



## THE DAMASCUS VETERAN

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

**July/August 2021**

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### **Greetings Post 171 Family:**

It would appear that the COVID 19 pandemic is mostly behind us now as we look forward to the summer. I do not want to jinx it, but it seems like things are almost back to normal.

The Post is opening back up again, and people are already starting to rent out the Post for parties, etc., and we are having in-person meetings. Speaking of which, as a reminder, we do not have a membership meeting in July and the Executive Committee will be meeting on Tuesday July 6, 2021, as Monday is the holiday observance day as the 4<sup>th</sup> falls on a Sunday.



I would like to thank everyone who had a hand in making our Memorial Day weekend celebration a resounding success. Special thanks to Sandy Seipp for coordinating our visits to the area cemeteries to place Flags on Veteran's graves on Saturday May 29<sup>th</sup>. Although the weather forecast called for rain, the weather was not bad at all, and Sandy's team placed 705 flags on Veteran's gravesites in 21 cemeteries. Thank you for your coordination, Sandy. Our Sunday's Memorial Day program was equally successful as we had over 100 in attendance! Special thanks to the Unit for providing lunch for the event and the Browningsville Cornet Band for an outstanding musical performance (as usual). It was a really good program and thanks to all involved.

I would also like to thank Jim Seritella for taking the lead and coordinating the Flag Retirement Program we had this past June 14 (Flag Day). We properly retired over 800 flags that were deemed to be unserviceable. BZ to Jim, and thanks to Brownie Chichester and Bill Green for serving as the honor guard for the event.

With the Department of Maryland Convention right around the corner (July 14-16), that means we will be beginning another Legion Year soon and the Post needs your help. We had the installation dinner of officers on June 26<sup>th</sup> and everyone is eager to get to work. I have said this many times before, we are looking for members to help out with the Post programs and events like bingo, baseball, auditing committee, and the scholarship committee, to name a few. I will be sending out an email with a list of committee positions that need filling and where you can help out.

That is about it for now. Enjoy the summer, getting out and about again, and getting back to normalcy.

For God and Country  
Fred Mitchell, Post Commander

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

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## Sons of the American Legion

Greetings from Squadron 171,

Finally restrictions are being lifted and things are starting to get back to normal. I'm happy to say that our meetings will start to get back on track at our normal times. I will send out an email reminder of when our next meeting is. I'm also proud to announce we have reached 103.8% membership this year. Let's keep this up moving into next year.

Our Slate Of Officers voted in for the 2021-2022 year are as follows:

**Commander: Todd Stockslager 1. Vice Commander: Tom Kaufman 2. Vice Commander: Tony Koontz Adjutant: Adam Young Finance Officer: Adam Young Sargent at Arms: Tyler Baughman Chaplain: Tyler Baughman Historian: Brosh Boshier.**

Thank you to everyone who volunteered to lead our Squadron into the next legion year!

I hope everyone enjoys the warm Summer weather and stays safe doing so. I urge everyone to stay tuned to the Legion website for news and upcoming events as they start to open back up. If anyone has any updates to make to their information we may have on file or an email to add please let me know @ [toddsal171@yahoo.com](mailto:toddsal171@yahoo.com).

For God and Country,

Todd Stockslager  
SAL Commander

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Happy Summer! Luckily things are getting back to normal. Restrictions are lightening up and the Post is starting to hold events.

Early bird letters have gone out for membership. From now until August 1st, Unit memberships will be \$21. Any membership paid after the August 1st, will be \$25. You can mail your payment to me at 11798 Sier Dr. Monrovia, MD 21770. If you have any questions feel free to contact me at 2404098226 or [axb5801@yahoo.com](mailto:axb5801@yahoo.com).

Unfortunately, I will not be reinstated as Unit President this year. As I have enjoyed serving the Unit for the past 2 years I have decided to step back and enjoy time with my family and other commitments I have already made. Even though we have been through a rough year with the pandemic, we overcame it. The executive board is working on finding a new Unit President to serve you. With that said I want to personally thank Kelli Cole for being my Vice President for the last 2 years and Nancy Sutherland for being my right hand woman as my secretary. A sincere thank you needs to be given to Sandy Seipp for being an AMAZING mentor.

I wish everyone the best and thank you for the opportunity for allowing me to serve as your Unit President.

For God and Country,  
Amanda Baughman

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## Legion 2022 Membership Renewal Time

It's the start of the new Legion Membership Year, so it's time to renew your 2022 Membership. Have a computer and want to save a stamp? It's easy to renew online. **Go to 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. Or you can mail a check made out to A.L. Post 171 for \$30.00, to me at: **Sam Baughman, 11798 Sier Drive, Monrovia, MD 2177**

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PLAY BALL!



The "Boys of Summer" are back! Thanks to improving conditions and the continuing vaccination program, our 2021 Legion Baseball program is off and running. By the time you read this, both our Junior and Senior Teams will have begun their seasons. We wish them both the best of luck for a competitive and healthy season.

Our Senior Team will have games at Damascus High School on the following dates:

June 24 at 5:30 pm  
July 1<sup>st</sup> at 5:30 pm

July 8<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm  
July 13<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm

The Junior Team will have games at Damascus High School on the following dates:

June 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00 pm  
June 27<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am and 12:30pm  
July 18<sup>th</sup> at 10:00am and 12:30pm  
July 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:00pm  
July 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm

Please come out and enjoy some summer baseball and support the young men representing our post. As always, If you would like to provide even more support, please consider becoming a financial booster. From all of us involved in the baseball program, warm wishes to the players and coaches for a successful 2021 campaign!

If anyone is interested in joining the Baseball Committee for the 2021 season, please contact me at [post171patriots@gmail.com](mailto:post171patriots@gmail.com)

Happy and Healthy wishes,

Alan T. Rannals

**2021 POST 171 BASEBALL COMMITTEE:** Alan Rannals (Chairman), Bob Bellison, and Evelyn Hernandez. **Civilian advisors:** Keith Hernandez, Sean Manion, and Dave Retherford.

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## Damascus American Legion honors the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

At it's first meeting since the Covid-19 Pandemic restrictions were eased, on May 10th, Damascus Post 171 honored Montgomery County Police Department Sergeant Kevin Holmes with the Legion Law Enforcement Officer of the Year award. Post Sergeant-at-Arms Bill Green made the presentation.



Sergeant Holmes, the leader of a Special Assignment Team, planned and directed operations that dramatically reduced automobile car thefts in his district and resulted in fifteen arrests. During a rash of daytime burglaries in one community of the County, Sergeant Holmes led his team in identifying, catching and arresting the burglar in the act. After receiving information that a dangerous murder suspect was believed to be in his operational area, Sergeant Holmes set up a surveillance plan that enabled his team members to identify and then takedown the suspect safely without use of major force.

A Marine Corps veteran and former Sheriff's Deputy and Gaithersburg Policeman, Sergeant Holmes has been in law enforcement since 1996 and a member of the Montgomery County Police Department since 2002.

At the same meeting, Montgomery County Legion Commander Cliff Bergstresser recognized Sergeant Holmes as the County-level Law Enforcement Officer of the Year, and he is a contender of the same award in the Southern Maryland District.

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# BINGO

## Night

### Bingo update!

Our Bingo Committee met in early may and reached a unanimous decision to err on the side of caution and not restart Bingo until Sept 2. We did this with our patrons safety in mind. We sure hope everyone is doing well and they have had the opportunity to get their Covid shots. We are going to meet in August and hope to start off with a bang, possibly offering a \$1000 payout for Big Jack Pot. Our Post has survived O.K. but has severely depleted our reserves. It is very important for you to share the news about our great Bingo program and encourage your neighbors and friends to attend and support this incredible Post. The money we raise goes right back into the community via programs like scholarships, Scouts, Boys State, Oratorical Contest, essay contest, maintenance of the Post home and more. For God and Country come on out on Sept. 2nd and have some fun.

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### Memorial Day



Memorial Day weekend kicked off on Saturday with members of the Post, Unit and SAL placing flags on the graves of veterans. Here the Unit's Marianne DiSomma, Commander Fred Mitchel and other volunteers prepare to place flags at All Soul's Cemetary in Germantown.



Photo on the right: Post Commander Fred Mitchell, incoming Department of Maryland Commander Will Trotter and women of the organizations that presented floral arrangements at the Post Memorial Day ceremonies.



PPC George Bolling with Tom Gartner Sr., Darron Long (seated) and guest speaker Ross Simpson of WDVM TV.

The Post's Memorial Day program began with Browningsville Cornet Band playing patriotic tunes.

Mrs. Betty Bass, Regent of the Pleasant Plains Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, and the Band played the National Anthem. Then, Legion Montgomery County Chaplain Jim Serritella delivered the invocation.

Commander Mitchell introduced Past Post Commander George Bolling, who paid tribute to the memory of the nearly 630,000 Americans who have lost their lives in all wars since World War I. Bolling then read the names of the twenty-seven Post members who transferred to Post Everlasting (passed away) since Memorial Day 2019. Auxiliary members carried flags as each name was called.

Incoming Department of Maryland Commander William "Will" Trotter led the presentation of floral arrangements by sixteen Damascus civic organizations. As Trotter read the names of the those honoring the Post's recently deceased veterans, representatives of each those civic organizations placed wreaths at the front of the auditorium, creating a beautiful floral array.

Trotter introduced the guest speaker, Ross Simpson, anchor at WDVM in Hagerstown and a renowned newsman and author. An Air Force veteran and formerly embedded reporter with the Marine Corps in Iraq, He spoke eloquently about his experiences in combat in Iraq, the losses of men with whom he served, the impacts of those losses, his frequent interactions and interviews with veterans, and the debt we the American people owe to our brave warriors. His inspirational speech brought the audience to a standing ovation.



## Flag Day



Since the Covid pandemic began, hundreds of Damascus area citizens and friends of American Legion Post 171 entrusted their unserviceable American Flags to the Post for proper retirement. The ceremony for accomplishing that was held at 6:00 PM on Flag Day, June 14th, at the Post Home. Legionnaire Jim Serritella chaired the event.

Post Commander Fred Mitchell opened the ceremony, welcoming the several attendees. The Post Color Guard presented the Colors, and Commander Mitchell cited the presence of the empty chair honoring the approximately 82,000 servicemen and women who are Prisoners of War and/or Missing In Action. Following the Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem, Mitchell summarized the history of the Flag retirement ceremony and read Ruth Apperson Rous' famous and inspirational poem, "I Am The Flag."



Post Sergeant-at-Arms Bill Green and Legionnaire Brownie Chichester presented the nearly 800 Flags for inspection and proper disposal. In his remarks, Commander Mitchell approved the proper retirement of the Flags, saying that the Flags are "...a precious symbol of all we and our comrades have worked for and lived for and died for." Post Chaplain Larry Matthews offered a prayer, committing "these Flags, worn out in worthy service, to a clean and purging flame." Following a moment of silence, Sergeant-at-

Arms Green ignited the flame to the bier and "Taps" was played.

Damascus Boy Scout Troop 1397 and Damascus Station 14 of Montgomery County Fire and Rescue provided support for the ceremony.



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<http://www.legionpost171.org> and <https://www.facebook.com/DamascusPost171>

**American Legion Post 171**

**Officers**

Commander	Fred Mitchell	(301) 916-8395	Membership	*Sam Baughman	(301) 401-6479
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice Commander	* Tony DeShiro	(843) 855-9353	Historian	Sam Lehane	(407) 230-3117
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander	Kevin O’Neill	(301) 525-2071	Chaplain	Larry Matthews	(301) 370-4079
Adjutant	Steve Monteiro	(240) 401-0370	Sgt.-at-Arms	Bill Green	(301) 253-5420
Finance Officer	Anita Trotter	(301) 661-6904	Service Officer	Keith Midberry	

**Executive Committee**

Judge Advocate	Dean Elliott	(240) 793-6868	*Bernie Moxley, Sr		
			Charles Bradsher		
			Steve O’Neil		
			Paula Gil		

\*denotes Past Post Commander

**Auxiliary, Unit 171**

**Officers**

President	Amanda Baughman	(240) 409-8226	Membership	Jane St. Louis	
Vice President	Kelli Cole	(240) 832-7733	Secretary	Nancy Sutherland	
Sgt-at-Arms	Virginia Myers		Chaplain	Patricia Rice	(301) 253-2266
Treasurer	Patricia Busche	(301) 391-6752	Historian	Diane Capel	

**SAL Squadron, 171**

**Officers**

Commander	Todd Stockslager		Sgt-at-Arms	Tyler Baughman	
1st Vice Commander	Tom Kaufman		Historian	Brosh Brosher	
2nd Vice Commander	Tony Koontz		Finance Officer	Adam Young	
Adjutant	Adam Young		Chaplain	Tyler Baughman	

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