



# THE PATRIOT

Serving Morgan County, Alabama

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Members and Guests enjoying Family Day, filled with food and fun.



The annual Field of Flags adorned Post 15's front lawn again this year.

# COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

I hope everyone has had a wonderful holiday season. Now it's time to get back to work.

## Here's a Look at 2025 in Review

Over the past year, we accomplished a great deal:

- Made significant improvements and completed long-overdue maintenance to our facility.
- Our Honor Guard participated in numerous funerals honoring our fallen veterans—too many to list individually.
- Our VSO, Chaplain John Johnson, assisted well over 100 veterans in properly filing their VA claims in a timely manner.
- Hosted the annual JROTC Drill Competition.
- Restarted our Family Picnics, which were a great success and will continue into the new year. This event was a true collaboration between the Sons of the American Legion, the Auxiliary, and the Post.
- Continued the success of the Commander's Breakfast. The next breakfast will be held on Saturday, February 21, 2026, from 8:00–10:00 hrs.
- Participated in Memorial Day, POW/MIA, Veterans Day, and Wreaths Across America ceremonies.
- Our American Legion Riders provided flag lines for all ceremonies.
- Our facility was used to support several veterans by hosting birthday and wedding events.
- Assisted Auxiliary Unit 15 with the Field of Flags on Veterans Day.
- With the assistance of BSA Troop 91, we held a successful flag retirement ceremony, including a mass flag retirement in the back parking lot on June 13.

The list goes on. We are a very active Post and a rare group—one where all family members work in unison toward a common goal: supporting our veteran community. Let's keep the momentum rolling. I am looking forward to another great year of hard work and continued growth of our Post!

Bill King  
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.

## Senior Vice Commander's Comments

Comrades,

Happy New Year my fellow Legionnaires! It is my hope that you all had a very Merry Christmas and will have a prosperous New Year in 2026.

If your membership card does not show 2026, your membership has lapsed. The Adjutant and I will contact those who have not renewed in mid-January. We do not want to lose anyone as member due to lapsation.

Post 15 offers the following great benefits including:

1. Monthly meetings with meals.
2. Annual family picnic.
3. Quarterly Commanders breakfasts.
4. Special occasion banquets.
5. Support from our Veteran Service Officer for VA claims.
6. Camaraderie with fellow veterans.
7. An active Legion Riders Chapter, Auxiliary Unit, and Sons of the American Legion Squadron.

After renewing, consider the PUFL (Paid Up for Life) option to avoid future dues increases—you will receive an annual card from National. We currently have 40 PUFL members.

With the Legion Act (July 30, 2019), more veterans are now eligible for membership. If you know someone who has served honorably on active duty since December 7, 1941, encourage them to join. Invite them, welcome them, and help them feel part of our community.

We also need more volunteers for our Honor Guard. If interested, please contact Honor Guard Captain Bobby Train at 256-303-5932.

Be the One,

John Nelson

Post 15 Senior Vice Commander

# BE THE ONE

# Membership Drive: Growing Our Legion Family

As we roll into the new year, our recruiting effort continues with renewed energy and focus. Last quarter, I shared that Post 15 would be embarking on a membership campaign designed to reach out to veterans in our area who have not yet joined the American Legion, as well as those whose memberships have recently lapsed. That campaign is now underway, and I want to share our plan with you.

## Reconnecting with Former Members

Our first priority is to reach out to those veterans who were members of Post 15 but have allowed their membership to lapse. Like most Legion Posts, we experience about 15 to 20 percent attrition annually. For us, that means roughly 56 members per year who do not renew.

To address this, the 1st Vice Commander and I will be sending letters to former members from 2023 through 2025, inviting them to return to the Legion family. We will follow up with a phone call on **Saturday, January 17th**, giving us the opportunity for a more personal conversation about their intentions to renew. Our goal is to bring back at least 20 percent of these members, which could result in 16 to 20 renewals for the 2026 campaign.

## Reaching New Veterans

In addition to reconnecting with past members, we are launching a direct mail campaign to attract new ones. The Commander and I have purchased a veteran's list for the Decatur zip codes, and our first mailing will serve as a test run. We will be sending out **1,000 letters** to veterans in our community, inviting them to learn more about Post 15 and the American Legion.

Direct mail campaigns typically see a 2 to 5 percent response rate, which could bring in 20 to 30 new members. To make this invitation even more meaningful, we are including details about the **107th Legion Birthday Celebration**, which will take place at Post 15 on **March 13, 2026**. This event will serve as a perfect opportunity for prospective members to meet us, learn about our mission, and experience the camaraderie that makes the Legion so special.

# Membership Drive: (continued)

## How You Can Help

This is where I need your support. Welcoming new members is not just about signing them up—it's about making them feel at home in our Legion family. When these veterans walk through our doors, they should immediately sense the pride, fellowship, and purpose that define Post 15.

I am asking as many of you as possible to attend the birthday celebration and help greet, welcome, and befriend these potential new members. A warm handshake, a friendly conversation, and a genuine invitation to be part of our activities can make all the difference. Together, we can ensure that Post 15 continues to grow, thrive, and serve as a beacon of support for veterans in Decatur.

## Closing Thoughts

Membership is the lifeblood of the American Legion. Every new member strengthens our ability to serve veterans, their families, and our community. Every returning member reaffirms the values of honor, service, and remembrance that we hold dear.

With your help, this campaign will not only increase our numbers but also deepen our impact. Let's make 2026 a year of growth, unity, and renewed commitment to the mission of the American Legion.

Respectfully,

Jason Forguson  
Adjutant American Legion Post 15

With support from the Chapter 15 Riders, Post 15's parade float and the Field of Flags caught the attention of many throughout our community.



## Those Crayola Eating Marines

It has been a time-honored tradition for the services to poke fun at each other, probably since the beginning of the revolution. Through the decades Marines have been known for many things and gone by many names. From 1775 through the 1800s Marines were nicknamed “leathernecks” from the stiff leather collars worn by Marines to protect their necks from sword slashes and to enforce posture. This was followed by the Sea Soldiers or Soldiers of the Sea during the 19<sup>th</sup> century highlighting their dual role as a naval infantry. During this same era sailors often referred to the Marines as Gyrenes. This was a teasing jab-suggesting Marines were government issue troops. This name did not last as other names took over such as Jarhead- referring to the short haircuts.

During the Battle of Belleau Wood of WWI in 1918, German soldiers described the Marines a Teufel Hunden. Which, in German the actual compound noun would be Teufelshunde. This may have been misheard or deliberately stylized by the Marines who used what was supposed to be an insult into what we still refer to Marines as “Devil



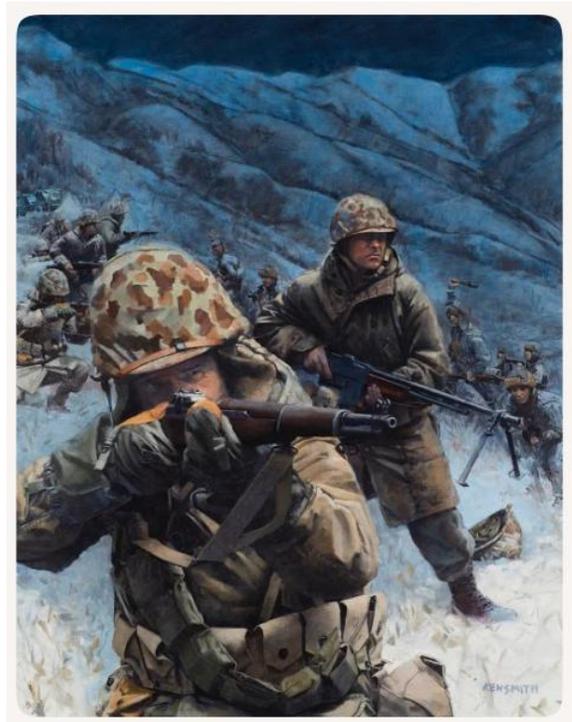
Dog”. The Marine Corps quickly embraced Devil Dog as a symbol of toughness resulting in posters and recruiting materials in WWI featuring a bulldog as a mascot labeled as a “Devil Dog”.

The following conflicts of WWII and Korea were no different. But most were names that originated from the units they belonged to, for example Marine Raiders. The Raiders were elite Marines trained for amphibious assaults and unconventional warfare. During the island-hopping campaign the Marine Raiders became well known for their ferocity and grit. On the Mankin Island Raid of August 1942, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Raider Battalion conducted a surprise amphibious assault on Japanese forces in the Gilbert Islands. About 211 Marine

Raiders deployed from submarines to destroy Japanese installations, gather

intelligence, and divert attention from Guadalcanal. This was the first ground offensive in the Pacific after Pearl Harbor and set the tone for the many battles to come. While the mission was a success, killing over 160 Japanese, the Marines lost 19. Sergeant Clyde Thomason was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, being the first enlisted Marine to receive the award during WWII.

During the Korean War, Marines who fought at the Chosin Reservoir between November and December 1950 became known as the “Frozen Chosin” or the “Chosin Few.” Roughly 15,000 Marines, alongside 15,000 UN troops, were encircled by an estimated 120,000 Chinese soldiers in brutal subzero conditions. Against overwhelming odds, the Marines executed a fighting withdrawal over 78 miles to the port of Hungnam, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy and preserving the integrity of their division — a feat that remains one of the most legendary episodes in Marine Corps history.



In the modern era, some Marine nicknames have endured while others faded into history. Terms of endearment like Devil Dog remain among the most common, while names such as Grunt and Jarhead are still widely used both within the Corps and by other branches of service. The tradition of poking fun at one another has long been embraced as a mark of honor among Marines and their sister services.

Though Marines are celebrated for their toughness and tenacity, they have not always been regarded as the most intellectual group. This perception gave rise to playful jabs from other branches — and even from within the Corps itself. Much like teasing the kid in school who ate glue, the humor evolved into a running joke about Marines being a little rough around the edges.

Over time, the jokes grew into part of Marine culture. Satire found a permanent home in Terminal Lance, a comic strip created by Marine veteran Maximilian Uriarte. Centered on the life of a Lance Corporal (E-3), the strip regularly lampoons military life and Marine Corps quirks and is prominently featured in the *Marine Corps Times*.

Once the internet came along, someone had the infinite wisdom to create a meme highlighting those Crayola Eating Marines. Then the smart phone hit the market

and the crayon eating Marines joke exploded. Several other memes were made, and Terminal Lance jumped on the trend and posted a strip in the Marine Corps Times highlighting the Army poking fun at Marines and their acceptance by Marines of the crayons.



The joke has continued to spread, not only on the internet and social media, but it has also found its way into birthday celebrations in the form of a Crayola themed cake and has furthered the Marine lore. This is of course all good fun, and Marines embrace the name-calling like they have throughout history. With grace and humility, admitting that even amongst the best of us there is room to laugh and poke fun at our missteps and shortfalls.

So, now when someone says, where did the Marines eating crayons come from? You can tell them it all started as a poke at Marine intelligence, or

lack thereof, and exploded on the internet resulting in birthday cakes shaped like Crayola boxes, edible crayons, and endless online references. Like *Leatherneck*, or *Devil Dog*, "Crayon Eater" became part of Marine Lore. What started as an insult turned into a badge of honor, a self-deprecating joke Marines proudly own.

# January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 New Year's Day	2	3 BINGO 6pm
4	5	6	7	8	9	10 BINGO 6pm
11	12	13	14	15	16	17 Sons of AL 9am BINGO 6pm
18	19 ML King Day	20	21	22 Executive Committee Meeting 6pm	23 Mid Winter Conference	24 BINGO 6pm
--Huntsville, AL--						15 - 18 January -----
25	26 Post 15 Membership Dinner 6pm Meeting 7pm	27	28	29	30	31 BINGO 6pm



# February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 12th District Meeting	2 Groundhog Day	3	4	5	6	7 Oratorical Contest BINGO 6pm
8 Super Bowl Party	9 Chapter 15 Riders Meeting 6pm	10	11	12 Lincoln's B-Day	13	14 BINGO 6pm
15	16 Presidents' Day	17 Mardi Gras	18 Ash Wednesday	19 Executive Committee Meeting 6pm	20	21 Commander's Breakfast 8-10am Sons of AL 9am BINGO 6pm
22	23 Post 15 Membership Dinner 6pm Meeting 7pm	24	25	26	27	28 BINGO 6pm



# March 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7 Riders Group Ride BINGO 6pm
8 Daylight Saving	9 Chapter 15 Riders Meeting 6pm	10	11	12	13 107th Legion Birthday Celebration	14 BINGO 6pm
15	16	17 St. Patrick's Day	18	19 Executive Committee Meeting 6pm	20	21 Sons of American Legion 9 am BINGO 6pm
22 Riders Group Ride	23 Post 15 Membership Dinner 6pm Meeting 7pm	24	25	26	27	28 BINGO 6pm
29	30	31				



**AMERICAN  
LEGION  
RIDERS**

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## **Chapter 15**

### **Riding with Purpose: A Message from the Legion Riders President**

Post 15 Riders,

As we close another quarter here at the American Legion Post 15 in Decatur, I want to take a moment to reflect on the incredible journey we've shared as Legion Riders. Our mission has always been more than just the open road—it's about service, remembrance, and community. Every mile we ride carries the weight of our commitment to veterans, their families, and the values that unite us under the American Legion banner.

#### **Celebrating Our Recent Rides and Events**

This past quarter has been filled with meaningful moments. We joined together for memorial rides honoring our fallen heroes, ensuring that their sacrifices are never forgotten. Each time we roll out in formation, flags flying proudly, we remind our community that freedom is not free and that the American Legion Riders stand ready to honor those who gave all.

We also participated in Veterans Day, Memorial Day and Purple Heart Ceremonies. Whether it contributed to the personal and professional growth of our local JROTC, supporting families in need, or lending a hand at Post 15 functions, our Riders showed up with heart and dedication. These efforts prove that our motorcycles are more than machines, they are vehicles of service and symbols of unity.

#### **Looking Ahead: Upcoming Opportunities**

The road ahead is just as promising. In the coming months, we have several rides and events planned that will continue to strengthen our bonds and extend our impact. Our JROTC Competition is on the horizon, and I encourage every Rider to participate. Not only does this event increase visibility of our organization, but it also showcases the spirit of the Legion Riders to the wider Decatur community.

This past year as we visited and investigated the status of Northern Alabama's Veteran's Parks and Memorials, we photographed and uploaded our praise and concerns to the American Legion website. This gives us an idea of what kind of shape the memorials are in now for future maintenance needs.

#### **Honoring Our Members**

No organization thrives without the dedication of its members, and I want to take a moment to recognize the Riders who have gone above and beyond this quarter. From organizing rides to volunteering at the Post, your contributions are the backbone of our success. A special thank you to Jane Train for planning our rides, and to Bobby Train for supporting us as a follow vehicle and use of your trailer for the parade float (even though the parade was canceled). I would also like to thank Michael and Ruth, your addition to the Riders has been an asset to the chapter with your leadership and all-important safety briefs.

Each new Rider brings fresh energy and perspective, strengthening our mission. To our seasoned members, thank you for mentoring and guiding those who are just beginning their journey with us. Together, we ensure that the traditions and values of the Legion Riders endure.

# Chapter 15 (continued)

## The Spirit of Brotherhood and Patriotism

At its core, being a Legion Rider is about more than motorcycles—it's about living out the values of the American Legion. We ride to honor, to serve, and to remember. We ride to remind our community that veterans are never forgotten and that their families are always supported.

Every time we gather, whether it's for a ride, a meeting, or a community event, we reaffirm our commitment to one another. Brotherhood, patriotism, and service are not just words—they are the foundation of who we are. And in these times, when unity and compassion are more important than ever, the Legion Riders stand as a shining example of what it means to serve with pride.

## A Call to Action

As we move into the next quarter, I encourage each of you to stay engaged. Attend meetings, participate in rides, volunteer at the Post, and continue to be ambassadors of the American Legion in our community. Your presence matters, and your contributions make a difference.

If you haven't joined us on a ride yet, I invite you to experience the camaraderie firsthand. There's nothing quite like the feeling of riding in formation, knowing that every mile is dedicated to a cause greater than ourselves. And if riding isn't your calling, there are countless other ways to support our mission—whether through volunteering, fundraising, or simply spreading the word about what we do.

## Closing Thoughts

Riders, the road ahead is long, but it is paved with purpose. As Legion Riders of Post 15, we carry the torch of service and remembrance, ensuring that our veterans and their families are honored and supported. Let us continue to ride with pride, serve with heart, and live out the values that define us.

Thank you for your dedication, your service, and your spirit. Together, we are more than Riders—we are guardians of memory, champions of community, and proud members of the American Legion family.

Ride safe, ride proud, and ride with purpose.

Respectfully,  
Jason Forguson  
Director, American Legion Riders Post 15 – Decatur, Alabama

# AMERICAN LEGION

## Post 15 Activities

Over the months of October through December, Post 15 brought back the annual Family Day and recognized Veterans Day with the community.

