



THE TRIPLE NICKEL



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

VOLUME VI, ISSUE V

IN GOD WE TRUST

MAY 2019

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Post elects new officers for 2019



Paschal



McClain



Waller



Horsley

Kenneth Paschal will lead Post 555 as post commander for the next year.

Members elected new officers for 2019 at the April 4 meeting.

Jerry McClain will serve as first vice commander. **Nancy Waller** will continue as second vice commander. **Robert Horsley** was elected to a three-year term as trustee.

The new officers will be installed at the monthly post meeting on May 2.

Paschal will serve as the third post commander since Post 555 was founded in 2014. He succeeds **Tom McDaniel**, who succeeded **Barry Blount**.

Kenneth Paschal

Kenneth retired as a first sergeant with the U.S. Army.

He maintained a Top Secret security clearance and served his country for over 21 years in the United States military. Despite his love and dedication to the military,

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BE SURE TO ATTEND OUR MAY POST MEETING!

COMPLEMENTARY MEAL
PROVIDED BY
LITTLE CAESARS
PIZZA



Little Caesars®

DINNER BEGINS AT 6:15 P.M.

MEETING AT 7 P.M.

PELHAM SENIOR CENTER

50 RACQUET CLUB PARKWAY, PELHAM

COME JOIN YOUR FELLOW LEGIONNAIRES!

1ST VICE'S COMMENTS



**Richard
Kaster**

*1st Vice
Commander*

Well, we are coming in to the month of May soon, as we are about to have some new officers, for instance, a new Post Commander and a new 1st Vice Commander.

I offer my congratulations to Post Commander (elect) Kenneth Paschal and 1st Vice Commander (elect) Jerry McClain and all the new officers appointed.

I want to thank all of you for giving me the opportunity to have served in several leadership positions in the past, but now I will step aside from leadership and continue serving Post 555 as Oratorical Chairman.



Paschal continues life of service

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Kenneth chose to retire and move to Birmingham so that he could spend more time with his daughter, Abigail. In doing so, Kenneth participated in Abby's school programs and served on the PTO board at her school.

Kenneth and his ex-wife divorced in 2008 in Alabama. After the divorce, his ex-wife moved to California with Abby. Since October 2011, Kenneth has only seen Abby once, despite his desire to be an active parent in her life. Kenneth has no criminal record of any kind and no reason to be denied an important role in Abby's life.

Since returning to Birmingham, Kenneth has been active in his community. He is a member of the First Baptist Church of Pelham (FBCP) and works as a volunteer in the Worship Care Ministry at FBCP. Kenneth served as the First Vice Commander for the American Legion Mathew Blount Post 555, and he is a member of both the Board of Directors for Kids First Awareness Community Center and the Exchange Club of Shelby County. Kenneth has completed certification training at the Birmingham Child Abuse Prevention (CAP) Center, and he received the Employer Support of the Guard

and Reserve Seven Seals Award and the 2016 Legionnaire of the Year Award by Post 555. All of these groups provide services and support to veterans, families, local communities, and youth.

Kenneth is also the State President and Director of Governmental Affairs for the Alabama Family Rights Association (ALFRA). He has been a guest on numerous radio and television programs and has been featured in and helped contribute to many printed publications on the importance of the child-parent relationship.

Kenneth's main focus is bringing awareness and education about a child's need and natural right to have both mother and father in his or her life and the dangers of parental alienation that often have lasting, traumatic effects. He has advised and consulted with many mothers, fathers, grandparents, judges, attorneys, legislators, and educators on this topic. He has been influential in driving the development of the Alabama Child Custody legislation over the last eight years, which would safeguard the parent-child relationship regardless of the parents' marital status. Kenneth emphasizes the idea that "the liberty of parents to direct the

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2ND VICE'S CORNER



Nancy Waller
2nd Vice Commander

With the installment of the new and returning elected officers in Post 555, it is my honor and pleasure to continue to serve as your 2nd Vice Commander and Events Committee Chairperson. Since these two positions go hand-in-hand, I will make sure that you have as much information as I receive from you and the rest of the members of the Executive Committee that will benefit everyone in Post 555. We serve YOU as Post members, and would not exist if it were not for YOU, so thank you for your support and commitment to Post 555 with your annual membership that I hope continues for years to come.

The month of May is very, very busy for Post 555 so please see what event(s) interest you and get involved. Let me know if you would like to play a part in anything that sounds like fun (Pelham Palooza) or that you feel is a valuable community event (placing flags on gravesites at the Alabama National Cemetery or the Pelham Cemetery). Check the page that I submit to Jim Billings listed as "Upcoming Events" and see what is scheduled. Lots to do this month!!!

Something that you will not see on the "Upcoming Events" calendar is the June 6 one-day trip to Fort Benning, Ga. It is not "sponsored" by Post 555, but it is open to anyone interested in joining us to observe an OSUT (One Station Unit Training) Infantry Graduation Ceremony, tour the National Infantry Museum (NIM), and walk through history on the "World War II Company Street" immediately adjacent to the NIM. Since June 6th is the anniversary of "D-Day", I was told there will be some special events taking place in the area. I visited the NIM one time last year and it is absolutely phenomenal. You will be amazed at the details given to the faces and bodies of the Infantrymen and Paratroopers depicted in the scenes, and the equipment is as real as it can be. It is well worth the donation of \$5 for the NIM and an additional \$5 for the WWII Company Street tour. As of right now, I have 19 Comrades signed-up to attend, and Mayor Waters said that his Pelham City bus could accommodate 25. Our plan is to depart the Pelham Senior Center at 0530 (5:30 a.m.) on Thursday, June 6, provide some breakfast "goodies" during the three-hour drive, attend the OSUT Infantry Graduation Ceremony, tour the NIM and the WWII Company Street, and grab something to eat on the way back to the Pelham Senior Center in time for the General Membership Meeting. It will be a long but I am sure very rewarding and memorable day for all. Let me know if anyone would like to have me put their name and phone number on the roster.

If you are not a member of the RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) that records our volunteer hours, I have applications with me at every General Membership Meeting. The only requirement is that you are 55+ years "young". Those of you who are already members, do not forget to record your hours and sign the sheet for April that will be going around the room on May 2 at our next meeting. Thank you all for your service, and hope you and your family had an enjoyable and faith-filled Easter.

2019 OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

In accordance with the Post 555 Constitution, and with the approval of the Executive Committee, incoming Post Commander Kenneth Paschal has appointed the following officers and committee chairs:

Appointed Officers

Position	Name
Chaplain	Tom McMahon
Sergeant-at-Arms	Ron McGriff
Post Historian	Shauna Hadley
Post Finance Officer	Joe Starnes
Post Judge Advocate	Larry Strayer
Post Public Relations Officer	Jim Billings
Post American Legion Riders Director	Jeff Monday
Sons of the American Legion Advisor	Ron Koonce

Appointed Standing Committee Chairs

Position	Name
Post Service Officer Committee Chair	Jerry McClain
Post Oratorical Contest Chairperson	Richard Kaster
Post Store	Frank Lakotich
Social Media/Web	Ron Koonce
Photography	Leo (Chic) Cecchini
Newsletter	Jim Billings
Sons of The American Legion	Jon Freeman

Appointed Officers (Pending)

Position	Name
Post Service Officer	
Boys State	
Auxiliary and Girls State	

Paschal

(continued from page 3)

upbringing, education, and care of their children is a fundamental right."

Kenneth spearheaded Alabama's first annual Parental Alienation Awareness Day and the "Bubbles of Love" campaign in 2009 to bring awareness about this form of child abuse, and he has helped coordinate this event every year since. Kenneth recently organized the fourth CLE/CEU training seminar in September 2018 that focused on the scientific data and trends affecting family law, and appointed by the Alabama Supreme Court to serve on the Advisory Committee on Child Support Guidelines and Enforcement standing committee.

Kenneth states that his life goals are to serve the Lord, to be the best father he can be to his daughter, to treat everyone with love and kindness--especially those who mistreat others--and to teach others about the concept of equality.

Jerry McClain

Jerry McClain is the Senior Pastor of Kingdom Christian Center located in the city of Birmingham, Alabama.

Jerry is a graduate of Chapman University of Orange County, Calif., and Troy State University of Troy, Ala. He served 25 years of military service with the U.S. Ar-

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McClain, Waller lead as vice commanders

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my as an Airborne Ranger and retired as a command sergeant major. In 2001, he traded in his M-16 for John 3:16 and was licensed and ordained as an Associate Pastor at Christian Faith Center in Seattle, Wash.

Under the leadership of Pastors Casey and Wendy Treat he served a 10,000 member, multicultural congregation at two campuses. As associate pastor for two locations he was responsible for baptisms, pre-service prayer, ushers, greeters, information centers, security, valet, espresso, parking, shuttles, international fellowships, long life ministry, men's ministry and a host of Pastoral duties which included pre-marital counseling, marriage ceremonies, memorials, funerals and jail ministries.

A native of Greenville, Ala., he met his wife Charla McClain of Oklahoma while stationed at Fort Lewis, Wash. They have five adult children (Lashondra, Bryant, Carmeisha, LaKeisha, and Nakita).

Jerry and Charla spend much of their time serving, teaching, and spoiling their eight grandchildren (Aiyanah, Olivia, DeAndrae, Destinee, Jada, Aliya, Justice and Bryant Jr). His hobbies include study of the word, riding Harleys, and playing golf.

Jerry and Charla wrote and published a marriage journal "How Can Two Walk Together Unless They Agree?" Available online wherever books are sold.

Nancy Waller

Maj. (Ret) Nancy J. Waller enlisted into the Alabama Army National Guard in the 226th Area Support Group (ASG) as a Private First Class (PFC) on Jan. 2, 1985. She then attended Basic Combat Training at Fort Jackson, S.C. and graduated in April 1985 with the distinction of being the Trainee Leader of the Cycle. Since she already had a four-year college degree, she did not need to attend Advanced Individual Training.

Her goal was to become an officer, so she started her one-year assignment at the Alabama Military Academy, Class 30, in June 1985 and received her commission as a second lieutenant in June 1986. She was the first female in the history of AMA to be an Honor Graduate.

She then served at the 167th Materiel Management Command in Homewood, Ala., for several years and was promoted to first lieutenant and captain within three years. Due to a move for her husband's AGR job in the Alabama Army National Guard, she transferred back into the 226th ASG in Mobile and soon became the first female company commander in

that unit, receiving a Meritorious Service Medal (MSM) for her service in that capacity. She served there for 17.5 years and was promoted to the rank of major.

In 2005, her civilian job was moving its operations to Mexico (she was a material supervisor at Delphi Mechatronic Systems in Foley, Ala.), so she pursued getting an AGR job in the 22nd Recruiting and Retention Battalion as a Recruiting and Retention NCO. In order to do this, she resigned her commission and went from MAJ Waller to SGT Waller overnight in June 2005.

It was a bit of an adjustment, but due to her level of expertise in the fields of logistics and administration, she continued to excel in the 22nd RRB as a Recruit Sustainment Program NCO in charge of newly-enlisted Soldiers, ensuring that they were trained and ready to attend and succeed at BCT and AIT. She was promoted to staff sergeant during this time. She was then asked to help at the 22nd RRB Headquarters in Montgomery to be on staff as the Training NCO. That was a position that she truly enjoyed due to being responsible for the training and readiness of all 130+ AGR Recruiters. She earned their respect and was soon promoted to sergeant first class until her re-

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Waller, Horsley fill key leadership positions

(continued from page 6)

tirement at age 60 in March 2014. She was presented with a Legion of Merit as her achievement and retirement award from the 22nd RRB and was a fitting end to her 29+ years serving in the Alabama Army National Guard.

As most of you might know, you retire at the highest rank achieved and held, which is why she retired as a major. She continues to "take care of Soldiers and Airmen" by giving ESGR briefings, help Soldiers with personal immediate death benefit insurance, serve on the Executive Council of the Enlisted National Guard Association of Alabama (ENGAA) as the Secretary/Treasurer from 2006 to present, and of course, is our current 2nd vice commander. She is married to her husband of 34 years, CW2 (Ret) Phillip "Sparkie" Waller, and has a 31-year old

son, Nathan, who served in the Alabama Army National Guard for 12 years. Her best friend is her dog, Lucy, who has been with the Waller family for almost 10 years.

Robert Horsley

Robert Horsley is a retired major from the U.S. Army Special Forces. He is also Ranger and Airborne qualified.

Drafted in 1966 as a private, he qualified for Officer Candidate School graduated in 1969 as an Infantry officer. Horsley was assigned to the Berlin Brigade, Berlin, Germany, in 1969 during the height of the Cold War. He volunteered for Vietnam then went to Airborne, Ranger then Special Forces.

Horsley has held various company commands and staff positions within the Special Forces Group and other Army units. He has been awarded various ac-

commodations and decorations for achievement.

He is a 1966 graduate of Auburn University.

Before he was drafted into the Army, Horsley had been hired by AT&T. Following his release from active duty, he returned to AT&T as an engineer, specializing in data transmission, high-speed digital data transmission via light guide and radio and deployment of new technology such as voice recognition software.

Horsley has owned and operated various businesses in the equine industry to include being an Arabian horse breeder and trainer. He also owned a feed and tack business.

He is currently a volunteer firefighter with the Brierfield Volunteer Fire Department and also serves on the Board of Directors for the BVFD.

In addition to his membership in Post 555, Horsley is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Military

THE TRIPLE NICKEL

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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**

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY 2019

Thursday, May 2, 7 p.m.

What: Swearing-in Ceremony for Officers

Where: Pelham Senior Center

Sunday, May 5, 1:30 p.m.

What: Pitch, Hit & Run Official Skills Competition of Major League Baseball

Where: Pelham City Park, 555 Ball Park Road, Pelham

Chairperson: Bobby Horsley

Co-Chairperson: Bill Blank

Volunteers Needed: YES!!!

Saturday, May 11, 1-7 p.m. (must be off of the property NLT 7:00 p.m. due to a party)

What: The Great American Cookout (fundraiser for Post 555)

Where: The Hangar @ the Bessemer Airport

Chairperson: TBD

Co-Chairperson: John Zeiss

Volunteers Needed: YES!!! Jeff Monday will be coordinating a raffle, so tickets will need to be sold throughout the crowd and at our information table; lots of great food (crawfish boil; grill open as well), music and fun.

Saturday, May 18, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

What: Pelham Palooza

Where: Pelham Parks and Recreation, 2020 Pelham Park Blvd., Pelham

Chairperson: Kenneth Paschal

Co-Chairperson: TBD

Volunteers Needed: YES!!! There will be TONS to do at this event including live music with the "M-80s", food trucks, dog park, Kidzapalooza, balloon artist, mechanical bull riding, bungee trampoline, fire trucks, vintage car show, hula hoopers, juried art show, rock-climbing wall, Harley-Davidson representatives, and face-painting. The event and parking are FREE!!!

Saturday, May 25, time TBD

What: Flag Placement Ceremony for Memorial Day

Where: Pelham Cemetery

Chairperson: TBD

Co-Chairperson: TBD

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, May 25, 9 a.m.

What: Flag Placement Ceremony Followed by Placing of Flags on Gravesites in Section 8

Where: Alabama National Cemetery, 3133 Highway 119, Montevallo

Chairperson: Nancy Waller

Co-Chairperson: N/A

Volunteers Needed: YES!!! In past years, we have had plenty of Volunteers from Post 555, so let's keep the numbers up so that we can take care of all flags on gravesites in Section 8 to show our namesake we are there to support him and everyone else at the ALNC.

Monday, May 27, 9 a.m.

What: Memorial Day Observance; Firing of a Civil War Cannon

Where: Alabama National Cemetery, 3133 Highway 119, Montevallo

Chairperson: Kenneth Paschal

Co-Chairperson: TBD

Volunteers Needed: Check with Kenneth

Tuesday, May 28, 9 a.m.

What: Flag Retrieval from Memorial Day Ceremony

Where: Alabama National Cemetery, 3133 Highway 119, Montevallo.

Chairperson: Nancy Waller

Co-Chairperson: N/A

Volunteers Needed: YES!!! As we had the need to place the flags, we now have the need to retrieve the flags, so the more Volunteers we have, the better!!

Date / Time TBD

What: American Legion Baseball Starts!!!

Chairperson: Jon Freeman

Guest Speakers / Programs at General Membership Meetings

May 2nd: Installation of New Officers; Legionnaire of the Year Award

June 6th: Law Enforcement Officer and Firefighter of the Year Awards; D-Day Program and Surprise Medal Presentation to Post 555 Member

July 11th: TBD

August 1st: Congressman Gary Palmer

September 5th: City of Pelham Mayor Gary Waters and City Manager Gretchen DiFante



CHAPLAIN'S THOUGHTS



Chris Vonderau

Post Chaplain

I heard this the other day and it's really buried into my thoughts - Truth without grace is mean. Grace without truth is meaningless. Truth and Grace together is good medicine. This is God's truth - you and I are sinful and in need of a Savior.

As I write this, it is Tuesday of Holy Week. Have you considered what Jesus did? The price He paid? Do you know how awesome Jesus is?

Have you ever heard that God loves you and sent His Son to die an atoning death for you so you can be completely forgiven to receive the free gift of eternal life? You can. It's called The Good News for a reason. In fact, it's the best news you and I have ever gotten.

You don't have to live under the weight or the consequences of futile and darkened thinking. You can be set free from all of that and step into incredible and glorious liberty as sons and daughters of Jesus through faith in Him.

If you have never made the decision to turn from your sin and turn to Christ, please, please, please call me - 205 966-1364. You don't want to miss what comes next.

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

Your Chaplain,

Chris Vonderau

205 966-1364



Get yours today!

Get your official,
limited-edition

**POST 555
LICENSE
PLATE!**

Pre-orders taken at the Post Store
during the March meeting.

\$12

Post 555 honors Thompson High AFJROTC cadets

Command Sgt. Maj. (Retired) Barry Blount presented two awards April 25 at the Thompson High School Air Force JROTC Awards Night.

Cadet Erik Bazan received the Scholastic Excellence Medal.

At left is Chief Master Sgt. (Retired) Christopher G. Spann, aerospace science instructor for the Thompson AFJROTC program.



**Awards Night
Thompson High School
Air Force JROTC
April 25**



Cadet Harrison Edwards received the Military Excellence Medal.

The mission of AFJROTC is to "Develop citizens of character dedicated to serving their nation and community." AFJROTC is not an accessions program and cadets are never under any obligation to join the military. AFJROTC is a citizenship training program that is designed to educate and train high school cadets in citizenship, promote community service, instill personal responsibility, character, and self-discipline.



Post Store Price List

(Proceeds Benefits Post 555 and Department Programs)



Post 555 T-Shirt
S-XL - \$20
XXI-XXXL - \$22



**Post 555
Coffee Mug \$ 10**



**Car Fund-raiser Benefiting Oratorical
Scholarships**
\$7 value for \$5



Defender's Bracelet \$5

**American Legion
Centennial Pin - \$5**





May 5, 2019
1:30 p.m.
Pelham City Park
555 Ball Park Road,
Pelham

Pitch Hit & Run™ is the official skills competition of Major League Baseball®. This grassroots program is designed to provide a FREE program for boys and girls, ages 7-14, that gives participants the chance to showcase their pitching, hitting and running abilities in an exciting baseball/softball skills competition.

PITCH – Participants are tested throwing 6 balls to a designated “Strike Zone” target. Any method of throwing is permitted.

HIT – Participants hit 3 balls off a tee for distance and accuracy.

RUN – Participants are timed, starting from second base, touching third then touching home plate.

- Participants compete in each of the three components and accumulate a total score using conversion tables.

Boys and girls are divided into four age divisions: 7/8, 9/10, 11/12, 13/14, and have the chance to advance through four levels of competition, including Team Championships at Major League ballparks and the National Finals during the 2019 MLB™ All-Star Week®.

The individual Pitching, Hitting and Running Champions, along with the All-Around Champion in each division age group at the Local Competition will be awarded and advance to the Sectional Level of competition in Madison, AL.

All participants must bring a copy of a valid birth document for age verification and have their parent or guardian fill out a registration/waiver form prior to the start of the competition.

Please register for your local event at <https://www.mlb.com/pitch-hit-and-run/find-a-competition/get-started>

For questions concerning the local competition, you may email your American Legion Baseball coordinator at albaseball@charter.net.

Hosted by
Alabama American Legion
Baseball



Volunteer Opportunity

"Let Freedom Ring" at the National Cemetery in Montevallo.

The American Legion, Matthew Blount Post 555 will participate in the Memorial Day Observance by firing **THREE** Civil War Artillery, Howitzer (cannon) at the Alabama National Cemetery, Montevallo, Alabama 35115, May 27th at 9:00 am.

We need 10 volunteers but need at least two alternate crew members to ensure a smooth operation of each howitzer. This is a great presence in the community opportunity, but most importantly to honor our fallen heroes at the Alabama National Cemetery. Cannon Salute: American Legion Post 555 and Barry Winn, Jimmy White, Ken Sumner



*If you have questions about volunteers, please email or call Kenneth Paschal, Memorial Day Cannon Salute Chairperson at 1SGPaschal@gmail.com or (205) 626-9458.

***No Experience Necessary.** *Each crew member performs a specific task that requires approximately 30 seconds to 60 seconds to master.*

Rehearsal 1: May 11, 2019 @ 12-noon (Helena Park prior to the annual duck race)

Rehearsal 2: May TBD, 2019 @ 6:30 pm (Pelham Senior Center)

Final rehearsal: May 27, 2018 @ 7am (ALNC)

*Last four years were a great success.

*Uniform: **Post blue polo shirt**, **Post baseball cap**, and **Khakis pants**.

**SATURDAY
MAY 11**



It's That time of the year!!

Come join us for Great food, fun, and entertainment at the same time supporting Veterans!!

Ride Starts: at The Heart of Dixie Harley Davidson and End at The Hangar in Bessemer

Registration begins at: 11am

KSU: Noon 12 pm

\$10.00 for one up

\$15.00 for two up

Ride in support of the

Great American Cookout

This is a Escorted ride out of Pelham,

4TH ANNUAL GREAT AMERICAN COOKOUT AND CRAWFISH BOIL



Your donation admits you in to
The Hangar/ you also get one Drawing ticket
for the end of the Ride Drawing.

800 Mitchell Field Rd
Bessemer, AL 35022

All Donations support the
American Legion Post 555 programs

**4TH ANNUAL
GREAT AMERICAN
COOKOUT
AND CRAWFISH BOIL**

**Saturday
May 11**

1:00pm

800 Mitchell Field Rd
Bessemer, AL 35022

\$5 Donation
at gate

**LIVE MUSIC
RAFFLE PRIZES**

**THE
HANGAR**

BAR & GRILL

all proceeds go to
Veterans and Youth Programs

**AMERICAN
LEGION
U.S.**

**Matthew Blount
Post 555**

**FAMILY AND PET
FRIENDLY**