



THE PATRIOT

Serving Morgan County, Alabama

American Legion Post 15 Honors POW/MIA Day

The American Legion Post 15 joined with members from throughout the community during POW/MIA Day to honor American prisoners of war (POWs) and those still missing in action (MIAs), as well as their families



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SENIOR VICE COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

Comrades,

As we enter October, we currently have 155 members which is 58.71% of our goal for 2025-2026 membership of 264 which is a great start. This year, National Commander Dan K. Wiley has a 2026 membership excellence incentive program. To qualify you must sign up two new members for 2026. There is a certification form for this program to be filled out and sent to National HQ.

If you have not yet renewed, you must renew your dues before 1 January 2026, or you will no longer be a member in good standing of Post 15. In addition, you will lose the continuous membership years you have earned. While you are thinking about paying your dues consider the PUFL option as well. This option will shield you from any future dues increases and you never will have to worry about forgetting to pay your dues. You will receive your membership card from National every year. Post 15 currently has 43 PUFL members, which I am proud to be one. I have never regretted choosing this option. You can also apply thru legion.org to pay multiple years.

Below are some options for paying your dues:

1. www.legion.org
2. Mail it to the Post address: American Legion Post 15, 2607 Highway 31 South, Decatur, AL, 35603
3. Drop it by the post!

"Members are the life blood of our organization."

We miss seeing each of you at our monthly meetings and you are missing the great camaraderie and an always delicious dinner. So please spread the word and let us round up our stray Legionnaires. Also, as always, a reminder, with the passage of the Legion Act on 30 July 2019 changing the eligibility criteria for membership in the American Legion this opens membership to another group of Veterans who were previously not eligible. There are veterans out there that may not know this. If you know of any Veterans who serve at least one day of service on active duty under honorable service since 7 December 1941 reach out to them and tell them about the American Legion. Tell them about the camaraderie and the community service Post 15 provides. Tell them about services to the local veteran community. Invite them to the Post. Show them around. Ask them to join, then as a new member make them feel welcome and that they belong.

As I requested in the last newsletter, we need more volunteers for our Post 15 Honor Guard. As we are older members, we are losing members of the honor guard due to health and other issues so please volunteer. If you are interested, please contact Honor Guard Captain Bobby Train at 256-303-5932

Be the One,

John Nelson

Post 15

Senior Vice Commander

Online Membership Renewals

For everyone who renews their American Legion Membership online -- a new card **will not** automatically be sent to your home address. You must contact the Post 15 Adjutant who will provide an updated card.

Adjutant's Comments

American Legion Post 15 Membership Campaign

During a 21-year career in the Marine Corps, I earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a Human Resources Management concentration from Liberty University and a Master of Business Administration with a concentration in Business Strategy. I also served on recruiting duty in Decatur, AL, managing the recruiting station, which provided extensive experience in organization and execution. These qualifications, combined with my current role as Adjutant for Post 15, uniquely position me to lead and execute a successful membership campaign for the post.

Post membership has shown a recent decline, and an analysis indicates several factors influence this trend. During the last executive committee meeting, a compelling point was raised regarding the need to provide tangible value to members. This insight has led to the development of a six-month membership campaign designed to increase recruitment and enhance the benefits offered to current members. The plan will be presented to the executive committee for monitoring and authorization.

This initiative is not a radical departure from our existing activities but rather an expansion of current programs and the implementation of more proactive recruiting strategies. The plan focuses on four key areas:

- Outreach and recruitment
- Community engagement
- Member experience
- Partnerships

Outreach & Recruitment

1. Veteran-Specific Events

- a. Host Veterans Appreciation Days with free food, music, and activities.
- b. Offer service officer help with VA claims and benefits to draw vets in who may need some help.

2. Partner with local Military Units

- a. Connect with the Alabama National Guard, Army Reserve, and Marine Corps Reserve.
- b. Attend unit drills with information booths.

3. Leverage Social Media

- a. Continue to keep Facebook page updated weekly with events, photos, and veteran resources.
- b. Highlight members' stories to show that the Post is active and supportive of the community.

4. Reconnect with Lapsed Members

- a. Call or send personalized letters to non-renewals. Offer a "welcome back" social event.

Community Engagement

5. Veteran-to-Youth Mentorship

- a. Expand on our partnerships with schools by increasing communication to advertise our Boys/Girls State and our Oratorical Competitions.
- b. Publicize these efforts so parents and vets see the Legion making an impact.

6. Charity & Visibility Events

- a. Host chili cook-offs or BBQ competitions – open to the public.
- b. Tie proceeds to veteran causes to show community value.

7. Parades & Civic Events

- a. Increase visibility in Decatur and the surrounding area's parades, festivals, and sporting events with color guards, booths, or floats and Flag lines.

Adjutant's Comments (continued)

Member Experience

8. Offer More Than Meetings

- a. Add Social Nights (karaoke, trivia, live music, game nights).
- b. Include family-friendly events like movie nights or holiday parties to bring spouses and kids.

9. Highlight Benefits of Membership

- a. Emphasize camaraderie, advocacy, and the sense of purpose in continuing to serve.
- b. Many forget the resources available to them through our veterans' advocacy groups.

10. New Member Buddy Program

- a. Pair a new member with a seasoned one to make them feel welcomed and engaged right away.

Partnerships

11. Work with local Colleges (Calhoun, Athens State)

- a. Reach out to veterans' groups and invite them to events

12. Business Partnerships

- a. Offer discount cards with local businesses (restaurants, auto shops, gyms).
- b. Businesses benefit from exposure; members get extra value.

Metrics To Track

A potent mix of **visibility, value, and community service** will lead to membership growth.

- The goals of this campaign are to add five new members per month
- Lapsed members reactivated with a goal of 20% return
- Increase event attendance (growth shows rising visibility)
- Social media engagement (increased likes, shares, event responses)

Post 15's strategic initiative leverages a multi-channel approach to engage the veteran community in Decatur. The campaign is designed to increase public visibility through organized events, drive direct engagement through outreach to colleges and veteran groups, and enhance the member experience with exclusive benefits. This comprehensive strategy elevates Post 15 from a simple gathering place to a vital and dynamic center of veteran life.

BE THE ONE

American Legion Auxiliary

Happy Fall Y'all from the American Legion Auxiliary Morgan County, Unit 15!

Our ALA Unit is getting ramped up for the upcoming months with lots to do. A few of us are attending the ALA Leadership Meeting in Montgomery on October 11th . We hope to get some good information to benefit our Unit. PLEASE NOTE: The Department of Alabama Mid-Winter Conference, scheduled annually in January, will be held in Huntsville for January 2026. Please try to attend. There is a \$20.00 registration fee that is paid to department for every attendee.

Volunteer Hours! The book to log your volunteer hours is available in the office. Please remember that every volunteer hour reported has a value of \$30.52! The American Legion Family knows your time is worth a lot! Please bring any questions you have on Volunteer Hours to the meeting, or reach out to me, Jane Train or Victoria Fergusson.

The Unit 15 Early Bird Drawing will be held on Monday, October 27th at our monthly membership meeting. Good Luck to all you Early Birds! Unit 15 will be meeting on Friday, November 7 at 9:30am to complete the décor and table settings for the Veterans Day Dinner. Please come out to assist in preparation for the dinner to honor our veterans! (* Please remember to contact Violet at the Post if you have signed up for the dinner but cannot attend.)

Tuesday, November 11th is Veterans Day!

The Field of Flags order forms are available at the post, and the QR Code is listed here for your convenience. Again, this year you can order your flag sponsorships online to have your honoree(s) included in Field of Flags. There is no fee to order your sponsorships online! Those volunteering their time and efforts to make this event a success again this year will be meeting at Post 15 on Monday, November 10th at 5:00pm to prepare the flags. Victoria is coordinating all the efforts on this project, so please advise if you have any questions.

We will meet at the American Legion Post 15 on Tuesday, November 11th at 5:30am to complete our FIELD OF FLAGS project! Please, come out and help with this, our biggest project of the year. (FYI - If you know of any teens that need service hours, please invite them to participate in posting the flags on Veterans Day morning, or afternoon to complete the project.)

We will be working on Friday, November 28th @ 10:00am to decorate the Post 15 Christmas tree. We appreciate your help with this project.

Thank you for all you do to help veterans, active duty and the members of our community!

Marsha King, President Unit 15, (251) 767-2446 kinghome6743@aol.com



FIELD OF FLAGS

Just use this code to sponsor your flags! There are no additional fees to order your sponsorships online, and you will have the convenience of donating to honor your favorite veteran(s)!

Just open your camera to see this pic, then click on the yellow address that shows up on your telephone's camera screen. Questions? Call an ALA Unit 15 officer for assistance!

Operation Iraqi Freedom 2006

Written by Post 15 Adjutant Jason Forguson

It was mid-January 2006, when I deployed to the Al Anbar Province of Iraq to a small but pre-established Forward Operating Base (FOB) called Camp Korean Village. Deployments had become the norm by this time in my career, and I had been a Sergeant for about a year. While most of the Staff-NCOs were deployed to larger operating bases, I was put in charge of a Marine Mobile Team, or MMT, consisting of four air traffic controllers, a radio operator, and a navigational aid technician. Our job was to control the airspace around the FOB and provide navigational aid via a tactical air navigation aid or TACAN. This is a large antenna that sends a 20 to 30-mile encrypted signal to an aircraft's navigation system and tells the pilot where the aircraft is in relation to the FOB.

It's funny how you look back at these things and everything feels different than it did then, but two dates always stand out to me. The first day you arrive in theater and the day you get to go home.



After a while those days seem to become the same day over and over. Like ground hog day. Not much happened in those early days of the deployment. The combat arms units were there to patrol the Syrian border and capture insurgents coming into Iraq. We were sort of lulled into this complacency on the FOB to a point where we didn't even wear our flack or Kevlar helmets the vast majority of the time. The unit we replaced mentioned they had been mortared almost weekly when their deployment started, but it had not happened in a few months, and we had not seen a peep out of

anyone.

Then one day, I received a call from a flight of two CH-53 helicopters inbound from their usual checkpoint. Our control tower was actually a wooden box on top of three shipping containers. Two of the



shipping containers were set side by side while the third was planted on top and in the middle of the two containers. You had to climb a rickety ladder up the first container, then climb a second ladder to get to the actual tower. There, we had a second radio so we could see the landing zone and the majority of the airspace we were attempting to control. I had told the

pilots to report 3 miles as I left the radio tent and headed up to the tower. We did not keep anyone in the tower unless we had an aircraft about to take off or come into the FOB. This was, in part, because we did not have consistent aircraft coming into the area, and because we felt we were a bit of a target up there. I climbed the first ladder and then up the second and was almost to the top. My one foot was still on the ladder, and I was about to step on the top shipping container. Suddenly, a mortar round hit close to the tower. The shock blew me back, and I grabbed the ladder as it broke below me. I fell into the shipping container below me, landing on my back and head. I seemed to bounce off the shipping container and landed face-first on the ground. Knowing the aircraft was still inbound, remember collecting myself, my head buzzing, but I don't remember hearing much else. I quickly climbed the first ladder and had to pull it up so I could use it to climb the rest of the way to reach the tower. Once I got up there, I called out to the CH-53's flight and told them to circle northwest of the FOB because of the round we just received. The pilot replied that they would circle five miles to the northwest and hold. The second light armored reconnaissance unit that was with us, providing security, was already reacting to the situation and requested air support. We had Cobra and Huey armed with 50-cal machine guns, who quickly responded to their request. I cleared them for



takeoff. They searched the area for a while but reported not seeing anything. Later, the CH-53s landed, and all was back to normal again. I went to medical later that day with pain in my back shooting down my leg. They gave me some Motrin, of course, and sent me on my way. We had to use one ladder for a while, at least until the Sea-Bees made two new steel ladders, and while they were at it, they built us a nicer tower. This one actually had air conditioning. They must have thought we were in the Air Force or something. Later in my career, I was diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury from this fall. Back then, the term TBI didn't really exist. You just sort of rubbed some dirt on it and continued to do your job. A few months later, I was home, and I got selected for Staff Sergeant and had orders to take my family on a three-year tour to Iwakuni, Japan.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4 Riders Group Ride BINGO 6pm
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 BINGO 6pm
12	13 Chapter 15 Riders Meeting 6pm	14	15	16 Boss's Day	17	18 Sons of Amer Legion BINGO 6pm
19 Riders Group Ride	20	21	22	23 Executive Committee Meeting 6pm	24	25 BINGO 6pm
26	27 Post 15 Membership Dinner 6pm Meeting 7pm	28	29	30	31 Hallow een	
						

November 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Riders Group Ride BINGO 6pm
2 Daylight Saving	3	4	5	6	7 Veterans Day Banquet 6:00 PM	8 BINGO 6pm
9	10 Chapter 15 Riders Meeting 6pm	11 Veterans Day Field of Flags 5:30am Parade 10am Ceremony 11am	12	13	14	15 Sons of Amer Legion BINGO 6pm
16 Riders Group Ride	17	18	19	20 Executive Committee Meeting 6pm	21	22 Commander's Breakfast 8am BINGO 6pm
23	24 Post 15 Membership Dinner 6pm Meeting 7pm	25	26	27 Thanksgiving	28	29 BINGO 6pm
30						

December 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4 Executive Committee Meeting 6pm	5	6 Priceville Christmas Parade BINGO 6pm
7 Pearl Harbor	8 Ch 15 Riders Post 15 Membership Dinner 6pm Meeting 7pm	9	10	11	12 Christmas Banquet 6:00 PM	13 Wreaths across America Army/Navy Game BINGO 6pm
14	15	16	17	18	19	20 Sons of Amer Legion BINGO 6pm
21 Riders Group Ride	22	23	24	25 Christmas	26 Winter Starts	27 BINGO 6pm
28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve			

AMERICAN LEGION RIDERS

Chapter 15

The Chapter 15 Riders honor the principles of The American Legion. Recent happenings included group rides to Veteran Memorials throughout the area, with the purpose of updating American Legion regional records. The Riders also stood flag lines during POW/MIA recognition service. If you are interested in learning more about the American Legion Riders, just contact one of our members or write to communications@allegionpost15.com.



AMERICAN LEGION

Post 15 Activities

Over the months of July through September, Post 15 recognized POW/MIA Day with the community, while also celebrating the Auxiliary, SAL, and Air Force birthdays. Unit 15 Auxiliary members were recognized with a gift to commemorate the Auxiliary's 106th birthday.



2025 ANNUAL FIELD OF FLAGS
AMERICAN LEGION AUXILIARY UNIT 15
HONORING OUR VETERANS
PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE



A Veterans Day tradition of displaying our Field of Flags honoring past, present, and future veterans will happen on Veterans Day, Tuesday, November 11, 2025.

Everyone is invited to sponsor a flag for \$10.00 each. The sponsor may name the veteran he/she is honoring, or simply sponsor a flag and a local veteran will be assigned. Flags will be labelled with sponsor's name and the name of the veteran being honored. Flags will be displayed as to allow sponsors to locate the flag(s) they have sponsored.

Flags will be displayed in front of the American Legion Post 15 from dawn to dusk on Veterans Day, Tuesday November 11, 2025 at 2607 Highway 31 South in Decatur, Alabama. (Weather permitting)

To sponsor a flag, please complete the following information and turn-in to the American Legion Auxiliary Unit 15 at the American Legion Post 15. Please make checks payable to The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 15 or ALA Unit 15 or sponsor online at www.zeffy.com

Sponsor's Name: _____

Sponsor's Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Veteran to be honored / Name: _____

Service Branch: _____

Mail or deliver this completed form and payment for \$10.00 each to:
The American Legion Auxiliary Unit 15
2607 Highway 31 S
Decatur, AL 35603-1505

Date Paid _____ *Cash / Ck #* _____ *Pmt Received by* _____
Posted _____

You may also order online using our platform at www.zeffy.com – see QR CODE at the top right of this page!