

# American Legion

120 North Jackson Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36104

[www.legional.org](http://www.legional.org) (334) 262-6638 or (800) 234-5544

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Mid-Winter Conference January 16-18, 2015

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*This year's Mid-Winter Conference will be held in Orange Beach, Alabama at the Perdido Beach Resort. The room rate \$99.00 for a standard room. There are suites that can be reserved the rates are \$239.00 for a one bedroom suite and \$339.00 for a two bedroom suite. To make reservations please call 800-634-8001 and use booking ID # 10370 in order to receive our special rate. If you would rather use the internet use [www.perdidobeachresort.com](http://www.perdidobeachresort.com). The hotel will accept reservations until the cutoff of December 22, 2014. If you make your reservations after this date you may or may not be given the special rate of \$99.00. Check-in time is 4:00 pm and check-out time is 12:00 pm, so please make plans accordingly. We are very excited to be at the beach in January and we hope to see you there. More information will be provided in the next newsletter. Should you have any questions before then, please do not hesitate to call Department Headquarters.*

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## Upcoming Events

### January 16

January 16-18, 2015 Mid-Winter Conference Perdido Beach Resort

### May 31

May 31 – June 6, 2015 Boys State, University of Alabama

### June 18

June 18 – June 21  
Department Convention  
Huntsville Marriott

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# NOTES FROM THE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER

Thanks to all who attended this year's Fall Leadership Conference. Attendance was better than normal. I hope everyone left the Conference knowing our Committees and Commissions are hard at work putting together programs and activities together that will grow our Alabama American Legion and increase our visibility in our communities and across the state. If anyone has any ideas or suggestions of how we can better do this, please send them to Department Headquarters so they can be considered. We need everyone involved if we are to achieve our goals for this year.

I want to restate this year's goals for the Department so everyone has the opportunity to help achieve them. Remember, the Department can only be as good as the performance of posts, districts and divisions -- we must all work together if we want our Department to better serve our veterans and our communities. These are our goals for this year:

- Exceed our 2015 membership targets at all levels.
- Implement the post assessment program.
- Achieve 100% submission of Consolidated Post Report.
- Improve professionalism at all levels.
- Increase program fund-raising.
- Promote the Legion family environment.

The Department has exceeded membership goals every month this year so far, which is very good -- but the "easy-picking" is pretty much over in another month. If we are to exceed this year's membership target of 19,000, we really need to improve on retaining our current members. We should be retaining at least 90% of last year's members, then adding to that our new members. Now is the time to call and/or visit those who have not yet renewed -- the personal touch is very effective! While the Department as a whole is doing OK, we have several posts that are lagging -- District Commanders, please contact them to see what help they need. Everyone needs to do their share.

We have a couple of District revitalizations coming up in December, and a team from National will be here to help. Anyone who may want to help as well as learn how a revitalization is conducted, please let your District or Division Commander know so we can get them included. We will be conducting other revitalizations this year, but using our own resources and manpower. More will be coming on these programs in the immediate future.

My thanks to everyone who supported and attended the State POW/MIA Ceremony on September 20th at the State Capital. It was a huge success. While this event is conducted by Rolling Thunder of Alabama, The American Legion is a co-sponsor. Many thanks to all the Alabama American Legion Riders that came out for the event -- several times the

# **NOTES FROM THE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER**

## **CONTINUED**

number of previous years!! However, on a sad note, three days after the event we lost a great patriot and friend. Don Westwood, President of Alabama Rolling Thunder Chapter 1 and founder of the POW/MIA Ceremony, passed away. Don was a great personal friend, tireless veteran advocate, and decorated veteran. He will be missed, but we need to ensure his legacy continues in the State POW/MIA Ceremony.

Now is the time to be pushing the Oratorical Scholarship Speech Contest. Willie Rogers and his committee have put together a great program, but we need contestants from posts throughout the state to make this a successful program. Best way to generate interest is face-to-face contact with students, and more especially their parents. We cannot rely on the schools alone pushing this program.

I want to close by asking you to reflect on the same statement provided in the August newsletter:

*“When did The American Legion surrender our role as the predominate voice of the American Veteran?”*

We can reclaim that role by knowing who we are and what we stand for, and having the determination and dedication necessary to make changes happen. I am confident the members of our Alabama American Legion have what it takes reestablish that role for which The American Legion has been known for over the past almost 100 years. We serve a very important role for our veterans and our Nation. Let's show what we can do!!

**REMEMBER THAT THE AMERICAN LEGION IS AN ORGANIZATION DEVOTED TO SERVICE TO AND SUPPORT OF OUR VETERANS AND OUR COMMUNITIES!**

## **24<sup>th</sup> District Commander Vann Daughtry**

Pepperell Post 152 from Opelika, Alabama will be in charge of the flag raising October 18 at the Syrup Sopping in Lochapoka, Alabama. This is the first time this has been done. Syrup Sopping Day is a historical fair. Lots of vendors and people visit Lochapoka every year for this event. This is the first time this has been done and will help get the word out about American Legion. Post Commander Daughtry and 24th District Commander will be in charge of raising the flag this year.

**Opelika's Veterans Day:** Everyone is invited to hear our keynote speaker, CSM Bennie Adkins, he is the veteran that just received the Medal of Honor.

Vann Daughtry  
24th District commander

### ***Invitation to the Veterans Rally in the Park***

WHO: Veterans, family members & citizens across Alabama.

WHAT: "The Veterans Rally in the Park".

WHEN: October 25, 2014 10 am - Noon

WHERE: Lakeside Park, 2801 Stemley Bridge Road Pell City, AL 35125

WHY: Bring attention to the plight of veterans and their families in the 3rd Congressional District of Alabama, the state of Alabama and across America. This is an American issue that will no longer be ignored.

### **Notes from Christana Frazier**

The American Legion is off to good start for the 2014-2015 year. We must continue to do more and join Commander Stacey in increasing **The Department of Alabama's Membership.**

I am reaching out to all Division, District, and Post Commanders to tap in one of Alabama's greatest Veteran resources, **The Female Veterans.** They are out there and we must continue to do what we can to bring them on board and become a part of the Legion family.

Thanks to the Posts that continue to hold events that include the Female Veterans and their family members.

If I can be of any assistance, please contact me.

For God and Country,  
Christana Hudson-Frazier  
American Legion Women Veteran Coordinator

## Adjutant's Comments

Here is a little about me. I have recently retired from the U.S. Army with my date being 1 November after serving 21 years as a Flight Engineer on CH-47 D/F helicopters. During my time in the Army I have performed many roles, my primary being repair of the aircraft. Other duties were platoon sergeant, production control NCOIC, and brigade and battalion level standardization instructor. I have been a member of the American Legion since the age of 19. I am now 40 married to Deborah and we have two sons, Taylor 14 years old, and Joseph 16 months old.

Being appointed as the new Adjutant for the American Legion Department of Alabama is a huge honor for me. This is my definition of a dream job. I am hitting the ground running here and I have already met a great deal of the leadership within the state. My goal for the next two years is to visit every post in Alabama. I am here to help all the posts meet and exceed their membership goals. I look forward to working with each and every one of you. In the future you will see in my little corner of the newsletter things I have done or attended during that past month. You will also see what I'm going to label now as the "Good Idea Fairy" column, this is where I will place the recruiting, fund raising, and post ideas that I have encountered that month.

The month of September was extremely busy for me. Along with trying to get procedures down here at Department I was also travelling every weekend to ensure some of the posts were getting the support they needed. I have attended 21<sup>st</sup> and 35<sup>th</sup> District meetings, POW/MIA ceremony here in Montgomery, 9/11 annual stair climb at the RSA tower, town of Madison Fair, and VA town hall meetings.

One of the goals I have set for myself is to change the stigma of the American Legion here in Alabama. In general the younger generation see the American Legion as a place where a bunch of old vets get together to tell war stories. This to me is a huge misconception. Yes we do all as veterans tend to tell war stories and sit at the bar, however that is not what the American Legion is intended nor what we are currently doing. To overcome this hurdle we must actively recruit membership. As a whole our organization has not captured the current era of veterans. These young vets often come with their families. We have spent so much time deployed or preparing to deploy we do not like to do activities that exclude our family. So I challenge all Legionnaires to actively recruit OEF/OIF veterans. Vietnam veterans you are our senior leadership now, you all must educate the OEF/OIF veterans of what the American Legion is supposed to be doing and welcome them into the fold. Knowledge of the American Legion programs is your most effective recruiting tool. Make sure you are smart on all our programs while you're recruiting. You will find that people will stand in line to hear about the programs and be more willing to join the organization.

Again I look forward to serving our veteran community the best I can. Remember we "NEVER LEAVE ANYONE BEHIND"!

## "Good Idea Fairy"

**Tip Number 1:** Appoint a dedicated member of your post as a Recruiter and acknowledge them for their accomplishments. (Post 229 you know what I'm talking about)

**Tip Number 2:** Active recruiting is 200% more effective than passive. So get out there and ask people if they are veterans then ask if they are a member. Get the conversation started and you will find membership will explode.

**Tip Number 3:** Use the "Why you" pamphlets but insert a letter from your post. Even more effective if you hand write something on the letter addressing that particular veteran.

**Tip Number 4:** Don't be afraid to approach businesses within your community to set up recruiting tables. Refer to 1-3 to be a successful one.

**Tip Number 5:** If you are using the donation bucket as a means to collect donations, make it a clear container and always start off with about 15 one dollar bills in there. This is a mental trick to get the ball rolling.



Department Adjutant Greg Akers addressing the attendees of the Annual 9-11 Memorial Stair Climb in Montgomery, Alabama.

# From the desk of Jr. Vice Commander Jim Jeffries

Dear Comrades in Arms and the American Legion Family,

Re: Fall Leadership Conference After Action Report

## **Americanism Commission:**

Several commissions reside in this category and all presented excellent updates. The commission chairs are Frank Hannah, Baseball; George Krigbaum, Boy Scouts; O.L. Pete Johnson, Boys State; Ron Haygood, Children & Youth; and Willie Rogers, Oratorical. All of the commissions have programs in place for 2015 which you'll hear more about in future newsletters and especially if you attend the Mid – Winter Conference.

## **POW – MIA Commission:**

Our 2014 mission was the 3rd Annual POW – MIA Recognition Day 2014 Ceremony at the State Capitol Building.

The ceremony set a new attendance record and was by all comments well received. The American Legion Department of Alabama, among a coalition of veterans' service organizations was the lead sponsor. The planning committee members representing various VSO's were for the most part also Legionnaires. Adjutant Braxton Bridgers represented The Department of Alabama. The keynote speaker was acclaimed speaker and author Sy Lichtenfeld. Sy is a former W II POW who escaped captivity from both the Germans and Russians. Sy is a Paid Up For Life member of Post 199 Fairhope, on the Board of Directors Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs, and President of the elite 106 Infantry Division Golden Lions.

## **October Thought:**

As we go about our duties, we are sometimes disappointed in the results and wonder what happened. Quite often, it's a matter of communication.

“DON'T ASSUME ANYBODY KNOWS ANYTHING UNLESS YOU TELL THEM YOURSELF” COL. J.C. HARDEE USMC

Respectfully,

Jim Jeffries  
Jr. Vice Commander  
The American Legion  
Department Of Alabama

## ***From the Desk of Jim Johnson, Public Relations Officer***

STILL SERVING AMERICA!

Greetings American Legion Members:

This event took place over the weekend in the District 22 area of the state, so I wanted to give you an update.

The first All Veterans and Family Reunion was an excellent event sponsored by the Tuscaloosa Tourism and Sports Commission. They went all out to welcome as many veterans from Alabama as possible.

The Honor Ride on Friday night went very well with beautiful weather and plenty of food and entertainment following. Thanks to all American Legion Riders for participating with such short notice. The riders went from Home Depot to the VA Hospital where it was met with many people who seemed to be very appreciative. Then it was on down Veterans Memorial Blvd, all decked out with American Flags, to the new Market Place on Jack Warner Parkway where the reception took place. The weather was perfect!



On Saturday was the event at the Dina Washington Cultural Arts Center. Thanks to State Service Officer Mark Sullivan, and members from Post 124 and Post 40, we were able to have a booth the entire day and greet many veterans.



*Post 123 Members greet Veterans on Saturday, September 27, 2014 at the Department of Alabama booth.*

We were aware that this year's reunion was in conflict with several important events statewide, including the Department of Alabama's Fall Conference. The plan is to hold the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual All Veterans and Family Reunion next year during the last weekend of August in an effort to avoid as many conflicts as possible.

If you attended the reunion and have suggestions on needed improvements, please let me know. The planning committee will meet soon.

Again thanks to all who came.

Jim Johnson  
Public Relations Officer  
Department of Alabama  
(205) 393-8451



# Public Relations: A New Look for the Department

The Department of Alabama website now has a new look. Check it out at [www.legional.org](http://www.legional.org) . Much of the site is still under construction, but your review and comments can be helpful. The new look has more of a marketing focus, than just leader/member information. Also, the look is geared to a younger audience.

A mobile (mobi) site and Department of Alabama smart phone app are currently under construction as well.

There is now has a QR code that you can download and use for your marketing handouts. Smart phone users can scan the QR code, which will take them instantly to the website. To use the QR code, you will need to download a free QR code reader into your smart phone, then scan the QR code below.



Another option available for smart phone users is a text code that will enable users to opt-in to text messages. Users can text "legional" or "40691". If you use this information in your advertising flyers, then be sure to use the boxed disclaimer. The text fees are based on the users' phone plan.

Message and data rates may apply. Messages will be delivered by mobile in sms format. Message frequency depends on need to communicate information. For help, text "HELP" to 40691, or text "STOP" to opt out.

One other item is an updated message on the department 800 number (1-800-234-5544). The Department staff will answer callers during normal business hours and after hours the message will include information to direct them to our website.

Please take some time and check out the new website and other marketing, public relations initiatives and let us know what you think. We hope that you will find the options user friendly and informative.

**District 33 Annual Picnic October 19, 2014  
American Legion Post 250 at Fowl River  
Schedule of events**

**10:00**

**Ceremonial participants practice ritual  
Lounge opens until 10:45**

**11:00**

**Assemble for flag retirement ceremony  
Post 250 commander calls to “Post the colors”  
Colors in place, Commander introduces District Chaplain  
Following prayer Post Cdr. leads pledge of allegiance  
Jr. Girls perform music  
Post Cdr. introduces District Commander  
Acknowledge VIP’s and any awards (*as provided by District 33*)  
Post Cdr. begins ceremony**

**Upon conclusion of ceremony**

**Lounge reopens  
District Cdr. and crew check for current 2015 Early Bird MEMBERSHIP CARD  
Post 250 Chaplain delivers blessing of food  
Begin serving food**

**1:00 PM**

**Baked goods auction, raffle and events in main ball room**

**PUBLIC AND ALL VETERANS INVITED**

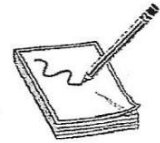
**10950 Dauphin Island Parkway, Theodore AL 36582**

**Ph. 251-973-1116 Fax 973-1157**

[www.alpost250.org](http://www.alpost250.org)



*From The Desk of the  
National Executive Committeeman  
~ Willis Frazier ~*



Greetings Fellow Legionnaires,

We had a successful 2014 American Legion National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. It was held Aug. 23-29. During the convention we elected a new National Commander, Mike Helms from Nebraska. 5 New National Vice- Commanders we also elected. The National Vice-Commander that will represent The Department of Alabama is Richard Neville from North Carolina.

President Obama addressed the Convention and other Guests. He addressed the concerns and issues at the VA Medical Centers and ensured us that they will be corrected. He said "It is our duty as a Nation to care for our Veterans." He thanked Commander Dillinger and The American Legion for the great work that we do on behalf of Veterans. The President introduced the new Secretary of Veterans Affairs. He is the former CEO of Procter & Gamble, Robert A, McDonald. He assured us that he had the full support of the White House to fix what is wrong with VA.

Sen. Sanders (Senate Chairman of Veterans Affairs) and Rep. Miller (House Chairman of Veterans Affairs) echoed what the President stated about VA.

Several Resolutions were adopted during the Convention. These will be passed on to the Senate and asked for their consideration to be included in Bills that will be brought before the House and Senate.

Some of the Resolutions adopted were:

1. Include Dental Care in VA Care.
2. Oppose any organization or for profit group that charge Veterans for assisting with claims.
3. Oppose taxing disability pay.
4. The Post 9/11 Veterans Caregivers Act be retroactive to all wars.
5. All protest during Military funerals must be at least one (1) mile from the funeral.
6. The destruction of The United States Flag a crime.

The Department is looking forward to visits from the National Commander Helms, Leading Candidate Dale Barnette (Georgia), and our National Vice-Commander.

Thanks to all Legionnaires for your hard work in helping to increase our membership.

I look forward to my visits to the Posts in this great Department.

If I can be of any assistance or if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

For God and Country,

*Willis Frazier*

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMAN



ALABAMA

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The Alabama Veterans Memorial Park

\$25 per bike and \$10 for additional rider. All proceeds be dedicated towards the maintenance of the Hall of Honor. Which contains the names of 11,000 + Alabamians who dies as a result of war since 1900.

Ride will start at noon at the Riders Harley Davison of Trussville, travel to the Alabama Veterans Memorial Park, then back to Riders where the raffle will be held and food will be served.

For information and registration for please go to [www.alabamaveterans.org](http://www.alabamaveterans.org) or call us at (205) 305-6749

**Greetings American Legion Members:**

**Subject: Keeping the Campfires Burning**

**What does that mean? Please watch National Commander Helm present his talk on the Four Pillars earlier this week. Go to the following link.**

**<http://www.legion.org/commander/224840/helm-harkens-back-four-pillars>**

**Are you working with your local press to obtain coverage of your events? Public Relations is the image of your American Legion Post. What is that image? Don't be hesitant to ask people in your area. Talk with the media and the mayor. You will get some honest evaluations. Is your campfire burning?**

**Have you heard radio PSAs or seen them on TV? If not, please call your local stations and ask them if they have received them. If not, please send me their contact information.**

**Is your campfire burning?**

**Jim**

**Jim Johnson  
Public Relations Officer  
Department of Alabama American Legion  
(205) 393-8451**