



*Published exclusively for the members of*

# AMERICAN LEGION MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555 PELHAM, ALABAMA

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*IN GOD WE TRUST*



## Matthew Blount Post 555



**Tom Long Post 555/  
District 23 Judge Advocate**

### Who Are the Patriot Guard Riders?

The Patriot Guard Riders (PGR) was formed in 2005 to shelter and protect the deceased's family against protesters from the Westboro Baptist Church, who claim the deaths of American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan are divine retribution. PGR members positioned themselves to physically shield the mourners from the presence of the Westboro protesters by blocking the protesters from view with their motorcade, or by having members hold American flags. The group also drowns out the protesters' chants by singing patriotic songs or by revving motorcycle engines.

Although initially founded by motorcyclists, the organization is open to anyone, regardless of political affiliation, veteran status, or whether they ride or not. The only prerequisite is "a deep respect for those who serve our country; military and first responders". The Patriot Guard was established in Mulvane, Kansas, at American Legion Post 136 in 2005. The

founding members incorporated the organization as a 501(c)(3) non-profit in the State of Oklahoma.

The group's mission quickly expanded to include the funerals of law enforcement

officers, fire department personnel, all first responders, and any active-duty member or veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces from all previous wars and conflicts and is now largely focused on recognizing and honoring the sacrifices of dead service members as well as their families and loved ones. As of 2011, PGR reported over 329,000 members and operates throughout the United States. It is anticipated that at the end of 2020 the PGR had nearly 500,000 members nationwide. In addition to their attendance at funerals, the group also greet troops returning from overseas at welcome home celebrations, deployment ceremonies, and performs volunteer work for veteran's organizations such as Veterans Homes. Many American Legion Members also ride with the Patriot Guard.

Additional information on The Patriot Guard Riders may be found at <https://www.patriotguard.org>.

Tom Long  
Judge Advocate

# COMMANDER'S CORNER



**Jeff Monday**  
*Post Commander*



Happy fall to you all, so many upcoming events in the fall, here are a few things I can think of. In the month of September we remember our Gold Star families. We attempted to have a ride in remembrance of Matt, but the rain did not work in the favor of two wheels; stay on the lookout for the new date. The month of October brings in Breast Cancer awareness and Cancer awareness, donate if you can, and please check yourself all the time it could save your life. Next, we have my favorite : Membership! This is the time to renew if you have not done so already. Finally, yet importantly, we are in the push to raise money for Wreaths Across America. **Please!** This is from the National level to the Alabama level; every dollar donated to the post for Wreath Across American will stay in Alabama. Make a 15-dollar donation (or several) or split with your friend. We need your help to keep this great remembrance alive for now and years to come.

I would like to thank each one of you for the understanding of our



moving the post meeting dates and location. We, in the executive committee, want to make sure we are looking out for your wellbeing and safety. I hope to see all of you at the Heart of Dixie Harley Davidson HOG meeting hall on October 14<sup>th</sup>.

Each December we have the National Wreaths Across America Day. The mission is to Remember, Honor and Teach. This is carried out by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, as well as at more than 2,500 additional National cemetery locations in all 50 U.S. states, at sea and abroad.

On December 18 at 11:00 AM, 2021, Wreaths Across America will be at Alabama National Cemetery to remember and Honor our veterans through the laying of Remembrance wreaths on the graves of our country's fallen heroes and the act of saying the name of each and every veteran aloud.

Jeff Monday  
Post Commander

# 1ST VICE'S COMMENTS



**Bill Blank**  
*1st Vice Commander*



Greetings to all members of Matthew Blount Post 555 and our families. We just finished the month of September and I have but one request to make: The end of the calendar year is rapidly approaching and membership dues for 2022 are due. I am making every attempt to encourage members to submit their dues as early as possible. There is a benefit for the Post by submitting dues early. Achieving the State Department's goal for Post 555 of 218 members is our mission. Last year was the first year we were unable to meet our goal of 100%, so we need to get back on-track for 2022.

Secondly, it is important that you keep your membership continuous. If you have insurance with The American Legion and your membership is interrupted, your coverage may be in jeopardy.

My last thought about the 2022 dues is this: Yes, you are paying your dues early for the 2022 period, but it will be one year before your dues are due again. Think about it; our Post can reach 100% if we reach 218 out of the total of 273 current members on our roster. Please be a part of the 218 that meets our 100% goal for 2022!!!

The November General Membership Meeting is the Annual Thanksgiving Dinner scheduled for Thurs., November 4, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Pelham First Baptist Church Annex which is on the opposite side of Highway 31 from the main church. Contact Adjutant Nancy Waller @ 251-554-6986 or myself @ 214-476-7074 to make your reservation for you and your guest. Please ensure that anyone you invite to accompany you must be a relative that lives under your roof. The meal is at no cost to Post 555 members or their guests, so put this date on your calendar and let either Nancy or me know that you would like to attend. Hope to see you on November the 4th!!!

Bill Blank



## 2nd Vice's Interim Report Nancy Waller

Still transitioning into the Adjutant position with Ron Koonce's guidance, and filling-in as the Acting Second Vice Commander since the position is still vacant. Anyone interested, let Commander Monday or me know, PLEASE!!!

Things are starting to happen finally out in the community, so please refer to the list below with the dates, events, etc. to make sure you have all the information you need to either be a Volunteer or just want to support the Post and come to the event(s).

I would like to start with an event that already happened prior to this newsletter, but it was the first of these events in a longggggg time. Post 555 was asked to do a Flag Replacement at the Helena "School for Amazing Kids" on September 30, 2021 at 10:00 a.m. Flag Team Coordinator, Ronnie McGriff, gathered all of the equipment needed, set-up a group of Post 555 Volunteers to perform the ceremony, and everyone involved had a great time and hopefully learned a little bit about the American flag. Great reception from the young people at the school, as well as the staff. If you see a flag at a school or business that needs replacement, contact Ronnie McGriff @ 205-910-2275. If you can approach someone at the school or business to help Ronnie with a POC's name and phone number, that would be ideal. Thanks in advance for allowing our Flag Replacement mission to continue.

**Tues., October 5, 2021:** Pelham National Night Out will be held in the Pelham City Park Complex in the parking lot between Pelham Middle School and the youth football field from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. We were invited to participate in this event this year and will be there with our tent, flag display, information table, and hopefully the BIGGEST draw for our area, our Legion Riders and their motorcycles. If you would like to arrive a little early to help set-up, please do so. There will be free food and prizes available. (Hurrah... editor's comment!)

**Thurs., November 4, 2021:** On behalf of the Blount Family, I would like to remind you that the November Post 555 General Membership Meeting will be a very special evening for all. It is our Thanksgiving Dinner/Meeting and will be held at the Pelham First Baptist Church Annex (where we had our "Meet and Greet" for the baseball players in August) at 6:00 p.m. This is a beautiful venue for our event, so please let me know if you will be attending. There is no cost to anyone, but there is a limit of 200 attendees. As of this article, I only have 58 members/spouses/guests signed-up. ***I will have sign-up sheets on all of the tables at the October 14, 2021 General Membership Meeting, or you can contact me via cell phone @ 251-554-6986 or via e-mail at [wallernej@gmail.com](mailto:wallernej@gmail.com).*** Please do not miss the opportunity to be a part of this great event. Commander Monday is

working on the agenda for this evening, and I think you will like what he has planned. He will be honoring a "secret" guest, and we will be showcasing the programs that Post 555 offers to the community (i.e., Jr. Shooters, Boy Scouts, Oratorical Contest, Baseball, Legion Riders, etc.). We are hoping that several of our city and county officials will be present as well.

**Wed., November 10, 2021:** I have two tables of eight being held for the Birmingham National Veterans Day Awards Banquet for members of Post 555. So far, I have 13 out of 16 tickets obligated, so if anyone is interested in tickets, I have three available. The tickets are \$45.00/person and the event is going to be held at the Sheraton Hotel in Birmingham with a start time of 5:30 p.m. Attire is semi-formal or formal, but hopefully that will not scare you away from this wonderful event. They usually honor a very special individual as Veteran of the Year, but I have not heard who that is yet for 2021. I have attended every dinner for years and each one gets just a little bit better. Plus, I see people from all over the state who I have not seen for years, so it is kind of a "reunion" of sorts; good times. Call me @ 251-554-6986 or send an e-mail to [wallernej@gmail.com](mailto:wallernej@gmail.com) if you are interested in some tickets. I look forward to seeing you there!!!

**Sat., December 11, 2021:** The first annual "A Pelham Hometown Christmas" parade and Christmas tree lighting are happening!!! The parade will start at the Pelham Civic Complex at 5:00PM, travel through Pelham and return to the Pelham Civic Complex for a tree-lighting. There will be a ton of things to do and food to eat, so put this date on your calendar. Commander Monday has been keeping us up-to-date from the committee meetings with the City of Pelham and we will be responsible for "staging" the floats at the Civic Complex, and recovering them as they return. We will be talking about actually having a float in the parade, so keep your ears open for that.

**Fri., January 14, 2022:** The Pelham High School Oratorical Contest has been confirmed between Chairman Richard Kaster and Pelham High School POC Michelle LeSueur for 8:30 p.m. in the Pelham High School Auditorium. Volunteers are needed for several positions so get with Richard Kaster for more details. As the event gets closer to the date, I will be putting out updates for everyone, but if you have an interest in volunteering to help, let Richard know. I helped with my first Oratorical Contest a good while ago and it was very interesting and a rewarding experience. The students who participated were amazing!! Get involved!!

## ADJUTANT'S AREA



*Nancy Waller*  
Adjutant

### **YOUR ANNUAL DUES ARE DUE FOR 2022 AS OF JULY 1, 2021!!!**

As promised in my September newsletter article, I am keeping you up-to-date on our membership numbers for 2022 every month. As of today's report, we have 119 members paid through 2022, but this does include the PUFL (Paid Up For Life) members, so I need to continue to see renewals come through for all of you who are annual members. I do want to point out that we are doing very well regarding our standing with the State Department. A report came out on 9/15/21 showing that we had 109 members which put us at exactly 50% of our goal of 218 for the year, but I did notice that the PUFL members were not included for some reason; not sure why. So, the next report that came out on 9/21/21 put us at 55.5% of our goal with 121 members (11 PUFL and 110 annual) and it did include the PUFL members. Today's report shows a total of 119 (11 PUFL and 108 annual), so I need to see where two of our members went.....

Everyone should have received their notification from The American Legion asking for your dues for 2022, so please make sure you take care of that as soon as you can. One reason for doing it now will prevent you from continuing to receive more notifications and mistakenly paying duplicate times. I have heard some members tell me that they are going to wait until the end of 2021 to pay their 2022 dues, but I try to explain to them that the State Department puts reports out that have certain percentages that need to be met at certain times of the year, so the earlier we get our 2022 dues in, the better we will do in meeting these requirements. Make your check payable to **Matthew Blount Post 555** and put it along with the "Dues Notice" in an envelope and mail to the Post address which is 50 Racquet Club Parkway, Pelham, AL 35124. Ron Koonce will get them out of the mailbox at the Pelham Senior Center, deposit your check, and send me a copy of the "Dues Notice" for me to update your membership in MyLegion.org as a 2022 paid member! I will then send your 2022 membership card via USPS along with a nice letter thanking you for your Service and continued support of Post 555. I cannot wait to send

you my nice "thank you" letter and your 2022 membership card with my signature on it; that is the best part of my job as Adjutant; taking care of YOU!!!

Do not get behind on your membership since that would affect the loss of your benefits. If you pay your 2022 dues after 12/31/21, your membership will have expired, so don't take a chance that you might forget and lose your valuable benefits. Everyone is important to the Post even if you cannot participate in meetings or events. We still want you to stay on our rolls as an honored member of Post 555.

If you are a current R.S.V.P. (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) member, don't forget to report your volunteer hours for the month of September when you come to the October 14, 2021 Post 555 General Membership Meeting. No, I did not type the wrong date for the date of the next meeting. We will be meeting in the HOG Meeting Room at the Heart of Dixie Harley Davidson dealership. The Pelham Senior Center is getting busier each day, and they are mandating the wearing of masks, so Commander Monday would like us to meet the second week of October at the alternate location. If you would like to wear a mask, you are certainly welcome to; that is your choice; but we will not mandate a mask upon your entry into the meeting room. If you have hours to report and cannot make the meeting, I can still report them for you. Call me @ 251-554-6986 and I will add your hours to my Monthly Station Form. I report the hours by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the next month. If you are not yet an R.S.V.P. member, the only criteria is that you are age 55+ years young. I will give you an application to complete and will take a photo of the front of your driver's license (for proof of age) so I can make a copy to accompany your application. Every month I will record your volunteer hours anywhere you serve, including Post 555 meetings and events. Just let me know if you would like an application!!

*For God and Country*  
*Nancy Waller*  
Adjutant

# SERVICE OFFICER NOTES



**Jerry McClain**  
*Service Officer*

Benefits AttenTION!

Surviving Spouses Stay alert! Stay alive!

Getting VA Benefits as a Surviving Spouse  
Many spouses rely on monthly veterans' disability benefits to help support their families. These benefits become even more crucial if your spouse dies as a result of their service-connected disabilities.

Spouses of disabled veterans may be eligible for VA benefits, such as disability compensation, health care, education and training, employee services, insurance coverage, and survivors' benefits. Surviving spouses of veterans may also be eligible for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation.

(DIC) is a monthly benefit that VA awards to a surviving spouse or dependent child(ren) of a service member who:

- Died in action
- Died from a service-connected condition

DIC is separate from the benefits the veteran may have been receiving during their lifetime. As of December 2020, the fixed monthly benefit amount for DIC is \$1,357.56. However, the DIC rate changes annually based on the cost of living adjustments.

State Alert! Stay Alive!

Jerry McClain

**va.alabama.gov**



# CHAPLAIN'S UPLIFT



**Joe Dunn**  
*Post Chaplain*



"I said in my haste: ALL Men are liars". King David-Psalm 16:1 (emphasis mine)

"Let God Be True And EVERY Man A Liar." The Apostle Paul-Romans 3:4 (emphasis mine)

I'm quoting the Bible at the first because I want you to know that I am writing from a purely biblical point of view, and NOT a political one. It is true in politics that **so many** politicians lie, and that they do it often, and without conscience. Just listen to one when they are caught talking into a "hot mic."

However, they also get a bad rap because their work is far more in the limelight, being called "public servants." (I know. I know!) The word "servant" is relative, and that makes it REALLY hard on those like our own Kenneth Paschal, who truly **does** want to serve us with integrity. Millions of others, though, lie straight faced and without a twinge of guilt.

Just ask the IRS! Well, many who lie to the IRS have at least a twinge of guilt, but then they go ahead and lie anyway! That's not all. My wife took her car to the dealer to get a part changed, due to a recall. Before she left, she called me, saying that they had "found" several things wrong, and she asked what she should do because the cost was going to be around \$3,000. Reeally?

Only GOD tells the truth ALL the time. Would we want it any other way? Only HE knows what's on the other side, and what's coming after death. Only HE understands why our country is falling apart and what's behind it all—and He tells us!

"In The Last Days Perilous Times Will Come." 2 Timothy 3:1

"In The Last Days The Love Of Many Will Grow Cold." Matthew 12:24

Why? There's almost NO character any more. The book of Revelation lays it all out— what's happening now right before our eyes, and what's going to happen.

My fellow Veterans, I am called to be like God, and to tell you the **truth** out of care for you all. I can think of no better way to do that this month, than to ask you to watch this short video to the end. It is about how the God of Love has made astronomy relate to a little speck called earth. Everything that has ever happened among billions of people has happened on that little speck. And the God of the universe CARES.

Hit "Watch On YouTube. Chaplain Joe

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i\\_L1dqJ4PGg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i_L1dqJ4PGg)

## POST 555 WORK AREAS

### *Triple Nickel Riders*



Hello to all my Legionnaire Family,

The Triple Nickel Riders has had a Roller Coaster of a month. The Riders joined with the Regulators Motorcycle Club for their Annual We Remember Tribute Ride. After the ride we joined in with the Bike Night at Goodfellows Social Club in Helena.

The 21st District hosted their Annual 911 Memorial Ride; several of my fellow Matthew Blount Legion Riders and I joined in. The Ride had a phenomenal 216 bikes participating. Unfortunately, due to the bad weather, our Matthew Blount Memorial Ride had to be cancelled to be rescheduled for a future day.

Revvin' 4 Research is a charity ride to help collect money for Breast Cancer Research. The Triple Nickel Riders came out to show their support for that worthy cause.

The Triple Nickel Rider would like to offer our Heart-Felt condolences to the friends and family of Wayne Johnson. He was the rider director for American Legion Post 107.

Stay safe and see you at the meeting.

Doug McDaniel  
Legion Riders Director  
Matthew Blount Post 555



MATTHEW BLOUNT POST 555

Post Leadership 2021/2022



Harley Davison HOG meeting hall in back of the store

**Meets first Thursday of the month.**  
 Post 555 Membership will meet on Thursday October 14th at the Harley Davidson's HOG meeting hall at 7PM. Dinner and fellowship at 6PM

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Post Commander</b><br>Jeff Monday         | <b>Auxiliary President</b><br>Caroline Culpepper     |
| <b>1st Vice Commander</b><br>Bill Blank      | <b>Sons of Legionnaires</b><br>Bill Blank, Comm.     |
| <b>2nd Vice Commander</b><br>TBD             | Ron Koonce, Advisor                                  |
| <b>Adjutant</b><br>Nancy Waller              | <b>Legion Riders Director</b><br>Doug McDaniel       |
| <b>Asst Adjutant</b><br>Ron Koonce           | <b>Flag Team Coordinator</b><br>Ron McGriff          |
| <b>Judge Advocate</b><br>Tom Long            | <b>Boy Scouts Coordinator</b><br>David Coram         |
| <b>Financial Officer</b><br>Barry Blount     | <b>Jr. Shooting Director</b><br>Darrell Lawley       |
| <b>Chaplain</b><br>Joe Dunn                  | <b>Baseball Director</b><br>Jon Freeman              |
| <b>Sergeant-At- Arms</b><br>Derek Winters    | <b>School Awards Program</b><br>Frank Lakotich, Chr. |
| Anita Bennett                                | <b>Awards Program</b><br>Barry Blount, Chr.          |
| <b>Post Service Officer</b><br>Jerry McClain | <b>Webmaster</b><br>Ron Koonce                       |
| <b>Historian</b><br>Shauna Hadley            | <b>Triple Nickel Editor</b><br>Frank Chacon          |
| <b>Public Relations Officer</b><br>Vacant    | <b>Photography</b><br>Chic Cecchini                  |
| <b>Post Trustees</b><br>Frank Lakotich       |  |
| Robert Horsley                               |  |
| Chris Combs                                  |  |

*The Triple Nickel*

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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 submissions 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](mailto:Editor@alpost555.com)

*Photos by Chic Cecchini, Post 555*

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American Legion Post 555





*Sons  
of the  
American  
Legion*

Since 1932



Squadron 555 roster continues to grow with 2 new members during the month of September setting the Squadron's roster total at fifty-one to date that includes both active and inactive members. The Squadron has gained twelve new members since July 1, 2021.

Total 2022 paid members is now at twenty-six of our goal of thirty-five. This translates to 74% of our 2022 goal and 104% of 2021 paid membership.

The annual dues remain at \$20. We encourage all members and sponsors to submit your 2022 renewals now. Also, everyone one is a recruiter. One new member will earn you a Post 555 Commander's Membership Award pin. Five new members will earn you a National Commander Excellence pin.

Applications for new members are found on the "Home" page of [www.alpost555.com](http://www.alpost555.com). Just select the "Join the Sons of American Legion" button and print the application.

Checks are to be payable to "Matthew Blount Post 555"

Mail renewals and applications to: American Legion

Sons of The American Legion

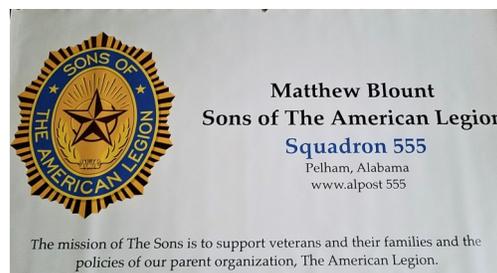
50 Racquet Club Parkway

Pelham, AL 35124

The Sons will continue to meet with the Post on October 14th, 2021, at the Heart of Dixie Harley Davidson HOG Clubhouse at 6:00 pm for meal and 7:00 pm for meeting. Guests are welcome.

Separate future SAL meetings are being are still being planned. Members will be notified once location/date/time has been confirmed. We are in the process of planning several SAL projects for the next few months.

The new SAL banner has arrived to be used in future events.



For God and Country

*Ron Koonce*

*SAL Adjutant/ Financial Officer*

Thirteenth Annual Wreaths Across America Campaign  
Alabama National Cemetery  
Montevallo, Alabama  
18 December 2021

The cost to sponsor each wreath is \$15.00. This year we are hoping for at least 10,000 wreaths which is an increase of over 2,000+ wreaths from 2020. All wreath sponsors and family members of those interred at the Alabama National Cemetery are invited and strongly encouraged to attend and participate in the wreath-laying ceremony.



**To sponsor wreaths, please complete the information below and return it, along with your check made payable to "Matthew Blount Post 555", to 50 Racquet Club Parkway, Pelham, AL 35124.** The deadline for checks to be received is **04 November 2021**, so please act on this request as soon as you are financially able. Each sponsorship is tax deductible. For more information and/or questions, please contact Barry Blount at 205-531-4131. Thank you in advance for your show of support to our Fallen Heroes and their family members during the 2021 Christmas Season.

-----CUT HERE-----

PRINT NAME OF INDIVIDUAL / ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ SPONSORSHIP AMOUNT: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

IN HONOR OF (LIVING): \_\_\_\_\_

IN MEMORY OF (DECEASED): \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

As of the last of September, the total donations from Post 555 for the WAA Campaign are \$405.00. The goal set by Barry Blount, the Chairman of the WAA Campaign, is \$4,500.00. That is a lot to make up to even come close to our goal, so please do what you can to help out. Cut out the above, fill it out and bring it with your check. I will also have donation forms available at the October 14, 2021 General Membership Meeting if needed. Thanks!!! Nancy Waller