



# DISTRICT 23 DISPATCH

*Published specifically for the members of Department of Alabama District 23*

**Winter 2026**

**Volume IV Issue IV**

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## Member Posts

Post 6 -Clanton  
Post 17 -Talladega  
Post 45 -Sylacauga  
Post 47 -W. Blockton  
Post 68 -Childersburg  
Post 105 -Goodwater  
Post 131-Columbiana  
Post 138 -Alabaster  
Post 195 -Sterrett  
Post 216- -Clanton  
Post 343 -Clanton  
Post 555 -Pelham



## Next District Meeting

### Winter District 23 Meeting 2026

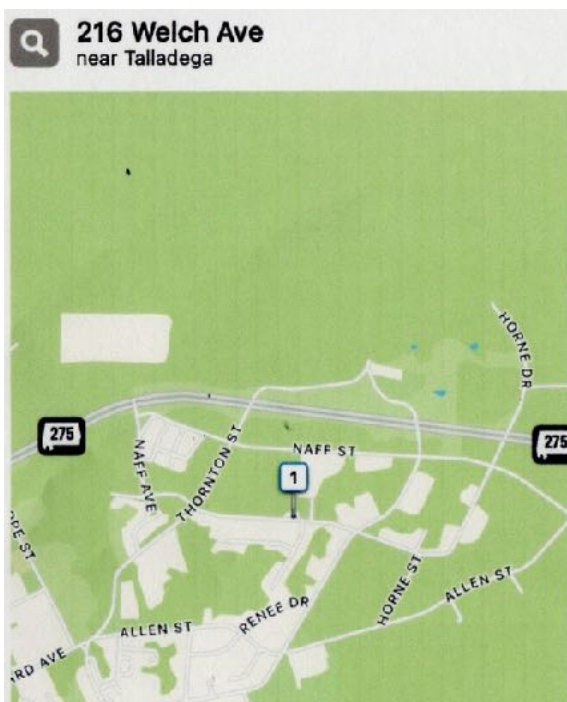
**When:** Saturday February 7, 2026  
10:00 am-12:00 pm

**Where:** Post 17  
216 Welch Ave  
Talladega, AL

### Directions to Meeting Location

#### The American Legion Post 45

From I-20 take exit 168 on to Highway 77 towards Talladega.  
Follow Hywy 77 to SR-275  
Turn left onto 275 and follow to Thornton Street, Turn right on to Thornton  
Follow Thornton to Welch Street.  
Turn left on Welch Street, follow to 216.  
Post will be on the left.





## Your guide to a successful Be the One event

If you are coordinating an event at your post, district or department related to Be the One, there are resources and materials to assist you. Below is a sampling of items that will help you get started. These and others are all available at [legion.org/betheone/resources](https://legion.org/betheone/resources)

### How to get started: Video series

**For an outreach activity:** An experienced event coordinator explains how to get started and put on a successful event.

**For a walk:** Key steps to host a successful Be the One walk or similar activities.

### Engage your community

**Videos:** A step by step guide on how to bring other organizations into your event.

**Brochure:** A Be the One trifold is intentionally left blank inside so you can customize it with local resources and share with your community.

**Video:** A Legionnaire explains how to customize and use the Be the One trifold.

### Reach out to media

**Sample media advisory:** Customize and invite your local media to cover an upcoming event.

**Sample press release:** Customize and send a press release so your local media can help promote the event to the community.

**How to-video:** Best practices on how to engage local media.

### Get social

**Social media:** Ready-to-use graphics can easily be adapted or shared as is on your social media channels.

### Use physical displays

**Materials:** There are print-ready pop-up banners, flags, posters, table covers and more items available for your event. Visit the resource page, download the items you want and then order them from a local print shop.

**Post activation kit:** View the video to learn how a post did a special order from Emblem Sales for a successful event.







## Public Relations Update

### *DISTRICT 23 DISPATCH*

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The District 23 Quarterly welcomes articles from Posts within the District to be published.

Recommended subject matter is past and future activities of your Post or any American Legion or Veteran-related subject matter.

The articles need to be proofed and “print ready” prior to sending to the editor for publication. If the article includes graphics or photos, it is helpful to include additional separate photos in Jpeg format along with your article.

The newsletter will be published on the first of the quarter prior to the meeting month. Deadline for articles will be two weeks prior to the publishing date. A reminder will be sent to each Post prior to deadline.

Items for publication are accepted on Executive Committee approval, available space and American Legion regulations. Please submit articles via email to Ron Koonce, Editor at: [ron.koonce@gmail.com](mailto:ron.koonce@gmail.com)

*For God & Country*  
*Ron Koonce*  
*Public Relations Officer*

*Follow the District 23 news on Facebook*  
[https://www.facebook.com/  
alabama23district](https://www.facebook.com/alabama23district)



KEEP THE LEGION  
STRONG

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*Submit articles prior to the no later than 14 days for publication the prior to the monthly quarterly meeting. We reserve the right to*

*edit any submissions for the purpose of publication. Letters to the Editor must include name, address and telephone number. Names will be withheld upon re-quest. Send email to: ron.koonce@gmail.com*

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District 23*

## District 23 Membership Status as of 1/22/26

The goal is still to have every post at or over 100% by end of March. As of January, 22 2026,  
District 23 is at 77.46%

Each Post is encourage to take advantage of your time to do buddy checks. We all know veterans that are alone at this time of the year. It is especially important to contact them. Make a visit if possible. Also local nursing homes with veterans. They would appreciate a visit.

**23rd District Commander - Preston Bell - 205-532-3024**

Post	New	PUFL	Reg	HQ Trans	Total	Goal	Percent	Reten %
6	2	1	14	0	17	16	106.25%	93.75%
17	2	2	45	0	49	57	85.96%	81.03%
45	5	4	37	0	46	55	83.64%	70.69%
47	0	4	24	0	28	32	87.50%	84.85%
68	2	2	13	0	17	23	73.91%	65.22%
105	0	1	13	0	14	16	87.50%	87.50%
131	4	3	45	4	56	60	93.33%	78.69%
138	0	7	50	0	57	82	69.51%	69.51%
195	0	1	15	1	17	16	106.25%	100.00%
216	2	3	24	2	31	30	103.33%	77.14%
343	0	1	22	0	23	33	69.70%	69.70%
555	1	14	143	5	163	195	83.59%	78.89%
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>518</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>84.23%</b>	<b>77.46%</b>



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*Send email to:  
ron.koonce@gmail.com*

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## NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM Willie Rogers – Chairman – 334-467-5039

**ELIGIBILITY:** Eligible participants in The American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest shall be citizens of or lawful permanent residents of the United States.

All contestants must be bona fide students herein described as any students under the age of twenty (20) years on the date of the National Contest who is presently enrolled in a high school or junior high school (public, parochial, military, private or state accredited home school) in which the curriculum of said school is of high school level commencing with grade nine (9) and terminating with grade twelve (12). Students must be enrolled in high school or junior high school during the time of participation at any level of The American Legion National High School Oratorical Contest.

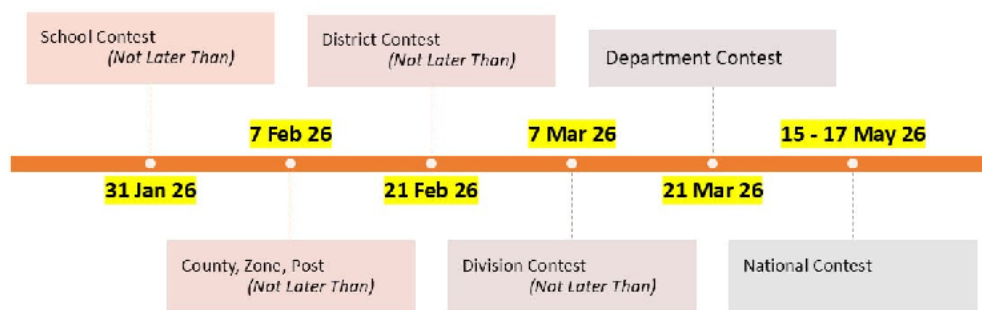
The three finalists of the National Contest will be ineligible for further participation at any level.

To receive the first-place award at any level within the Department of Alabama, the winner must represent the American Legion at the next level of the contest.

## DEPARTMENT OF ALABAMA ORATORICAL CONTEST DATES

2025-2026

Oratorical Contest Schedule



## National Commander Wiley's Incentive Pin



### NATIONAL COMMANDER DAN K. WILEY'S 2026 MEMBERSHIP EXCELLENCE INCENTIVE PIN CERTIFICATION FORM

Please make sure that the address, phone number and email address provided is for the recruiter and not the post.



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address or PO Box: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ MAIL TO RECRUITER ☐ MAIL TO POST

TO QUALIFY YOU NEED TO RECRUIT (2) NEW MEMBERS INTO THE AMERICAN LEGION.

(A NEW MEMBER IS DEFINED AS ANY ELIGIBLE VETERAN JOINING FOR THE 2026 MEMBERSHIP YEAR WHO WAS NOT A MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN LEGION DURING THE 2025 MEMBERSHIP YEAR). **TRANSFERS DO NOT COUNT AS NEW MEMBERS.**)

NEW AUXILIARY MEMBERS AND SAL MEMBERS DO NOT COUNT TOWARDS THIS INCENTIVE. PLEASE FORWARD THE NAMES OF NEW SAL MEMBERS OR AUXILIARY MEMBERS TO YOUR SQUADRON OR UNIT FOR USE IN THEIR RESPECTIVE INCENTIVE PROGRAMS. CONTACT YOUR STATE HEADQUARTERS FOR MORE INFORMATION.

PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT THE MEMBERS HAVE BEEN PROCESSED BEFORE SUBMISSION.  
COINS WILL NOT BE MAILED UNTIL THEY ARE VERIFIED ON THE NATIONAL DATABASE.

**THE DEADLINE FOR THIS INCENTIVE IS JUNE 30, 2026, OR UNTIL SUPPLIES ARE EXHAUSTED.**

(2) NEW MEMBERS:

(Include full name, ID number, department, post)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Return completed forms to:  
The American Legion  
Internal Affairs & Membership Division  
PO Box 1055  
Indianapolis, IN 46206

Fax: 317-630-1413  
Email: [kadams@legion.org](mailto:kadams@legion.org)



# Legion Family Mid-Winter

This year's Mid-Winter Conference was held at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Huntsville, Alabama January 15-18, 2026.

## **Sons of American Legion Alabama Detachment**

The Detachment of Alabama Midwinter Conference was held on 17 January in Huntsville in conjunction with the Department conference, where Legion Family Members from across the state gathered to learn, reconnect, and conduct business. SAL Detachment of Alabama VC Walker, a Squadron 555 member was able to share a strong membership report for Area 3, including all three 23<sup>rd</sup> District Squadrons with Squadron 17 leading the way at 145%, Squadron 131 over 100%, and Squadron 555 already closing in on the February target.

Department Commander Willie Rogers addressed the SAL, praising their work toward strengthening the Legion's Four Pillars and speaking about the communication, involvement, and leadership necessary to drive progress in the organization.

During his address, Detachment Commander Paul Woodyard also stressed the importance of SAL involvement, urging Sons to show up and actively participate in district meetings; hopefully there will be a good turnout of SAL members at the upcoming D23 meeting in Talladega.

At the conference, information was shared regarding the Alabama Yellowhammer College (AYLC). Those in officer positions (or interested in becoming an officer) should prepare to attend AYLC by completing the free online Legion Basic Training course and possessing a uniform cover. Legionnaires will coordinate the application process through their District Commander; Sons will send applications to their Detachment Vice Commander.

A highlight of the SAL conference was a presentation by Squadron 114 Adjutant, Doc Scheffler, regarding efforts to get SAL VAVS Reps placed at Alabama's three VAMCs, what is needed, and how both Sons and the broader Legion Family can get involved to help support our Veterans in the VA medical system and fulfill their needs through manpower and materiel. We hope to have an update soon about SAL VAVS Rep certification by the individual hospitals.



Commander Willy Rogers - Commander Paul Woodyard



Commander Paul Woodyard addresses the Detachment



Squadron 114 Adjutant, Don Scheffler gives VAVS update

## *Post 17*

### *Talladega, Alabama*



### **Post 17 brings in the New Year.**

Thanks for every one that can out to bring in the 2026 New Year.

### **Post 17 treats Veterans to a Christmas Party**



Some of our post members were able to attend the resident Christmas party today at the Col. Robert L. Howard State Veterans Home and got to celebrate the holidays with these very special veterans. There was food, gifts, laughs and lots of memories made. Thank you to all who were able to make it out to this wonderful event!



## Matthew Blount Post 555

*Pelham, AL*



Members of Post 555 receive award from the Shelby County Retired Senior Volunteer Program for provided over 5,000 hours of volunteer service to veterans and the community.



Post 555 Triple Nichole Baseball team placed second in the 2025 National American Legion Baseball tournament. Commander Skip Mize receives trophy from Head Coach Jonathan Ott.



Members of Post 555 prepare 100 gift bags for the Veteran's Hospital Christmas Caravan.

L-R- Chic Cecchini, Ron Koonce, Nancy Waller, Frank Lakotich, and Ray Pata.

### Post 555 Family Thanksgiving Dinner

Post 555 provides the annual Thanksgiving dinner for the Post 555 family in appreciation of their membership and support.



Post 555 participates in Pelham Police Night Out



*District 23/Winter*



## Post 131 Columbiana, Alabama

Post 555 provides the annual Thanksgiving dinner to the Post 555 family in appreciation of their

### Columbiana Christmas Parade



There was a great time at the Columbiana Christmas Parade being with the American Legion and Auxiliary Post 131. Thanks to everybody that made it possible.

### Supporting Veterans



Mayor Elect [Lisa Strickland Davis](#) stands with [American Legion Post 131 Columbiana, AL](#) in a show of support to stop Veteran Suicide. Let's make a difference in our community by serving those who served this country.

### The American Legion Post 131 from Columbiana Flag Education

The American legion Post 131 Columbiana was invited to Columbiana Middle School to teach students how to display, and fold the American Flag. The 6th grade classes were excited to put hands on and lined up with smiling faces and loads of questions.



### Columbiana Middle School Veterans



Members of Post 131 participates in Columbiana Middle School Veterans Program



L-R: Perry Edwards, Charles Duncan, Dave Swanson, Gerry snell, Thomas Bell (SAL), David Miller.

*District 23/Winter*