



THE TRIPLE NICKEL



Published exclusively for the members of

AMERICAN LEGION MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555

PELHAM, ALABAMA



VOLUME VI, ISSUE III

IN GOD WE TRUST

MARCH 2019

INSIDE ...

March Post Meeting.....	2
Oratorical Contest.....	3
2nd Vice's Corner.....	4
Adjutant's Area.....	5
Upcoming Events.....	6
Judge Advocate.....	7
Shooting Team.....	8
Chaplain.....	9
Post Store.....	11
Pitch, Hit & Run.....	12
Military Appreciation Night Acknowledgements	13

American Legion turns 100!

The American Legion came to life in Paris, France, March 15 to 17, 1919. War-weary members of the American Expeditionary Forces who had fought to victory in World War One and remained in Europe, restlessly awaiting passage home, gathered for what became known as the Paris Caucus.

In the months that followed the armistice of Nov. 11, 1918, they had time to think about life after the war and what they might do...

- In support of their wounded comrades.
- In honor of the fallen.
- To help surviving spouses and orphans.
- To protect the democracy they pledged their lives to defend.
- And to chart a new course for future generations of Americans.



These troops envisioned a different kind of veterans association. It would be like none before it, or any that would follow.

The American Legion would be built on strengthening the nation – not serving themselves – through four primary pillars of volunteer work on behalf of:

(continued on page 10)

BE SURE TO ATTEND OUR MARCH POST MEETING!

COMPLEMENTARY
MEAL PROVIDED
BY
FULL MOON
BAR-B-QUE



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!

Tramaine Moore headed for state Oratorical contest

By Briana Harris
Shelby County Reporter

PELHAM – For the second year in a row, a Pelham High School student will compete in the American Legion's statewide oratorical contest that's set for March 9.

The 2nd Division Oratorical Scholarship Contest, officiated by Vice Commander Ron Bradstreet, took place at First Baptist Church of Pelham on Feb. 23 at 10 a.m. Pelham High School senior Tramaine Moore came out on top in the competition winning first place.

Caroline Bass, a senior at Vestavia Hills High School, won second place, and third place went to Wil Hyche, a senior Glenwood High School in Phenix City.

Each of the winners received certificates of distinction and engraved gold, silver and bronze medals. The judges and the moderator for the competition each received a coffee mug with an eagle and Post 555 printed on the side.

Moore is now eligible to compete in the American Legion Department Oratorical Scholarship Contest on March 9 at the State Department Archives Museum in Montgomery. Moore and her parents will be invited to attend activities associated with the oratorical contest in Montgomery as guests of the American Le-



gion on March 8.

This marks the second year in a row that a Pelham High School student will compete in the state competition.

The first-place winner of the state competition receives a \$5,000 scholarship and is offered a four-year scholarship to University of Alabama as long as he/she maintains a 3.0 GPA and can pass the entrance exams. The winner is also eligible to compete in the national oratorical competition. Second place receives \$3,000 scholarship and third places gets \$2,000 scholarship.

In the national competition, contestants will spend three days in Indianapolis at the headquarters for the

American Legion. All expenses will be paid for the contestant and two chaperones.

The winner of the national contest receives an \$18,000 scholarship, second place receives \$16,000 and third place gets \$14,000. Also, each time the contestants give their speeches they will receive \$1,500.



2ND VICE'S CORNER



Nancy Waller
2nd Vice Commander

March is a big month for the Post and for me! March 15th is the 100th birthday for the American Legion, and I will hit the "Big 65" on March 1st and will be yet another proud recipient of Medicare and TRICARE for Life!! Happy birthday to us both!!

Several months ago, I asked each of you to give me some ideas for guest speakers, and one of our Post 555 members asked for our Triple Nickel Shooters to come to one of our General Membership Meetings; great idea. I was able to work with their coach, Mr. **Sam Richardson**, to have him and several shooters come to our meeting on March 7th, so don't miss them. The shooters will be bringing their equipment, so it will be kind of like "show and tell" for all of us.

Since this month is the official 100th birthday of the American Legion, the Executive Committee is working on some way(s) to commemorate this monumental birthday, but nothing has been confirmed as of the writing of this article. It will be a surprise to all of us.

I am asking for Volunteers to help clean-up the Pelham Cemetery. The city will be providing cleaning supplies and a dumpster, so all we need to bring is gloves, personal water bottles, leaf rakes, and soft scrub brushes. It is highly recommended to wear clothing that you don't mind getting dirty. This event is scheduled for Sat., March 30, 2019 from 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Boy Scout Troop 2 will be there also, but since there are so many Veterans' graves, we have been invited to join the Boy Scouts. I will have sign-up sheets on the tables at our March 7th meeting.

At the recent Events Committee Meeting, we talked about how to "beef-up" our General Membership Meetings and one suggestion was to invite Post 555 members to speak about their military background/experiences. I guarantee with us doing this, someone is going to be talking about themselves or their military career and someone else in the room is going to have something in common with him/her that they never knew before, and that common bond may very well start a friendship. We will personally ask Comrades to do this; we won't spring it on you so if you are shy about talking in front of people, don't worry. You will certainly have that choice, but if you like to share your story, let us know and you will be welcomed to address the group.

Check the page in the newsletter that lists the upcoming events and if something sounds good to you, join in and help out the Post!! Also, don't forget to get your R.S.V.P. hours posted on the February 2019 Monthly Station Form. I will try to get to you during the meeting, but if I miss you, see me during or after the meeting to record your Volunteer hours for the month. Every hour counts toward the next level of award from the R.S.V.P. program!!!



ADJUTANT'S AREA



Ron Koonce

Post Adjutant

The Post 2019 renewals are slowly coming in but not as fast as we would like to see.

There are still about thirty 2018 members that have not renewed for 2019. We value each and everyone of these memberships and do not want to lose you as a member of our Post 555 family.

You can renew online at www.legion.org or mail to the Post with your \$45 renewal fee payable to "Matthew Blount Post 555" to :

Matthew Blount Post 555
50 Racquet Club Parkway
Pelham, Alabama 35124

If you are in doubt about your status, you can contact me at ron.koonce@alpost555.com.

The Post is pleased that we have exceeded our new membership goal of 10 new members for 2019 with a total of 13 to date. We welcome all our new members!. Invite a veteran to attend our new meeting on March 7 at 6:15 p.m. for fellowship with meeting at 7 p.m.

Congratulations to the Military Appreciation Night committee chaired by Kenneth Paschal for a great job. The Post provided each veteran and members of the active military present with a \$25 Gift Card to the Pelham Texas Roadhouse restaurant at a value close to \$2000.

Thanks to more than a 100 individuals from the Post, community and local youth organizations that contributed to this successful event recognizing our military and veterans.

Ron Koonce

Adjutant

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**

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH 2019

Saturday, March 30th

9:00 a.m.: Pelham Cemetery Clean-up

Where: Pelham Cemetery, 475 Cahaba Valley Road, Pelham, AL 35124

Post 555 members asked to help with clean-up efforts along with Boy Scout Troop 2. The city will be providing cleaning supplies and a dumpster. Bring the following items:

Gloves, personal water bottles, leaf rakes, and soft scrub brushes

Sign-up during the March 7th General Membership Meeting (sign-up sheets will be on the tables).

APRIL 2019

Date / Time TBD

The Great American Cookout (fundraiser for Post 555)

Where: The Hangar @ the Bessemer Airport

Chairperson: TBD

Co-Chairperson: TBD

MAY 2019

Date TBD

Time TBD: Flag Placement Ceremony for Memorial Day

Where: Pelham Cemetery

Chairperson: TBD

Co-Chairperson: TBD

Monday, May 27th

9:00 a.m.: Memorial Day Observance; Firing of a Civil War Cannon @

ALNC

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

35115

Chairperson: Kenneth Paschal

JUDGE ADVOCATE'S CORNER



Chuck Kiser

Judge Advocate

We are entering two of the most important months in the life of any Post. March and April bring nominations of new Post Officers in March and the election of those officers for the coming year in April.

On behalf of the Post I would like to thank the 2019 Nominations Committee comprised of Larry Strayer, John Zeiss and Wayne Curtis for their efforts. It is greatly appreciated.

The Committee has convened during February and they present the following slate of candidates for consideration by the Post for the positions indicated.

Commander:

Richard Kaster

1st Vice Commander:

Jerry McClain

2nd Vice Commander:

Nancy Waller

3 Year Trustee:

Bobby Horsley

The remaining Trustees: 2 Year Term - **Frank Lakotich** and 1 Year Term - **Bill Blank** are not up for election and their continued service is reaffirmed, in accord with Post organizing documents, by the membership.

In accord with the Post Constitution and Bylaws, nominations from the floor for the above positions may also be considered. Nominations from the floor may only be made during the appropriate time at the March Post meeting. No nominations from the floor will be accepted after that. For clarification, I am including the referenced verbiage from our documents below.

"Section 6. Nominations and Elections – Nominations – Nominations for elected offices shall be presented to the membership by a Nominating Committee comprised of three, non-officer Post members at the regularly scheduled Post meeting in March. Nominations from the floor for elected offices, if any, shall be accepted at the regularly scheduled Post meeting in March. Nominations from the floor require: the nominee be present at the meeting, they agree to

(continued on page 8)

Meet your shooting team: Claire Vonderau

Claire Vonderau began her shooting career when she was 12 years old, in the 6th grade

with Shelby Shooting Sports Association in Helena.



She shot Sporter Class for 1 year and then moved to the Precision Class when she was 14.



Claire shoots 12 – 15 Precision Air and Precision

Smallbore matches a year and practices about 8 hours a week. She has won several competitions across the South East and is 7 Excellence In Competition points away from earning her Distinguished Badge.

Claire will be a Senior in high school next year & is working hard to qualify for the 2020 Junior Olympics. She wants to thank all the support she gets from the American Legion. She's one of the Smoked Butt & Brisket Preparers that we enjoy every few months.

JUDGE ADVOCATE'S CORNER—CONTINUED

(continued from page 7)

serve in the position for which they are nominated if elected and their nomination is seconded by ten members in good standing. No nominations from the floor will be accepted at the regularly scheduled Post meeting in April.

Section 7. Nominations and Elections – Elections shall take place at the regular Post meeting in April. Elected Officers shall hold office until their successor shall have been elected

and installed. When two or more candidates aspire for the same office, voting shall be by ballot conducted by the Judge Advocate, or in his absence an officer so designated by the Commander. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected to the office for which they are a candidate."

All officer and committee positions, other than those noted, are appointed by the incoming Commander annually.

If you have an interest in serving on a committee in 2019, please contact me. We will be looking for volunteers to serve as Committee Chairpersons and Committee members, to be appointed by the incoming Commander, for all Committees. We need your involvement to continue the vibrant tradition of accomplishment that Post 555 has developed in its first years.

Get involved in the life of your Post!

CHAPLAIN'S THOUGHTS



Chris Vonderau

Post Chaplain

I've been preparing a lesson for a few days on the Prodigal Son from Luke 15:11-32. If you haven't read it in a while, look it up. My portion of the lesson deals with the Older Brother who stayed home with the Father, not the party animal who left. I once identified with the Party Animal, but, recently have seen myself more like the Older Brother than I care to admit.

I want life to be fair. I've learned it isn't. The Older Brother & I have a tendency to harden our hearts. Instead of being joyful about his younger brother's return or his father's joy, he responded with a reference to "slaving away for you". He was serving the Father out of Duty instead of Delight.

You can't earn God's love. God's love doesn't work like that. Something that is earned can also be lost. Unconditional Love can not be lost, nor can it be earned. It is freely given. And that is what the Father has for you - unconditional love.

You and I don't deserve saving. We deserve death. The Father couldn't stand the thought of that so He made a way. He won't force us to love Him, but He has done everything He can to get our attention. Call me if you don't know how much He loves you. 205 966-1364

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

Legion celebrates 100 years of service to America

- Veterans.
- Defense.
- Youth.
- And Americanism.

Of course, the organization made a high priority of compassionate care and treatment for disabled veterans returning to civilian life. Such care and treatment were desperately lacking in the United States at the time.

But The American Legion would reach into many other layers of society, some of which puzzled the public.

Why, for instance, does a veterans group operate a nationwide youth baseball program?

A speech contest?

A mock government for high school students?

Why the emphasis on naturalization and citizenship for legal immigrants?

And is it really a veteran's job to build city parks, install swimming pools, carve out hiking trails, form community bands, manage ambulance systems, rescue flood victims and lead Boy Scout units?

The American Legion would spend the next century firmly establishing that such purposes strengthen the nation.

Since the very beginning – front and center – has been compassionate and comprehensive treatment for those who served in uniform and came home changed by mili-

tary experience.

The effects of wartime service were especially profound for The American Legion's first generation.

They had been attacked and wounded by weapons previously unseen in history. They had been poisoned and blinded by chemical gas.

Nearly half of their fatalities had come from illnesses caused by unsanitary conditions, lack of medicine and rancid food on the battle fields and at sea.

They suffered psychological effects ignored at the time by medicine, the military and government.

These effects – known then as “shell shock” – would sweep decorated combat veterans into asylums, jails and onto the streets ... where relief was not forthcoming.

The founding Legionnaires faced uncertain futures in a U.S. economy that had stormed forward while they were fighting in the muddy trenches of Europe to protect others, both foreign and domestic.

And then, coming home greatly altered by their experiences, many of these early Legionnaires knew they would face racism, sexism, elitism, deficient health care, scant transition programs and public misunderstanding – even ridicule and scorn.

The American Legion was determined to change the

culture and public perception, no matter what it took, about veterans and the honorable nature of military service.

These veterans would spend the next century – as each war era begat a new generation of Legionnaires – devoted to community-building, the welfare of children, patriotism, education, peace and goodwill.

The inspiration for this mission can be traced to the civilian military camps where many eventual American Legion founders trained prior to U.S. entry in World War I.

This was known as the Preparedness Movement.

The movement arose in defiance of U.S. policy to stay out of the Great War in Europe. Those who trained in the camps believed that if America did eventually get called to fight, too few were trained, equipped or inspired to succeed.

So they took it upon themselves, as volunteers, to become prepared.

One of the Preparedness Movement's charter members was Theodore Roosevelt Jr., son of the 26th U.S. president, who had trained in the Plattsburgh, N.Y., civilian camps long before U.S. entry in the war.

In command, the future American Legion founders soon discovered that the U.S. military was in poor shape for wartime service.



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



Acknowledgements



ARMY | MARINES | NAVY | AIR FORCE | COAST GUARD

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **MILITARY** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **APPRECIATION** **NIGHT**

Saturday, February 9, 2019

On behalf of the Planning Committee we would like to thank the following individuals and sponsors for volunteering, donating, and contributing to the "Military Appreciation Night".

Adithi, Anjali, and Anya: Reddy triplets (skaters)
American Legion(AL), Matthew Blount Post 555
AL, Matthew Blount Post 555 Legion Riders
American Village
ChubbFathers Restaurant – Alabaster
Cracker Barrel Old Country Store in Pelham
Daughters of the American Revolution (Cahawba Chapter, David Lindsay Chapter, Lily of the Cahaba Chapter, and Princess Sehoy Chapter)
Erik Hudson, Pelham Director of Hockey
Exchange Club of Shelby County
Full Moon BBQ – Pelham
Gary Waters – Pelham mayor
Golden Rule BBQ – Pelham
Heart of Dixie Harley-Davidson
Harry Christian, Commander, American Legion
Department of Alabama
Kai's Koffee House
KATs Delivery
Kingdom Christian Center Church
Lisa Bates
Mary Lou's Team at Remax Advantage
McAlister's Deli – Pelham

Mike's Merchandise in Pelham
Minuteman Press of Central Alabama
Old Time Pottery
Pelham Civic Complex and Ice Arena
Pelham Fire Department
Robert Robinson, Jr.
Sons of AL, Matthew Blount Squadron 555
Texas Roadhouse - Pelham
University of Alabama Hockey Program
Wish Upon a Star with Dana
Woodlot Artisans LLC
Youth programs
AL, Post 555 Junior Shooting Sports Program
Bessemer Composite Squadron Civil Air Patrol
Boy Scouts Troop 2
Cub Scouts Pack 404
Hope Christian School Key Club
Kingdom Christian Center Church – Youth
Pelham Ice Skating School
Pelham High School Choral
Thompson High School Girls Varsity Soccer
Vincent High School JROTC (Army) Color Guard
Ward Chapel AME Church, YPD