



**The American Legion
Department of Maryland
Damascus Post 171
PO Box 171
Damascus, Maryland 20872**

**Steve Monteiro
Commander**

2023 – 2024

**Anita Trotter
Adjutant**

**POST MEMBER MEETING MINUTES
March 11, 2024**

ATTENDANCE:

Executive Committee	
Commander: Steve Monteiro	Finance Officer: Ray Lewandowski
1 st Vice Commander: Charles Bradsher	2 nd Vice Commander: Kevin O'Neill
Adjutant: Anita Trotter	At-large Member: Keith Martin
	At-large Member: Mandy Buckley
Members	
Keith Midberry	Bill Green (Bingo)
Bill Raab (PPC)	Dave Clemmer (PPC)
Sam Baughman (PPC)	Sam LeHane (Historian)
Larry Matthews	Dean Elliott
Mike Wright	Scott Dallas
Cary Henry	Phil Purcell
Sean Egan	Charlie Appleby
Ernie Screen	Kris Bradsher
Steve O'Neil	Obed Pellegrino
Brownie Chichester	

Commander Monteiro began the meeting at 1930 hours.

- Past Chaplain Larry Matthews began the meeting with a prayer.
- The Commander presented the minutes from previous meetings as available for review and the membership approved them.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Saturday March 23rd: Women's Veterans Event.
- March 29th : Vietnam Veterans Day.
- Saturday April 6th : Post 171 Unit has their annual Bingo fundraiser. Make plans to come!
- Saturday April 27th: Western Region dinner for the Department Commander.
- Friday June 14th : Flag Day and preparations are in progress.
- The application processes for the Department of Maryland General Scholarships, Boys State, and Girls State 2024 are now open at <http://mdlegion.org/boysstate/> .
- July 15-19: Department of Maryland Convention. Get your rooms now.

A BIG THANK YOU!

- Keith Martin reviewed the Post insurance policy with our insurer Erie. They drafted a new policy that provides the Post with better and more defined coverage. We were under-insured. Thank you for this initiative, Keith!
- Dave Clemmer cleaned and refinished the “name board cabinet.” (This is the black felt board with white letters naming the Post and Unit leadership, Post Everlasting Members, sick-call members, and more.) The cabinet was removed during the vestibule renovation last summer and has now been reinstalled in the Main Hall. Thank you, Dave!
- Mike Wright did a fantastic job presenting “Life on a Submarine” at Lorien on March 13th. Lorien opened the monthly event to non-veterans also, so we had a record attendance. They love us there and asked for us or other Posts to consider supporting the other Lorien facilities.
- Mike Wright installed eleven new light fixtures in the Main Hall, replacing the dated and tattered sconces. The new lights look great...renters and bingo players have started to compliment our new look.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

- The Post Baseball season starts June 20th, and we need help from the Post to prepare the field prior to each game. Damascus High School allows us to use their field, so we need to maintain it.
- Want to be in the Celebrate Damascus parade? Post 171 usually provides the honor guard, but we could be represented even more! The option is there, for anyone who has an idea of what we can do about it. See: <https://www.facebook.com/celebratedamascus2024>
- The annual Celebrate Damascus, complete with fireworks in our backyard, will be July 12, and there are activities on Saturday the 13th also. We need a volunteer to coordinate with our in-house MarketStreet Big Band to host a concert on our lawn or indoors during this time. Or...you can set up a performance or dance night with them for *another day and time*. They want to play, and we want to give them to the community – we have the space, they have the talent.
- Sam LeHane is asking for a new leader to take the helm of the Post High School Constitutional Speech (Oratorical) program. This would be a suitable place for a new member to get involved in serving the community in direct service to our young Americans. Let Sam or the Commander know if you want to know more. Sam will be there to help you learn about the expectations of the program.
- Mike Wright spent time in the past week cleaning out a closet of junk. This included old paint, tiles, and other hazardous waste. We can use a volunteer to arrange proper disposal of these items (get them properly to the dump) as appropriate.
- We need volunteers to work bingo, even if you do it just once a month. All help is welcome, but positions especially in need include:
 - Snack bar set up, 4-6pm.
 - Snack bar serving and clean up, 6-8:30 pm
 - Vegas card selling, 5-8:30 pm.
 - Snack bar baking, cooking, and prep. *Wednesday or Thursday before 5pm*. If you can make a pot of chili or soup, bake a cake, pie, or other goodie, assemble sandwiches, or prepare any other food that is your specialty, we need you! If you can cook but need someone to get it to the Post for you, we will find transportation.

OFFICER AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

FIRST VICE

- First Vice reported that he is preparing for the Flag Retirement Ceremony on June 14th, with Scott Dallas and Jim Serritella. They have coordinated with the fire department, the bugler, the singer for the National Anthem, and the Scouts for their assistance. Scott contracted with Charlie Appleby to fabricate

metal frames to be placed under the flag pile. Additional planning will include Unit support, refreshments, and the Commander will create the program for the event.

SECOND VICE

- 2nd Vice is planning for the Memorial Day Program. Program and refreshments will be like previous years, with the Scouts assisting to distribute water bottles. Commander to create the program.
- The Browningsville Band has agreed to perform, per tradition. They asked for a \$150 donation but that has not changed in 10 years. The EC voted to increase that to \$250.
- We will coordinate with Sandy Seipp for the placement and retrieval of flags at designated cemeteries.
- We will coordinate with Casey Koontz for the 2nd annual Field of Poppies.
- PDC Will Trotter will coordinate with the schools for their ceremonies.

COMMANDER

- Commander Steve Monteiro noted that he has received a certificate for 50 years of Legion Membership for Walter Capel. Wow! Congratulations, Walter.
- The Commander relayed that the Department of Maryland convention is July 16-19 in Ocean City. Post 171 is allotted delegate slots for attendance and voting, and we pay each delegate a \$400 stipend to offset their costs for the trip. It is a good opportunity to get your spouse or family to the beach and do some good while you are there. Call the Commander or Adjutant if you want more information.
- The Commander reported that he will attend the Celebrate Damascus planning meeting on March 14th.
- Commander Steve and Service Office Keith Midberry visited Platoon 22, which is a veteran-focused transitional services provider. They are in Frederick, MD. See: <https://platoon22.org>.

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT

- The Finance Officer presented the monthly report.
- In the last month Bingo grossed over \$50k.
- The new boiler is paying off...we budgeted \$9000 for heating oil and have spent \$3900.
- However, the bill for our fire protection services was \$1800 over budget.

JUDGE ADVOCATE

- Judge Advocate Fred Mitchell was absent but sent notes related to his position as Slating Officer for the Post Election activity this year.
 - In accordance with Article VI, Section 4 of our by-laws, the commander has selected the following members to comprise the 2024 election committee: Fred Mitchell as Judge of the Elections; and PPC Sam Baughman and Mike Wright as tellers (to assist in the counting of ballots if necessary). A motion was made and approved to ratify this election committee.
 - Fred Mitchell reports that he has at least one nominee for each of the 11 elected positions. There are 7 post officers elected: Commander, 1st Vice, 2nd Vice, Adjutant, Judge Advocate, Finance Officer, and Sergeant-at-arms. There are four other members elected from the membership at-large that serve on the Executive Committee. The seven officers and the four members at large comprise the 11-member executive committee. The offices of Historian, Service Officer, and Chaplain are selected by the commander and ratified by membership. They are not members of the Executive Committee.
 - Fred will present the slate to membership in April, and we will have the vote at the May membership meeting. At that meeting, he will be taking nominations from the floor. Even though he has at least one nominee for each position, nominations are still open and if someone wishes to serve just let Fred know. In the event we have more than one nominee for a position, we will vote by secret ballot as required by the bylaws. (See Article VI, Section 5).

ADJUTANT

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- Adjutant Anita Trotter reported that the Post award name plaques have been updated and reinstalled in the vestibule.
 - Adjutant and Mike Wright also hung a small bulletin board near the Main Hall kitchen. The intent of this bulletin board is to post materials that are appropriate for public consumption. We want our visitors to know what we do, and especially what we do with the monies we earn from rentals and bingo. E.g., baseball games, youth scholarships, Memorial Day celebrations, flag retirement, and more. Advertisements for public and private businesses, and other inappropriate notices, will be removed.

MEMBERSHIP

- Membership Chair, Sam Baughman, presented the membership stats. As of 3/15, we have 284 members for 96.271% of goal, 5th in District, 55th in State.

BINGO

- Lead Bill Green reported that bingo is going great! The volume of sales of the Vegas games is up and our new bingo games have increased a little extra also. Attendance has been up over the past month, and we have gained quite a few never-before players.
- We have an issue with the snack bar, however. The EC discussed the mission of the snack bar and its profitability. They considered contracting out the labor, changing the menu, and more. Though the snack is not profitable, the EC concluded that it is for the convenience of the bingo players. No changes currently.

RENTALS

- Rental Agent Anita Trotter reports there is no further information from AmeriCorps currently. They are still coordinating with the major corporation that wants to donate time and effort to our Post.
- The Main Hall facelift will continue while we await AmeriCorps' decision whether they will paint it or not. Anita and Mike Wright removed the curtains and then installed a "screen" over the back bingo board. The curtain rods & strings are broken, so this is another approach. Suggestions are welcome concerning the next steps. That area now may look better with a valence, but we are trying out the current solution.

BASEBALL

- The Post 171 Baseball program is moving right along. We will be playing an 18-game schedule in the division (seven teams including Post 171 and we play each other 3 times). We want to have a 25-game schedule. The team has been registered and the insurance purchased.
- The next major hurdle is populating the roster. We don't know if we will have a junior's team this year; we may need to combine to have a strong senior's team.
- Fred will be picking up the baseball hats he ordered this week.

HOUSE AND GROUNDS

- Chair Mike Wright discussed on-going work in the attic. We'll have our annual HVAC inspection soon and the AC in the attic poses a safety issue. There is a lack of lighting, and workers can fall through the ceiling. The EC approved Mike's purchase of materials to fix these safety issues.
- Mike improved his methods for the monthly cleaning of the grease trap, so now he can accomplish it in a shorter and cleaner time. Where there's a will, there's a way!

SAFETY

- Keith Martin will hand over leadership of the Safety Committee in July. Commander Steve plans to roll the committee into the "future of Post 171" initiative. Steve is looking for a volunteer or two that would like to look at the Post 171 home and infrastructure, and where we see it going in the next 5-10 years.
- We have three volunteers to attend food-handling and safety training.

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- The Safety Committee will investigate preparing a second recommendation for Radon Abatement.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Social Media Chair Kris Bradsher reported that our online presence is growing. We are reaching more community members. We're mostly on Facebook now but she is considering Instagram and X (Twitter).
- Kris suggests that we plan activities for community veterans. We can open the door to them with an offer free food...people will attend for that. Perhaps a pancake breakfast to include non-members.

OTHER

- Post Service Officer Keith Midberry reported that the Pact Act has been updated to include more bases of service and agent orange issues. Members are encouraged to check into this or call him if more information is needed.
- With our extended insurance coverage, we now cover the 12+ acres of vacant land that the Post owns. We suspect/know that there are private structures on our land, so we will investigate what that means. Member Cary Henry operates a drone and volunteered to help "map" and take a close look at that land.
- Long time member Ernie Screen ended the meeting with a thanks to many for how well the Post is doing right now, including detailed minutes (Anita) a re-vamped Newsletter (Mandy) and strong membership management (Sam B). He added that he is proud to be a member of this Post!
 - Ernie noted his concern, however, that we used to have 400 members and that we all need to help Sam B identify veterans. Ernie proposed that we form a committee to help Sam call eligible Montgomery County Vets. Also, we can take another look at having a buffet dinner like other local clubs. People will come for food!

Meeting Adjourned:

Chaplain closed the meeting with a prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 2045 hours.

Sorry these minutes are so long, but there is so much going on and so many people doing good things!

Approved by the Executive Committee via email, March 18, 2024.

Submitted by:

Anita Trotter

Post 171 Adjutant