

## **American Legion Officer of the Year nominee named at Damascus Post**

### **FOR THE FREDERICK NEWS-POST**

Damascus American Legion Post 171's nominee for the American Legion Law Officer of the Year — Montgomery County Police Officer II Andre Smith — received that honor March 7 at a meeting of all post commanders in Montgomery County at Post 86 in Rockville. Bill Green, Post 171's sergeant-at-arms and chairman of the selection committee, described Officer Smith as "a gentle giant", who is 6 1/2-feet tall and weighs 260 pounds. Green, himself a retired Montgomery County police officer, said, "Andre is a formidable figure when approaching suspects, but his voice and demeanor are calming."

Smith's selection was based on his 2019 record in the Germantown District, including a felony arrest, four misdemeanor arrests, two criminal citations and an alcohol citation. In total in 2019, he made 548 traffic stops and wrote 195 citations and 378 warnings, and he wrote nine accident reports and 76 incident reports. In addition, he was credited with de-escalating a volatile situation involving a veteran suffering with PTSD, accompanying the veteran to receive treatment and receiving the gratitude of the veteran's family. Officer Smith was also cited for his masterful handling of a serious domestic situation resulting in the arrest of a suspect threatening to kill an entire family he was holding hostage. A graduate of Seneca Valley High School, he has also often been observed shooting hoops with the young people he encounters on his beat. Officer Smith is an extraordinary policeman who serves as an example worthy of emulation by his peers.

Between now and July, Officer Smith will be considered for the same award at the Southern Maryland District, and, if he is selected at that level, he will compete for the American Legion Department of Maryland Law Officer of the Year. If he succeeds at the state level, he will be recognized at the national level of the American Legion later this year.



Montgomery County Police Officer II Andre Smith is the Damascus American Legion Post 171's nominee for the American Legion Officer of the Year. From the left: Damascus Legion Sergeant-at-Arms Bill Green, Officer Smith, and Montgomery County Legion Commander Cliff Bergstresser.

*Photo by Rob Hobson*

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