



THE TRIPLE NICKEL



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

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IN GOD WE TRUST

APRIL 2018

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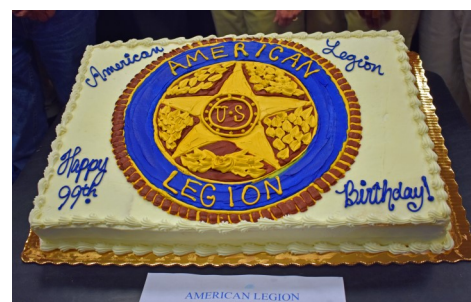
Members of Matthew Blount Post 555 gather around a birthday cake March 1 to celebrate the 99th anniversary of the founding of the American Legion.

Post celebrates Legion's 99th

Post 555 kicked off its centennial celebration of the American Legion at its March 1st meeting. Members enjoyed a birthday cake recognizing the founding of the American Legion on March 15, 1919.

The post plans a year of activities to showcase the accomplishments of the Ameri-

can Legion and its service to communities and veterans nationwide.



COMMANDER'S COMMENTS



Tom McDaniel

Post Commander

A new election year has come with some new officers, new members and definitely new challenges. This is the time we need to determine what I can do this year to help my post. You know this is an important question. Every individual needs to determine what his calling is in The American Legion. It's entirely how you as an individual approach and decides what you want to contribute personally. Now I am not about to start harassing anyone to participate in anything. I would just like to point out to you how you can participate and feel good about it.

We have some who would like to just come to the meetings once a month and socialize with all your comrades. You know that's great, we need people to attend our meetings because we do work hard in preparing a program for you and letting you know what's happening in the state and locally. You are important to our organization.

There are those that come, wanting to participate in some way, but do not know just how or what they can do. This is the individual we would like to talk to and explain our programs in detail and show them how they can contribute. Participating in some of our programs can be as little as showing up at an event and displaying your support and it could be stepping forward and taking a leadership position. It's all in what you are comfortable in doing.

Every member is important no matter what role you decide to play. This is your organization and we work hard to see that you enjoy it. It is up to you to contribute in the way you feel comfortable. We must not, however fail to remember why The American Legion was started. During World War I, three soldiers of different rank, felt the need to develop an organization to help veterans as they returned to the United States from being in unbearable and unmanageable situations.

“Every member is important no matter what role you decide to play.”

Since that time The American Legion has come a long way from establishing the roots of The American Legion at the local level to voicing our concerns and opinions in Congress. The American Legion has become a very strong voice in how we take care of our veterans. You can feel a great sense of pride in the progression of The American Legion, like I said, it all starts with you. No matter what roll you play you are important to The American Legion and to us as an organization to be able to continue to insure our veterans get the services they deserve.

This year, I ask everyone to find your comfortable spot in our post. I would hope some of you would like to get more involved helping to grow our programs. Please see me or any of our officers on the programs you would like to help with. Remember, this is not a job, it's an obligation we have to help our veterans and also our community.

See you at the next meeting on April 5th at 7 p.m. with social time at 6:15.

1ST VICE'S COMMENTS



Richard Kaster

1st Vice Commander

Post 555 has a total of 206 members.

2018 Renewals so far, we are at 148 = 119 percent.

We have three new transferees, they are as follows: Coy D. Cambron, James R. (Jimmie) Blue.

Oratorical update – We completed the High School Oratorical contest for this year. As you know we have had quite a successful Oratorical Program this year.

The two Pelham High School winners on Jan. 10th, 1st place winner Mason Herrington, 2nd place winner Addison Fuller, went on to compete at the 23rd District Oratorical contest on Feb. 3rd, held in the First Baptist Church of Pelham in the Choir room. The judges selected Addison Fuller as the 1st place winner, of the 23rd District Oratorical contest and she moved on and competed and won 1st place at the Oratorical competition, at 2nd Division on Feb. 17th at Shades Crest Baptist Church in Bluff Park.

Then Addison Fuller went on to compete in the Department Oratorical competition on March 10 and had flawless, outstanding presentations. Unfortunately, she took 3rd place, however she received a \$2,000 scholarship award. We are very proud of Addison Fuller's performance, she well represented Pelham High School and Post 555, 23rd District and the 2nd Division.

Congratulations to the 1st place winner from the 3rd Division: Ms. Anna Hagel, homeschooled from Wetumpka, representing District 32 and Post 133, Millbrook. She received a \$5,000 scholarship award and will go on to the National Oratorical Contest at the American Legion headquarters in Indianapolis from April 13-15.

The 2nd place winner from 1st Division: Ms. Erin Key Florence High School, representing District 11 and Post 11, Florence. She received a \$3,000 scholarship award.

Remember we have an ongoing fundraiser for the High School Oratorical scholarship contest: Blue Rain Car Wash coupons available for \$5. Please see me or whoever has the coupons at the sign-in table at the April 5th Post 555 General Membership meeting.

Department Convention set for June 14-17

This year's Annual Convention will be held at the Embassy Suites in Montgomery, 300 Tallapoosa St.

The daily rate is \$119, with parking for \$14 a day.

The cutoff for room reservations is May 25. Call (334) 269-5055 to make reservations.

If you are wanting a hospitality suite, please call and speak to Dawn Railey directly.

This hotel does not accept checks, so please plan accordingly. Check-in is at 4 p.m. with check-out at 11 a.m.

There will be a banquet on Saturday evening, June 16, at a charge of \$15 per person. Menu and order form will be available at a later date.

For more information, contact Department Headquarters.



ADJUTANT'S AREA



Ron Koonce

Post Adjutant

A reminder to all that the Alabama State Convention is scheduled for mid-June 2018 in Montgomery. See more information within this issue of this newsletter. Schedule details will be available at a later date. Election of state officers will be held at this meeting. Ron Bradstreet, commander of District 21 and Post 911 in Hoover is a candidate for Junior Vice Commander.

We are saddened with the loss of one of our own, Comrade Rodney Hightower, Sr. who transferred to the Post Everlasting on March 19. Please keep the Hightower family in your thoughts and prayers.

Opportunities for the Flag Team are on the increase. The more the team is committed to conducting replacement ceremonies, the more opportunities there are to join the team. Contact Ronnie McGriff, Flag Team Coordinator, at FlagDetail@alpost555.com if you are interested in participating. It provides good exposure of the Post while serving the community.

There is still time to get your 2018 membership renewals to the Post. Checks payable to "Matthew Blount Post555". Mail to: 50 Racquet Club Parkway, Pelham, AL 35124.

Please note that the election of 2018-2019 officers will take place at the next meeting on April 5.

Taps

Rodney Clark Hightower Sr.
August 22, 1949 – March 19, 2018

Rodney Clark Hightower Sr., age 68 of Pelham, transferred to Post Everlasting on Monday, March 19.

He served his country as a Marine and was a member of



American Legion Matthew Blount Post 555.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Calvin and

Frances Hightower.

He is survived by his loving wife, Martha Bartlett Hightower; daughters, Robin H. Hollingworth (Brent) of Pelham, and Renee L. Hightower of Chelsea; sons Rodney C. Hightower Jr. (Kim) of Birmingham and Grady C. Tabor (Susan) of Nashville, Tenn.; grandchildren, Jordan Coston, Reece Coston, Riley Coston and Cole Hollingsworth of Pelham, Tallulah Hightower of Chelsea, Harlow Hightower and River Hightower of Birmingham, Francee Tabor and Asher Tabor of Nashville, Tenn.; brother, Calvin Hightower and sister, Carolyn Deegan (Jim), both of Red Banks, Miss.

Inurnment was at the Alabama National Cemetery in Montevallo.

THE TRIPLE NICKEL

*is published monthly for members of
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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**



Addison Fuller takes third at Dept. Oratorical Contest

MONTGOMERY, Ala. -- Addison Fuller, a senior at Pelham High School, took third place at the American Legion Department of Alabama Oratorical Contest held Saturday (March 10) at the Alabama Department of Archives and History.

She received a scholarship check for \$2,000. Fuller previously won competitions at the post, district and division levels. She plans to attend Huntingdon College this fall.

Fuller is the daughter of Bram and Melissa Fuller.

The American Legion Oratorical Contest exists to develop deeper knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school students. Since 1938, the program has presented participants with an academic speaking challenge that teaches important leadership qualities, the history of our nation's laws, the ability to think and speak clearly, and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges of American citizenship.

Young orators earn some of the most generous college scholarships available to high school students. Over \$138,000 in scholarships can be awarded each year. The overall national contest winner gets an \$18,000 scholarship. Second place takes home \$16,000, and third gets \$14,000. The American Legion's National Organization awards the scholarships, which can be used at any college or university in the United States.

Raising the flag at Burnette Farms Market

Post 555's flag team and the Triple Nickel Riders conducted a flag replacement ceremony March 10 at Burnette Farms Market on State Road 261 in Pelham.

The Triple Nickel Riders delivered the 10-by-15-foot flag via motorcycle escort. Riders Director Jeff Monday presented the new flag to the flag detail.

The new flag was raised to the sound of "Reveille" bugle call followed by the National Anthem.

At the close of the ceremony, owners Mike and Mary-Charles Burnette were presented a copy of the American Legion Flag Etiquette Manual. They were also recognized for their patriotism in displaying the U.S. Flag at their business.



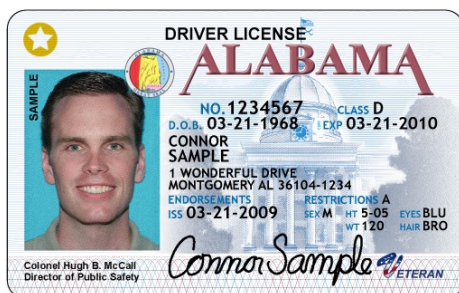
Alabama veterans can show status on driver licenses

Since May 1, 2013, Alabama veterans have had the option of displaying proof of military service on their driver licenses.

To establish proof of service, a veteran must visit one of the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency's Driver License examining offices, a license commissioner's office or probate office, and present a DD-214 form from the U.S. Department of Defense that shows an "honorable" or "general under honorable conditions" status.

There is no additional charge for the veteran designation for a first-time driver license applicant or for an individual seeking to renew his or her license. A veteran who chooses to add the designation before his or her renewal date, however, must pay the standard fee for a duplicate license.

For more information, visit www.alea.gov.



2ND VICE'S CORNER



Anita Bennett

2nd Vice Commander

Hello comrades, I am very excited and honored to announce that the new director of the Alabama National Cemetery in Montevallo, Eldon Woodie (Colonel, U.S. Air Force, Retired), will be our guest speaker for the May 3rd post meeting. Please make plans to attend and make him feel welcome!

Also, if you are a Vietnam-era veteran, please plan to attend the June 7th post meeting as we hope to have Suzi Koski, 2nd vice regent of the Lily of the Cahaba Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, with us. They would like to present certificates on behalf of their organization. Please watch in the next newsletter for confirmation on the date.

EDITOR'S NOTE



James Billings

Public Relations Officer

You may have noticed by now that this edition of The Triple Nickel looks a little different from previous issues. That's because Adjutant Ron Koonce has stepped back from his editor duties to concentrate fully on the daunting task of keeping this post's paperwork straight.

Ron has been the editor of this monthly publication since its inception in 2014. Since that time, The Triple Nickel has been recognized by many Legionnaires in Alabama as the outstanding newsletter it is. I only hope I can maintain the standards of excellence that Ron has set. He has my thanks for his guidance and assistance.

If you have ideas or suggestions for how we can improve The Triple Nickel, please share them with me at james.thomas.billings@gmail.com. I'd love to hear from you.

Thanks for being a part of Matthew Blount Post 555!



New flags at Pelham City Hall

Pelham City Hall has bright new U.S. and Alabama flags following a flag replacement ceremony conducted March 14 by Post 555's Flag Team.

City employees, Pelham firefighters, and other members of the community — led by fellow Post member Mayor Gary Waters — watched as the flag team lowered the old flag, and raised a new one to the sound of bugle calls.

The ceremony consisted of the lowering of the worn U.S. Flag after the sounding of “Retreat” and lowered to the sounding of “To the Colors” bugle calls. The flag was folded in the appropriate manner.

Post Trustee Frank Lakotich narrated the ceremony and led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. He also explained the significance of the bugle calls used in the ceremony.

The ceremony concluded with a presentation of the American Legion Flag Etiquette Manual to Mayor Waters.



JUDGE ADVOCATE'S CORNER



Chuck Kiser

Judge Advocate

The annual Post Election of Officers will be held at the Post meeting on April 5th. Following the announcement of the Nominating Committee and Executive Committee nominees at the March Meeting, with no nominations from the floor

being received, the nominees to be elected at the April meeting are as follows:

Commander – Tom McDaniel
 1st Vice Commander – Richard Kaster
 2nd Vice Commander – Anita Bennett
 Trustee (3 Year Term) – Nancy Waller

Tom will be seeking additional Post members who are willing to either serve as officers, chairpersons or committee members in several areas. Individuals who served in these positions during 2017-2018 may be asked to serve again. However, we continue to ask additional Post members to consider serving in the following areas:

Appointed Officer Positions:

- Judge Advocate
- Sergeant-At-Arms
- Historian
- Chaplain
- Service Officer
- SAL Advisor

Standing Committee Chairs and Committee members:

- Americanism

- Membership
- Post Activities
- Communications
- Legal
- Veteran's Affairs
- Children & Youth
- Economic
- Uniformed Groups (Flag Replacement Detail)
- National Security

Ad Hoc Committee Chairs and Committee members:

- Boys State
- Girls State
- Fund Raising
- Events
- Oratorical
- Social Media – Facebook
- Social Media – Website
- Newsletter
- Legion Baseball
- Photography
- Nominating
- Veteran's Recognition
- Emergency Preparedness

With this many opportunities to become involved in the life of the Post, everyone should be able to find an area of interest to them. 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!

CHAPLAIN'S THOUGHTS



Chris Vonderau

Post Chaplain

Comrades,

I saw a church sign the other day that said, "If you aren't close to God, who moved?" I've thought often about that this week. Satan, our enemy, wants to keep us second guessing our relationship with our Heavenly Father every chance he gets.

Let's settle this once and for all - Does God accept you and if so, on what basis? Romans 5:1 says, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ".

If you have put your faith in Jesus Christ, you can rest assured you are at peace with your Heavenly Father. If you have not, let's talk. Call me at (205) 966-1364.

Turn your eyes to the cross of Jesus Christ, my brothers and sisters, we are one day closer to home!

WELCOME

NEW

MEMBERS!

Coy D. Cambron

Jimmie Blue

William C. Sims

— — — —
147 Renewals to date

188.8% of goal

Total Roster = 206

Get ready for American Legion Baseball

American Legion Baseball season is fast approaching. Please take time to register your team on the state of Alabama website: www.alabamaamericanlegionbaseball.com.

The spring coaches meetings will take place the week of April 22nd in various locations throughout the state. The exact times and locations will be provide in the next two weeks.

The Varsity Division will have an additional opportunity to play in a regional tournament with teams from Arkansas, Kentucky and Tennessee. More information will provided during the coaches

meeting in April.

American Legion Baseball is a national institution, having thrived through a

world war, several national tragedies, and times of great prosperity as well as great despair.



Support Committee provides opportunities to serve in 2018



Chuck Kiser

Veterans Recognition Committee

The Activities calendar for the Blue Star Salute Foundation and Support Committee for the Alabama National Cemetery is shown below. 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.

Your assistance and participation in Veterans Recognition events during 2018 would be appreciated.



Date	Time	Event	Location	Notes
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 Columbia	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	
May 24 (Thursday)	9:00 am 10:15 am	Put up Avenue of Flags TAPS Program	ALNC (Montevallo)	Volunteers welcome OPEN TO PUBLIC (Free Adm.)
May 24 (Thursday)	12:00 pm	SCALNC Membership Meeting	American Village Liberty Hall	OPEN TO PUBLIC
May 24 (Thursday)	3:00 pm	Graveside Flags Hole Punching	ALNC	Meet at Committal Shelter 3
May 26 (Saturday)	9:00 am	Graveside Flags Placement Ceremony	ALNC (Montevallo) Committal Shelter 3	Families and friends place American Flags on each grave
May 26 (Saturday)	10:00 am	Set up chairs and 10'X20' tent for Memorial Day	ALNC (Montevallo) Ceremonial Flagpole	Chairs will be transported from SC Storage Bldg
May 26 (Saturday)	11:00 am	Rehearsal for Memorial Day with all program participants	ALNC Ceremonial Flagpole	
May 28 (Monday)	7:00 am	Parking team report and Set up SC tent, podium, PA System, etc	ALNC Ceremonial Flagpole	Equipment transported from SC Storage Bldg
May 28 (Monday)	9:00 am	ALNC Memorial Day	ALNC (Montevallo) Ceremonial Flagpole	OPEN TO PUBLIC (Free Adm.)
May 28 (Monday)	10:30 am	Remove chairs and other SC equipment	ALNC Ceremonial Flagpole	Transport to SC Storage Bldg
May 28 (Monday)	10:30 am—2:30 pm	American Village Memorial Day	American Village	OPEN TO PUBLIC (Free Adm.)
May 29 (Tuesday)	9:00 am	Remove Graveside Flags & Take down Avenue of Flags	ALNC	Transport Flags to SC Storage Bldg
May 31 (Thursday)	6:00 pm	SOS Program	Briarwood Presbyterian Church	Charon Rivers, POC

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 TWO Civil War Artillery, Howitzer (cannon) at the Alabama National Cemetery, Montevallo, Alabama 35115, May 28th at 9:00 am.

We need two, five crew members to ensure a smooth operation of each howitzer. We need 10 volunteers but need at least two alternate crew members. 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



Cannon Crew Volunteers

David Coram
Bobby Averett
Don Colvard
Ron Gofourth
Ron McGriff
Justin Hadley
Billy Blank
Douglas McDaniel Jr.
Jerome Steven
John Zeiss
Tom Hession
Tracy Simmons

*If you have questions about volunteers, please email or call Kenneth Paschal, Memorial Day Event Coordinator 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 12, 2018 @ 12-noon (Helena Park prior to the annual duck race)
Rehearsal 2: May 16-19, 2018 after 5pm (Pelham Senior Center)
Final rehearsal: May 28, 2018 @ 7am (ALNC)

*Last three years were a great success.

*Uniform: Post 555 Polo Shirts and ball cap



THE AMERICAN LEGION EDUCATION INSTITUTE

Have you taken **BASIC TRAINING** yet?

The American Legion's official training program for officers, members, Legion College applicants and those who simply want to expand their knowledge of the nation's largest veterans service organization is now available online.

The American Legion Extension Institute has been rewritten, updated, streamlined and enhanced with videos, digital photos, clickable links, a historical timeline and additional features. The program should take less than two hours to complete. It is divided into six sections, with a quiz at the end of each one, followed by a final exam.

Topics

- ♦ History & Organization
- ♦ Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation
- ♦ National Security
- ♦ Americanism
- ♦ Children & Youth
- ♦ Course Conclusion



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American Legion: Post/ Squadron /Unit #

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TRIPLE NICKEL RIDERS



Jeff Monday

Director, Triple Nickel Riders

Hope everyone is doing well and had a very Happy Easter. It seems Mother Nature has been very busy this month, cold then hot and cold again, but the riders haven't missed a beat. I am very proud of each rider — way to adapt to whatever Mother Nature throws at you. The Riders are proud to say that the Triple Nickel Riders have a home at the Heart of Dixie Harley Davidson, we will be hoisting the monthly meeting at Heart of Dixie Harley Davidson HOG (Harley Owners Group) room. The monthly meetings are on the 2nd Thursday of every month at 6:30pm (1830) with a dinner ride after the business meeting.

The Riders were very honored to take part in the Flag Replacement Ceremony at Burnette Farms Market on March 10th. Thanks to Riders: Todd Erwin, Eric Fort, Will Hayes, Johnny Ryan, John Atwell, Alan Farmer and Robert Phillips. It was an honor to be part of what some may think as very small task, but very humbling. Our Flag Replacement Team is top-notch. The Riders haven't stopped talking about how great this event went and how proud we are to help. Thanks to the Flag Replacement Team and The Post for letting the Rider take part of this great event and day

This is a very important month for the Riders, and this is why, when you see us you see the Motorcycles and you may even hear the pipes. Beyond the noise you will notice we carry a very important name on the back patch that we place on the vests that we wear. The name is Matthew Blount, he rides with each one of us. We have carried him North, South, West and East. He's been to Washington DC, The Vietnam Wall, and to the sands of Daytona Beach. Each rider that wears The Matthew Blount Post 555 back patch wears it with pride. So, this month we remember a great fellow rider. Matthew Alexander Blount went to be with his Lord on March 10, 2012. Matthew is interred at the Alabama National Cemetery, Montevallo.

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



Burnett Farms Market Flag Replacement: Left to Right: Todd Erwin, Eric Fort, Will Hayes, Johnny Ryan, John Atwell, Jeff Monday, Alan Farmer and Robert Phillips.