



THE DAMASCUS VETERAN

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

SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2013

THE COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

As we begin a new year, I am amazed at the dedication of our members who give their time and energy to support our many programs. We have a complete slate of Committee Chairmen and Committee Members, but to continue to move forward we need fresh faces and fresh ideas. Please consider volunteering for committee chairs and committee members. You can contact me via cell phone at 843-855-9353 or email at commander@legionpost171.org.



July 16-19 was the Department of Maryland Convention in Ocean City, MD, ten Post 171 delegates attended. We received the award for outstanding yearbook, which was presented to Ed Williams. Well Done Ed!

The Damascus AL Baseball Team had an outstanding season; we came in second in the state, losing only to Funkstown in the double elimination tournament. Everyone raved about the quality of the competition, but especially noteworthy were the many comments we received regarding the sportsmanship of our players. This was a direct result of Bobby Bellison, our Baseball Committee Chairman, the coaches, the parents, and the Baseball Boosters who supported our team throughout the season. Also, the Frederick County and Montgomery County Little League team came in second place in their tournament. Bobby Bellison was presented with a second place ribbon and second place trophy from the FC & MC Little League.

Check out our new web site at www.legionpost171.org. Note the new "Committee" and "Our Veterans" pages. Kudos to our webmaster 2nd Vice Kevin Mook, who has done a superb job setting up the web site and the new email addresses.

Sam Baughman came up with the great idea to interview a different World War II veteran for each newsletter issue. Our first veteran, and the oldest at our Post, is Wilfred Koontz. Wilfred and his wife Margaret's input, combined with an earlier taped interview with Unit member Mickey Day, made for a very interesting write up. An abbreviated version is in this newsletter; go to our web site page "Our Veterans" for a complete narrative and photos.

The new Bingo season starts September 5th. Tell your friends - tell your friend's friends! Tell them to check out our Facebook page, our new Web site, and our newsletter! Let's all work hard to get the word out as Bingo is our main fundraiser.

We now have several ways to tell the community about Post 171 activities. Ching-Yao Yu is our Facebook manager, Kevin Mook is our Webmaster, Lou Popowsky is our Newsletter editor, and George Bolling is our Public Affairs & Media Committee Chairman. We need to utilize all of these resources. All their names and telephone numbers are listed under the "Committee" page on our web site and/or the Committee listing posted on the bulletin board at the Post.

Baker Middle School has invited the Post to participate in their annual 9/11 Flag Raising Ceremony on Sept 11th. Due to the size of the student body there will be two ceremonies, the first starting at 8:30 AM. Please arrive by 8:00 AM to enjoy coffee, deserts and cold beverages. Unit and SAL members are invited. Let's have a good turnout! Remember, they invited us!

The Post has contracted with **Call Multiplier**, a company that calls Post members to notify them of important events; e.g. Post Everlasting. While receiving computer generated calls is understandingly impersonal, it is the best way to ensure that the call is made, that the responsibility for making the calls lie with a single entity, and that we receive feedback if a Legion member was not able to be contacted. Service Officer Jim Serritella will manage the system, and Membership Chairman Keith Midberry will maintain our roster. Post members who do not want to participate have the option to opt-out of the system. Important announcements will be made concurrently by email, but because less than half the Post has email we needed another method to notify those other members. If a member does not have email and opts-out of the call plan, he/she will have to make their own arrangements to be notified.

The Pavilion project is moving along. Architectural plans have been completed, and we are in the process of obtaining required permits. The next phase is to obtain construction bids. We are implementing a phased project so that as funds become available we can add on to the building.

A committee has been established, chaired by Linda Richon, which is in the very initial stages of research to determine if it is feasible and affordable to expand and upgrade the upstairs kitchen.

On July 14th the Post Honor Guard presented the Colors at the Montgomery County Senior Sports Association Tait Tournament at Olney Manor Park. Jim Rice, MCSSA Treasurer, made a generous donation to the Post in appreciation. More events have been scheduled.

Four young men who attended Boy's State - Alan Rannals, Aaron Ochs, Garret Merlino and Nick Mengle - asked to attend our Aug 12th General Meeting to say a few words about their experiences, impressions, and appreciation of the program. Each presented himself very well and received a warm round of applause from the entire assembly.

Finally, it is with regret that I tell you that Past Commander Don Lewick (1964-65) transferred to Post Everlasting on July 31, 2013. I did not know him, but the many comments I have heard about him makes me regret not knowing him.

God Bless our Troops and God Bless America
Anthony M. "Tony" De Shiro, Commander

The 2014 High School Oratorical Contest

Members of the Post Legion Family who know outstanding high school students attending Damascus, Seneca Valley, Clarksburg, and Poolesville High Schools and local home-schooled students are urged to encourage these young people to enter the Post's annual contest. The contest will take place on January 11, 2014, at 10:00 AM. Contact Committee members Jack Talamo, ShaWn Gill, Bob Ray or me for more information.

--PPC George Bolling, Chairman

Post Public Affairs and Media Committee

Commander Tony has established a new committee to ensure that our Post's public message gets out to our friends who are participating in our public events, including ceremonies on Veterans Day and Memorial Day, Bingo, Oyster Roasts, Shrimp Feasts, and programs like the Oratorical Contest, Scholarships, Baseball, Boys State, and especially to those veterans who are not benefiting from belonging to the American Legion. You are encouraged to convey your ideas and suggestions to any of the PA & Media Committee members.

--PPC George Bolling, Chairman

Wilfred Koontz

Wilfred is the oldest member of American Legion Post 171 in Damascus, MD, and is also a member of VFW Post 10076 in Mt. Airy, MD. Due to space limitations we could not present a complete story of Wilfred's military experiences in this article. Please go to our web site (www.legionpost171.org) and click on "Our Veterans" for a more detailed narrative.

Wilfred Koontz was born at home on March 10, 1919, where he lived with his parents on a farm near Unionville, MD until drafted in 1941 at the age of 21. He served 41 months in the Aleutian Islands, Alaska (AK), and 9 months in Germany. He was discharged on November 9, 1945, attaining the rank of Sergeant. His decorations include: U.S. Army Good Conduct Ribbon, WW II Victory Ribbon, American Campaign Ribbon, Asiatic - Pacific Campaign Ribbon with Bronze Star, American Defense Service Ribbon, and the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Ribbon with Bronze Star.

Wilfred's story in his own words: "My first days in the Army were typical of all branches of the service; indoctrination, many shots, and little sleep! I completed training, and then took a convoy to Camp Claiborne, LA where my group was loaded onto trains for Ft. Lewis, WA. At Ft. Lewis we set up guard because this was right after Pearl Harbor, and the country expected the Japanese to strike the West coast at this point.

In July 1942, I left Seattle and arrived at Ft. Richardson, AK in July 1942. After being equipped for the Arctic, I landed on Adak, AK, and during my 40 months I spent time on Semya and Amchitka Islands building airplane runways and standing guard duty. I can still recall Japanese planes bombing the runways, and how cold it was in the Aleutians. For amusement, we would shave our heads for something different to do. We'd get a six-pack or case of beer each week, but as I never drank much I would sell my beer to the other guys, and then send the money back home.

There were times when I felt that I wouldn't make it home. On Attu, an island in the Aleutians, we had already taken the island, but we had a dog-eat-dog fight to clear the Japanese out of their holes. The Japanese were very good at sneaking down in the middle of the night, cutting the throats of the guards on the beach and then the men who were sleeping. I didn't know any better so I just did my job! The Japanese committed suicide and women jumped off cliffs with their babies because they didn't want to surrender. It took a couple of months to clear them off the island. It was terrible work!

Food was C-rations for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. For quite a while we slept on the tundra; after awhile we got 8-man tents. By then we got some real good food - powdered eggs, and ate them until we got sick because we hadn't eaten anything but C-rations until that time. We did not celebrate any national holidays; it was simply living one day to the next.

We were on a ship scheduled to go to Kiska Island, AK to participate in the invasion and to relieve the combat troops who were there. We had already lived on the islands for 2 years so we were considered Alaskan scouts.

We had been scheduled to land but the Japanese had already evacuated by submarine, so we saw no combat there. That's when we came back to the States for redeployment to France, and later Germany.

When the Pacific war ended I had already been transferred to Bad Ems Germany. We landed in France and advanced into Germany with the 106th Line Division with our ammo trains and so forth. As we were marching north, we were continually swamped with German soldiers surrendering.

After discharge my first job was driving a truck; then I was moved up to dispatcher. I left that job and went to work at the Roby Miles General Store in Damascus. Brown Williams was running it after he bought it from Mr. Roby. I then went into painting with Gilmore Hurley. After that I worked for KC Engineering Company in Rockville MD for about 4-5 years, after which I worked at Walter Reed Army medical center as a fire fighter for 5 years. I then went into business for myself and bought Bailey & Koontz Appliances, which became K&K Appliances, in Damascus. I sold out in 1976 and have been retired since then."

2014 Membership Year Now Underway!

The 2014 membership year started July 1st and while a lot of renewals are still processing I am confident that we are already at 50% thanks to those that immediately returned their renewals, those that renewed on-line and over 100 Paid-Up-For-Life members. The first 50% is always the easy part while getting the *next* 50% to renew is not!

We ended 2013 at 401 but that includes members who passed on to Post Everlasting during the year. Consequently, based on past history of non-renewals and transfers, we will need to recruit 25-30 new members to stay a 400 Post and even more if we are to reach our all-time high of 411. Let's make that happen this year! Everyone knows of an eligible veteran at work or in their neighborhood – sign them up!

PLEASE renew as soon as you receive your notice or better yet, contact me about a Paid-Up- for-Life Membership (PUFL - amount based on your age) and never have to worry about dues again! You can pay in full or over a 12 month period. Annual dues can also be paid on-line at www.legion.org/renew. This site allows you print out a temporary membership card. You can also renew at the Department of MD website - <http://www.mdlegion.org>. Paying on-line saves us stamps, envelopes and *time*! Please don't send in dues for more than one year, amounts over \$25 will be returned.

Keith Midberry, Membership Chairman, kmidberry@yahoo.com or (301) 916-7929

Deployed Members

Post member Brian Reute (son of member Scott Reute) is due to return from Afghanistan in late September and Post member Michael Cacace (son of member Max Graybill) is due to return from South Korea late summer. We look forward to seeing them at the Post this fall!

Lucas Weeks, son of member J.B. Weeks, recently deployed to Afghanistan. Please consider dropping Lucas a line or card to show your appreciation for his service!

Lucas Weeks
A/2-4 IN 4/10 MTN
FOB Tagab
APO AE 09354

BASEBALL REPORT

By: Chairman Bob Bellison



The 2013 Legion baseball season was certainly the best since 2000 when Cmdr. Bolling accepted the State Championship Trophy. The first time that I met this team at the 1st practice I liked them. This was a very special team. In the past we've had some exceptional players, but this was a team with no weaknesses. Each game a different player would step up to make the key play or get the key hit. Our team won the League Championship with a 20 - 4 record, followed with a 3 game sweep to take the play-offs and advance to the State Tournament. In the State we won games vs. Cumberland, Sandy Spring, Talbot (Easton) and lost twice to Funkstown. The team's overall record including non-league games was 32-8. An outstanding and very exciting season!

The coverage that we received from the local Gazette and the Cumberland Times-News pretty much tells the story. *GAZETTE* Headlines: **Damascus Post 171 Wins County Title...Damascus confident going into the Legion postseason.** *Shortstop Casey Bulik* "I think after the first couple practices we had, we knew this was going to be a special year...Coach Davis "We've got a good strong baseball team and we're confident about heading into the postseason" *CUMBERLAND TIMES-NEWS* Headlines: **Damascus Post 171 Pascoe No-Hits Host Post 13..Right-hander fans 11 in win over Cumberland.. Coach Davis "Grant's ethic is top of the line and his ability to throw first-pitch strikes makes him such a good pitcher and he has great mechanics.** Headlines: **Funkstown, Damascus in Title Game Today.** Winner claims state crown, berth in New Jersey regional.

The Championship game after 6 innings was 2-2, then Funkstown went ahead to win 6-2 ending a very memorable season. Emory McMinn (son of Post member Bill) was awarded the hitting award with an average of .417. Post 171 was well supported at the State Tournament with a very good representation from the Post and parents of all the players. Following the presentation of awards, the players, coaches, parents and Post 171 members gathered on the field for fellowship & pictures. It really gave you the feeling of being part of a family. Our gratitude and congratulations go out to the coaches and players for a memorable and banner season.

Just like the team it has also been a banner year for the Booster Club. Our sincere thanks go out to our players, coaches, parents, Boosters and our Post 171 Baseball Family for their tremendous support of Post 171 Baseball. Our baseball program continues to be consistently one of the best in the State and we should be very proud.

The Jr.Team played 32 league games, 5 in the July 4th Classic in Cumberland for a total of 37 games. As in the past, the Jr. team improved as the season progressed. The highlight of their season was being the runner-up in the July 4th Classic. Like the Sr. Team this is an average of 5-6 games per week. Needless to say, this was a very tight and demanding schedule for the players and the coaches. Our sincere thanks go to Coach Davis and Coach Wodoslawsky and their coaching staff for their dedication to 171Baseball.

BOOSTER CLUB

*GRANDSLAM (\$100 Donation *+ \$100)*

**June Gebicke, *Michael & Lynda Papio, *Jay Abrahams, *John & Sandy Walte,r*Buzz & Eileen Burroughs, *Bob & Ruby Bellison, *Ray Mullican, *Ernie Clifford, *John Wayne + In memory of Debbi, *J.D. Morris, *Judy Moore, *Keith & Mary Gene Martin, George & Mary Bolling, Ron & Peggy Scott, Bob & Cindy Ray, Madalean Darby, Mark & Bty Jeffers, Woody Rupp, Bob Moxley, Brownie & Ginny Chichester, Dee Dee Myers, Donald & Betty Nicholson, Bill Hauptman, Linda Richon, Richard Bowers, Sandy Seipp, John Seipp, Bob & Louise Mullinix, Reva Pearce, Delores Neal, Rosalyn Bowman, Pat, Rice, Bill McMinn, Daniel & Wendy Abramson, Andy & Judy Knapp, Bill Plunkett, Skip Duvall, Hazel Hoyle, ShaWn & Paula Gill, Tony DeShiro, Gene Wilson, Fran Burlas.*

DOUBLEHITTER (\$50 Donation)

Danny & Debby Moxley, Lynn & Steve Norwood, Jim Serritella, Pat & Paula Moxley, Jack Talamo, Harry & June Pearce, Ray & Martha Luhn, Lenny Senseney, Mae Senseney, Bill Green, Harold Meicklejohn, Mary Robinson, Lloyd Young, Grace Burch, Ernie Screen, Sam Baughman, George Johnson, Hank Hartley, Ray Schwalm, Liz & Lou Popowsky, Willie Ruffin.

IN MEMORY: Gene Hoyle, Ken Diggs, Marvin Myers, Orville Martin, Roscoe Pearce, Bill Rice, George Richon, Jim Moore, Debbie Duvall.

DAMASCUS AMERICAN LEGION POST 171 SHRIMP FEAST

The Shrimp dinner is scheduled for **Saturday, October 5, 2013**. We serve fried and steamed shrimp, and fried chicken, coleslaw, potato salad, baked beans, a cheese platter, a veggie platter, and rolls and butter. This is one of our Post's major fundraisers, and we need the membership's help talking it up and selling tickets. We also need help before, during, and after the dinner.

This is a great evening for food and dancing. Yes-- we have the Second Chance Band to play dance music from 7:15 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Price for this fun evening is **\$27 per person in advance and \$32 at the door.**

Please contact me about questions or tickets.
Dinner Chairman, Kevin Mook, 301-204-9722

SHRIMP FEAST
October 5, 2013
DINNER 6 PM

Advance Tickets at \$27/ea. _____, \$ _____
Tickets at the door are \$32/ea.
Contact Kevin Mook for tickets,
or any Post 171 Member.
Tel. # for Kevin: 301-204-9722



Swearing in the Post 2014 Officers



Post 171 Delegation to the 2013 Dept of MD. Convention in Ocean City, MD.



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

SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2013

Dear Members: Welcome back to a year filled with many challenges and programs in the American Legion Auxiliary. I attended the first DEC meeting on August 10th at Hagerstown and learned the many programs we will be contributing to this year.

On Monday, August 13th I held the first Executive Meeting for Unit 171. Due to many being on vacation the group was small but productive as many issues were discussed and will be brought before the body at the first meeting in September. That being said, I am asking all of you to think about a fund raiser other than basket bingo.

For those of you not attending the September meeting I will share the good news of the awards we received at the Annual Convention in July at Ocean City.

Americanism – Most Outstanding Work: Second Place; 128 – 205 members
Cancer Control – Most Outstanding Work: First Place; 128 – 205 members
Chaplain – Most Outstanding Work: Second Place; 128 – 205 members
National Security – Best All around Program: First Place; 128 – 205 members
Poppy – Best Poppy Report: First Place; 128 – 205 members
Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation: Second Place; Most Outstanding Family Contact

Thank you ladies for your volunteer service to these programs.

The first Unit monthly meeting will be Monday, September 9th at 7:30 p.m., Post 171 home.

School has begun – watch for our children as they walk to school or board the school bus. They are our precious commodities.

God Bless America, God bless you, and God bless our troops wherever they may be.

Yours in service,
Cindy Ray

My Dear Post Family

Words cannot express to you how grateful I am for all your love and support following George's sudden death. In these few short months, I have come to realize how much George was loved and respected by you all and what his hard work meant to you. George always jumped in with both feet. 23 years in the Army taught him never to quit. That was his motto in his job and as a member of the Post. He loved calling bingo, cooking for pancake breakfast, and the Memorial Brick project. It was my honor and privilege to know

and love this man for 11 years - far too short a time but I thank God every day for each and every hour I had with this wonderful man.

Thank you all again for your kindness.

Linda Richon

POCKET FLAG PROJECT

Liz Popowsky, Chairman

Unit members continued to support the Pocket Flag Project over the summer. On June 24, Linda Richon, Sandy Seipp and Liz Popowsky worked with the USO at BWI to personally present Pocket Flags to troops deploying that night. Approximately 130 pocket flags were presented and it was an honor to look into the eyes of a soldier (the PFC or Lt. Col.) and present him/her a flag and watch as it was immediately placed in a uniform pocket. Sandy and Liz returned to BWI August 20 and presented over 60 pocket flags. During those visits, they also assisted in distributing USO care packages and water as the troops checked in. On August 21, 260 Pocket Flags were mailed to the troops in Afghanistan serving with Lucas Weeks, son of Post 171 member J.B. Weeks. Please keep your eyes and ears tuned to help identify additional troops to receive Pocket Flags and contact Liz Popowsky, 301-371-6648, rayliz53@yahoo.com



Unit 171 Officer's 2014 Swearing in Ceremony



SAL Officer's 2014 Swearing in Ceremony



Sons of the American Legion Squadron, 171

A Newsletter for Members & Friends of Damascus Squadron 171

SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER 2013

Greetings,

I hope everyone had a wonderful summer and is ready to begin a new Legion family year. The Sons are looking forward to a bright year ahead. We are looking to continue working with the Post and Unit in all of the activities that help us to be able to do so much for the community.

The SAL is hoping to bring in many new members in the upcoming year and are looking for any and all help to recruit new members and strengthen membership.

We are planning on continuing things that we have already started like presenting another scholarship in the coming year as well as another flag day program next June.

Anyone who needs to send in their dues may send it to the Post attention SAL. If I do not have your email address please send it to me. I can be reached at johnboy42081@yahoo.com

Please continue to keep our troops and our legion family in your prayers.

Yours in service,
John Wayne Duvall

Post Commander's Note: If you have email capability and are not on my Legion electronic distribution list, please send your **telephone number and email address to me at commander@legionpost171.org** If you have moved and changed your address, please call the Post, 301-253-0769, and leave a message with your new address. The Post Office will not forward bulk mail, and we have to pay \$.45 for each returned Newsletter to get them back and find out which addresses are no longer valid.



COMING EVENTS
Post, Unit & Squadron 171 Calendar

<i>Post Meetings</i>	<i>Unit Meetings</i>	<i>Squadron Meetings</i>
2 nd Monday of the month, 7:30pm	2 nd Monday of the month, 7:30pm	2 nd Monday of the month, 7:00pm

September 2013

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	
3 rd	Executive Committee Meeting	7:00 PM
5 th	Post Bingo – New Season!!	7:00 PM
9 th	SAL Member Meeting	7:00 PM
9 th	Post and Unit Member Meetings	7:30 PM
9 th	County Commander Post Inspection	7:30 PM
11 th	Baker Middle School 9/11 Flag Ceremony	8:00 AM
12 th	Post Bingo	7:00 PM
14 th	Pancake Breakfast	7:30 AM
14 th	Montgomery County Meeting at Post 171 following the Pancake Breakfast	
19 th	Post Bingo	7:00 PM
26 th	Post Bingo	7:00 PM

October 2013

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	
3 rd	Post Bingo	7:00 PM
5 th	Shrimp Feast	6:00 PM
7 th	Executive Committee Meeting	7:00 PM
10 th	Post Bingo	7:00 PM
12 th	Pancake Breakfast	7:30 AM
14 th	SAL Member Meeting	7:00 PM
14 th	Post and Unit Member Meetings	7:30 PM
17 th	Post Bingo	7:00 PM
24 th	Post Bingo	7:00 PM
31 st	Post Bingo	7:00 PM

Looking Ahead

Nov 4 th	Executive Committee Meeting	7:00 PM
Nov 10 th	Marine Corps Birthday	OORAH!
Nov 11 th	Veteran’s Day Program at Post	TBD
Nov 11 th	SAL Member Meeting	7:00 PM
Nov 11 th	Post and Unit Member Meetings	7:30 PM

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



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American Legion Post 171

2012 – 2013 Officers

Commander	Tony DeShiro	843 855-9353	Historian	Ed Williams	301 865-4250
1st V. Cmdr.	Willie Ruffin	301 972-5798	Chaplain	Shawn Gill	301 253-6239
2nd V. Cmdr.	Kevin Mook	301-204-9722	Sgt-at-Arms	Bill Green	301 253-5420
Judge Advocate	Dean Elliott	240 793-6868	Ex. Comm.:	Sam Baughman	301 831-3216
Adjutant	Will Trotter	301 661-6902		Ernie Screen	301 253-3560
Treasurer	Ching-Yao Yu	240 668-4080		Buzz Burroughs	301 253-2741
Serv. Officer	Jim Serritella	301 253-3971		Ronald Scott	301 831-7974

Auxiliary, Unit 171

2012 – 2013 Officers

President	Cynthia Ray	301 972-1978	Color Bearers:	Open	
V. President	Open			Open	
Secretary	Rosalyn Bowman	301-253-4473	Exec. Comm.:	Mary Bolling	301 898-7119
Treasurer	Linda Richon	301 253-5466		Betty Nicholson	301 865-1638
Chaplain	Jennifer Shaffer	301 829-8487		Barbara Raab	301 330-5447
Historian	Mary Beth Talamo	301 253-4457			
Sgt-at-Arms	Virginia Myers	301 831-9188			

SAL Squadron, 171

2012 – 2013 Officers

Commander	John Duvall	301 787-4480	Chaplain	Drew Shaffer	301 412-3443
1st V. Cmdr.	Tony Koontz	240 439-9501	Sgt-at-Arms	George Shaffer	301 831-535
2nd V. Cmdr.	Josh Shaffer	301 412-3443	Historian	OPEN	
Adjutant	Adam Young	240 422-1765	Post Liaison	George Bolling	301 980-8917
Finance	Tony Koontz	240 439-9501			

Newsletter Editor: Lou Popowsky tel: 301-371-6648 email: popowsk@yahoo.com