

The Damascus Veteran

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

June 2026

Upcoming Events

Damascus Post and Unit 171

Post and Unit Meetings
And Elections for the
2026-2027 Year | June 8, 7 pm (unit)
and 7:30 pm (post)

Flag Day and Flag
Retirement Ceremony | June 14, 4pm

Post and Unit BBQ
Picnic and Installation
Event | June 20, 4pm

Post Baseball Annual
Bobby Bellison Red,
White, and Blue
Baseball
Game, DHS field. | July 4, 11:55 am

Followed by a picnic for the team!

Department of Maryland

Annual Convention,
Ocean City, MD | July 13 - 19

Community

Red Cross Blood
Drive, at Post 171 | July 10

Damascus Mile, for
Hometown Heroes
Banners | July 5

Celebrate Damascus,
Color Guard in the Parade | July 10

See the baseball team schedule at:

<https://web.gc.com/teams/qNFh9peq2OQB/2026-summer-damascus-post-171-patriots-17u>

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



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legionpost171.org

From the Post Commander

As my tour as Commander of American Legion Post 171 comes to an end, I want to thank all of you for your support, your friendship, and—on occasion—your patience.

Serving in this role has been an honor, a privilege, and sometimes an adventure worthy of its own after-action report. I've enjoyed the challenges of it and it has been rewarding to work alongside such dedicated Legionnaires. We've accomplished a lot together, but as we all know, there is still much left to be done. The mission continues, and our Post's best days are still ahead.

Please join me in supporting our new Commander, who now inherits the gavel, the glory, and the mysteries of how all the little things are getting done around the Post, seemingly invisibly. While we may have ghosts, we don't have elves...things are getting done by many of you, just doing the work in the background. I wish the Commander every success and know they'll lead us onward and upward.

Thank you for allowing me to serve. I may be stepping down as Commander, but I'm not going far—there's still work to do, and besides, somebody has to keep an eye on things. I plan to continue the work on the building rehabilitation, using our state grant. Thank YOU!

Anita

commander@legionpost171.org

Legion Membership Report

Post 171 has 292 members, which is 101.389% of our goal of 288. We are 1st in our District, and 23rd in the State, by percentage to goal. For most department awards, Post 171 sits squarely in the category of Posts of over 201 to 500 members. Maryland has between 135 and 157 American Legion Posts, depending on which official source and year you reference.

Great news - we won the District "Bear Claw" award. Given for community activities and membership, we've won \$500 toward Post needs.

Scholarship selections are complete!



Post 171 and Unit 171 together awarded \$16,000 in scholarships to local high school seniors. Where possible, volunteers will be attended school award ceremonies and other events to personally present the scholarships.

Thank you to the two committees who solicited the applications and then sorted through dozens of submissions. Selection is not easy among so many deserving students.

Maryland Boys State and Girls State attendees are ready to go!

Post 171 and Unit 171 are each sending two high school rising seniors to Boys and Girls state.

Boys State will be at McDaniel College, Westminster, MD June 21-27, 2026. See the department website for more information about both programs:
<https://mdlegion.org/boysstate/>

Girls State will be at Salisbury University, Salisbury, MD June 21-26, 2026. Both programs have been a part of the American Legion since the 1930s.



Spring is for sports!

This year, Post 171 sponsored three sports teams, along with our outstanding baseball program and being a DHS Athletic Booster. This year Post 171 has our names on the shirts of:

- Damascus Cougars 14u Boys Baseball
- Damascus Cougars 14u Girls Softball
- 32 Sports high school girls Flag Football

Post 171 recognizes the importance of youth sports in Damascus and the surrounding community.

It's Time to Nominate and Elect new leadership!

Post 171 has a long tradition (not a rule) that Post officers hold their positions for two years. Turnover after a couple of years infuses the Post with new ideas, new plans, and new energy. Time to infuse the new people!

Join us for our Legion Year 2026-2027 elections at the next membership meeting on Monday June 8. We will have a pizza social starting at 6:45, and the meeting starts at 7:30.

Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the time of voting. All nominees must be a paid Post member and be able to provide (a look at) their DD-214 for confirmation of service.

The officer slate is:

At our meeting we will also welcome several officers and candidates from the Department of Maryland. This includes the leading candidate for the Department Commander in 2026-2027.

Commander	Kevin O'Neill
1 st Vice Commander	Chuck Nyugen
2 nd Vice Commander	Mike Wright
Adjutant	Toby Zellers
Treasurer	Treena Wetsel
Sergeant at Arms	Jason Peterson
Judge Advocate	Fred Mitchell
Members At Large	Obed Pellegrino, Dennis St Jean, Paula Gill, and Anita Trotter

Chaplains Corner

Bad News..... Good News



There is an old military series of chants of Bad News / Good News... for example, "They're gonna tear down the bar at the officers' club" boooo "They're gonna build a bigger one!" YYYEEAAA Sometimes you get the feeling you're just not quite sure of the Bad News/Good News side of the fence you're sitting on? In most cases, the saying points you to an OK resolve of the Good News side – A little quiet time helps ease the solution.

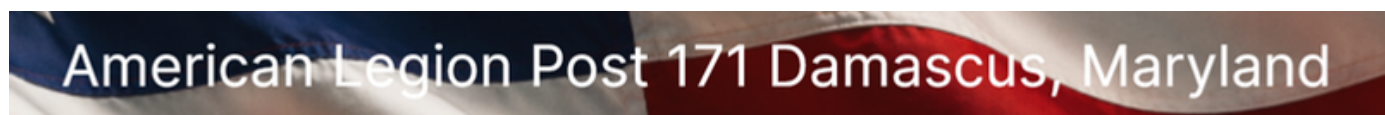
It has been a hectic period for the legion member these last few months. But the end is in sight with June's new elections and convention week on the July calendar. The election of the new Post 171 officers and executive board members, all Good News.

But, just like the new bar at the "O Club", we're gonna build a better Post for our members, the Unit, and our families. There is lots to do in this coming legion year. And you need to be part of it! Even if you don't pick up a hammer, your voice counts – your opinion is equally, if not more important – OR in some cases, your ability helps solve the issue at hand.

As Chaplain, my 2 cents is the middle man of divine intervention asking God for guidance, direction, and safe keeping over the Post Team Members. Occasionally, I lift a hammer! But as team members – your help as a post contributor adds to the success of the effort at hand. The 2nd Monday of the month is the legion meeting open to all members... meeting starts at 7:30PM - hot pizza is delivered by 6:45PM come, eat, and kibitz with your fellow legionnaires.

Ladies and Gentlemen, back to the bad news – good news... I give you>>>
Bad News – Time Flies Good News – You're the pilot!

Respectfully Submitted....Jim Serritella chaplain@legionpost171.org



Post 171 has a new website! If you are reading this, you have probably seen it! Be sure to check out all the new features and information at legionpost171.org.

We were having issues with the old site hosting company and found ourselves limited as to the new features, along with the look and feel that we could accomplish, on that platform. The new solution opened the door wide to possibilities!

Submit suggestions for site content, stories, and photos to webmaster@legionpost171.org

Post and Unit 171 Family BBQ Picnic and Installation of Officers

Join us for a BBQ and potluck. We'll supply hamburgers, hotdogs, and beverages. Please bring a side dish, salad, or dessert to share—and your lawn chairs.

**Saturday, June 20th, 4 pm,
back lot of our Post home**

Families (kids!) are welcome. We will have games like cornhole, badminton, a firepit for s'mores, and more. Around 5:30 pm we will hold the installation ceremony, with our District Commander and President, for our new 2026-2027 Post and Unit officers.



10201 Lewis Dr, Damascus
Questions and RSVP by June 13 to:
info@legionpost171.org

We need a headcount and a non-binding idea of what food item you may bring. If you don't cook, bring chips or something. Seriously, don't stress this part!



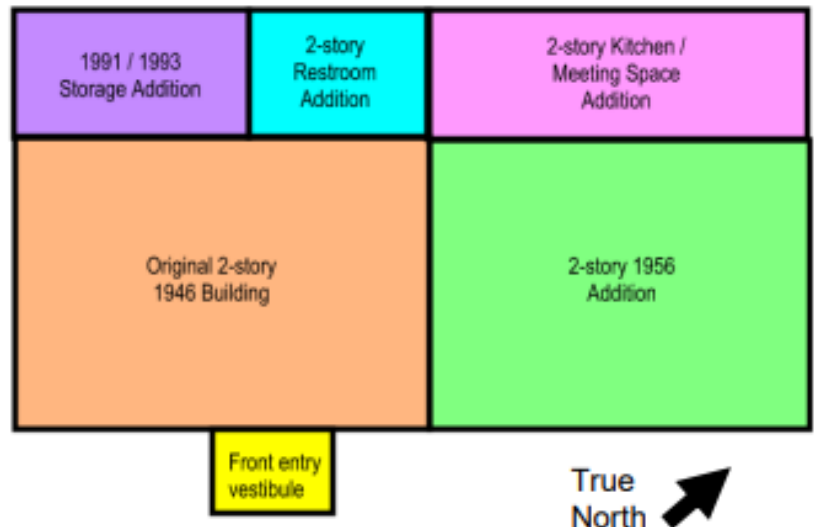
Foundations Forward

It probably seems like forever since we received our capital funds grant from the state. It seems like forever to the team also! Here's a quick status:

- Your Committee hired a design architect and engineering firm to accomplish a feasibility study of desired and necessary changes.
- That firm examined the building, developed accurate architectural drawings, and are now working with us to determine what can or should be done. What we CAN do may be constained by county building and federal safety codes. Willfully violating code during rehab will negate our insurance, so that's not an option.

What now?

With the study in hand, the engineering firm will send out our list for pricing from general contractors. From that the committee can decide what can be done, within our capital budget, this year, next year, or even in the coming five years.



Here are various proposed modifications to the existing building:

- Upper-Level Restroom Replacement - making them fully ADA compliant
- Lower-Level Modifications - including ADA restrooms and reconfiguration of the now-unused fry and steam room spaces.
- Stair Replacement - both sets of stairs are out of current safety code and we are looking at making them fit our internal flow needs better.
- Sprinkler System Install - may be a necessity, not necessarily a desire!
- Electrical Upgrades - may be a necessity, for safety reasons.