kenneth Paschal)

Saturday, Feb. 23

10 a.m.: 2nd Division American Legion High School Oratorical Scholarship Contest

Where: First Baptist Church of Pelham, 2867 Pelham Pkwy, Pelham

(Event Chairman Richard Kaster)

JUDGE ADVOCATE'S CORNER



Chuck Kiser

Judge Advocate

Let me be among the first to wish each of you and your families a very Happy New Year!

A new year brings with it the steps necessary to operate the Post's business in order to support the numerous community and veterans' activities we undertake throughout the year. Key among those "housekeeping" activities is the nomination and election of officers for the coming year. The offices of Commander, 1st Vice Commander, 2nd Vice Commander and three Trustees are elected offices. All other officer and committee positions are appointed by the incoming Commander annually.

Nominating Committee and Officer Candidates – The Officer nomination and candidate selection cycle is now upon us. The Nominating Committee is comprised of three non-Officer Post members in good standing. I currently have two volunteers to serve on this committee and am looking for one more.

This committee will be selected in January and will meet to make their nominations in February with nominations announced in March. In 2019, we will be electing individuals for the positions of Commander, 1st Vice Commander, 2nd Vice Commander and Trustee. If you have an interest in being considered for nomination for an Officer position in 2019 or are interested in serving on a committee in 2019, please contact me.

Get involved in the life of your Post!

CHAPLAIN'S THOUGHTS



Chris Vonderau

Post Chaplain

Happy New Year! Hope you and your family have a great 2019.

Turn your eyes to the Cross of Jesus Christ comrades, we are one day closer to home! 2 Peter 3:8-15

Chris Vonderau

(205) 966-1364



NATIONAL CEMETERY HAPPENINGS

Bonnie Woodie

Alabama National Cemetery

2018 finished on a high note. The Wreaths Across America Ceremony was the biggest to date. Over 3,000 attended and volunteered for the event. The guest speaker, Medal of Honor Recipient, U.S. Army Capt. Gary Rose gave a thoughtful and inspirational presentation. Every grave had a wreath placed on it and the cemetery looked spectacular. Thanks to all that attended and volunteered. For great pictures taken by Post 555 finest, go to Support Committee for Alabama National Cemetery on Facebook. Volunteers to pick up wreaths will be greatly appreciated. The new date for wreath pick-up will be Jan. 8 at 9 a.m. As always, we appreciate your help.

TRIPLE NICKEL RIDERS



Jeff Monday

Director, Triple Nickel Riders

Hope everyone had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year's, 2019 is here let's get this party started. Be part of moving the Post forward this year. Get involved, be involved, as the great Army quote "Be All You Can Be" in 2019. Cant wait to get busy, check out and keep up with the Riders

on your Riders Facebook page, (Triple Nickle Riders). Keep the rubber down and the Chrome up.

Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he or she wants to do it.

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





ARMY | MARINES | NAVY | AIR FORCE | COAST GUARD

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **MILITARY** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

APPRECIATION

NIGHT



SATURDAY @ 7:00 PM

Opening ceremony @ 6:45 PM



ALABAMA HOCKEY

FEBRUARY 9TH

Alabama Hockey

VS

Missouri 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