



June 2025

Volume 5 Issue 10

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER
Patriot Cody Phipps

Dear Patriots and Purple Heart Recipients,



I am honored to serve as your Commander for the Department of Arizona for 2025/2026.

Hopefully everyone is having a safe and fun summer. In our “dark months” we are still working to grow and promote the order. From suicide prevention, homelessness prevention, fundraising, to providing services to Veterans and their families, we’ve been busy.

I have started on a suicide prevention plan for the department which I would eventually like every member to be familiar with. A brief overview is that officers and members would be trained in suicide recognition and intervention techniques that would make all of us assets to help Veterans around the state of Arizona. I’m looking for volunteers to help me design this program and get it started. Please reach out to me if you’re interested in helping.

The Sr. Vice Commander will be attending the National Convention in July. We look forward to learning the plans being put forth by the National organization and providing that information to the membership.

I would like to thank all that are currently serving as officers at the chapter and department. I look forward to working with our new officers; **Sr Vice Mike Smaydy, Inspector Stephan Bobby, Sgt-at-Arms John Ballenger, Americanism Officer William Hunker, & webmaster Cheryl Packham.** You can learn about the new officers and the webmaster further in the newsletter. To all past Commanders and Officers, volunteers, associate members, and the Combat Wounded Heroes who continue to serve every day, Thank you!

On a sad note, my condolences and the condolences of the Department go out to Patriot Larry Leighton, department adjutant, and to his wife Kay. Kay’s father, Raymond “Bob” Valdez, passed away on June 16th. Raymond was an Army & Vietnam Veteran who served 21 years. His awards and decorations for service include two Distinguished Flying Crosses, two Bronze Stars, 28 Air Medals, & two Army Commendation Medals. We thank Bob for his service to our Nation, to the Army, & to his fellow soldiers. Kay and Larry are in our thoughts and prayers. Information on services are at this [link](#). In lieu of flowers, Dorothy and Kay request donations be made in memory of Robert Valdez to [American Legion Post 94](#).

Hopefully everyone has an opportunity to relax and enjoy some of the sunshine. If you need anything, please reach out to Chapter and Department leadership. We are still handling business and supporting Veterans electronically.

Thank you for your service,

Yours in Patriotism,
Cody Phipps
Department of Arizona Commander

DEPARTMENT SR. VICE-COMMANDER
Patriot Michael Smaydy

Greetings Patriots,

I am Patriot Mike Smaydy. I am honored to be serving as your Dept. Sr. Vice Commander and hope to make you proud while working with Commander Phipps.



My eligibility for the MOPH comes from receiving the Purple Heart for wounds suffered on May 8, 1969, in the Republic of Vietnam while serving in the Army with the 1st Cavalry Division.

I am divorced and have 2 grown daughters and 4 grandchildren, which I'm extremely proud of.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible as I travel around the state this coming year.

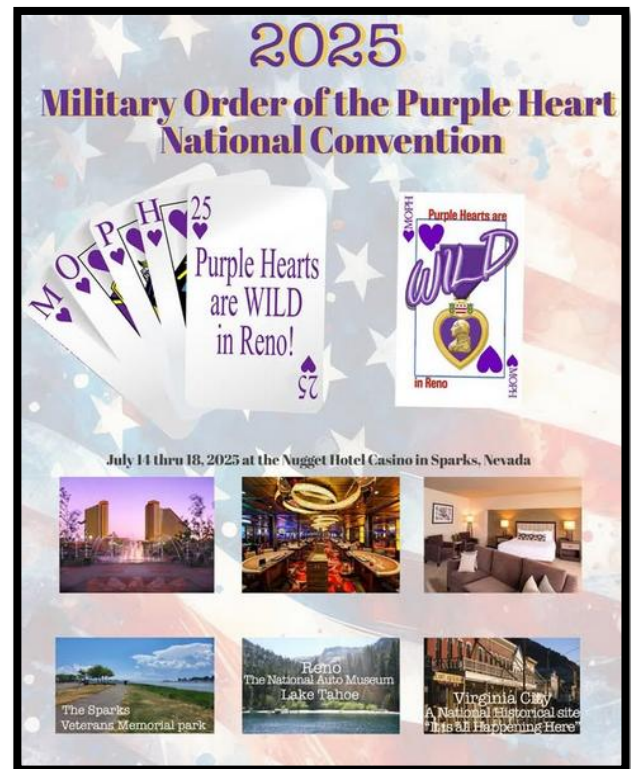
I will be attending the National Convention in Reno in July and hope to come up with a better understanding of where the National Organization is on leading us forward. Information on the convention is below and in the pane on the right. Hope to see you there.

National Convention: The National Convention will be held in Sparks, NV July 14th through July 18th. **Nugget Hotel Casino** | 1100 Nugget Avenue, Sparks, NV 89431 is the host hotel.

Registration: Here is the registration link for the National Convention at the [National MOPH website](http://www.purpleheart.org)! To register, members **must** log in to their www.purpleheart.org accounts on the website. You ****must log in**** before attempting to register.

Hotel Rates: Sunday-Thursday: \$132.37 per night (fees & tax). Friday & Saturday: \$164.82 per night (includes resort fee & tax) **Use Group Code: GMOPH2** & call 775-356-3272

In comradeship,
Michael J. Smaydy
Dept. Sr. Vice Commander



DEPARTMENT CALENDAR:

- July 3 > Manhattan Dolls in Tucson
- July 4 > Independence Day
- July 9 > Chapter 793 Meeting
- July 23 > Chapter 442 Luncheon
- July 25 > Hire a Veteran Day
- July 26 > Rim Country Stand Down Payson
- July 27 > Korean War Remembrance Day
- July 28 > Buffalo Soldier Day
- July 29 > Chaplain Corps Birthday
- Aug 4 > Coast Guard Birthday
- Aug 7 > Purple Heart Day
- Aug 16 > White Mts. Stand Down



DEPARTMENT JR. VICE-COMMANDER
Patriot John Moore

JULY 4TH INDEPENDENCE DAY: Independence Day commemorates the signing of the Declaration of Independence, which was ratified by the Second Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, establishing the United States of America. Let us celebrate this great country, the blessing of freedom, and the privileges that come with it. On this day, we salute each of you who have made our Freedoms possible and have helped to keep our Nation safe. Happy 4th of July to all our members. Remember to stay cool, drink plenty of water, and stay safe while having fun.



KOREAN WAR ARMISTICE DAY: July 27th is Korean War Remembrance Day. We salute the 5.8 million Americans who served in the U.S. armed services during the Korean War. 36,474 Americans died in the Korean War from June 25, 1950, to July 27, 1953. A very special thanks goes out to our 42 members that were awarded Purple Hearts for wounds received serving in the "Forgotten War".



PURPLE HEART CAP: Like most veteran organizations, the Military Order of the Purple Heart has its own distinctive purple military style cap. Chapter caps are purple with white piping and white lettering, with a George Washington emblem sewn on it. The chapter number and the words "Life Member" may



NEW DEPARTMENT WEBMASTER: The Department of Arizona, MOPH, is proud to announce the launch of its newly redesigned website at www.mophaz.org, led by newly appointed Department Webmaster Cheryl Packham.



Cheryl is a medically retired OIF Veteran, a life member of the MOPH, and a self-employed Business Systems Strategist based in Surprise, Arizona. She is a member of Chapter 691. Cheryl brings both technical expertise and a deep personal commitment to the veteran community.

Her work on the new site prioritizes usability, security, and accessibility. The site now features a streamlined layout with footer-based navigation that aligns with modern web design standards. Key enhancements include a keyword search function, a Department-wide events calendar, a blog section for program and news updates, and a live Facebook feed embedded directly on the homepage. (*Firefox users must enable Standard privacy mode, not Strict, to view the Facebook feed on the website properly.*)

Cheryl is also offering to build individual chapter websites at no cost, helping local chapters improve their digital presence and connect with members more effectively. Examples of this work can be seen at the 691.mophaz.org and 442.mophaz.org sites.

To contribute content or request updates, members should contact their chapter leadership for submission. Cheryl can be reached directly at webmaster@mophaz.org, with a standard two-business-day turnaround on requests.

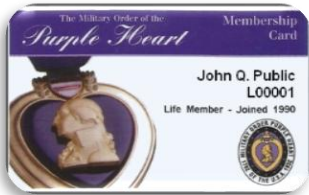
The Department extends its thanks to Cheryl for her dedication and looks forward to this next chapter in strengthening MOPH Arizona's online presence in support of its mission to honor and serve combat-wounded veterans across the state.

PURPLE HEART LICENSES PLATES: Vehicle license tax exemption is available for PH veterans. On registration of a vehicle, if the veteran submits satisfactory proof to ADOT that the person is a veteran and a bona fide Purple Heart medal recipient and was honorably discharged the registration tax fee is waived. Can only be used on one vehicle. Specialty plate and personalization fees still apply.



be added with white letters as appropriate. Order for \$29.95 at [Keystone Uniform Cap](#).

MEMBERSHIP CARDS: Replacement membership cards are available on the National Website you can login to your account and print a paper one or you can order plastic one at



<https://www.purpleheart.org/store>

Yours in Patriotism
John R. Moore
Jr. Vice-Commander

PURPLE HEART GEAR: The Purple Heart Store is a company devoted to Honoring Purple Heart Recipients and their family members. It has served PH recipients for over 20 years and is a veteran owned business. Visit the [store](#) for hats, shirts, ties, etc.



DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT Patriot Larry Leighton

GENERAL: The heat came a little early but of course it was not unexpected. As we continue to take care of Veterans and Families, remember YOU and YOURS fall into that category. Be sure you take time to take care of the yourself and your family.



As always, there will be lots of opportunities to celebrate Independence Day.

This July 4th can be considered another one in a long string of events leading up to the 250th anniversary of our Nation's birth next year. **Enjoy the holiday but be safe.** Remember to drink plenty of water. If you are feeling thirsty, you are probably already dehydrated!

National Purple Heart Day is just around the corner. In fact, as I write this, August 7th is just 40 days and a wake up away. Enjoy the summer holidays and wear **PURPLE on August 7th, National Purple Heart Day.**

MEMBERSHIP. During our last DEC meeting, the leadership voted to add another incentive for joining the Order. Each Chapter has to develop their own criteria for evaluating a **new member's "integration"**. **If the Chapter determines the new member is involved and participating in chapter activities, the Department will refund the membership dues.** While we don't want anyone to think we are offering free membership or paying recipients to join the Order, **we are offering an incentive to to be more than just a name on the roster.**

UNIFORMED SERVICES IN ACTION 2026 CALENDAR: Sales of the *Uniformed Services In Action 2026* **Calendar** are lagging behind expectations.



While we realize your first priority for donations may not be the Military Order of the Purple Heart, we hope that it is on your list at some level and

maybe even a little left over for the Department of Arizona! Although the odds of winning are not great, they are better than you get with many other raffles AND they make good gifts, even for folks who only use digital calendars on their smart phones. 😊 Please



consider buying one for yourself and maybe some for your friends and family. Use [the link](#) or scan the QRC to order to get yours and extra for gifts for your friends and family.

BUDDY CHECKS: As we head into the hotter months, most chapters will be "Dark" for two or three months. Keep the communications open. Contact your fellow Veterans and say hi. We don't want anyone to feel isolated or alone. Call a Veteran today!

Yours in Patriotism
Larry Leighton
Adjutant

AMERICANISM OFFICER
Patriot William E. Hunker

TEACHING THE NEXT GENERATION WHILE HONORING THE PAST:



I am William Hunker & I am honored to step into the role of **Department Americanism Officer and ROTC/JROTC Coordinator** for the Department of Arizona. As a 12-year U.S. Army veteran whose career included time as an Airborne Infantryman, Special Forces, and—my personal favorite—Psychological Operations specialist, I bring a deep passion for service, mentorship, and outreach. Since leaving Fort Bragg and settling in Phoenix, Arizona, I’ve spent the past decade continuing to serve in new ways. I’ve been privileged to speak regularly at local high schools for the last three years and look forward to expanding MOPH’s presence through youth engagement, ROTC/JROTC partnerships, and the promotion of positive Americanism values statewide. I see this new role as a powerful opportunity to help carry MOPH forward and ensure it continues to serve, uplift, and represent our fellow wounded veterans.

In addition to my work with MOPH, I am currently a Reverend and a proud husband of 20 years with my wife Danielle and our son Edward (13) who is an Honor Roll Student, a very active member of local Boy Scout Troop 531, and carries high aspirations of becoming a Herpetologist (The study of slimy and scaly things). For the past year, I’ve also led unique wellness classes at Phoenix VA’s 32nd Street facility. In these programs “Let Go With Lego” and “Lego Your Way”, I use mindfulness, creativity, and nostalgia through LEGO to help veterans rediscover balance, process emotions, and enhance self-care in a hands-on, supportive environment. I am truly excited to bring this same energy of creativity, connection and purpose into my Americanism and ROTC/JROTC outreach efforts across the state. Together, we can continue to honor our legacy while inspiring the youth and communities with the core values of service, sacrifice, and patriotism. I am here to serve with heart, purpose, and the spirit of the Purple Heart.

William E. Hunker
Americanism Officer

DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

ELECTED OFFICERS: These are the Department Officers for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

- Commander - **Cody Phipps** (442; 817.239.2073; commanderazmoph@gmail.com)
- Senior Vice Commander - **Mike Smaydy** (691; 928.445.3792; michaelism@hotmail.com)
- Junior Vice Commander – **John Moore** (442; 520.744.9768; mophchapter442@comcast.net)
- Finance Officer – **Jim Starkman** (691; 708.638.2321; karen4357@att.net)
- Inspector – **Inspector Stephan Bobby** (472; 480.266.9268; veteranairborne@yahoo.com).
Sergeant At Arms – John Ballenger (691; 602.245.0437; cjballenger22@msn.com)

APPOINTED OFFICERS:

- **Adjutant Larry Leighton** (691; 623.776.5443; adjutant.mophaz@gmail.com)
- **Americanism Officer Will Hunker** (691; 910.644.7742; william.hunker@icloud.com)

VACANT POSITIONS: If you would like to fill one of these positions let us know.

- Chaplain - appointed
- Judge Advocate - elected
- Legislative Officer - appointed

FORT LOWELL CHAPTER 442 – TUCSON, AZ
Commander Cody Phipps

Patriots of Chapter 442,

Wishing our many members who are traveling this summer safe travels and good health. The chapter is still here for you throughout the summer.



We had our best turnout yet at our Purple Heart Luncheon in Oro Valley. The next luncheon is planned for **The Hoppy Vine on July 23 at 1200**. I hope to see everybody there and appreciate your support!

In June we supported feeding Homeless Veterans in Tucson. We are also planning a Back to School BBQ for Esperanza residents towards the end of Summer. More to follow on that.

We hosted Bingo for the residents at the Arizona Veterans Home. The residents and volunteers have a great time each month and we are grateful for the opportunity to serve. Thank you, Danny, Yolanda, Dave, Cherie and Susan, for making Purple Heart Bingo happen.

Stay cool, enjoy the sunshine and I look forward to seeing everybody soon.

Yours in Patriotism,
Cody Phipps
Commander

Commander Cody Phipps – cody.phipps@outlook.com
Sr. Vice-Cdr Dave Bertagnoli - dbertagnoli@Q.com
Jr. Vice-Cdr: Mike Dyer - mrdyer@comcast.net
Chaplain: Danny Lemon - ddlemon@outlook.com
Adjutant: John Moore – mophchapter442@comcast.net
Website: <https://442.mophaz.org/>
Facebook: [Chapter 442 Facebook Page](#)
Donate online: [Donations Appreciated](#)

Meeting date: 3rd Monday (no meetings June, July, or August)

Time: 5:00 PM

Meeting location: Bridge Church at 8150 N Sandy Desert Trail, Tucson, AZ 85741. This is just off I10 & Cortaro Farms Rd. Go east on Cortaro Farms Rd to N. Sandy Desert Trail.

BINGO AT THE VA HOSPITAL: We hosted bingo for the patients at the Tucson VA Hospital on May 30. Thank you to **Patriot Cody Phipps, Patriot Dave Bertagnoli, Patriot Danny Lemon, and volunteers Yolanda Lemon, Cherie Stallman, Sam Phipps, and Susan-Lea Campbell Skuhr.** **Yolanda Lemon made the beautiful quilt that was the grand prize.**



MONTHLY PURPLE HEART LUNCHEON: Our next luncheon is on **July 23** at noon in Oro Valley, AZ. Location will be **Hoppy Vine** at 12125 N Oracle Rd, Oro Valley, AZ 85737 in the Oro Valley Marketplace. All members are invited to attend and enjoy fellowship with other combat wounded veterans.

Our **June luncheon** was held at The Guadalajara Original Grill in Oro Valley. We had a great time. 10 PH recipients and 2 veterans attended which is an increase of 4 from last month. **A special thanks to Air Force veteran Mike Badger who paid for lunch for all of us.**



LEARN ABOUT OUR CHAPTER: Our video presentation explains our mission, who we are and what we do. View our video slideshow at [this link](#)

A BLAST FROM THE PAST: Purple Heart Park in Tucson was dedicated on **Memorial Day 1996**. It may be one of the older Purple Heart entities named by MOPH



SUPPORT LOCAL VETERANS' GROUPS:

Help support the **Legion Post 132 fundraiser on July 3rd**. By attending we can show the community all Veterans Organizations are working together in celebrating the Declaration of Our Independence. **Please wear your MOPH gear**. For more info contact Jim Barnhart at 520-404-2040

See photo below

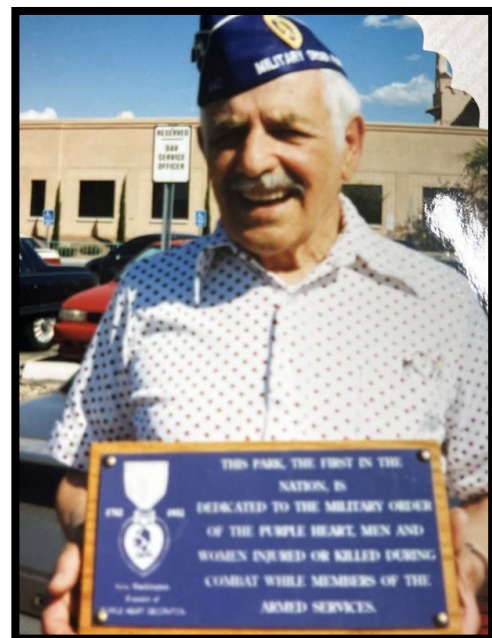
Nationally. **Former Chapter Commander A. F. Lalli** (now deceased) led the effort to name the park.



L to R: Carroll Fyffe National Cdr, Patriot John Tapia, Patriot Dominic Di Giovanni, Dept of AZ Cdr Donald Horner, & AZ Ladies Auxiliary President Edith Horner.



Chapter 442 Cdr A. F. Lalli with plaque to be placed at the park.





SHORT HISTORY OF MOPH IN TUCSON: A MOPH Chapter has served Tucson veterans since 1933. Arizona Chapter 73 in Tucson was chartered in 1933. Tucson was the first location in the state of Arizona to have a MOPH Chapter and was the only chapter in the state until 1939. The charter had 12 signatures of which General John J. Pershing was number 1. General Pershing resided in Tucson part time at that time. After General Pershing's death in 1948 Arizona Chapter 73 requested to be renamed as the General John J. Pershing Chapter 73. A chapter in Ohio was already named after General Pershing but they agreed to give up their chapter name and National approved Arizona Chapter 73 being renamed in 1950. General John J. Pershing Chapter 73 remained active until about 1970. In April 1980 Ft. Lowell Chapter 442 was chartered. The chapter was named after Ft. Lowell, which was an Army post near Tucson that was active from 1873 to 1891 and had a major role in the Apache Wars. In 1981 Ft. Lowell Chapter 442 hosted the MOPH National Convention at the DoubleTree Inn. 400 MOPH members from across the Nation attend the convention in Tucson from Aug 18 to Aug 22. In June of 1982 the chapter hosted the Department of Arizona convention. Summary of history is from news articles in the Arizona Daily Star & Tucson Citizen archives.

TRI-CITIES CHAPTER 472 – MESA, AZ Commander Ignacio Rivera



Cdr: Ignacio Rivera (480) 381-6618
Sr. Vice-Cdr: Ramiero Del Rio (602) 818-0796
Finance: James Pomush landjpomush@gmail.com
Adjutant: Stephan Bobby veteranairborne@yahoo.com
Chaplain: vacant

Meeting date: Last Thursday of the month (No meetings: Jun Jul & Aug)
Meeting time: 10:00AM
Meeting location: American Legion Post 26
505 W 2nd Avenue, Mesa, AZ 85210-1202

Yours in Patriotism
Ignacio Rivera
Commander Chapter 472

DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR:



Patriot **Stephan Bobby** has been selected as the **Inspector for the Department of Arizona**. Congratulations Stephan.

MESA VET CENTER:

Mesa Vet Center is located at 1303 South Longmore, Suite 5, Mesa, AZ 85202. The hours are 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM. Phone # is 480-610-6727.



**I WEAR RED
REMEMBER EVERYONE
DEPLOYED
ON FRIDAYS**

PURPLE HEART BRICK PROGRAM: Patriot **Stephan Bobby**, Chapter 472 oversees the **Purple Heart Memorial Brick Program** for the Department. The bricks are installed at the **Purple Heart Memorial at Wesley Bolin Plaza** at the state capital. Order a 4"x8" Purple Heart Brick to commemorate being a Purple Heart recipient or order one to commemorate a family member or friend who received the Award. The cost of the brick, engraving, and placement costs are: **\$35 Purple Heart recipients and \$40 for other veterans**.

Checks, along with a copy of your order form, should be made out to MOPH AZ & sent to:

Patriot Stephan Bobby
MOPH AZ PH Brick Coordinator
4543 E. County Down Dr.
Chandler, AZ 85249-7339
or Download Order Form: [PH ORDER FORM](#)



MICHAEL E. MAHONEY CHAPTER 691 – SURPRISE, AZ Commander Larry Leighton

I hope everyone has big plans to celebrate the Fourth! Remember in addition to fireworks safety, It is going to be HOT so stay hydrated and watch out for signs of heat injuries in those around you and of course, yourself.



Read the Department Adjutant's article above. There's a paragraph in there that might help recruit new members. If you have any questions, feel free to give me a call.

When we come back in September, we'd like to have a guest speaker. If anyone reading this would like to volunteer to tell their story or to invite someone to be our speaker, please give me a call at 623-776-5443 or email me at commander691moph@gmail.com.

Have an idea for a social event? Let me know and I can get the word out to the members.

Cdr: Larry Leighton - commander691moph@gmail.com

Sr. Vice-Cdr: James Starkman -

karen4357@att.net

Jr. Vice-Cdr: Sal Salinas-

salsalido@gmail.com

Chaplain: Jimi Sallmen -

jimisallmen@gmail.com

Adjutant: Larry Leighton -

commander691moph@gmail.com

Meeting date: 2nd Saturday

Meeting time: 9:00 AM

Meeting location: Sands Chevrolet Surprise Conference Room (16991 W Waddell Rd, Surprise, AZ 85388)

Enter parking lot from N Cotton Lane.

Website: <http://691.mophaz.org/>

Facebook: [Chapter 691 Facebook](#)

Note: Meetings will also be via Zoom. Enter the meeting ID (842 2842 9701) and the password (879117). By phone, call 719 359 4580 and enter the id/password.

Kay Leighton cuts the Army cake



SAFETY: Be SAFE! Be as HEALTHY as you can!

Have FUN! Call a Veteran today! 😊



ARMY BIRTHDAY: We celebrated the Army's 250th Birthday and Flag Day at our June meeting. A good time was had by all.

Attendees at the June meeting



The birthday cake



PURPLE HEART DAY: Please wear your Purple Heart hat and shirt when you go out. Let folks know you are a member.



Yours in Patriotism
Larry Leighton
Commander

DALE E. CRICK CHAPTER 793 – FLAGSTAFF, AZ
Commander Rodger Ely

Fellow Patriots,



Welcome to Chapter 793. Our chapter participates in patriotic and welfare activities throughout Northern Arizona. Chapter 793 supports Northern Arizona Stand Downs in several Northern Arizona communities. Our chapter is honored to be able to participate in patriotic events and support veterans' needs in Northern Arizona. The High-Country Stand-Down was held during May in Flagstaff. Several Northern Arizona communities became Purple Heart entities during the past several months. Thank you, Page Arizona, Tuba City Arizona, and Nazlini Arizona (Navajo Nation).

You are always welcome to join us at our meetings or any of our activities!

Commander
Rodger Ely

Commander: Rodger Ely - juggy64@aol.com
Sr. Vice-Cdr: Daniel Reich - daniel_r_reich@msn.com
Jr. Vice-Cdr: Elmer Sangster - sangster333@hotmail.com
Adjutant: William Weldon - baseballbillpaul@npgcable.com
Chaplain: Rupert Oseveda - rupert@swiftaz.net
Facebook: [Chapter 793 Facebook](#)
Next Meeting – contact the chapter
Meeting time: 11:30 AM
Meeting location: VFW Post 1709
409 W Santa Fe Ave, Flagstaff, AZ 86001
Meeting date: Bi-monthly on 4th Wednesday.

Military Order of the Purple Heart
Dale E. Crick Chapter 793
Meeting Announcement

Wednesday . July 9th, 2025 . 11:30 Am
VFW Post 1709
409 W. Santa Fe Avenue
Flagstaff, Arizona

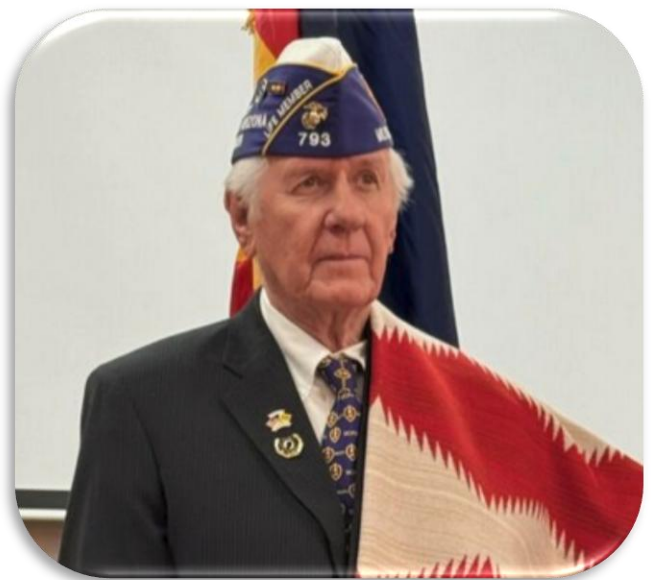
TRIBUTE TO PATRIOT BILLY WELDON:

Arizona artist Neil Logan is creating a life-size sculpture of Patriot Billy Weldon, Chapter 793. Billy is a former department commander and Region VI commander. He is the longtime crossing guard at Marshall Elementary School in Flagstaff.

https://azdailysun.com/.../article_07e2007f-4853-44d4....

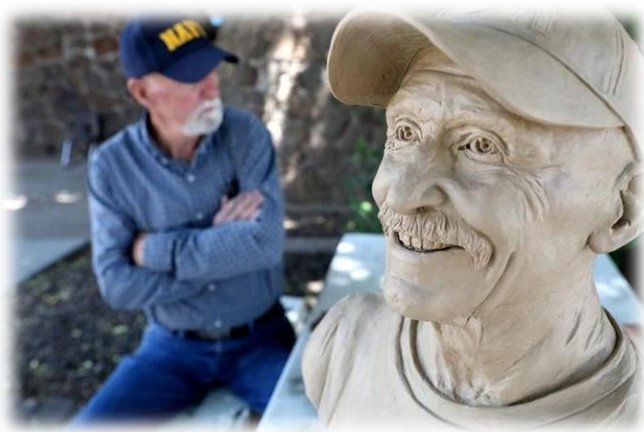
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WARRIORS BLANKET: Chapter commander Rodger Ely was presented with a Warriors Blanket. Native American Blanket ceremonies are a significant tradition that marks important achievements and symbolizes unity and support.



BLAST FROM THE PAST: In 2011 Chapter 793's Purple Heart Truck came into being. The history of the Dale Crick Chapter 793 Purple Heart Truck is told in the news article at this [link](#). Community members & businesses were instrumental in the creation and restoration of a 1966 Ford F350 truck that serves as the official truck for the Dale Crick Purple Heart Chapter #793 in Flagstaff.

Billy Weldon, Stacie Zanzucchi and Ric Lindstrom stand Thursday in a group to the right and in front of other community members
photo next page



Bob Stump Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center

500 Highway 89 North
Prescott, AZ 86313-5001

[Get directions on Google Maps](#)

Main phone: [928-445-4860](tel:928-445-4860)

VA health connect: [877-252-4866](tel:877-252-4866)

Mental health care: [928-445-4860](tel:928-445-4860), ext. 7500

Flagstaff VA Clinic

1300 West University Avenue, Suite 200
Flagstaff, AZ 86001-7228

[Get directions on Google Maps](#)

Main phone: [928-226-1056](tel:928-226-1056)

VA health connect: [877-252-4866](tel:877-252-4866)

Mental health phone: [928-445-4860](tel:928-445-4860), ext. 7500



FLAGSTAFF VETERANS VBOC: Flagstaff Veterans VBOC is held every **first Tuesday of the month, 10:00am to 3:00pm.** The VBOC will have a VA representative to help with various VA issues & claims.



CHAPTER 2560 – APACHE JUNCTION, AZ **Commander Mike Overmeyer**



Cdr: Michael Overmeyer > moverme48@gmail.com

Sr. Vice Cdr: Chuck Byers > seagb@cox.net

Jr. Vice Cd: James King > kingjs6@live.com

Adjutant: Sandra King kingjs6@live.com

Chaplain: Frank Sonntag Jr. sfcfrank2003@yahoo.com

Meeting date: 2nd Saturday of the month.

Meeting time: 10:00 AM

Meeting location: Mesa Buckhorn Elk Lodge #2656 at 6718 E Avalon St, Mesa, AZ 85205

CHAPTER 2560 WEARS RED ON FRIDAYS:

On June 20th Patriots including about a dozen Purple Heart recipients met for Wear Red on Friday's breakfast. The guest speaker was Jimmy Tran who was

CHAPTER HONORS OFFICER FACIO: Chapter 2560 presents the **family of Apache Junction Police Officer Gabriel Facio** a check for \$500.00. Officer Facio, was shot after responding to reports of a driver

a Vietnamese child that his father chose over his other siblings to come over to the USA as he thought Jimmy would have a better chance to succeed. In 1975 after the war, his father loaded him up in a boat full of people and a Charity Ship picked him up in the ocean. Quite a story he told about what he did after he came over.

Join us EVERY Friday for Breakfast at 7:30am to 8:15am.
Cost for breakfast is \$12.00 Meeting starts at 8:15am.

Place: American Legion Post #27
1018 S. Meridian Rd
Apache Junction, AZ 85120

We wear RED on Fridays to Remember Everyone Deployed
Everyone is invited. Veterans, Spouses, Patriots and Guests
No Membership required...

YouTube.com: EastValleyR.E.D.FridayPatriots

East Valley RED Friday Patriots



WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA: Chapter 2560 supports Wreaths Across America with a Christmas in July online Auction. See below:

MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART

CHAPTER 2560

CHRISTMAS IN JULY

Online Auction!!!



MOPH is having a "Christmas in July" online auction to raise monies for Wreaths Across America Remembrance Day.

One fun way, is to do an Online Auction! Please go to this website and look thru the items which are up for Auction. You can bid as many times you wish. This auction will start on July 1, 2025 and will end at 6pm on July 31, 2025.

<https://go.dojiggy.io/wreaths>

Remember, if you have a loved one in another cemetery, and Wreaths Across America participates in that cemetery, we can assist you in having that wreath placed on WAA Remembrance Day, December 13, 2025.

Please contact Nancy Fassbender if you have any questions at 520-280-4715.

brandishing a firearm on June 2 and died 6 days later. Officer Facio, was a 3 year veteran of the police force and the 1st Apache Junction police officer killed in the line of duty. He is survived by his wife, son, and a daughter.



Officer Facio



MOPH RELATED INFORMATION

PURPLE HEART HALL OF HONOR: Add your story to the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor. Enroll at this [link](#) or click on the image.



PURPLE HEART COMBAT WOUNDED VETERANS OF ARIZONA: The Purple Heart Combat Wounded Veterans of Arizona is our department 501c3 entity. If for tax purposes, you or a



donor is required to donate to 501c3 use our online portal to make your donation. Funds designated for a chapter will go in their entirety to the chapter. **Use the "Add/Write NOTE" field to specify the purpose of your donation.** Thank you in

advance for supporting Veterans! **Donate Online:** [Donations Appreciated](#)

STAYING SAFE IN THE HEAT:

Staying Safe in the Heat: Know the Signs of Heat-Related Injuries. As temperatures rise, so does the risk of serious heat-related injuries. Every year, thousands of people are affected by extreme heat, which can quickly turn dangerous if warning signs are ignored.

Heat exhaustion is a common heat injury that happens when the body loses too much water and salt through sweating. Symptoms may include heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, and muscle cramps. If not treated, heat exhaustion can progress to a more serious condition.

Heat stroke is a life-threatening emergency that occurs when the body's temperature rises rapidly, and it can no longer cool itself. Key signs of heat stroke include confusion, loss of consciousness, hot and dry skin, and a body temperature above 103°F (39.4°C). Without immediate medical treatment, heat stroke can cause permanent organ damage or even death.

Dehydration is another major concern in hot weather. When the body loses more fluids than it takes in, it can lead to dry mouth, extreme thirst, dark urine, fatigue, and dizziness. Severe dehydration requires medical attention.

Prevention is key:

- Drink plenty of water, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Avoid strenuous activity during the hottest parts of the day.
- Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing.
- Take breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas.

BADGE OF MILITARY MERIT SOCIETY: The purpose of the Badge of Military Merit Society is to preserve and perpetuate the history and legacy of the Purple Heart Medal, to support and honor its



individual recipients, and to support the organization known as the Military Order of the Purple Heart of the USA, Inc. (MOPH) through the MOPH's MOPH Fund. Donate to support MOPH at this [link](#).

UPDATE YOUR MOPH CONTACT INFO: Keep your snail mail address, phone & email address up to date. Go to the [MOPH National website](#). You need your membership number to log in. You can then update your contact information. You can also email us at adjutant.mophaz@gmail.com and we can update your snail mail, phone & email address for you.

HELP YOUR CHAPTER: Visit the [MOPH Fund website](#) (<https://mophfund.org/>) on the Partners and Ambassador pages. Anything you buy from those pages generate funds directly back to your Chapter and to the National Headquarters for our programs.



THINKING ABOUT DEATH: Have you thought about your death or your spouse's? No. Well, you should. This is not another article on suicide awareness and prevention. As Veterans, we talk a lot about our DD-214. Do we know where it is? Does our family know where it is? What about our VA rating? Same basic questions – do you and your family know where your VA claim submission or the award letter is, what the rating is, what the rating is for, etc. What we don't talk about, or at least not in most groups, is all the "other stuff." If you died suddenly and unexpectedly, would your spouse, children, or executor know where to start? Here are just a few things YOU need to do sooner rather than later. It is your responsibility to make sure the impact of your passing is mitigated to the best of your ability. Here are some personal thoughts to help you get started.

1. Make a list! There are several places you can look for **examples**. If you need a starting point, just Google "what needs to be done when a veteran dies." Review the list with the family. Make sure they can read and understand what the list is for and what needs to be done for each item on the list.

2. Make sure your "instructions" are clear using language the family will easily understand. Don't just

- Check on older adults, children, and pets who are more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses.

Knowing these symptoms and acting quickly can save lives. If you or someone around you shows signs of heat stroke, call 911 immediately and move the person to a cooler place while waiting for help.

Stay cool, stay hydrated, and stay safe this summer!



ARIZONA STANDDOWN ALLIANCE: The Arizona Veterans StandDown Alliance (AVSA) holds resource fairs in 13 of Arizona's counties. These events allow veterans and their families who are experiencing housing instability and homelessness to get and stay connected to housing and supportive services.

[Rim Country StandDown](#)

Saturday, July 26, 2025

Mazatzal Hotel & Casino (Highway 87, Mile Marker 251, Payson, AZ 85541)

[White Mountain StandDown](#)

Saturday, August 16, 2025

Show Low Elks Lodge (805 E. Whipple Street, Show Low, AZ 85901)

[Yavapai County StandDown](#)

Friday, September 26, 2025

U.S.VETS Prescott (1040 Whipple Street, Prescott, AZ 86305)

[Cochise County StandDown](#)

Friday, October 17, 2025

Ethel Berger Center (2950 E. Tacoma Street, Sierra Vista, AZ 85635)

[Navajo County StandDown](#)

Friday, October 24, 2025

Navajo County Fairgrounds (404 E. Hopi Drive, Holbrook, AZ 86026)

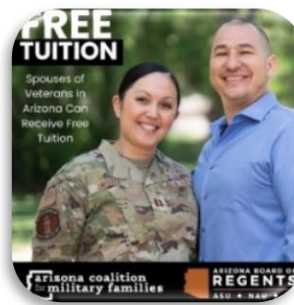


leave the cryptic notes you wrote for yourself. One real good example of this is your "online accounts." Make sure the account name and what it's for, web address, log in information (**userid, password, and/or pin**, if applicable), are written in a format ANYONE can understand.

3: What and who are your favorites. This goes beyond what you like to eat and drink. Think about your favorite songs, pictures, scripture, foods you might want to share with family and friends at your funeral or celebration of life. Who do you want to invite or not invite; your family may not know all your friends in the various clubs and organizations you belong to.

4. The most important item to consider – don't wait until it's too late!

FREE TUITION FOR VETERAN SPOUSES:



Spouses of honorably discharged veterans enrolled at an Arizona public university, or a participating community college are eligible to receive free tuition on a first-come, first-served basis. Learn more at the [AZ Board of Regents](#).

RIM COUNTRY STAND DOWN:

The poster is titled 'STAND DOWN' in large, bold letters. Below the title is a subtitle: '(The Stand-Down concept used during the Vietnam War to provide a safe retreat for units returning from combat operations.)'. The main image shows a silhouette of a soldier standing next to a large American flag. Below the image, it says 'VETERANS' in large, bold letters. The event title is 'Rim Country Stand Down' in large, bold letters. The date is 'July 26, 2025'. The location is 'Mazatzal Hotel & Casino, Highway 87, Mile Marker 251, Payson, AZ 85541'. The time is '10:00AM TO 2:00PM'. A list of services includes: Free Hot Lunch, Health Services, Dental, Vision, Hair Cuts, Job Services, Veterans Benefits, and And much more. The text 'Sponsored By:' is followed by logos for AVSA, Veterans of America, Mazatzal Hotel & Casino, North Country HealthCare, Arizona Coalition for Military Families, DYNF, and others.

OTHER INFORMATION

STATE LEGISLATION: These three bills are still awaiting action from the Rules Committee in both houses:

- HB2672: Property Tax Exemption for Disabled Veterans – Under review by the Senate Rules Committee, chaired by Senator Farnsworth.
- SB1155: Pay Equity for USPHS/NOAA – Under review by the House Rules Committee chaired by Rep. Hendrix.
- SB1704: VDF Monies for State Veterans Homes – Under review by the House Rules Committee, chaired by Rep. Hendrix

Contact Committee Chairs and Members Today if you support these bills. For HB2672 Senator Farnsworth at DFARNSWORTH@AZLEG.GOV

For SB1155 and SB1704 Rep. Hendrix at LHENDRIX@AZLEG.GOV

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VA TRAVEL VOUCHER FORM: As a reminder, the old beneficiary travel voucher claim form has officially expired. The new forms are now out for use. The forms can also be found online at <https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-10-3542/>.

VA COMMUNITY CARE: VA Community Care Just Got Easier. The Department of Veterans Affairs has changed its process for veterans to get medical care from non-VA providers, removing a requirement that a referral to community care be reviewed by another VA doctor. The VA announced that it is enacting a provision of the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act that will help ease veterans' access to medical services from private providers. The law, signed in December by then-President Joe Biden, prohibits VA administrators from overriding a VA doctor's referral for a patient to get outside care. More info is at this [link](#).

MY HEALTHEVET & VA.GOV TRANSITION:

The VA's patient portal, My HealtheVet, is moving to [VA.gov](https://va.gov). With the new My HealtheVet on VA.gov portal, Veterans will have a more secure, single online location to manage their health care and other VA benefits and services.

As of January 31, 2025, Veterans are no longer able to sign in using My HealtheVet user ID and password. The two-remaining [sign-in options will be Login.gov](#), which offers streamlined set up and integration with other federal services like TSA Precheck and FEMA, and [ID.me](#), which provides additional verification methods, including video calls, and can be used for military discounts.

BILLS IN CONGRESS: The Rural Veterans Transportation to Care Act (S. 784/H.R. 1733), aims to improve transportation services for veterans living in rural areas by expanding eligibility to county veterans service organizations and tribal organizations, thereby broadening the scope of entities that can receive a Highly Rural Transportation Grant from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The bill would also raise the maximum amount of funding granted for the purchase of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-compliant vehicles. Currently, 2.7 million veterans reside in rural areas and many encounter barriers and challenges when accessing VA health care. One of the primary challenges is the limited transportation options available to these veterans. This legislation would expand and modify the VA's grant program to provide alternative transportation options to veterans in rural or highly rural communities.

Contact your representative or senator to voice support for this legislation.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE: Military retirees are required to update their Uniformed Services Identification (USID) cards to the new Next Generation USID card by December 31, 2025. The [paper-based USID cards with indefinite expiration dates will no longer be accepted](#) after this date.

It's important for military retirees, dependents, & surviving spouses to know these old forms of ID will not be valid to access a military installation, and you will need issuance of the NextGen ID card.

There are several ways to make an appointment to get a new ID card. (1). You can visit the RAPIDS ID Card Office Locator website to find the closest office and either call them to make an appointment or (2). schedule your own appointment using the website.

<https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/>



CLELAND-DOLE MENTAL HEALTH COPAY EXEMPTION: Good news for Veterans who owe

KB HOMES & HOMES FOR WOUNDED

HEROES: KB Homes & Homes for Wounded Heroes is looking for an OEF/OIF Veteran to give a home to. Must be 100% disabled, Purple Heart recipient, wounded in theater, and lost a limb or sustained blindness. And be willing to relocate to Tampa, San Antonio, or Denver. See flyer for details.

Help us find the next veteran recipient of a new home.

And let's support America's heroes.



Since 2019, KB Home has partnered with Jared Allen's Homes for Wounded Warriors (JAH4WW), a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising money to build fully accessible homes for America's combat-injured Veterans.



KB Home has built mortgage-free, accessible homes for veterans in our San Antonio, Tampa and Denver divisions. We are honored and humbled to support those who have given so much for our country and its citizens. We would like to continue this important mission and are actively seeking your help in identifying our next recipient.

If you know a veteran who meets the qualifications and whose family would like to live in a market where we currently build, please encourage them to apply at:
homesforwoundedwarriors.com/veteran-application



kbhome.com | homesforwoundedwarriors.com

Applicant must meet these qualifications:

- Injuries sustained in combat with the U.S. military while serving in Iraq or Afghanistan during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) or Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)
- Declared 100% disabled by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) or Veterans Affairs
- Purple Heart recipient
- Wounds resulting in the loss of a major limb, blindness or paralysis

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copays for outpatient mental health and substance use disorder visits. **VA is canceling and refunding the first three mental health and substance use disorder copays in each calendar year between June 27, 2023, and December 29, 2027.** Click [HERE](#) to learn more.

MYVA HOTLINE: The MYVA is at **1-800-MyVA411 (698-2411)** and is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to serve veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

SUPPORT CAMP CORRAL: Help send a child to camp. Your donations support sending children of veterans and military in need to Camp Corral. See the poster below for details.



CAMP CORRAL

Join Golden Corral in supporting Camp Corral, which sends children of our nation's wounded, ill, and fallen military members to an unforgettable week of camp.



SCAN TO LEARN MORE & DONATE

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION:

Please send information & photos that you would like included in the newsletter to mophchapter442@comcast.net. We would like to get the newsletter out on the last day of the month. **Get news information & photos for us by the 25th of each month.**

Yours in Patriotism,
John R. Moore
Jr. Vice-Commander

