



# THE DAMASCUS VETERAN

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

---

**March – April 2019**

---

## THE COMMANDER'S CORNER



Blessings to all of the Post 171 family. “Old Man Winter” has been on us. It’s made it difficult to get functions completed as scheduled. The Southern Maryland District meeting had to be cancelled, our Oratorical Contest had to be postponed by one week and we missed one regularly scheduled Bingo night. We also had to postpone our membership meeting once. We were fortunate to have the makeups successful for the Oratorical Contest and our own membership dinner went on as scheduled. We had good food and a great time commiserating with each other. My hardy congratulations to all the members of our family that were honored that night. (see article below) We are quite excited about coming events being planned. The first of course is the Centennial celebration of the American Legion itself on March 15th. It’s hard for a Legionnaire my age to comprehend all the American Legion has done over the past 100 years for veterans and their families. I do remember one Post 171 event quite well. I was about to be discharged from Walter Reed hospital in September 1968. I was assigned by the “patient Company CO” to be the OIC for an external dinner for a large group of patients, that dinner was hosted by Post 171. This is another great example of the “greatest generation” and the fine support of the pillars of the American Legion. The second century should be all the better for all of us and the men and women coming up behind us. It will be a day to observe and celebrate.

Our spring Shrimp feast scheduled for April 27<sup>th</sup> has been cancelled. We are moving our attention to a celebration for our World War II members 75 years after the invasion of Normandy Beach in 1944. (see article below) We are also working on another Flag Retirement service at the request of local Girl Scouts. This is scheduled for May 11 at 6:00 PM, more details to follow. We are in the final third of our fiscal year which is full of activities. It’s been a whirlwind trip and momentum is still rising. Spring will be in the air soon and here’s wishing for a more normal spring and summer.

For God and Country,

David F. Clemmer, Post Commander

---

## Post 171 Plans D-Day Remembrance Dinner

We are in the planning stages to host a 75th anniversary dinner to remember D-Day veterans. The event will also be used to honor all World War II veterans of the Greatest Generation. The dinner is scheduled for Saturday, June 1st from the hours of 5 PM to 8 PM. The Social Hour (5 to 6) will provide drinks and social fare among static displays and period posters. Ticket prices are not yet finalized, and proceeds will benefit a veteran's organization yet to be decided.

Project Normandy was first conceived on a recent trip to France. I had the opportunity to visit the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in Colleville-sur-Mer, the Omaha and Utah beaches, Pointe du Hoc, and Sainte-Mere-Eglise. I've traveled to many battlefields, monuments and cemeteries – but have never experienced the emotions felt amongst those Crosses and Stars of David. Like so many other American patriots – they gave up all their tomorrows, so we could have the freedoms of today.



We are entering the final planning stages and need your support. Please contact me for more information and project plan on how you can help support this remembrance ceremony.

Thank you in advance of your support!

Steve Monteiro, Email: bayonet@aol.com, Cell: (240) 401-0370

---

### Oratorical Contest

On Saturday, January 26th, Damascus American Legion Post 171 held its annual Oratorical Contest and the winner was Our Lady of Good Counsel High School sophomore Catherine Zellers. For her win, Catherine received a scholarship award of \$500.

Finishing in second place was Damascus High School sophomore Noah Etienne who won \$250. Finishing in 3rd place was Clarksburg High School junior Zoe Tishaev who won \$150.

The judges were Montgomery College professors Sharon Anthony and Joan Naake as well as Past-Post Commander George Bolling.

Catherine was the winner of the Montgomery County contest by default and went on to place 2<sup>nd</sup> in the District contest.

Post 171 prizes for next year's Oratorical Contest will be doubled with 1<sup>st</sup> place receiving \$1,000, 2<sup>nd</sup> place \$500 and 3<sup>rd</sup> place \$250.



## Damascus American Legion Family Celebrates

The Damascus American Legion Family—including Post 171, Auxiliary Unit 171, and Sons of the American Legion Squadron 171—gathered for the annual Membership Dinner on January 28<sup>th</sup> at the Post Home.

Following dinner, Post Commander David Clemmer opened the program by telling a story about true heroism exhibited by an Army helicopter crew in April, 1968 in the A Shau Valley of South Vietnam.

When the CH-47 Chinook crashed after taking massive enemy fire, it caught fire, creating multiple explosions. The Pilot—Chief Warrant Officer John Fox—quickly took inventory of his crew and discovered that tail gunner Kenny Sager was missing. Fox summoned help from soldiers nearby who rushed to the burning chopper to find Sager entangled in the wreckage badly burned and very near death. After Sager was successfully extracted, Fox was able to get him to an aid station, and after two years' hospitalization at the Army's burn center at Fort Sam Houston, Sager had healed sufficiently to be discharged from the Army and return to his civilian career. Commander Clemmer then introduced Kenny Sager, a Bethesda resident, who spoke eloquently of the toughest experience of his life and the heroic actions of those who rescued him. His remarks evoked a standing ovation from the nearly ninety attendees.



Ms. Edwina Flynn, a guest of Commander Clemmer, sang the National Anthem, and Post Chaplain Paula Gill gave the invocation. Past Post Commander George Bolling conducted the official POW/MIA Remembrance Ceremony. Past Post Commander and Membership Chairman Sam Baughman reported that the Post has gained fifteen new members since July of last year, and he introduced the several in attendance. Then, in succession, leaders of the Sons, Unit and Post honored four Legion Family members for their extraordinary service during 2018. The evening ended with the attendees singing “God Bless America.”



For a complete list of upcoming Post 171 events and activities go to the calendar at <http://www.legionpost171.org/>

## American Legion Post 171 Flag Retirement Ceremony May 11<sup>th</sup>, 6pm

“What’s the difference between a Flag Retirement Ceremony and a protesting demonstration of a flag burning?”  
The simple one word answer is – RESPECT.

The American Legion ends the majority of its communications with the phrase, “For God and Country”. We have a love of God and love our Country. These two prominent topics are included in every American Legion event including, a Chaplain opening and closing prayer, the reading of the Constitution Preamble, and the respect we show for our POW/MIA soldiers with our open chair and table.

Protesters, on the other hand, have an entirely different outlook of all people who disagree with their position in life. Because the Supreme Court has allowed flag burning under the first amendment right of free speech, individuals can be disrespectful of our country and flag “for which it stands” as they burn our beloved national symbol.

When individuals or organizations fly our flag over a prolonged period, the flag becomes tattered and weather worn with frayed edges and fading colors. The flag is replaced with a new flag of similar size. The American Legion conducts a formal “Flag Retirement Ceremony”. Here is the difference – we do not JUST BURN the tattered flag. Over the course of time – usually once or twice a year, a legion post will accumulate several worn flags. In fact, we advertise, and have an outside bin to collect these flags. We accept all U.S. and foreign country flags for our ceremony. Several legionnaires participate in the preparation of the event. We announce the retirement ceremony to the public, and over the last two events, hundreds of individuals participated in the ceremony.

Let us explain the ceremony. During the Press Release time of collecting flags for the ceremony, legion folks, prepare an elevated bier for flame aeration, the gathered flags are placed on the bier. They are soaked with lighter fluid. The SAL and boy scouts prepare chairs and the parking area. The ceremony opens with a bugler sounding “A Call to Colors”, then the Chaplain reads a prayer of dedication and respect. The Post Commander continues with the ceremonial prepared text, the Star-Spangled Banner is sung by all in attendance, an honor guard fires a sixteen-gun salute. Our local fire department attends with a fully prepared tanker and support staff in the event of a flammable problem. The bugler sounds TAPS and with the beginning of TAPS, Legionnaires ignite the bier of flags. After the bier has burned the deteriorated flags, the attendees proceed inside of our post as the Auxiliary Unit serves prepared refreshments.



The picture contains over 500 worn and tattered flags being retired. The entire ceremony is under the respect and love of God and Country.

What is the difference between an erratic screaming protester and his burning of our national symbol? Ask how many people ever attended an American Legion Flag Retirement Ceremony. RESPECT

Ladies and Gentlemen, – You are invited you to attend our next “Call to Colors”



With dignity and Respect,

“For God and Country”  
James Serritella



**Sons of the American Legion Squadron, 171**  
**A Newsletter for Members & Friends of Damascus Squadron 171**

---

Greetings from the SAL Squadron,

This winter sure has wrecked-havoc. Hopefully the winter is almost over and sunshine and flowers are on the horizon. In January, I was given the opportunity to give a very deserving member of the SAL the Member of the Year Award at the Membership Dinner. John Wayne Duvall has been such a great asset to our organization. He is always willing to lend a hand, not just to the SAL, but also to the Post and the Auxiliary. It was an honor to present this award to John Wayne.

I would like to encourage any members with ideas for the upcoming Legion Year to bring them up at our next meeting, any input is greatly appreciated.

Thank you to everyone who attended our Spaghetti Dinner on February 17th. It was awesome to see everyone. It is great to see the support that we received from the Post and the Auxiliary at our event. We collected a large amount of canned foods and non-perishable foods that were donated to Damascus HELP food pantry.

We are actively planning on more fundraisers throughout the 2019 year. Stayed tuned for details.

Our next meeting will be held on Monday, March 11th at 7pm.

Todd Stockslager  
SAL 171 Commander

---



**American Legion Auxiliary**  
**Post 171**

The Auxiliary is holding a **Bingo Extravaganza!!!** on Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>. The event features **Vera Bradley and Thirty One Bags**, cash prizes and filled gift boxes. The doors open at 5:30 and bingo starts at 7pm. Only \$25 for 20 games of bingo - win cash or other prizes. Lots of great door prizes!

Delicious dinner platters and light fare will be available for purchase. Bring a canned, non perishable food item and get a bingo card for a special game. Seating is first come/first served. NO reserved seating.

**Tickets and information available online at <https://ala17bingo19.eventbrite.com> or call Trish at 301-467-1321 or Amanda at 240-409-8226.**

---



## THE POST 171 PATRIOTS BASEBALL PROGRAM UPDATE

Even with snow on the ground, and more in the forecast, activity with the Post 171 Patriots is heating up. The summer season is rapidly approaching and members of the baseball committee and coaching staff are getting ready to hit the field for the 2019 Legion Baseball Season.

The baseball committee is proud to name Kevin Hernandez as the 2019 Post 171 Senior Legion head coach. Coach Hernandez has coached within the Damascus Sports Association at multiple levels and has also been an Assistant Coach at Damascus High School for the past several years. While serving as an assistant coach with the Post 171 program, he finished out the 2018 season in the head coaching role while guiding our Patriots to within one win of the Montgomery County Championship. Coach Hernandez hopes to continue serving the fine young men that represent our Post and build upon last year’s outstanding performance.

The baseball program will hold tryouts for the 2019 Senior Legion team on March 10th, March 17th and possibly on March 24th if necessary. Tryouts will be held at Damascus High School baseball field and tryout times and more details will be posted on our website and announced via our Post 171 Baseball program Twitter account.

With baseball season and warmer weather rapidly approaching, we hope you’re going to join us in supporting the Post 171 baseball program. Our schedule of games will be posted and the young men always appreciate a friendly crowd and seeing friendly faces in the stands. If you want to provide even more support, please consider becoming a financial booster. From all of us involved in the baseball program, warm wishes and we can’t wait for the umpire to declare “Play Ball!”

**2019 POST 171 BASEBALL COMMITTEE:** Alan Rannals (Chairman), Keith Martin (Secretary), Sam Baughman, Bob Bellison, George Bolling, Buzz Burroughs, Frank Carpenter, Brownie Chichester, Will Cole, Skip Duvall, Bill Green, Bill Hauptman, Evelyn Hernandez and Ron Scott.

### 2019 POST 171 BASEBALL BOOSTER CLUB MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **DOUBLE HITTER** (\$50 Donation)  
Cook-out – Banquet- Schedule & Game Results

\_\_\_\_\_ **HOMERUN** (\$100\* Donation)  
Cook-out – Banquet- Schedule & Game Results  
Select 1 Apparel Item From Below

\_\_\_\_\_ **GRANDSLAM** (\$200\*+ Donation)  
Cook-out – Banquet- Schedule & Game Results  
Select 2 Apparel Items From Below

**Apparel Items:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Shirt (Size \_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Sweat Shirt \_\_\_\_\_ Hat  
Circle Color – (Size \_\_\_\_\_)  
Red/Gray/Navy/White Circle Color –  
Red/Gray/Navy/White

***\_\_\_\_\_ I DO NOT WANT ANY APPAREL ITEMS; PLEASE USE MY ENTIRE DONATION FOR THE POST 171 BASEBALL PROGRAM***

Make checks payable to **Post 171 Baseball** and return to American Legion Post 171 Baseball, ATTN: Keith Martin, PO Box 171, Damascus, MD 20872. Any comments or questions should be directed to Alan Rannals at [rannals@gmail.com](mailto:rannals@gmail.com) or Keith Martin at [rkmgm@verizon.net](mailto:rkmgm@verizon.net).

# The American Legion at 100



Take a look at the men in this photograph. Every member of the American Legion today owes a debt of gratitude to them. These men gathered in Paris on March 15, 1919 to create the organization we are proud to represent a century later.

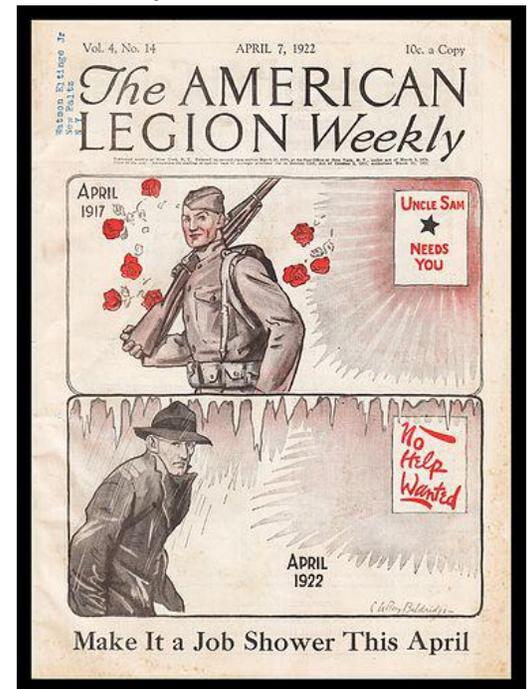


It was called the Paris Caucus. It was organized by men like Theodore Roosevelt Jr., a Medal of Honor winner, and General John “Blackjack” Pershing. It was held, said Pershing, “With the sound of battle ringing in our ears.”

Two million American men participated in World War One and most of them were stuck in Europe at the end of hostilities because the United States did not have the resources to bring them all home in a timely manner. Military leaders and regular soldiers, sailors and Marines were determined that these veterans would not be ignored or pitied as was the fate of veterans of earlier wars. These veterans would not only be heard, they would be honored. Many had suffered physical or psychological wounds that would stay with them for the rest of their lives.

America listened. In September, 1919, Congress chartered the American Legion. Our forefathers in service made sure the American people did not forget the men who had fought and died in France, or those who came home to the despair that can overcome those who have ridden to the sound of the guns. Here is the cover of The American Legion Weekly from 1922.

The Legion has never lost its mission. From the G.I. Bill that created the largest middle class the world has known to Agent Orange benefits to recognition of PTSD, the Legion has been on point. God Bless the men who gave us this mission.





Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Damascus, MD  
Permit No. 4400

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Post Home Location: 10201 Lewis Drive, Damascus, MD 20872 – Phone: 301 253-0769**  
<http://www.legionpost171.org> and <https://www.facebook.com/DamascusPost171>

## American Legion Post 171 Officers

<b>Commander</b>	<b>Dave Clemmer</b>	<b>(240) 447-7542</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>Sam Baughman (PC)</b>	<b>(301) 401-6479</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander</b>	<b>Fred Mitchell</b>	<b>(301) 916-8395</b>	<b>Historian</b>	<b>Sam Lehane</b>	<b>(407) 230-3117</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander</b>	<b>Larry Matthews</b>	<b>(301) 370-4079</b>	<b>Chaplain</b>	<b>Paula Gill</b>	<b>(661) 618-7638</b>
<b>Judge Advocate</b>	<b>Dean Elliott</b>	<b>(240) 783-0982</b>	<b>Sgt-at-Arms</b>	<b>Bill Green</b>	<b>(301) 253-5420</b>
<b>Adjutant</b>	<b>Kevin O'Neill</b>	<b>(301) 525-2071</b>	<b>Executive Comm</b>	<b>Paula Gill</b>	
<b>Finance Officer</b>	<b>Tony DeShiro</b>	<b>(843) 855-9353</b>		<b>Keith Martin</b>	
<b>Service Officer</b>	<b>Steve Monteiro</b>	<b>(240) 401-0370</b>		<b>Bill Raab (PC)</b>	
				<b>Buzz Burroughs</b>	

## Auxiliary, Unit 171 Officers

<b>President</b>	<b>Marianne DiSomma</b>	<b>(301) 606-4645</b>	<b>Membership</b>	<b>Amanda Baughman</b>	<b>(240) 409-8226</b>
<b>Vice President</b>	<b>Kelli Cole</b>	<b>(240) 832-7733</b>			
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Amanda Baughman</b>	<b>(240) 409-8226</b>	<b>Executive Comm</b>	<b>CaseyKoontz</b>	
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Patricia Busche</b>	<b>(301) 391-6752</b>		<b>Donna Sefcik</b>	
<b>Chaplain</b>	<b>Pat Rice</b>	<b>(301) 253-2266</b>		<b>Barbara Raab</b>	
<b>Historian</b>	<b>Diane Capel</b>				
<b>Sgt-at-Arms</b>	<b>Virginia Myers</b>				

## SAL Squadron, 171 Officers

<b>Commander</b>	<b>Todd Stockslager</b>	<b>Chaplain</b>	
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Vice Commander</b>	<b>Tom Kaufman</b>	<b>Sgt-at-Arms</b>	
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Commander</b>	<b>John Duvall</b>	<b>Historian</b>	<b>Tyler Baughman</b>
<b>Adjutant</b>	<b>Adam Young</b>	<b>Post Liaison</b>	<b>Paula Gill</b>
<b>Finance Officer</b>	<b>Adam Young</b>		

Newsletter Editor: Larry Matthews Lawrence.,matthews17@gmail.com