



November 2025

Volume 6 Issue 3

**DEPARTMENT COMMANDER**  
**Patriot Cody Phipps**

Dear Patriots,



*Cody Phipps*

First, I'd like to congratulate and thank the Patriots of our department who represented the Military Order of the Purple Heart at parades and events for Veteran's Day. Our chapters joined in events honoring Veterans around Arizona. Thank you for your service and your continued dedication to serving Veterans.

Happy Thanksgiving! My favorite holiday meals were on a paper plate with plasticware in a tent with a battery of artillerymen. I hope this Thanksgiving you and your family are safe and well and enjoy the holidays. Please know that the Department of Arizona and I are forever grateful for your service and sacrifice.

The holidays can be a tough time for warfighters and Veterans. Financially and emotionally. We are supporting Veterans for the holidays and talking about financial stress and planning as an approach to suicide prevention. Please never hesitate to reach out to somebody if you need support.

**Save the Date** – Saturday May 2<sup>nd</sup> is the Department Convention in Tucson. More details to follow as we get closer to the convention.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our next Department Executive Committee Meeting by Zoom on January 28th. A member of the chapter command group must attend. The Zoom call is **open to all members**. Time: 06:30 PM Arizona Time. Zoom Meeting ID: 842 2842 9701 & Passcode: 879117 or Dial in: 669 900 6833.

Thank you for your service and dedication to the Order and to our Veterans.

Yours in Patriotism,  
Cody Phipps  
Department of Arizona Commander

**DEPARTMENT SR. VICE-COMMANDER**  
**Patriot Michael Smaydy**

Greetings Patriots,

Thanksgiving weekend is over and hopefully it was joyful and accident free. It's December and the year 2025 will soon be history. Most of our time and efforts in December will concentrate on the Holiday Season.

Please remember our fellow veterans that aren't as fortunate as you may be. Once again, it would be nice if the chapters could target one or two families less fortunate with food or toys if they have little ones. It really is gratifying knowing that you have helped feed a needy



*Mike Smaydy*

veteran and their family on Christmas Day.

Also, the chapters should start thinking about who they would like to nominate for Patriot of The Year. It would be nice to have a nominee from each chapter.

Also, the chapters should be thinking about what they would like to achieve at the start of

2026 and finish up by Department Convention May 2<sup>nd</sup> in Tucson.

Patriots I wish you and your families a Happy and Safe Holidays.

Michael J. Smaydy  
Department Sr. Vice Commander  
928-445-3792  
[michaeljsm@hotmail.com](mailto:michaeljsm@hotmail.com)

### DEPARTMENT JR. VICE-COMMANDER Patriot John Moore

**PEARL HARBOR REMEMBRANCE DAY:** December 7<sup>th</sup> is the 84<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the attack on Pearl

Harbor. 3,500 Americans were casualties, and the United States entered WWII. Our people united to do what was needed to defend liberty and America's "Greatest Generation" was born. We no longer have a member who served at Pearl Harbor and most of that generation is now gone but we are eternally grateful to them for their courage, perseverance, and sacrifice. Thank you to the "Greatest Generation". Take

some time on December 7<sup>th</sup> to remember those who died at Pearl Harbor and those who fought to prevail in WWII.



*John Moore*



*Arizona (BB 39)*

**WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA:** Wreaths Across America **will be held on December 13<sup>th</sup>** this year.

Our Chapters and the Department participate in and supports Wreaths Across America at a number of cemeteries in the state. Check with your chapter or find a local cemetery to help place wreaths on veterans' graves. You can find participating cemeteries at the [Wreaths Across America website](http://www.wreathsofamerica.com).



**PURPLE HEART CHAPTER CAP:** Like other veteran organizations the Military Order of the Purple Heart has its own uniform cap. This distinctive purple military style cap is the basic item of the Military Order of the Purple Heart uniform. 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 be added with white letters as appropriate. Department and chapter officers should have the Order’s official headgear. It would be nice to have if planning on attending the Department Convention in May. Order for \$29.95 at [Keystone Uniform Cap](#).

**DEPARTMENT CALENDAR:** Event details are further down in the newsletter.

- Dec 1 > Civil Air Patrol Birthday
- Dec 7 > Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- Dec 13 > National Guard Birthday
- Dec 13 > Wreaths Across America
- Dec 13 > Chapter 691 Meeting
- Dec 14 > Start of Hanukkah
- Dec 15 > Chapter 442 Meeting
- Dec 16 > Battle of the Bulge WWII begins
- Dec 17 > Chapter 442 Monthly Luncheon
- Dec 20 > Space Force Birthday
- Dec 25 > Christmas

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

### DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT Patriot Larry Leighton



I hope everyone had a super Thanksgiving Holiday but did not “over do” it. I also hope you remembered to think about our Veterans and families of and deployed service members who may not be as lucky as we are. As we enter into December, the Season of Giving, please take a moment to open your hearts to others who may not be as fortunate as you are.

There are literally hundreds of organizations and folks asking for your help and donations. Be sure to do your due diligence before making any commitments. For every legitimate charity organization, there are probably at least four fake/scammers just waiting for you to fall victim to

one of their schemes.

In addition to the good organizations you are familiar with, don’t forget we do have two non-profit charity organizations right here in the Military Order of the Purple Heart. The first is the National level, the MOPH FUND, Inc. (EIN: 87-316-8304, <https://www.mophfund.org/>) and the second at our own Department level, the Purple Heart Combat Wounded Veterans of Arizona (EIN: 82-1286505, <https://www.mophaz.org/phcwvoa>). Both organizations are dedicated to serving Veterans, Veteran Families, and our communities by supporting Purple Heart programs.

Happy 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday Space Force. While the youngest and least well known of all the Armed Forces, you are definitely an integral part of the TEAM.

While the Holiday Season is generally considered a happy and joyous time, for many it can be a sad and stressful time. Those who have lost loved ones during this season in the past and those who do not have family and friends to lean on may retreat into themselves. A friendly phone call, even from someone they have never met can do wonders for their morale. Please do not hesitate to

reach out to Veterans from your past or to anyone you know that could use just a little lift during this season.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, call the Veterans Crisis Line: 988, press 1. Help is always available. Hope is always possible.

Kay and I wish you and yours a safe and Happy Holiday Season!

Be SAFE! Be as HEALTHY as you can! Have FUN! Call a Veteran today!

Yours in Patriotism  
Larry Leighton  
Adjutant

## DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

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

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

**APPOINTED OFFICERS:**

- Adjutant - **Larry Leighton** 623.776.5443; [adjutant.mophaz@gmail.com](mailto:adjutant.mophaz@gmail.com)
- Americanism Officer - **Will Hunker** 910.644.7742; [william.hunker@icloud.com](mailto: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,



*Cody Phipps*

November has been a busy month for the chapter, and I want to thank you all for your efforts to make every event a success. From supporting the Charlie Skuhr Golf Classic, to the Veterans Day Parade, to supporting Veterans in need here in Tucson, Chapter 442 always makes it happen. That's only possible because of your participation and enthusiasm. Thank you.

In December we will participate in Wreaths Across America at several of our local cemeteries here in Tucson. We will visit the residents of the Arizona State Veterans Home Tucson and provide them with a Christmas Gift Bag. I am looking forward to the Christmas events next month.

I hope you all had a safe and happy Thanksgiving with your families.



Yours in Patriotism,  
Cody Phipps  
Commander

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

**Meeting date:** 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

**INNOVATION ACADEMY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:** Patriot Dave Bertagnoli & Patriot John Moore spoke to three 5th grade classes at Innovation Academy Elementary School in Oro Valley for Veterans' Day. We spoke about Vietnam, the Purple Heart, and military service. The school provide a breakfast for the veteran guests. Students were well behaved, and had good questions. We had a good time. This is the 15<sup>th</sup> year we have spoken to Mrs. Liz Gingrich's classes. Her father was a Purple Heart recipient at the Battle of the Bulge in WWII.



*Innovation Academy 5th Grade Classes*

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

**Charlie Skuhr Memorial Golf Tournament:** Ft Lowell Chapter 442 supported the Charlie Skuhr Memorial Golf Tournament on November 8<sup>th</sup> with a MOPH information table. Thank you to **Patriot Cody Phipps, Patriot Dave Bertagnoli, Patriot John R. Moore** for manning our resource table. The Charlie Skuhr tournament will raise about \$15,000.00 for the HEM/ONC wing at the Tucson VA Hospital. Thank you **Susan-Lea Campbell Skuhr** for organizing the event in memory of your husband, a Purple Heart recipient. Also "Big George" made his first public debut in Tucson.



*Patriots Bertagnoli, Phipps, & Moore*





*Breakfast provided for the Veteran Guests*



*Patriot Bertagnoli talks about his service in Vietnam*



*Patriot Moore answers Questions*



*Patriot Bertagnoli Answers Questions*



*Big George & Chapter 442 Members*



*38 Golfers, who are veterans, were honored before the Tournament*

**VETERANS DAY Parade:** At Tucson's 106<sup>th</sup> Annual Veterans Day Parade Chapter 442 participated with vehicles driven by **Patriot Cody Phipps, Patriot John Grand, Patriot Jim Zimmerman, Patriot Dave Bertagnoli, & Patriot John R. Moore.** Thank you Buzz Geist, Cherie Stallman, Jim Corbin and Sam Phipps for riding with us. Great parade with wonderful community turnout. Big George made his Tucson Veterans Day parade debut.





**AZ STATE VETERANS CEMETERY MARANA:** It was a beautiful morning on Nov 10th as Ft Lowell Chapter 442 joined other Veterans' groups and community volunteers to place flags for Veterans Day on the 5,800+ veterans' graves at the Arizona State Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Marana, AZ. **Patriot John R. Moore, Patriot Cody Phipps, Patriot Mike-Rosie Dyer, Patriot Jack Van, Patriot Danny Lemon & Patriot John Grand represented MOPH.** Thank you to all the veterans and community volunteers who came out to help. A special thanks to Terry Hall, Denny Sisk, Buzz Geist, Tony Day and Keith Goudy who helped the chapter.



*Keith Goudy & Patriot Moore*



*Patriot Moore, Patriot Van, Patriot Phipps, Patriot Grand, Tony Day, Patriot Lemon, Terry Hall, & Denny Sisk.*

*John Grand, Dave Bertagnoli, Cheri Stallman, Jim Zimmerman, John Moore, Cody Phipps, & Sam Phipps*



*Patriot John Moore & his baby*



*Buzz Giest & Commander Phipps*



*Jim Zimmerman's 1964 GTO*







*State Veterans Cemetery Marana*



*On the Parade route*



*Patriot Lemon & Patriot Moore*



*John Grand's Buick*



*Patriot Grand & Tony Day*



*Buzz Geist & Patriot Phipps*



*Big George*





*Patriot Dyer & Terry Hall*

**RLBC CHURCH:** On Nov 9th at the Veterans' Day service at RLBC Church **Patriot John Moore** presented certificates of appreciation for military service to two Air Force and 2 Army veterans in the church congregation.



**MONTHLY PURPLE HEART LUNCHEON:** We held Purple Heart Luncheon on November 19<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon at Noble Hops in Oro Valley, AZ .



*From left to right Patriot Moore, Patriot Lemon, Patriot Phipps, Sam Phipps, Patriot Zimmerman, & Patriot Grand*

**BIG GEORGE:** Patriot Cody Phipps and Patriot John Moore went to Mesa on Nov 5<sup>th</sup> to pickup "Big George" (large replica of a Purple Heart) for



*Patriot Bobby, Patriot Phipps, Patriot Duren, & Patriot Moore*

use in the Tucson Veterans Day Parade. We met up with **Patriot Stephen Bobby** and **Patriot Jason Duren** from Chapter 472 at **Cider Corps in downtown Mesa**. Two Vietnam

veterans and two Afghanistan War veterans had a good time exchanging war stories. **Jason owns Cider Corps which is a cider tap room. Neat place with a veteran's vibe to it.**

**BINGO AT THE TUCSON VA Hospital:** Ft. Lowell Chapter 442 hosted bingo for the patients at the Tucson VA Hospital Nov 29<sup>th</sup>. 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. The grand prize was a beautiful handmade quilt from the ladies at Canyon Del Oro Bible Church.



*Yolanda assists the Grand Prize Winner*

**DEPARTMENT CONVENTION:** Fort Lowell Chapter 442 is the host for the 2026 Department Convention. The date is tentatively set for **Saturday May 2nd**. Since the next convention is in Southern Arizona, we need to get a feel for how many of our chapter members would attend to make sure we get a venue with a conference facility large enough to accommodate us. We know it is a way off but if you think you will attend let us know. Thanks!

### MORE BINGO PHOTOS:



*Patients Enjoying Bingo*



*Patriot Lemon assists Patients at Bingo*



*Patriot Bertagnoli calls Bingo*



*Sam Phipps and Cdr Phipps help with Bingo*



*Sam Phipps & Yolanda Lemon display Grand Prize Quilt*

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



Fellow Patriots,



*Ignacio Rivera*

Welcome to Chapter 472. Our meetings are on the last Thursday of the month at 10:00 AM at the American Legion Post 26. Come and join us!

Commander: Ignacio Rivera (480) 381-6618

Sr. Vice-Commander: Ramiero Del Rio (602) 818-0796

Finance: James Pomush [landjpomush@gmail.com](mailto:landjpomush@gmail.com)

Adjutant: Stephan Bobby [veteranairborne@yahoo.com](mailto: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

**EAST VALLEY VETERANS PARADE:** Patriot Jim Pomush & Chapter 472 participated in the East Valley Veterans Parade in Mesa, AZ.



*Big George & Patriot Jim Pomush*



*East Valley Veterans Day Parade*

**FUNDRAISER: Patriots Ron del Rio, Ignacio Rivera, Ruben Del Rio** all joined in fundraising efforts for the Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 0472 on Oct 25<sup>th</sup> at the Market Place Swap & Shop in Mesa, AZ.



**MESA COMMUNITY COLLEGE:** Patriot Pomish representing The Mesa Hohokams presents a check from the Mesa Hohokams to Mesa Community College Basketball Coach, Kori Stephenson, and the 2025-2026 women's team!



*After the Parade at Cider Corps with young Marine*

**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](#)



*Memorial Bricks at Wesley Bolin Plaza*



**CIDER CORPS:** Cider Corps hosted a 250<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party for the Marine Corps on November 9<sup>th</sup>. Cider Corps is owned by chapter Member Jason Duren.



*Patriot Duren*

**REFLECTIONS:** A letter to the children of Afghanistan. I fought for what I believed in —



God, Country, Corps. Maybe someday I can put words to all that that means. But for now, I just wanted to be an image bearer to you. My

daughters are your age now, and it's hard to believe I was breaking bread with you when you were their age — with a rifle across my chest and a mission that could have very well caused you a lifetime of hardship. You're in your mid-20s now, the same age I was when I was there, and I hope you see the young man whose heart was truly there to protect you to the best of my ability. I hope you know that I never stopped





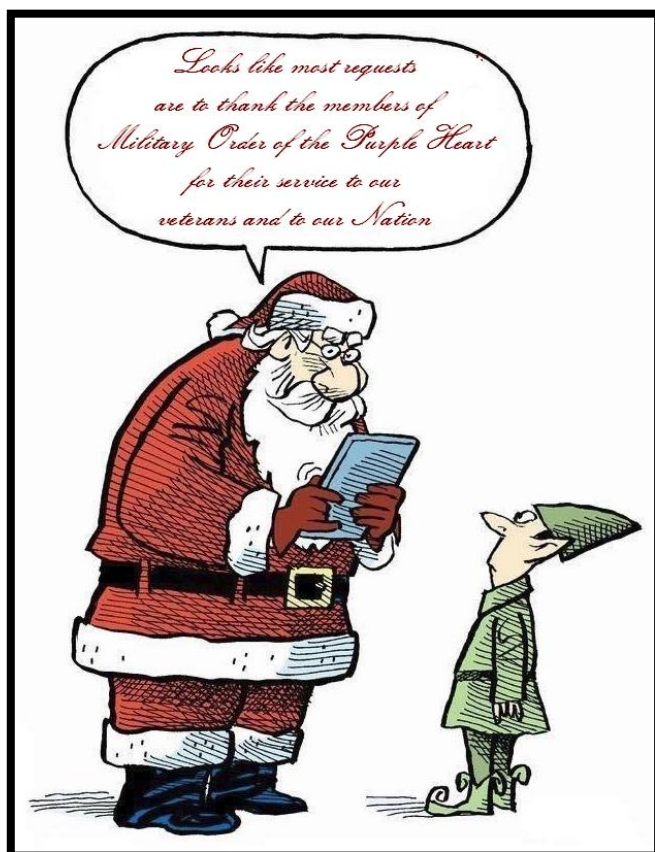
*Purple Heart Monument at Wesley Bolin Plaza*

## 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.



thinking about you — the laughter, the curiosity, the quiet moments between the chaos. I've



carried your face with me ever since. If I could sit with you again, I'd tell you that I'm sorry for the pain that was caused

and I hope you grew up with a desire to be a light in your community.

My daughters remind me of you every day. I pray that your life has found peace, that your children grow without the sound of war, and that someday, somehow, we all understand each other better than we did then.

Patriot Jason Duren

**BIG GEORGE: Patriot Cody Phipps and Patriot John Moore** from Chapter 442 went to Mesa on Nov 5<sup>th</sup> to pickup "Big George" (large replica of a



*Patriot Bobby, Patriot Phipps, Patriot Duren, & Patriot Moore*

Purple Heart) for use in the Tucson Veterans Day Parade. They met up with **Patriot Stephen Bobby** and **Patriot Jason Duren** from Chapter 472 at **Cider Corps** in downtown

**Mesa**. Two Vietnam veterans and two Afghanistan War veterans had a good time exchanging war stories. **Jason owns Cider Corps which is a cider tap room. Neat place with a veteran's vibe to it.**



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

Fellow Patriots,



As I write this, I am thinking about another leftover turkey sandwich washed down with some eggmog! Oh boy! I hope all of you enjoyed your time with family and friends during the holiday and are looking forward to a season of giving – also known as the Christmas holiday season. On November 7<sup>th</sup>, we had another fundraising event at the Sundome Plaza Merchants Arts and Crafts Fair. As always, our events are focused on being able to provide support for Veterans and families less fortunate than ourselves. At this event, we added over \$1200 to our Welfare account and were able to fund several Veteran oriented support organizations including the Angel Trees for Veterans we co-sponsor with Corte Bella Vets and American Legion Post 94.

The Chapter participated in several Veterans' Day events around the Valley. Keith Gray and Will Hunger will be placing the Department and Chapter wreaths at the **Pearl Harbor Remembrance Ceremony in Phoenix on December 6<sup>th</sup>.**

In case you skipped over it, please read the Department Adjutant's input to this newsletter and think about others who may not be as fortunate as ourselves.

Our next meeting is Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 0900 in the Sands Chevrolet training room. You can find directions on our website at <https://691.mophaz.org/news-events>. If you cannot come in person, maybe you can join us virtually via Zoom ([https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81559570914?pwd=U29JaDIEMUR0bTdlYWUySUftOVRRTQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81559570914?pwd=U29JaDIEMUR0bTdlYWUySUftOVRRTQT09;); Meeting ID: 815 5957 0914; Passcode: 328403; or by calling 2532050468).

Kay and I wish all of you and yours a very safe and Happy Holiday Season. We look forward to seeing you at the meeting.

Be SAFE! Be as HEALTHY as you can! Have FUN! Call a Veteran today! 😊

Yours in Patriotism  
Larry Leighton  
Commander

Cdr: Larry Leighton -  
[commander691moph@gmail.com](mailto:commander691moph@gmail.com)  
Sr. Vice-Cdr: James Starkman -  
[karen4357@att.net](mailto:karen4357@att.net)  
Jr. Vice-Cdr: Sal Salinas-  
[salsalido@gmail.com](mailto:salsalido@gmail.com)  
Chaplain: Jimi Sallmen –  
[jimisallmen@gmail.com](mailto:jimisallmen@gmail.com)  
Adjutant: Larry Leighton -  
[commander691moph@gmail.com](mailto:commander691moph@gmail.com)

**Meeting date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.  
**Note:** Meetings will also be via Zoom. Enter the meeting ID (ID: 815 5957 0914) and the password (328403). By phone, call 253-205-0468 and enter the id/password.  
**Website:** <http://691.mophaz.org/>  
**Facebook:** [Chapter 691 Facebook](#)

**CHAPTER 691'S NEW CANOPY:** Here's a picture of us with our new purple canopy at the recent fundraiser where we raised \$1200!



*L to R: Larry Leighton, John Ballenger, Jim Starkman, Cindy Capek, and Ron Capek*



**NEW CHAPTER WEBSITE:** We have a redesigned website at <http://691.mophaz.org/>. Make sure you bookmark the web address since it is different than the old address.

**ANGEL TREES FOR VETERANS:** Sun City West's Sundome Plaza has once again become a hub of holiday generosity as the Angel Trees for Veterans program returns to brighten the season for veterans living in VA Hospitals and Living Centers in Phoenix and Prescott as well as transition homes like M.A.N.A., U.S. Vets, and Veterans First and the State of Arizona Nursing Home.

Seven Christmas trees are placed at various locations throughout the plaza. Each tree is decorated with simple paper tags—"I would like" tags—bearing specific requests from veterans who reside in VA medical and residential facilities. Shoppers could select a tag, purchase the requested item, and return the wrapped gift to the store listed on the tag. Many of the requests are humble and practical. Many tags ask for basic cleaning supplies so veterans living in transition homes can do their part to keep shared spaces clean and comfortable. Others ask for gift cards, giving veterans the dignity and independence to choose their own gifts on rare trips outside their facilities. Gift cards also allow facility staff to celebrate birthdays and other special occasions for residents who might not otherwise receive anything special that day.

Corte Bella Vets, a veteran support organization from nearby Corte Bella, organizes the project. It is managed by chapter 691, **Patriot Jim Starkman and his wife Karen**. Each Christmas tree prominently displays the flags of the United States' Uniformed Services—Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Space Force—alongside the American flag, creating a powerful visual reminder of the men and women the community is honoring.

Community support has grown each year. This year, **more than 3,000 "I would like to have" tags** will hang from the branches. **Jim and Karen** personally ensure that tags are replenished every couple of days. Once shoppers purchase the requested gift, they wrap it, and return it to the designated Sundome Plaza store printed on the tag. From there, volunteers step in to handle the logistics of sorting and delivery.

Volunteers from **American Legion Post 94 (Sun City West)**, **Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 691 (Sun Cities Chapter)**, and the **Corte Bella Vets** work together to gather the gifts, separate them by facility, and prepare them for delivery. The gifts are then delivered to the VA Hospitals and Living Centers in Phoenix and Prescott on **December 16 and 17**. Volunteers prepared the trees for this year's season.





*Karen Starkman, Keith Fowler (mostly hidden behind Karen), Eileen Mateyka, Larry Leighton, Jim Starkman, Lyn Peterson (kneeling), Sherri Hayes, supervising is Nicholas (Leighton's Pekingese in the stroller), Kay Leighton, and John Ballenger*

Roger Kleinschmidt (not shown in photo) was preparing the shipping boxes when the picture was taken.

The business community has also stepped up in a big way. The **Happy Valley Home Depot** donates more than **60 packing and shipping boxes** each year, along with the use of a moving truck to ensure the gifts are transported safely and efficiently.

Thanks to the generosity of Sun City West and surrounding communities, the Angel Trees for Veterans program now delivers an estimated **\$70,000 to \$80,000 worth of gifts** each year. These gifts support veterans in **five** VA Hospitals and Living Centers in Phoenix and Prescott, reminding them that they are not forgotten and that their service is deeply appreciated.

Residents and visitors are encouraged to take part in this year's drive by visiting the **Sundome Plaza Shopping Mall**, located at: **13527 W Camino Del Sol Sun City West, AZ 85375**

To participate, simply stop by one of the Angel Trees, select one or more "I would like" tags, purchase and wrap the requested gifts, and return them to the designated store listed on the tag **no later than December 15**. For more information about the Angel Trees for Veterans program, or to learn how you can help, contact:

**Jim Starkman – Program Coordinator**

Phone: **708-638-2321**

This holiday season, a short trip to Sundome Plaza and a simple tag from a Christmas tree can make a lasting difference in the life of a veteran who gave so much for our country.

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



Fellow Patriots,



*Rodger Ely*

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. Several Northern Arizona communities became Purple Heart entities this past year. Thank you, Page Arizona, Tuba City Arizona, Nazlini Arizona, & White Cone, Arizona (Navajo Nation). This month, we participated in the Western Navajo Parade and Fair.

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

Commander  
Rodger Ely

**Commander:** Rodger Ely - [juggy64@aol.com](mailto:juggy64@aol.com)

**Sr. Vice-Cdr:** Daniel Reich -  
[daniel\\_r\\_reich@msn.com](mailto:daniel_r_reich@msn.com)

**Jr. Vice-Cdr:** Elmer Sangster -  
[sangster333@hotmail.com](mailto:sangster333@hotmail.com)

**Adjutant:** William Weldon -  
[baseballbillpaul@npgcable.com](mailto:baseballbillpaul@npgcable.com)

**Chaplain:** Rupert Osequeda -  
[rupert@swiftaz.net](mailto: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 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday.

**MARINE CORPS BIRTHDAY:** Several chapter members attended the Marine Corps Birthday Ball on Nov 8<sup>th</sup>.



*Cdr Ely & Patriot Weldon*

**WHITE CONE, AZ BECAME A PURPLE HEART COMMUNITY:** On October 29<sup>th</sup>, the White Cone Chapter of the Navajo Nation was designated a Purple Heart Community.



*Patriot Ely & Patriot Weldon accept Proclamation*



*Patriot Weldon presents PH Signage*



**NAVAJO NATION:** On November 3, **Navajo Nation President Buu Nygren** officially proclaimed the **Navajo Nation as a “Purple Heart Nation,”** recognizing the extraordinary service and sacrifice of Navajo men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces. The ceremony took place in Crownpoint, NM. MOPH National Adjutant Keith Gray attended the ceremony. More photos are available at the [Navajo Nation Website](#).



*President Buu Nygren & National Adjutant Gray*



*Navajo Nation President Nygren signs Proclamation.*



*Nation President Buu Nygren & Adjutant Gray*



*Chapter 793 presents PH Flag*

**IN MEMORIAM:** Chapter 793 during the ceremonies at White Cone, AZ honored the memory of PH recipient Vincent Wayne Begay who passed away in 2020.



*Patriot Sangster speaks to honor departed PH Recipient Vincent Begay*

#### **FLAGSTAFF VA CLINIC:**

1300 West University Ave, Suite 200

Flagstaff, AZ 86001

Phone: 928-226-1056

Mental Health Phone: 928-445-4860, ext 7500

Website: [Flagstaff VA Clinic](#)

**FACEBOOK:** Facebook is the best place to find information on the chapter and stay current with our activities. Our Facebook page is at [Chapter 793 Facebook](#).

#### **WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA CAMP NAVAJO**

Join us at **10:00 AM on Dec 13<sup>th</sup>** to place wreaths on veteran's grave markers. Scan the QR code on the flyer below to sponsor a wreath for Camp Navajo.





*Adjutant Gray & other Purple Heart Recipients in attendance.*

## MARSHALL MAGNET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:

On Nov 7<sup>th</sup> the school honored veterans from their community with a **special assembly recognizing their service and sacrifice**. We're especially grateful to the veterans within our own community, including the families of our students and their beloved crossing guard, Mr. Billy (also known as **Patriot Billy Weldon**).



*Principal with Patriot Weldon*



*Patriot Weldon speaks to Class*

ARIZONA VETERANS' MEMORIAL CEMETERY AT CAMP NAVAJO

## National Wreaths Across America Day

DECEMBER 13, 2025 at 10:00AM

14317 VETERANS DR.  
BELLEMONT, AZ 86015

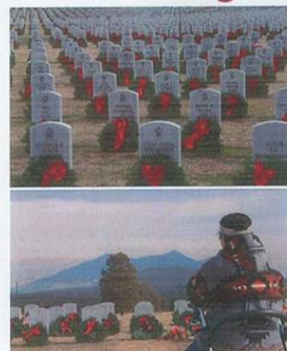
Each December on National Wreaths Across America Day, our mission to Remember, Honor and Teach is carried out by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at more than 3,400 additional locations in all 50 U.S. states, at sea and abroad. In many homes, there is an empty seat for one who is serving or one who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. We hope you will join us to show our Veterans and their families that we will never forget.

**SPECIAL NOTE ON DIRECTIONS:** When coming to visit us, please do NOT turn

right/west on Bellemont Camp Rd (Route 66). That is NOT a through street. You MUST drive straight through on Transwestern/Hughes, on the curvy road over the railroad overpass, to get to Veterans Drive, on which you will follow the signs and turn right/west to drive to the cemetery. Please do not enter the Camp Navajo Depot security gates.

**NOTE:** This is an outside event, please dress accordingly.

To Sponsor a Wreath go to:  
<https://www.wreathacrossamerica.org/pages/31662/Overview?relatedId=0>  
ccnenn@aazdvs.gov



**HONOR FLIGHT:** Support Honor Flight by donating at Mike & Rondas' the Place Westside, Flagstaff, AZ. Also all tips on Veterans Day were donated to Honor Flight, AZ.



## WARRIOR WEDNESDAY

*Is your buddy thriving or surviving?*



*Give your buddy a call today!*



*Patriot Weldon Speaks to School Assembly*

### BOB STUMP VA MEDICAL CENTER:

500 Hwy 89 North

Prescott, AZ 86313

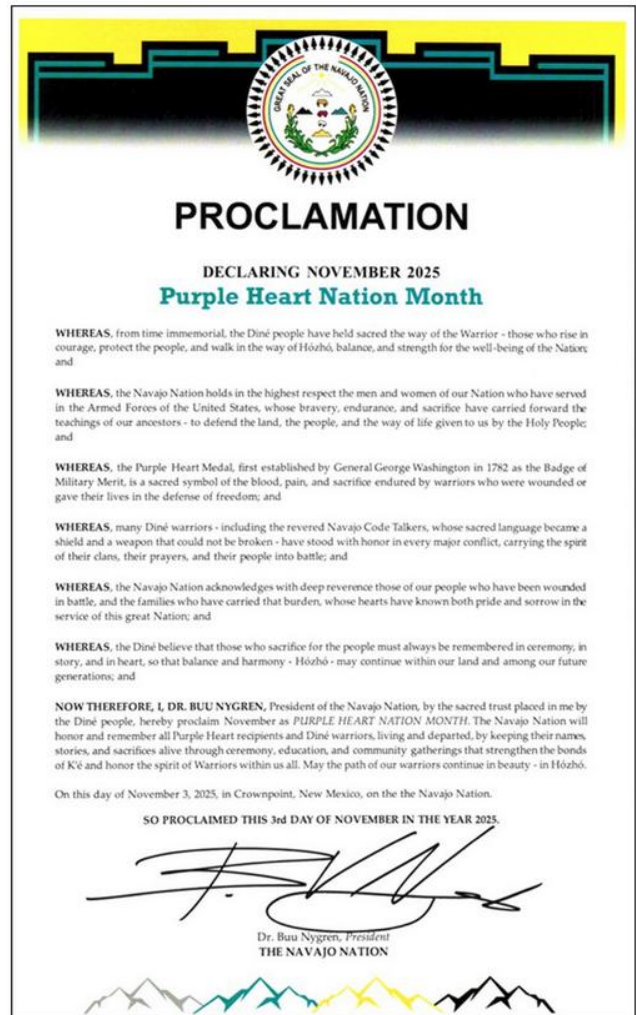
Phone: 928-445-4806

Mental Health Phone: 928-445-4860, ext 7500

Website: [Bob Stump VA Medical Center](http://Bob Stump VA Medical Center)



### NAVAJO NATION PROCLAMATION:



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



*Michael Overmeyer*

**Cdr:** Michael Overmeyer > [moverme48@gmail.com](mailto:moverme48@gmail.com)

**Sr. Vice Cdr:** Chuck Byers > [seagb@cox.net](mailto:seagb@cox.net)

**Jr. Vice Cd:** James King > [kings6@live.com](mailto:kings6@live.com)

**Adjutant:** Sandra King [kings6@live.com](mailto:kings6@live.com)

**Chaplain:** Frank Sonntag Jr. [sfcfrank2003@yahoo.com](mailto:sfcfrank2003@yahoo.com)

**Meeting date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month.

**Meeting time:** 10:00 AM

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

Yours in Patriotism  
Mike Overmeyer  
Commander Chapter 2560

**NEW CHAPTER 2560 WEBSITE:** We have a new website at [2560.mophaz.org](http://2560.mophaz.org). Make sure you bookmark the address in your web browser.

**WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA:** We are getting ready for Wreaths Across America for this coming December. We are still looking for any children



**VIETNAM SERVICE LAPEL PIN:** Patriot Chuck Byers was honored along with several other veterans with the DOD Vietnam Service Lapel Pin presented by Congressman Greg Stanton.



### CHAPTER 2560 WEARS RED ON FRIDAYS:

Patriots, including about a dozen Purple Heart recipients meet for **Wear Red at Friday's breakfast.**



Please join us for the upcoming October through December assemblies. Numerous guest speakers have been scheduled for the remainder of the year that we are confident you do not want to

miss.

A buffet breakfast is served beginning at 7:30 AM (\$12pp + gratuity), and the program starts promptly at 8:15 AM. See you next Friday!! Bring a friend.

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

between the ages of 7-11 who would like to help at the ceremony. I love to include our children in the ceremony to teach them why we do this. Contact me at [nfass@hotmail.com](mailto:nfass@hotmail.com).

Thank you very much for supporting Wreaths Across America.

*Sponsor a Wreath Today!*

**WREATHS across AMERICA**  
National Remembrance Day  
Community is Invited!

**Saturday, December 13, 2025 at 10:00am**

Please scan the QR Code below to sponsor or to Volunteer—you can also visit:  
[www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org/AZ0190P](http://www.wreathsasscrossamerica.org/AZ0190P)

Mariposa Gardens Memorial 400 S Power Rd Mesa, AZ 85206 and/or Mountain View Cemeteries 7900 E Main St Mesa, AZ 85207

**THANKS TO OUR 2025 SPONSORS**

Wreaths Across America gives back \$5.00  
On every wreath sold to support local Veterans in our community!

Did you know?  
Worcester Wreath Co. makes 90,000 wreaths per day for \$2 days to supply WAA!

Make checks payable to "Wreaths Across America" and mail to:  
4657 S. Desert Dawn Dr., Gold Canyon, AZ 85118

Please help the Military Order of the Purple Heart honor our local heroes

Direct questions to Nancy Fassbender (520)280-4715 or [nfass@hotmail.com](mailto:nfass@hotmail.com)



**VA Whole Health CARE:** Starting Oct. 1, 2025, VA will update its billing practices for Whole Health well-being services to ensure consistency with federal law. **Veterans in Priority Groups 6, 7 and 8**, who are already responsible for outpatient co-payments, will **now pay a \$15 co-payment for Whole Health well-being services** billed under Stop Code 139. More information is available at the [VA website](#).

**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.

**UNITED ARIZONA VETERANS:** This organization offers scholarships to Arizona veterans. Go to this [link](#) for more information or to apply.

**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](#).

**ARIZONA STANDDOWN ALLIANCE:** The Arizona Veterans StandDown Alliance (AVSA) holds resource fairs in 13 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.

1. **2026 Maricopa County StandDown**  
*Tentative:* Thursday & Friday, March 12-13, 2026  
Arizona State Fairgrounds (1826 W. McDowell Road, Phoenix, AZ 85007)

### **PURPLE HEART VEHICLE REGISTRATION**

**FEES:** 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**.

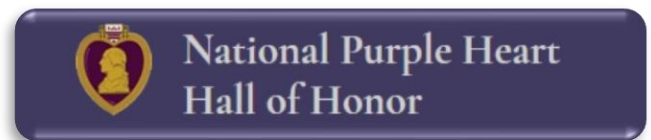


### **PURPLE HEART MAGAZINE:**



The **September/October** edition of the **National Purple Heart Magazine** is **available**. The Department of AZ articles are on pages 105, 106, & 107. Go to the [Purple Heart Magazine](#). Enjoy!

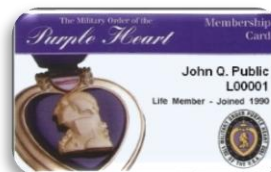
**PURPLE HEART HALL OF HONOR:** Add your story to the Purple Heart Roll of Honor to help inspire future generations of citizens. Enroll at this [link](#).



**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.



**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>



### **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



Can only be used on one vehicle. Specialty plate and personalization fees still apply.

**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](#).

#### NEWSLETTER INFORMATION:

Please send information & photos that you would like included in the newsletter to [mophchapter442@comcast.net](mailto:mophchapter442@comcast.net). We would like to get the newsletter out on the last day of the month. For the November issue get news information & photos to us by the 27<sup>th</sup> of the month. Thanks!

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

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](#)

**NEW DOD ID CARDS FOR MILITARY RETIREES & Dependents:** The Department of Defense (DoD) has announced that individuals will need to replace their older, laminated paper ID cards with new, more secure Next Generation Uniformed Services Identification (USID) cards. Detailed information related to the USID cards visit [www.cac.mil/](http://www.cac.mil/).



#### OPERATIONS ORDER: 12-01-25

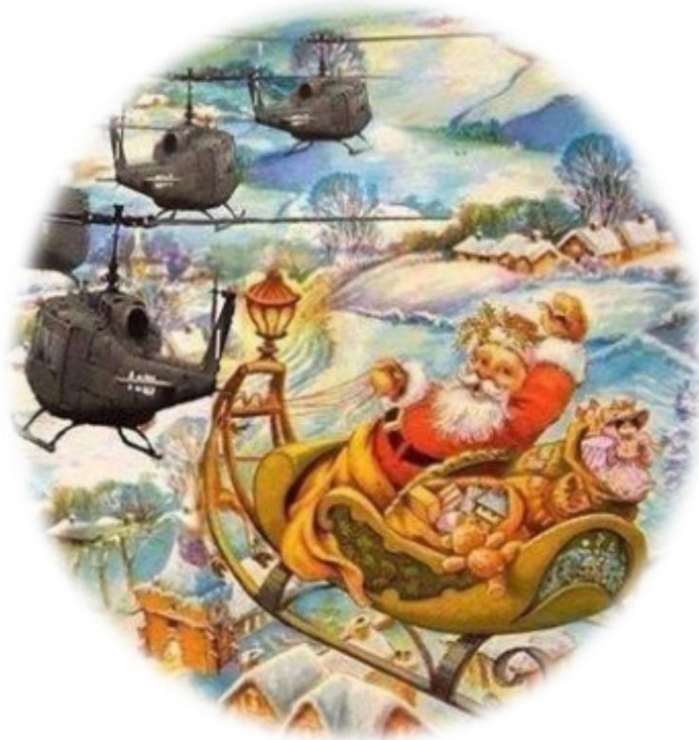
##### Subject: Christmas

1. An official visit by General Santa (NMI) Claus is expected at this headquarters on 25 December 2025. The following instructions will be in effect and govern the activities of all personnel during the visit.

a. Not a creature will stir without official permission. This will include indigenous mice. Special stirring permits for necessary administrative actions will be obtained through normal channels. Mice stirring permits will be obtained through the Office of the Surgeon General, Veterinary Services.

b. Personnel will settle their brains for a long winter nap prior to 2200 hours, 24 December 2025. Uniform for the nap will be Pajamas, cotton, light, drowsing, with kerchief, general purpose, camouflage; and Cap, camouflage w/ear flaps. Equipment will be drawn from CIF prior to 1900 hours, 24 December 2025.

c. Personnel will utilize standard field ration sugar plums for visions to dance through their heads. Artificially sweetened plums are authorized for those in their unit weight control program. Specifications for this item will be provided by the servicing dining facility.



d. Stockings, wool, cushion sole, will be hung by the chimney with care. Necessary safety precautions will be taken to avoid fire hazards caused by carelessly hung stockings. Unit Safety Officers will submit stocking hanging plans to this headquarters prior to 0800 hours, 23 December 2025, ATTN: G4, for approval.

e. At the first sign of clatter from the lawn, all troops will spring from their beds to evaluate noise and cause. Immediate action will be taken to tear open the shutters and throw open the window sashes. G4 Plan (Saint Nick), Reference LO No. 3, paragraph 6c, this headquarters, 2 February 2009, will be in effect to facilitate shutter tearing and sash throwing. Division chiefs will familiarize all personnel with procedures and are responsible for ensuring that no shutters are torn open, or window sashes thrown open prior to start of official clatter.

f. Prior to 2400 hrs., 24 December 2025, all

personnel will be assigned to "Wondering Eye" stations. After shutters are thrown open and sashes are torn, these stations will be manned.

g. The G4 will assign one each Sleigh, miniature, M-66, and eight deer, rein, tiny, for use of General Claus' driver who, IAW current directives and other applicable regulations, must have a valid SF 46 properly annotated by Driver Testing; be authorized rooftop parking and be able to shout "On Dasher, on Dancer, on Prancer and Vixen, up Comet, up Cupid, on Donner and Blitzen".

2. General Claus will enter quarters through standard chimneys. All units without chimneys will draw Chimney Simulator, M-6, for use during ceremonies. Chimney simulators will be requested on Engineer Job Order Request Form submitted to the Furniture Warehouse prior to 23 December 2025, and issued on DA Form 3161, Request for Issue or Turn-in.

3. Personnel will be rehearsed shouting "Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night." This shout will be given at the end of General Claus' visit. Uniformity of shouting is the responsibility of division chiefs.

CHRISTOPHER K. KRINGLE  
Colonel, USA  
OIC, Special Services