

The Damascus Veteran

A Newsletter for Members & Friends of
Damascus American Legion Post 171, Unit & Squadron

January/February 2023

From the Post Commander

Greetings to my Post 171 Family:

I want to wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year. And I want to thank the Executive Council, Legion Members, and Unit Members for their support in the past year. With your continued support, we accomplish the ambitious goals and objectives for the coming year.

Looking back to November, one of the most important activities our Post conducts is the Veterans Day Observance. These activities included Flag Raising Ceremonies at four area schools. On Thursday, November 10th we participated at Clearspring and William B. Gibbs Jr. Elementary Schools, and on Friday, November 11th we participated at Lois P. Rockwell and Damascus Elementary Schools. I want to thank PPC Fred Mitchell and Legionnaire Anita Trotter for delivering the remarks at two of the schools. And thanks to my fellow Legionnaires who attended these ceremonies.

At the conclusion of my remarks at Clearspring, a kindergartner presented a packet of thank-you cards. I graciously accepted the cards on behalf of all our Nation's veterans. My one regret is not being able to share the 18 individual cards with you.

The formal portion of the Veterans Day Observance was held at our Legion Post. Foul weather could not dampen the Patriotic spirits of attendees. Selected songs and the National Anthem were sung by Damascus High School Chorus led by Sarah Goldsmith, Choral Director.

The keynote speaker was Rick Yount, Executive Director of Warrior Canine Connection (WCC). WCC utilizes a Mission Based Trauma Recovery model to help recovering Warriors reconnect with life, their families, their communities, and each other. Warriors interact with dogs from birth through adulthood, training these dogs to act as service dogs for wounded Warriors. Warrior Trainers benefit from the animal-human connection, while wounded Warriors receive the support that a service dog can provide.



Thank you cards from Clearspring Elementary School.

*Taking care of veterans, and
taking care of each other*



Damascus American Legion Post 171
10201 Lewis Drive
Damascus, MD 20872
(301) 253-0769
legionpost171.org

Steve Monteiro, Post Commander, is shown presenting a \$500 donation to Rick towards the WCC mission. Observing the presentation from left to right are: Casey Koontz, Auxiliary Unit 171 President, Sandy Seipp, Auxiliary Unit 171 Past President, and Legionnaire Larry Matthews, a WCC volunteer. Everyone is encouraged to visit the WCC [website](#).



Looking towards the future, here are major events planned for 2023. More detailed information will be provided as the dates draw closer. We look forward to your continued support and participation.

Date	Event	Project Officer(s)
Now - March 31	Scholarships	Legionnaire Ray Lewandowski
January 14	Oratorical Contest	Legionnaire Sam Lehane
January 28	Post Membership Dinner	2nd Vice Commander Kevin O'Neill PPC Sam Baughman
March 23	Health Fair	Legionnaire Keith Martin
June - September	Post 171 Display at the Damascus Heritage Society Museum	Legionnaire Sam Lehane
June 14	Flag Retirement Ceremony	1st Vice Commander Charles Bradsher
June 24	Installation Dinner	2nd Vice Commander Kevin O'Neill
Fall 2023	Car Show	Commander Steve Monterio

Note: Sons of the American Legion – I am still working to re-energize and reinstate the SAL.

For God and Country

Steve Monteiro
Post Commander

From the Auxiliary Unit President

Hello and a Happy New Year to Unit Members and Post 171 Family!

I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and is ready for a fresh start in the new year! In the past year, our Unit lost a number of members who either passed away or transferred. Currently, we have 78 members and I am happy to start the new year off by reporting that we are currently at 101.3% of the Department membership goal for our Unit and our Unit is in first place in membership within Western Maryland District 8! Thanks to Jane for all of her hard work on membership. Because

our membership has diminished over the past year, we now find ourselves having a small handful of people that take on the majority of the work. We desperately need to increase our membership to give us more manpower to undertake the Unit's programs and projects. As you know, it is my goal to increase our membership by engaging the public through our poppy projects this year.

Even though we've been unsuccessful (so far) in locating a local school art department to help make poppies for our Poppy Field Project we continue to pursue this project. At our December meeting, we had a good discussion about the challenges we've met and identified some alternatives that we will be exploring to get the poppies made. Again, if you have any contacts with youth groups such as Girl Scout troops, 4H groups, or art groups, or if you have any ideas for the project please contact either Cathy Magus ((301) 370-7236, cathy@maguscpa.com) or Marianne DiSomma ((301) 606-4645, marianne62@msn.com).

While working in the bingo kitchen earlier in 2022 I was shocked to learn that many of the youth volunteering to earn their SSL hours had no idea what the American Legion was about and our various programs involving youth, including scholarships. I saw this as a prime opportunity to educate our youth about our organization and what we have to offer them. As a result, the Unit created an initiative to develop a half-page informational sheet that could be handed out to those students and that could be posted on social media. Marianne developed a draft and the final version has been given to the students working in the bingo kitchen. Marianne reported that the students were very pleased to learn more about our organizations and very enthusiastic about our various scholarship opportunities, oratorical contests with monetary awards, etc. that our Post and Unit have to offer them. Additionally, Marianne worked with Post member Mandy Buckley to develop an online process where students can submit their scholarship applications to the Auxiliary instead of having to write and mail them in. We are hopeful that this process is more in line with the technology our youth are accustomed to and will ultimately result in an increase in scholarship applications for years to come. Thanks to Marianne for your efforts in both of these areas!

We've decided to hold a cash bingo fundraiser again this year. Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 1st for that event. We'll have more information and we will be asking for your support of this event in the next couple of months. I see this as another public event where we can increase community awareness of our organization and work on recruiting new members. Be thinking about different ways we might do that and bring your ideas to the next meeting or contact me.

Hopefully, you all have had time to come up with ideas for creating patriotic poppy centerpieces. We'll have poppies available at our upcoming meetings that you can take home to create your project. The centerpieces you make will be judged at our April meeting with a small prize to the winner, but more importantly, we'll use them as centerpieces on the tables on Memorial Day. I can't wait to see what you all come up with, but even better I can't wait for us to show our creativity to the public on Memorial Day.

As you can see, we have a lot of things going on in our small, but mighty Unit. I hope you'll join us at the January 9th Unit meeting where we will hear from Post member Sam Lehane about their initiative to donate some Post artifacts to the Damascus Heritage Society Museum and

how the Unit can be involved along with the continuation of our various projects aimed at identifying new members and having some fun along the way.

In the spirit of SERVICE, not self

Casey Koontz
Unit President

Post 171 Auxiliary Calendar of Events 2022-2023

January

- 5 Thursday, Bingo – Snack Bar
- 9 Monday, 7 p.m., Unit Meeting
- 14 Saturday
Post Pancake Breakfast
Post Oratorical Contest
- 16 Monday, MLK Day
- 19 Thursday, Bingo Snack Bar
- 21 Saturday, ALA District Meeting at Sykesville Post 223
- 28 Saturday, 5 p.m. Membership Dinner

February

- 2 Thursday, Bingo – Snack Bar
- 11 Saturday, Post Pancake Breakfast
- 13 Monday, 7 p.m., Unit Meeting
- 16 Thursday, Bingo – Snack Bar
- 20 Monday, President’s Day

March

- 2 Thursday, Bingo – Snack Bar
- 13 Saturday, Post Pancake Breakfast
- 16 Thursday, Bingo – Snack Bar
- 23 Sunday, ALA District Meeting at Reisterstown Post 116

The Post 171 Patriots Baseball Program

Great Baseball Banquet

Legion Family —

On Sunday, December 18, 2022, we had the baseball banquet to recognize the players and coaches from the summer seniors and juniors teams, and the “fall ball” team. It was a nice turnout with about 60+ people in attendance and we had a nice meal catered by Mission BBQ.



The highlight of the evening was recognizing the coaches and the players. I would like to again personally thank all of the coaches involved in the program: Coach Kevin Hernandez (Senior Team Coach); Coach Connor Wills (Juniors Team Coach); and Coaches Tom Stack, Frank Fitzpatrick, Mark Beall, and Art Okum. Before I get into the specific recipients of the player awards, I would also like to mention a remarkable young man who also assisted with the Baseball program. Malachi Nunez was a player who was injured to the extent that he could not play. So, he came to the practices and the games and pretty much became a fifth coach for the fall ball team! Thank you, young man, for assisting in the success of the fall ball team!

Here are the players who the coaches chose to recognize at the banquet:

Seniors Team

The Ken Diggs Award | Isander Cruz

Fall Team

Best Offensive Player | Connor Beall

Best Defensive Player | Justin Witmer

Juniors Team

Most Valuable Player | Jackson Stewart

Best Offensive Player | Tyler Gagen

Best Defensive Player | Gabe Hernandez



Baseball award recipients, left to right: Gabe Hernandez, Jackson Stewart, Justin Witmer, Connor Beall, Tyler Gagen, Malachi Nunez.

Congratulations to these fine young men and outstanding representatives of our Post.

While the banquet normally represents the end of the season, this one served as the new beginning or kickoff for the upcoming spring/summer season. Keith Martin and I will be working in earnest to get the things accomplished we need to get done so that what happened last summer doesn't happen again. We can always use your help because there is a lot to do – including getting boosters for the program.

Again, thanks to the coaches and players for this past year and I look forward to having an even better 2023 season.

Congrats to the team on a good season and a heartfelt thank you to the four coaches!

For God and Country

Fred Mitchell

Baseball Committee Chairman

Legion 2023 Membership Report

Our goal this Legion year is 287 members who renewed their memberships. As of December 16th, we have 249 renewals, which is 87.76% of our goal. Thanks to those who have renewed, we are 3rd in District. You can send your \$30 renewal payment to P.O. Box 171, Damascus, MD 20872, or to me at: 11798 Sier Drive, Monrovia, MD 21770, or if you have a computer and want to save a stamp, it's easy to renew online. Go to [Legion.org](https://legion.org) and click on "Renew Your Membership". All you need is your ID# (if you don't know it, or can't find it, call or text me: (301) 401-6479) and method of payment.

Sam Baughman
Membership Chairman

2023 Oratorical Contest

The Damascus Post 171 American Legion Oratorical contest will be held on Saturday, January 14th, 2023 at the Post Home. Inclement weather date will be January 21st. Contest will begin at 10 a.m. and Post doors will be secured at that time. Legionnaires who wish to volunteer to help out with the contest are asked to arrive between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. We would like to see as many Legionnaires in attendance as possible to show support for these young scholars, so please come out and show these fine contestants the honor they so richly deserve.

The contest provides an opportunity for high school students to win scholarship money (\$1,000 First Place, \$500 Second Place and \$300 for Third Place) based on their knowledge of the U.S. Constitution and to demonstrate that knowledge through a public speaking contest.

The contestants are judged by professors from Montgomery County College, in accordance with rules outlined on the American Legion website. Damascus American Legion Post 171 staff will be on-hand to actually run the contest and provide logistical support during it.

The top-3 finishers will receive their check immediately after the contest and the winner will be eligible to participate in subsequent contests through the District, state and National levels to win additional scholarship money.

2022 American Legion National Oratorical Contest Champion Emma Noble



Sam Lehane
Oratorical Contest Chairman

Membership Recognition Dinner

January 28th, 5 PM

Mark your calendars! This is a great event will be held at the Post home and everyone is encouraged to attend. New members (2022 and 2023) and their +1s are free! There will be an update on our programs; recognition of deserving member service, and previews of what's coming this spring. Our Post is an outstanding American Legion Post and we want all members to play an active part in supporting the varied programs benefiting veterans, our community and the country. This is a wonderful time to catch up with friends and welcome our new members. It is also a wonderful opportunity to recognize superior service by deserving Legionnaires and get energized for future Post service to veterans and our community.

RSVP by January 23, 2023 via [email](#) or [mail this form](#) to:
Post 171
10201 Lewis Drive
Damascus, MD 20872

Cash will be accepted at the door with timely RSVPs. Emailed RSVPs are preferred and appreciated.

Schedule:
Social Hour: 5 p.m.
Dinner: 6 p.m.
Program: 7 p.m.

Chaplains Corner

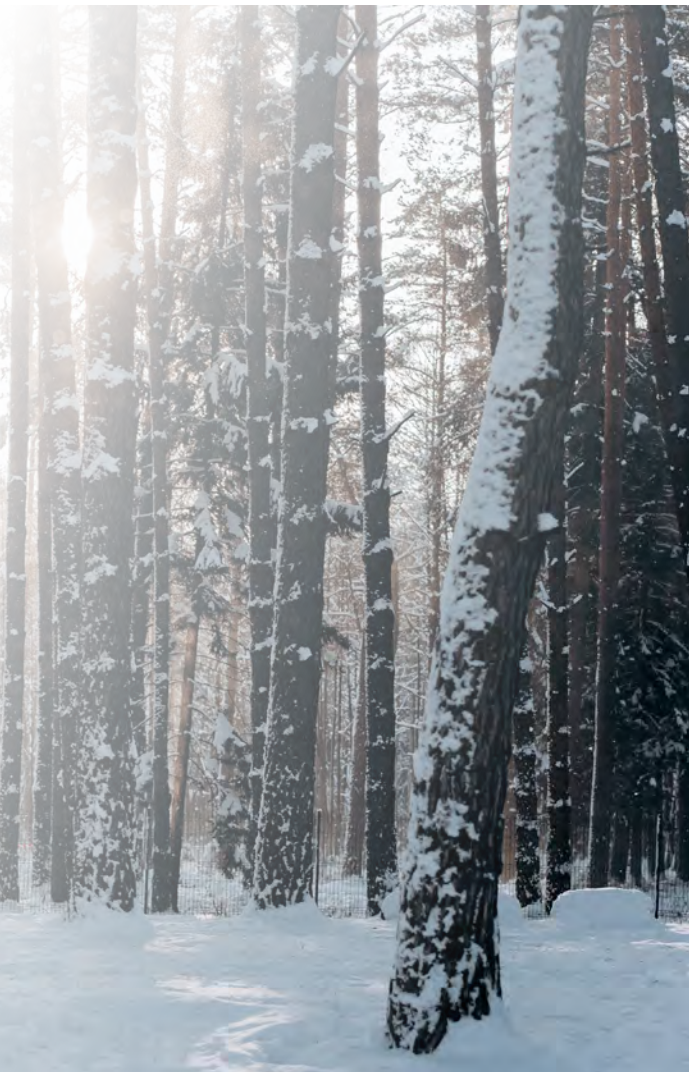
A Prayer for the New Year

As the old year comes to an end, let us recall what it held for us. Let us be thankful for the rich experiences it gave us. For every sympathetic smile, for every tear, for moments which brought laughter, for nature's loveliness, for friendship's beauty. Then asking forgiveness for thoughts and deeds unwise. Of selfishness, ignorance, ridicule, and dishonor. As we stand on the threshold of a new year, let us be thankful for the opportunity to stand and gaze intently, eagerly, beyond the door to so many challenges that lie ahead. May we have the courage, truth and faith to meet them without flinching and thought of self. Relying upon the One that gives us strength and makes us whole.

In who's Name we pray. Amen

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths."
Proverbs 3: 5-6

Will Trotter
Chaplain, PDC



Three Marines walk over 3,300 miles to raise awareness of POW/MIAs

From [The American Legion](#)

On June 6, three Marine veterans embarked on a 3,365-mile walk from USS Constitution in Boston Harbor to Newport, Ore. Their mission: create awareness about the nation's more than 81,000 POWs and MIAs, and to raise funds for History Flight, a nonprofit dedicated to researching, recovering and repatriating U.S. service members.

For Justin "J.D." LeHew, a highly decorated Marine and chief operating officer of History Flight, the journey reinforced "the principle of never leaving a fallen comrade behind, and that I am my brother and sister's keeper."

Called "Team Long Road," LeHew, Coleman "Rocky" Kinzer and Ray Shinohara walked Highway 20, the Medal of Honor Highway. Along the way, they were celebrated by American Legion posts and members – especially in Oregon, their final leg.

Dan Burks, the department's second vice commander, greeted the team at the state line Nov. 18. National Auxiliary President Vickie Koutz and National Security Commission Director Mario Marquez joined them as they walked into Vale, where Past National Commander Charles Schmidt and his wife, Linda, gave a warm welcome.

"The rucksacks we carry represent the heavy burden carried by generations of warriors who have served in our nation's ranks since 1775, as well as the weight of a nation ... to live up to the promise that we will never leave a fallen comrade behind."

Team Long Road finished their journey the week of Christmas. Read more at teamlongroad.com.



American Legion Auxiliary National President Vicki Koutz and American Legion National Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division Director Mario Marquez joined three Marines on their journey to raise awareness about the more than 81,000 U.S. POW/MIAs on November 21 in Vale, Oregon. Photo by Kyle Green/The American Legion

Find more news, information, and resources from the American Legion at legion.org.

American Legion Post 171

Officers

Commander	Steve Monteiro	(240) 401-0370	Membership	Sam Baughman*	(301) 401-6479
1st Vice Cmdr.	Charles Bradsher	(301) 253-9327	Historian	Sam Lehane	(407) 230-3117
2nd Vice Cmdr.	Kevin O'Neill	(301) 525-2071	Chaplain	Will Trotter*	(301) 661-6902
Adjunct	Fred Mitchell*	(301) 916-8395	Sgt-at-Arms	Bill Green	(301) 253-5420
Finance Officer	Anita Trotter	(301) 661-6904	Service Officer	Keith Midberry	(240) 472-5317
	Judge Advocate	Dean Elliot		(240) 793-6868	

Executive Committee

Steve O'Neil	Will Cole*
Paula Gill	Ray Lewandowski

* denotes Past Post Commander

+ denotes Past Department Commander

Visit the [Post Officers page](#) for available email addresses.

Auxiliary, Unit 171

Officers

President	Casey Koontz	Liontonyjames@comcast.net
Vice President	Marianne DiSomma	marianne62@msn.com
Secretary	Cheryl Minekime	Ca.minekime@gmail.com
Treasurer	Patricia Busche	buschep@msn.com
Chaplain	Sandy Seipp	idahosss@aol.com
Historian	Will Trotter	adjutant171@comcast.net
Sgt-At-Arms	Virginia Myers	pappydee@verizon.net

Visit the [Auxiliary Officers page](#) for available phone numbers.

Have feedback or an article to share? Please send it to the newsletter editor, **Mandy Buckley**, at news@legionpost171.org. Articles are due by the 20th of every even month.