

The Damascus Veteran

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

January/February 2025

From the Post Commander

New Year, New Opportunities: Resolutions for a Better Post 171 in 2025

As 2025 approaches, many people reflect on personal resolutions. Some make detailed lists, while others prefer to adjust their goals informally. I fall somewhere in the middle. I strive for continuous improvement without setting unrealistic expectations.

At its core, a resolution is a choice—a decision to act with intention, contribute more, and care deeply. As we look ahead, I consider what I want for Post 171. What do you envision? Whether you're a longtime member or recently joined, your role is essential. Let's set goals that strengthen our community and make Post 171 more impactful. By volunteering, connecting, and serving, you bring our mission to life every day.

Your time, energy, and dedication have already helped us accomplish so much. In 2024, we refreshed parts of our Post home through partnerships with AmeriCorps and Home Depot, resulting in new paint, repairs, and a new Main Hall floor. We addressed security concerns with new cameras, locks, and enhanced safety signage. We're now pursuing state grants for parking lot lighting and other major renovations—goals still too early to count on but full of promise.

Beyond facility upgrades, we revitalized programs like Post baseball, blood drives, and

Lorien visits. We continued youth programs such as Scouting, the Oratorical Contest, and college scholarships. Now, we're innovating beyond the traditional! Members created well-attended social gatherings outside regular meetings. We supported veterans by building a wheelchair lift and maintaining a veterans' group home garden. We collected a mountain of donations and cash for delivery to hurricane victims. We also strengthened ties with community events like Celebrate Damascus and the PlaceMaking Festival.

So, we now have proof that we can and want to do more! Looking ahead to 2025, we're looking for more opportunities like those. We have organizational resolutions that need your help to bring them to life:

1. **Serve Veterans in Need:** We resolve to identify veterans requiring assistance within our Post and community, connecting them with the help they need.
2. **Strengthen Community Bonds:** We plan to deepen our partnerships with local organizations, creating more opportunities for meaningful collaboration.
3. **Be a Family for Our Members:** Post members who don't need direct assistance can still benefit from fellowship. Let's build a welcoming environment where all members and their families feel connected and valued.

What's your volunteer resolution? Consider making one that supports the mission of the

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



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legionpost171.org

American Legion and Post 171. Together, we can make 2025 a year of extraordinary service and community impact.

Anita Trotter
Post Commander

Legion Membership Report

We are currently at 265 paid members, which is 88.93% of our goal of 298. We are 1st in the District and 8th in the State.

If you have a 2024 membership card, **it expired on December 31.**

You can renew your 2025 membership online at: legion.org/renew or send a check made out to A. L. Post 171 for \$40 with the renewal notice National sent out with the “please rush” envelope to P.O. Box 171, Damascus, MD 20872, or send to me at: Sam Baughman, 11798 Sier Drive, Monrovia, MD 21770.

If finances are tight or you have medical issues, please don't hesitate to let me know. The Post can renew for you confidentially—we're here to help.

Contact me: racecarman0711@comcast.net or text: (301) 401-6479 if you have any questions.

Sam Baughman
Membership Chairman

Greg Martinez and friends built this platform and installed the lift, giving Shawn Gill a new level of freedom.



The Post 171 Patriots Baseball Program

Baseball is Right Around the Corner



Legion Family—

There is not much to share today, but baseball is gearing up for the 2025 season, and we could use some help when the season starts.

Our initial meeting for the 2025 season is on January 13, 2025, at Post 11. After that, I will have more to share about the impending season. I hope you all had a great holiday season, and now it's time to get to work.

More will follow after our initial meetings with the Department of Maryland Baseball Committee. Until then, stand by...

For God and Country

Fred Mitchell

Baseball Committee Chairman

Uplifted: Veteran Gets the Gift of Mobility

Shawn Gill, a valued member of the Post, recently had a wheelchair lift installed in his home thanks to the efforts of Greg Martinez and his friends and the generous support of the Post.

Greg and his friends traveled all the way to Pennsylvania to inspect and purchase the lift and brought it back to Maryland. But their efforts didn't stop there.

The team also built a sturdy platform to make the lift safe and fully usable.

This new lift will make a dramatic difference in Shawn's daily life, providing him with easy and safe access to his home. The dedication of Greg and his friends is a shining example of the support and fellowship found within the veteran community.

Gratitude Corner

As we usher in a new Legion year, we recognize the many individuals whose contributions have made a difference. While it's impossible to thank everyone by name, here's a snapshot of recent efforts:

- **Mike Wright:** Oversaw parking lot repairs and the installation of electronic locks on exterior doors. As the building and grounds lead, Mike has fixed so much that would be difficult to name it all!
- **Greg Martinez:** Coordinated and completed a project to find and install a wheelchair lift in the garage of a Post member in need.
- **John Palomino:** Stepped up as our new Rental Agent, bringing fresh ideas for improving rentals. Welcome aboard!
- **Sam Lehane and Sean Eagan:** Recreated our display at the Damascus Heritage Museum—a job well done.
- **Kris Bradsher:** Coordinated an outing at Stone Silo Brewery, and is already working on the next one.
- **Dave Clemmer:** Donated a uniformed mannequin wearing his full-dress uniform, enhancing our historical display army.
- **Will Trotter:** Coordinated our annual visits to area schools for Veterans Day. They and we love doing this!
- **Jason Moxley:** Spent hours of his own time sculpting the bushes on the front lawn. They really needed to be thinned out!
- **Post 171 Unit Auxiliary:** Coordinated the annual charity potluck—and to all of those that brought and bought desserts. Green Valley donated the fried chicken!

Thank you to all who give their time, talent, and energy. Your dedication keeps Post 171 thriving.

Chaplains Corner

Travel Safe.... And volunteer!

Most Legion members have traveled throughout their lifetime. During this holiday season, you or your family may be traveling to share the happiness of the yuletide gatherings. In ancient times, there was a prayer for "The Stranger Within Our Gates":

++ To Our Guests ++

Because this hotel is a human institution to serve people, and not solely a money-making organization, we hope that God grants you peace and rest while you are under our roof.

May this room and hotel be your "second" home. May those you love be near you in thoughts and dreams. Even though we may not get to know you personally, we hope that you will be comfortable and happy as if you were in your own house.

May the business that brought you our way prosper. May every call you make and every message you receive add to your joy. When you leave, may your journey be safe.

We are all travelers. From birth to death, we travel between eternities. May these days be pleasant for you, profitable for society, helpful for those you meet, and a joy to those who know and love you best.

I hope you enjoyed reading the Chaplain's Corner this year. I presented a variety of articles for your review and smiles. It's always a pleasure for me to jot out a few lines for the newsletter and come up with an Invocation and parting Benediction for monthly meeting prayers.

The Legion year is half over, but we still have work to do! We need volunteers to step up and be part of the many programs and events the Post puts on. Some areas we could use help include:



- the historical section,
- the scholarship committee,
- the 80th Post anniversary event,
- bingo, and
- the many events the 2nd Vice plans.

I encourage everyone to come to the monthly member meetings on the second Monday of each month for camaraderie and to get details on all that we have going on at the Post. The pancake breakfast on the second Saturday of each month is also a good opportunity to catch up while enjoying some great food. Come visit!

As this year draws to a close and a new one is poised to begin, let us not forget the Legion members who have gone to their final reward and Post Everlasting--may they rest in peace.

Happy holidays and happy New Year!

Jim Serritella

Chaplain

Chaplain@legionpost171.org

Upcoming Events

Damascus and Post 171

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| Membership Dinner | January 25 |
| First Responder Appreciation Event | April 13 |

Posts 11, 191, and Other Veteran Events

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| Puppy Yoga (Platoon 22 & WCC) | January 13 |
| Gottman Couples Workshop (Platoon 22) | Weekly on Thursdays January 30 - March 6 (must register) |
| SAL Steak Dinner (Post 191) | January 31 (sign up by January 26) |
| Community & Veteran Job Fair (Ft. Meade) | March 19 |

American Legion Mourns Passing of President Carter

From [The American Legion](#)

American Legion National Commander James A. LaCoursiere, Jr., issued the following statement December 29, 2024, concerning the passing of former President Jimmy Carter.

“President Carter was a Legionnaire, a distinguished Navy veteran and a devout Christian. His commitment to human rights and community service was respected worldwide. He lived longer than any president in American history and made the most of his post-presidential years by strongly advocating for world peace and improving the lives of the disadvantaged. His energy, integrity and humility were admired by people across the political spectrum. President Carter’s wife, Rosalynn, was a leader in mental health awareness. They will both be missed. Our condolences to the entire Carter family and the many lives that they have touched, especially in their home state of Georgia.”

During an address to The American Legion’s 1980 national convention, President Carter described his vision for America on the world stage. “We do not maintain our power in order to seize power from others. Our goal is to strengthen our own freedom and the freedom of others, to advance the dignity of the individual and the right of all people to justice, to a good life, and to a future secure from tyranny. In choosing our course in the world, America’s strength serves American values,” he said.

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

American Legion Post 171

Officers

| | | |
|------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Commander | Anita Trotter | (240) 401-0370 |
| 1st Vice Cmdr. | Paula Gill | (301) 253-9327 |
| 2nd Vice Cmdr. | Kevin O'Neill | (301) 525-2071 |
| Adjutant | Mandy Buckley | (301) 661-6904 |
| Finance Officer | Ray Lewandowski | (301) 775-7152 |
| Membership | Sam Baughman* | (301) 401-6479 |
| Historian | Sam Lehane | (407) 230-3117 |
| Chaplain | Jim Serritella | (301) 253-3600 |
| Sgt-at-Arms | Scott Dallas | (301) 253-5420 |
| Resource Officer | Keith Midberry | (240) 472-5317 |
| Judge Advocate | Fred Mitchell* | (301) 916-8395 |

Executive Committee

Mike Wright Steve Monteiro*
Bill Rabb* Cary Henry

* denotes Past Post Commander

Visit the [Post Officers page](#) for other available contact information.

Auxiliary, Unit 171

Officers

| | | |
|----------------|---------------------------|--|
| President | Will Trotter [†] | adjutant171@comcast.net |
| Vice President | Casey Koontz* | |
| Secretary | Cheryl Minekime | Ca.minekime@gmail.com |
| Treasurer | Will Trotter [†] | buschep@msn.com |
| Chaplain | Sandy Seipp* | idahosss@aol.com |
| Historian | Sandy Seipp* | idahosss@aol.com |
| Sgt-At-Arms | Dee Myers | pappydee@verizon.net |
| Membership | Jane St Louis | |

Executive Committee

Will Trotter* Casey Koontz* Sandy Seipp*

* denotes Past Unit President

[†] denotes Past Post Department Commander

[‡] denotes Past District President

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.