



Our Color Guard Supported the 12 Annual Damascus Freedom 5K

The Damascus American Legion Post 171 Color Guard supported the Damascus Freedom 5K and Kids Race on September 11, 2021. Race proceeds benefit great organizations that together support the troops in the field, their families while deployed and those who return home wounded or disabled. Shown with First Responders are from left to right: William Green, Ridgely Chichester, Willie Ruffin and William Cole. Their biographical sketches follow.

William Green, AKA Bill, from Mt. Airy, MD enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1963. He served in the Marine Detachment aboard the USS Northampton CC1 home ported at Norfolk VA from January 1964 - 1966. Bill was married in June 1965. He transferred to Cherry Point, NC in January 1966, and served as Sgt. of the Guard for the Nuclear Weapons Guard Post until November 1966. His daughter was born in June 1966, and he received orders for Viet Nam in November 1966. As a Squad Leader in Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Marine Division, Bill fought at Hill 51 and the Que Son Valley in the Republic of Viet Nam until September 13, 1967. He received his Honorable Discharge on September 18, 1967.

Ridgely 'Brownie' Chichester was born in Olney and currently lives in the Brighton area of Brookville, MD. He graduated from Sherwood High School in 1962 where he played basketball and baseball. Brownie was drafted in the U.S. Army in July 1965. He spent 6 months at Ft. Jackson, SC, a year at Tan Son Nhut, Vietnam, and 6 months at Pine Bluff, AR. He completed his service in July 1967. Brownie joined American Legion Post 68 in the 1960s and transferred to Post 171 in 2007. He has been a member of the Color Guard shortly after his transfer. He worked 46 years for Vitro Corp./BAE Systems defense contractors as a material control supervisor in the Purchasing Department. Brownie is married to Ginny and has 2 children and 3 grandchildren.

Willie Ruffin is from Germantown, MD. He was drafted into the U.S. Army, in September 1966. Completed Basic Training and Advanced Individual Training at Ft. Polk, LA. He was transferred to Ft. Bragg, NC, February 1967, in a waiting status. Willie received orders in late July to Viet Nam, arriving in country in mid-August. He was assigned to AG Company, USARV, Long Binh. As a SPEC 5, he spent much of his time securing the compound perimeter during the North Vietnamese Tet Offensive attacks on U.S. bases. Generally, every night, from the time he arrived in country in August, 1967 until departing 13 months later in September 1968. Willie received an Honorable Discharge on September 15, 1968, and his awards included the Army Commendation Medal for service.

Past Post Commander William Cole graduated from high school and enlisted in the U.S. Marines, serving from 1990 to 2000. After recruit training at Parris Island, SC and infantry school at Camp Geiger, NC. He was selected to become a Presidential Honor Guard in Washington DC. After a two year tour at Marine Barracks, LCpl. Cole received orders to Camp Pendleton, CA with the 1st Battalion 9th Marines. In October, 1993 Cpl. Cole was deployed with the 1/9 on the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) Special Operations Capable to Somalia for Operation Continue Hope. After that tour he served as a Drill Instructor at Parris Island, SC. In 1996 Will changed his Military Occupation Specialty and transferred to Helicopter Marine Training (HMT) Squadron 303 in Camp Pendleton, CA and he became a helicopter crew chief. Sgt. Cole's next tour was with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron (MLAH) Squadron 773 in Willow Grove, PA. Among his many medals, ribbons and badges, Will was awarded the Navy Achievement Medal for Heroic Action and the 2017 Legionnaire of the Year. After active duty from the Marine Corps he completed his Bachelor's degree in business at the University of Maryland. Will then started his law enforcement and intelligence agency career at The Central Intelligence Agency, Department of Homeland Security, and Prince George County Park Police.