

The Damascus Veteran

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

May/June 2023

From the Post Commander

Another successful Legion year (2022- 2023) is drawing close to a close. And I want to thank all my Legion family for their unwavering support that contributed to our many successes. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve you this past year. I want to recall the following high points and key contributors.

Veterans and Community Health Fair. The first annual health fair was held on March 18th. The fair was the initiative of Legionnaire Keith Martin, Fellow Legionnaires shown in the front row from left to right: Dr. Brent Lechner (Event Medical Director), Mandy Buckley (Strategic Communications and Marketing), Keith Martin (Program Manager), and Steve Monteiro (Commander). Keith Midberry (Veteran Service Organization Outreach Booth) and Larry Matthews (Facility Coordinator and Mission BBQ liaison) appear in the second row.



The following is an extract from Keith Martin's After Action report, "Participating organizations may be divided into several categories. The first category included the healthcare team of the Mercy Health Clinic, the Central Maryland Area Health Education Center, and the Behavioral Health Team from the 10th Medical Regiment of the Maryland Defense Force. The second grouping included representatives from the Veterans Administration and the Maryland Departments of Veteran Affairs and Health Human Services. Participating organizations in this category included the Washington DC VAMC eligibility and enrollment technicians, the Montgomery County Maryland Department of Veteran Affairs representative, and Maryland's Commitment to Veterans. Community and Veteran Service Organizations also



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

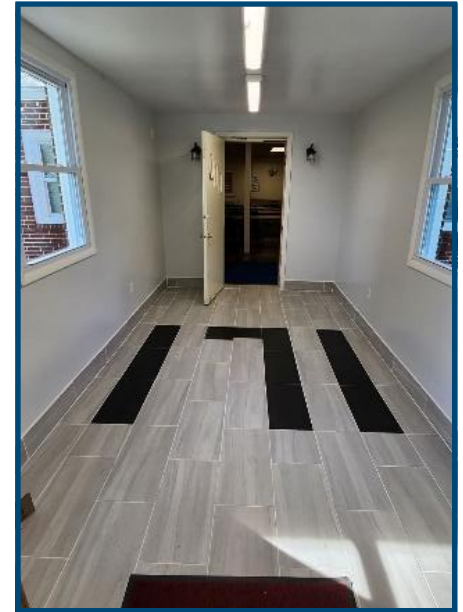


Damascus American Legion Post 171
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included Platoon 22, No One Left Behind Outdoors, Warrior Canine Connection, Lifeline Equine Therapy Services, Kris Bradsher Nutrition, LLC, and Damascus HELP, the local food pantry.”

Note: Additional information and photos on this outstanding event can be found on our Post website. <https://legionpost171.org/>.

Post 171 Renovations. There have been two recent renovations to our Post facility. The first is the renovation of the vestibule. It began with the removal of overgrown shrubs from the front of the building, regrading and sealing the foundation to prevent water seepage, and replacing the front door. Inside the paneling was replaced with sheetrock. The flooring was replaced with tiles and “171” was embedded by Charlie Appleby. Words cannot express the thanks to Bill Green and Charlie for their talents and tireless efforts to transform our Post’s entrance and save us thousands of dollars.



The second is the replacement of the boiler. After many, many years of service the time to replace the boiler was long overdue. Deciding factors were the increased price of fuel oil (our cost was \$2,000 in one month alone), and the difficulty in locating replacement parts. The Executive Committee reviewed three bids and presented their recommendation to Membership at the April 10th meeting. Membership unanimously approved to award the contract to Mettee Plumbing & Heating for \$38,600.

Upcoming Events. Please join in and support the following events:

- **May 13 — Pancake Breakfast.** Pancake Breakfast. Choose from: pancakes, French toast, eggs, sausage gravy, sausage patties, biscuits, toast, fruit cup, coffee, juice, and milk. Donations only.
- **May 27 — Flag Placement.** Help place flags on the local graves of our fallen Comrades. It is a time-honored tradition. Details will be provided by Sandy Seipp later.
- **May 28 — Memorial Day Program.** The Program will be posted to our website. The Project Manager is Kevin O’Neill.
- **June thru September — Know Your Legion.** The story of Damascus Legion Post 171 will be on display at the Damascus Heritage Society Museum. If you have any artifacts that you would like to share with the community please contact Sam Lehane, Project Manager, at historian@legionpost171.org.
- **June 14 — Flag Retirement Program.** Join us to respectfully retire Flags beginning promptly at 6 p.m. Charles Bradsher is the Project Officer.

For God and Country

Steve Monteiro
Post Commander

From the Auxiliary Unit President

Well, the weather is starting to heat up and so are our Unit activities. Our Bingo Extravaganza on April 1st was a huge success. We have many upcoming activities surrounding Memorial Day as well as our election of officers for the 2023-2024 year. I hope you will consider helping out with these activities and stepping up to support your Unit.

Our Bingo Extravaganza had a lively crowd of 175 people, many of whom won bingo and/or Vegas ticket cash games and raffles. We had close to 100 door prizes as well. So, hopefully most everyone went home with something. We collected a large number of donated canned goods as well as gift cards donated by Weis in the amount of \$150 to go to our local food bank, Damascus HELP. I want to thank all of the Unit and Post members who contributed to making this annual event another success for the Unit.

The Unit members have been busy working on their patriotic poppy centerpieces that will be placed on the tables in the Post on Memorial Day. Don't forget to bring them with you to the May Unit meeting where we will vote on our most favorite one and the winner will receive a special gift from me. Based on the fun discussion about this at the last meeting I can tell you that the competition is fierce! If you need poppies to complete your centerpiece just let me know.

We are in the final planning stages for our Poppy Field Project. Enclosed with this newsletter is a [form](#) that explains the process for making a donation for a poppy. Friday, May 26th is National Poppy Day. That day the Unit plans to have a short ceremony recognizing the poppy donors and placement of the poppies in the field in front of the Post home. This field of poppies will remain in place through the Posts Memorial Day service on Sunday, after which the donors may take their poppy home. As part of the Memorial Day service the Unit will have a short presentation on the significance of the poppy and will read the Flanders Field poem. If you are interested in sponsoring a poppy, helping with this project, or have questions please contact Marianne DiSomma.

At the April meeting we elected a nominating committee to develop a slate of officers for the 2023-2024 year. When called upon, I encourage each of you to get involved by taking one of the open positions.

As we are winding down our Legion year you can see we still have a number of on-going activities that I encourage you to get involved with. Our next Unit meeting on May 8th at 7 p.m.



If you are unable to attend the meeting, but would like to help with any of our projects please contact me (email: liontonyjames@comcast.net or (301) 831-6746.

In the spirit of SERVICE, not self

Casey Koontz
Unit President

Post 171 Auxiliary Calendar of Events 2023

May

- 4 Thursday, Bingo – Snack Bar
- 8 Monday, 7 p.m., Unit Meeting
- 13 Saturday, 7:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.,
Post Pancake Breakfast
- 18 Thursday, Bingo – Snack Bar
- 21 Sunday, ALA District Meeting at
Carroll Post 31, Westminster
- 26 Friday, National Poppy Day;
Ceremony at Post for Placement
of Poppies for Poppy Field
- 27 Saturday, Posting flags on
Veteran’s graves
- 28 Sunday, Memorial Day Service at
the Post
- 29 Monday, Memorial Day

June

- 1 Thursday, Bingo – Snack Bar
- 10 Saturday, 7:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.,
Post Pancake Breakfast
- 11 Sunday, Western MD Region God
& Country Service, Camp West
mar (Sabillasville, MD)
- 12 Monday, 6 p.m., Pot Luck Dinner
and Dessert Auction
7 p.m., Unit Meeting
- 15 Thursday, Bingo – Snack Bar
- 24 Saturday, Installation Dinner
5 p.m., Cocktails
6 p.m., Dinner

From the Sons of the American Legion Squadron Commander

To the members who have 2022 cards, you can still renew your membership by sending a check for \$15 made out to SAL Squadron 171, to: Sam Baughman, 11798 Sier Drive, Monrovia, MD 21770, or you can save a stamp and renew on-line at: Legion.org/Sal-renew, and we will get your new card to you. The 2024 Legion year starts on July 1st.

For God and Country

Tyler Baughman
SAL Commander

Legion 2023 Membership Report

Our goal this Legion year is 287 members who renewed their memberships. If you still have a 2022 card, you still have two months to get your 2023 card. The 2024 Legion year starts on July 1st. As of April 28th, we have 285 renewals, which is 99.30% of our goal. We only need 2 more renewals to make 100%. You can send your \$30.00 renewal payment to: A L 171, 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://www.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.

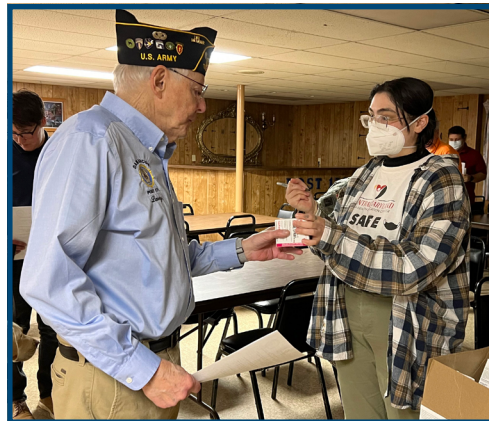
Sam Baughman
Membership Chairman

Health Fair and Blood Drive

Thank you to the Post and Auxiliary Members that contributed to the Health Fair that was held on March 18. We were able to serve veterans and the community by gathering several services and health care professionals in one location. We offered free health screenings, NARCAN training, and access to Veterans Affairs eligibility and enrollment specialists, among many other professionals and organizations that volunteered. We also thank Mission BBQ for generously providing lunch.



Platoon 22 had one of the most popular volunteers.



The NARCAN training was informative and can help save lives.



Post 171 President, Health Fair committee, and members of the Maryland Defense Force's 10th Medical Regiment.

We will hold a blood drive July 7 from 10 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. at the Post. We hope to have a good turnout from the community as this is during Celebrate Damascus (July 7-8). Please register with the [American Red Cross](https://www.redcross.org). You can search for our blood drive in the upper right corner by zip code and pick a time that works for you. The Red Cross is also offering a [Red Cross dry bag](#) as a thank you gift for blood donors July 1 - 11, while supplies last.

Baseball Update

Hopefully, we will be soon hearing those much-anticipated words again; “play ball!” I am of course talking of the impending spring season. The good news is that we hope to field a juniors team (U17) and a sandlot team (U15). Competing with the so-called “show case” teams, we didn’t have many seniors (U19) indicate that they wanted to play American Legion Baseball this spring. Well, hope springs eternal, and I am hoping that this year’s juniors turn into next year’s seniors.



As of this newsletter, the teams have been registered and the insurance purchased for both teams. I am just waiting for the Department of Maryland representative to give his “okay” and we should be good to go. The next big step besides scheduling the games is to populate the teams. So, if you know youths interested in playing American Legion Baseball, please let me know – and spread the word that baseball is back at Post 171! Additionally, we will be playing in the Western District this year vice playing in Montgomery County and the baseball should be much more competitive.

Finally, we are still looking for people to help out and boosters to support the team. Thank you in advance for your support and I hope to see you at the ballpark soon.

For God and Country

Fred Mitchell

Baseball Committee Chairman

Chaplains Corner

What God Hath Promised

By Annie Johnson Flint

God hath not promised skies always blue,
Flower-strewn pathways
All our lives through;
God hath not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.

But God hath promised
Strength for the day,
Rest for thy labor,
Light for the way,
Grace for the trials,
Help from above,
Unfailing sympathy,
Undying love!

Will Trotter
Chaplain, PDC

Vet Centers as a Mental Health Solution

From Vincent J. “Jim” Troiola, National Commander of [the American Legion](#)

Dear American Legion Family members and friends,

Are you aware of the critical services provided by Vet Centers?

Eligible veterans and their families receive vital counseling and readjustment services from Vet Centers. Oftentimes, these veterans live in rural areas far from a VA medical facility.

In fact, Vet Centers also have mobile units. These make it possible to offer services even closer to where veterans live as well as dispatching the mobile units to certain areas where the need is the greatest.

Currently there are more than 300 Vet Centers but that number will be increasing this spring, allowing even more veterans and their family members to be served. A recent American Legion [Tango Alpha Lima podcast episode](#) welcomed Army National Guard veteran Mike Fisher who is now the chief readjustment counseling officer for the organization. He covered a lot of ground — similar to Vet Centers — taking about their services, eligibility criteria, expansion and more.

He also sees the value in working with American Legion posts to deliver these services in rural areas.

“We send out staff to provide services in (outlying) communities,” he said. “It could be borrowing space from a local American Legion location where we have a confidential counseling space where we provide services for that community.”

The American Legion is a strong supporter of Vet Centers. Several years ago, we supported the Vet Center Eligibility Expansion Act.

Starting in 2022, [the act expanded eligibility](#) for readjustment counseling and related mental health services through Vet Centers to certain members of the Coast Guard, National Guard and reserves.

While we applaud VA for its strategic growth of Vet Centers, there also is room for more advancements. Notably, as a way to combat the rate of veterans who die by suicide.

That is why The American Legion is calling on Congress to support the funding, implementation and continued expansion of VA and community-based mental health services through Vet Centers.

Vincent J. “Jim” Troiola
National Commander



A VA VetCenter vehicle sits at a Veteran's Crisis Command Center setup by The American Legion at the Oahu Veterans Center on Sept. 9, 2014 in Honolulu, Hawaii. (Photo by Kent Nishimura for The American Legion)

Find more news, information, and resources from the American Legion at [legion.org](#).

American Legion Auxiliary Post 171

Poppy Project

National Poppy Day – May 26, 2023



The red poppy is a nationally recognized symbol of sacrifice worn by Americans since World War I to honor those who served and died for our country in all wars. It reminds Americans of the sacrifices made by our veterans while protecting our freedoms.

This year our Unit will have available ceramic poppies which can be purchased for a donation of \$15 or more. The donation will include a ribbon tied to the poppy reading “In Memory Of” and their Veteran loved one’s name. The poppies will then be placed in the “Poppy Field” in front of Post 171 and will remain until Memorial Day, May 29th. On May 30th, or later, you can collect your poppy and take it home.

The below form can be detached and mailed to Marianne DiSomma at the Post (American Legion, Post 171, P.O. Box 171, Damascus, MD 20872) or e-mail Marianne at marianne62@msn.com

Please make checks payable to “American Legion Unit 171”.



Amount of Donation \$ _____ Cash Check

Donor Name: _____

Donor Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ E-mail: _____

IN MEMORY OF: _____

BRANCH OF MILITARY: _____

American Legion Unit 171
P.O. Box 171
Damascus, MD 20872

Thank you for supporting our Project to remember our Heroes!

American Legion Post 171

Officers

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

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.

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

* denotes Past Unit President

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

Sons of the American Legion, Squadron 171

Officers

Commander	Tyler Baughman	(240) 586-3631
1st Vice Cmdr.		
2nd Vice Cmdr.		
Adjunct	Steve Monteiro [#]	(240) 401-0370
Finance Officer	Fred Mitchell*	(240) 274-0641
Historian		
Chaplain		
Sgt-at-Arms		
Post Liaison	Paula Gill	(661) 618-7638

[#] denotes Current Post Commander
* denotes Past Post Commander

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