



February 2026

Volume 6 Issue 6

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER
Patriot Michael Smaydy

Hello Patriots,



Michael Smaydy

Commander Phipps has resigned as commander. The Department of Arizona MOPH appreciates the hard work and dedication he provided to the Order. Per National Bylaws, the senior vice commander moves up to commander, and the junior vice assumes the senior vice position. Being so close to Department Convention and annual elections, the Junior vice commander position will remain vacant.

This year seems to be just racing by. By the time you read this there will only be two months until the Department Convention this year. It means that it's time to put the finishing touches on all projects being done this year and getting also necessary paperwork into Department and National. Also, I hope all the chapters were able to get their Patriot of the Year candidates into the Department by the deadline. The Department has to pick the state winner and forward to Regional in March. It's time for annual

elections again. It would be nice if we could get some new members to be active, even if it's just on a committee or an easy appointment so you could learn what the organization does and be involved in your chapters' business. Even if you just attend meetings, it helps. Your vote helps decide which way your Chapter goes forward. And for Chapter Officers, when you get someone new attending a meeting, don't immediately give them elective offices or committees and overwhelm them. We want them to come back and be an asset.

If anyone is interested in running for a Department Office or would like to have a Department Appointed Position, please notify either the Department Adjutant or one of the current Department Officers. There are plenty of openings if you are interested.

At our last DEC I was extremely pleased by the reports from all the Chapters. Their work in their community is nothing short of outstanding. But the working members could use any and all help. It appears that all of our chapters are going strong. We at the Department level are here for you if you need anything to make your Chapter function more smoothly. For members we request you go through your Chapters if you need any help. We are here for YOU.



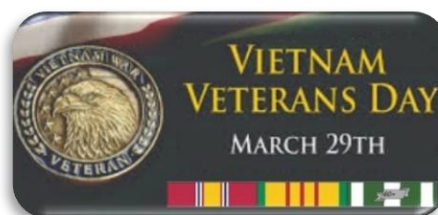
Michael J. Smaydy
Commander
Department of Arizona
michaelism@hotmail.com

**DEPARTMENT SR. VICE-COMMANDER
Patriot John Moore**

NATIONAL VIETNAM VETERANS DAY: In March our chapters will participate in ceremonies for National Vietnam War Veterans Day in various locations around the state. In 1973 March 29th, was the day the last U.S. combat troops departed Vietnam. This now is a day each year when we honor the 2.7 million Americans who served in Vietnam during the Vietnam War, honor the 58,000+ soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen who made the ultimate sacrifice and thank those who never received the recognition they deserved for their service during the war. Thank you to each of our 682 Patriot members who received Purple Hearts while serving in the Vietnam War.



John Moore



NATIONAL CONVENTION: The 2026 National Convention will be in New Bern NC. The Dates are July 13th -July 17, 2025

To register use this link: <https://www.purpleheart.org/NationalConvention>

- Departments & Chapters If you would like to donate or if you know of an organization that is willing to be a sponsor please use this link:

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/sponsor-93rd-annual-national-convention?>



DEPARTMENT CALENDAR: Event details are at other locations in the newsletter.

- Mar 1 > Patriot of Year Nominations due
- Mar 3 > Navy Reserve Birthday
- Mar 5 > Seabee Birthday
- Mar 6 > Fisher House Car Show (Tucson)
- Mar 6 > Bullhead City Standdown
- Mar 10 > Tucson Standdown
- Mar 11 > Dept Policy Committee Meeting
- Mar 12 > Stories of War (Tucson)
- Mar 12/13 > Maricopa Standdown
- Mar 14 > Chapter 691 Meeting
- Mar 15 > American Legion Birthday
- Mar 16 > Chapter 442 Meeting
- Mar 20 > Stafford Standdown
- Mar 21/22 > Luke AFB Airshow (Glendale)
- Mar 25 > Medal of Honor Day
- Mar 25 > Verde Valley Standdown
- Mar 25 > Executive Committee Meeting
- Mar 27 > VA Resource Fair Tucson
- Mar 28 > National Vietnam Veterans Day (Tucson)
- Mar 29 > National Vietnam Veterans Day

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

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT
Patriot Larry Leighton

GREETINGS PATRIOTS,



Larry Leighton

March is a busy month. In addition to **Chapter elections**, there are several opportunities to remind our communities the Order does exist and what we stand for and support including Womens History Month, Navy Reserve Birthday (3rd), National K-9 Veterans Day (13th), National Medal of Honor Day (25th), Vietnam War Veterans Day (29th) and four Warrior Wednesdays and four Red Shirt Fridays. **Ralph Arivizu** is our first \$300 gift certificate winner! His calendar number is #515 and was drawn on Feb 18th. Congratulations Ralph. **Calendars are still available for only \$25/copy, a 50% discount off the original price.** When the newsletter comes out, you will still have 47 chances to be our next winner! If you have not already bought one for yourself, family, and friends, please use this [link](#). **Remember the funds we raise go to**

support Veterans and families.

Department Elections will be held on May 2nd during the Department Convention TBA (and on Zoom). Consider stepping forward for an elected or appointed position or to be on a committee. New ideas to improve Department operations are always needed and wanted.

PATRIOT AWARDS LUNCHEON: The Department is sponsoring two tables at the **Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame Society's Patriotic Awards Luncheon to be held on May 1st.** If you are interested in attending, please respond to adjutant.mophaz@gmail.com AS SOON AS POSSIBLE to reserve your seat (maximum of two per Patriot). Emails only, no chat messages, and no phone calls! I need the full name of each attendee and any food restrictions. The first to reply (18 seats) will be guaranteed a seat. If you reply after the 18 seats are allocated, you will be put on a waiting list. If you are not one of our 18, tickets to this event will go fast and it is generally sold out. Early bird pricing ends April 3rd. The event flier is attached. More information is available at <https://avhof.org/patrioticawardsluncheon/>.



AZ SYMPOSIUM IN SUPPORT OF MILITARY, VETERANS, & FAMILIES: Event will be held on **April 15/16th at the Desert Willow Convergence Center, Phoenix.** Please let me know ASAP if you would be interested in attending one or both days. We will need to **confirm and register before Mar 15th** in order to get any "early bird" pricing (\$155 for one day; \$255 for both days) and apply for funding from the sponsor. Group discounts are available if we have three or more attending. Although this email is only being sent to DEC members, Chapter Commanders are encouraged to find out if any of their members would like to attend and perhaps becoming a Chapter or



Department representative to the Arizona Coalition for Military Families. Use this [link](#) to learn more about the Symposium.

PATRIOT OF THE WEEK! We want to learn more about our members. You may be thinking “everyone in my Chapter already knows me so why should I bother?” Even if you are known there, look around. How many members who don’t come to meetings see you? If you don’t belong to a chapter (Member at Large), who beyond your immediate circle knows you? Take a few minutes and share a little about yourself? Let us know what service you were in and when, when and where you were wounded, and why you joined the Order. We’d also like to know a little about your current life including things like occupation after the service, hobbies, etc. You don’t have to write a whole book or even send a picture (it would be nice, particularly if you have a “then” and “now”. Send what you want to adjutant.mophaz@gmail.com and we’ll get your story in our Department Newsletter and maybe even the National Purple Heart Magazine.

Events! We try to keep the Department Calendar (<https://www.mophaz.org/events>) up to date with events that may be of interest to the members but I know we often miss some or get them posted late. If you know of any upcoming events you think might be pertinent, send me the essential details (fliers are acceptable) and we’ll try to let the Department know and post them to the calendar.

National Purple Heart Day is August 7th. Please let me know if you are planning to celebrate or recognize OUR special day in any way. I’d love to get that information in our newsletter and the Purple Heart Magazine.

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

PS. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you – not what may have been done unto you.

Yours in Patriotism
Larry Leighton
Adjutant

DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

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

- Commander - **Mike Smaydy** 928.445.3792; michaelism@hotmail.com
- Senior Vice Commander - **John Moore** 520.744.9768; mophchapter442@comcast.net
- Finance Officer – **Jim Starkman** 708.638.2321; karen4357@att.net
- Inspector – **Stephan Bobby** 480.266.9268; veteranairborne@yahoo.com
- Sergeant At Arms – **John Ballenger** 602.245.0437; cjballenger22@msn.com

APPOINTED OFFICERS:

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

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

- Junior Vice Commander - elected
- Chaplain - appointed
- Judge Advocate - elected
- Legislative Officer – appointed

FORT LOWELL CHAPTER 442 – TUCSON, AZ
Commander Cody Phipps

Patriots of Chapter 442,

Thank you all for your efforts in making the chapter an excellent resource for our Tucson Veterans. From providing rental assistance, car repair assistance, utility assistance, and help for homeless veterans, your commitment truly makes a difference. Your generosity and dedication embody the spirit of service. We provided the widow of a veteran with \$300 in assistance this month. A special thank you to Canyon Del Oro Bible Church's Quilting Ladies for hand-making the quilts we use as the grand prize at our monthly bingo session at the VA Hospital. Volunteers are welcome to come out and assist as we host bingo. The next bingo session at the VA Hospital is on March 28th. If you can help meet us at bldg. 60 at 2:00 PM.



Cody Phipps

On March 28th we will participate in the annual Vietnam Veterans Day Ceremony at Kino Veterans Memorial Park.

Join us for our chapter meeting on March 16th and at our monthly Purple Heart Luncheon on March 18th. **Join us at** Nana's Kitchen at 8225 N Courtney Page Way Suite 129 Suite 129, Tucson, AZ 85743.

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 TUCSON VA Hospital: The chapter hosted bingo for the patients at the Tucson VA Hospital on Feb 28th. Thank you to **Patriot Dave Bertagnoli, Patriot Cody Phipps, & Patriot Danny Lemon**, who conducted bingo and to volunteers **Cherie Stallman, Susan-Lea Campbell Skuhr, & Sam Phipps** who helped the patients. The grand prize was a beautiful handmade quilt from the ladies at CDO Bible Church.



Volunteers display the grand prize

CHAPTER ELECTIONS: Elections will be held at the March meeting. Nominations are now open. Contact the adjutant if you want to run for an office or nominate someone. Let us know if you would like to serve in an appointed position.

MONTHLY PURPLE HEART LUNCHEON: Chapter 442 will hold its monthly Purple Heart luncheon on March 18th at Nana's Kitchen at 8225 N Courtney Page Way Suite 129, Tucson, AZ 85723. This is near I10 & Cortero Farms Rd.



Nana's Kitchen

NEW TUCSON VA LEADERSHIP: Starting Friday, February 27th, **Dr. John B. Kettelle** will be deleted as the Interim SAVAHCS Director. He brings a proven record of leadership and dedication to the mission, and I am confident he will continue to do so during this detail. Dr. Kettelle is a U.S. Navy Veteran. He received his MD from the University of California Davis, School of Medicine and completed his residency in General Surgery at San Joaquin General Hospital in Stockton, CA. He began his VA career in August 2015, became the SAVAHCS Chief of Surgical Services in May 2017, and has served as the SAVAHCS Chief of Staff since August 2019.

WARRIORS HONOR CRUISE: Congratulations to **Patriot John Grand**. John applied for the free cruise offered to Purple Heart recipients and was accepted for the October cruise. [Warrior Honor Cruise](#) is a non-profit that gifts free cruises to Purple Heart recipients. John, enjoy your Caribbean cruise!

FOUR CHAPLAINS' CEREMONY: Ft. Lowell Chapter 442 participated in the Four Chaplains ceremony on Feb 1st. **Patriot John Grand** read the biography



Prize winner with Volunteer Susan-Lea Skuhr



Sam Phipps & Patriot Bertagnoli call Bingo

TOP 50 INSPIRING WOMEN OF 2026: **Patriot Frances Johnson**, associate member of the chapter, has been nominated for this award. Congratulations, Frances.



SOUTHERN ARIZONA BALLOON EXCURSIONS: **Patriot John Grand** from chapter 442 received a free balloon adventure over the Sonoran Desert

of one of the Four Chaplains, Chaplain Fox. **Patriot John R. Moore** gave remarks on the history and significance of the Purple Heart. **Patriot Grand** read the biography of Chaplain Fox. A Purple Heart wreath was placed in honor of the Four Chaplains by **Patriot Cody Phipps, Patriot John Grand,** and **Patriot John R. Moore**. Special guest was **Patriot Emeritus Walter Ram** who is 102 years old. Music was provided by the 4th Cavalry Band (1880 Cavalry Band reenactor group).



BR: Patriot Bertagnoli, Patriot Grand, & Cdr Phipps FR: Patriot Ram & Patriot Moore.



Patriot Moore gives remarks about the Purple Heart

from [Southern Arizona Balloon Excursions](#). Thank you **pilot Paddy Nilz** for your patriotism in donating the ride and for your piloting expertise. Thanks to **Crew Chief Steve Hodge** and **Sam Phipps** the drone man too. At 88 years young this is John's second balloon flight and he had a blast.



Patriot Grand center



Cdr Phipps & Patriot Grand

Exit 12 – Stories of War in Tucson. Please join us and **Exit12 on March 13th at 7pm at the Proscenium Theatre** as they blend movement with story-telling and dance. Explore themes of identity, resilience, and life transitions. Exit12 heals the veteran and military-connected community, educates civilians, and advocates for veterans issues. Go to this [link for information](#).



4th Cavalry Band



Patriot Grand reads Chaplain Fox's Biography

TUCSON VA RESOURCE FAIR: See flyer below for information on this March 27th event.

SAVAHCS Tucson Veteran Engagement and Resource Fair

Tucson Veteran Engagement and Resource Fair

VA and community resources will be on hand providing information and resources to Veterans, their families and caregivers.

Friday, March 27 | 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
at **El Pueblo Activity Center**
101 W. Irvington Road, Tucson, AZ 85714

CITY OF TUCSON VA

Join us on Friday, March 27, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for our Tucson Veteran Engagement and Resource Fair at El Pueblo Activity Center, located at 101 W. Irvington Road, Tucson, AZ 85714.

VA and community resources will be available, offering valuable information and support for Veterans, their families, and caregivers. For more information, please contact our Public Affairs Office at pao.savahcs@va.gov. We look forward to seeing you there!

FISHER HOUSE CAR SHOW & 10 YR ANNIVERSARY:
Join Us for the Fisher House 10th Anniversary

EXIT 12 DANCE COMPANY *Stories of War in Tucson, AZ*

March 13 @ 7:00pm
Exit12: Stories of War
Proscenium Theatre
on the Pima College West Campus
2202 W Anklam Rd, Tucson, AZ
with special guests: Dancesequences

March 5 through March 12
Exit12: Community Workshops
Move with us at Catalyst Creative Collective, the Tucson VA, and the JCC during our residency! Optional performance on March 13.

for more info and tickets:
www.exit12danceco.org/up-next

UofA “WILDCAT” WING ROTC PROGRAM WINS TOP NATIONAL HONOR:

The University of Arizona Air Force ROTC cadets recently received a significant surprise that brought pride to the campus. The cadets were recognized as **the best large detachment among 145 Air Force ROTC units nationwide.** Congratulations! Here is the [link to news article](#).



TUCSON STAND-DOWN: The Tucson Standdown will be on March 10th at the Gem Center from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Address is 222 South Freeway, 3234 Tucson, AZ 85745.

see flyer below

Celebration! We're thrilled to celebrate a decade of service at the **SAVAHCS Fisher House Tucson with a Car Show & Resource Fair** Friday, March 6 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.



2026 Tucson Veteran StandDown
March 10, 2026 | 9:00am - 2:00pm
GEM Center
 222 South Freeway, 3234 Tucson, AZ 85745
 (located by Red Lion Inn and Suites Tucson, Downtown)

VETERANS
 Bring your DD Form 214, ID cards, Social Security cards, court paperwork, and any disability claim information.

**NO ALCOHOL
 NO DRUGS
 NO WEAPONS**

Open to all veterans and their families in need of the following complimentary support and resources:

- Haircuts
- Clothing/Hygiene Items
- Mental Health & Religious Counseling
- Benefits Applications
- Housing Assistance
- Pima County Veterans' Court
- Substance Abuse Counseling
- Pet Care/Vaccinations
- VA Services
- Treatment Referrals
- and so much more!

Questions? Contact Jessica Grover at tucsonveterans.jessica@gmail.com.

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 landipomush@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

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"x 8" 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

Download Order Form: [PH ORDER FORM](#)



CIDER CORPS: Patriot Keith Gray, National Adjutant, nominated Cider Corps owned by **Past 472 Chapter**

Commander Jason Duren to be featured in the **Cheers250** section of the **America 250 Arizona** celebration and **Cider Corps** was selected and will be featured. Cider



Corps is a veteran owned business in Mesa owned by **Patriot Jason Duren**. The [Cider Corps](#) family hopes you have a great 2026 with family and friends! And as you gather, take a minute to remember/honor the sacrifice of the many service members and their families that won't be together with us this year.

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.



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



Fellow Patriots,

Our next regular meeting is Saturday, March 14th. This is an important meeting as we will elect the new slate of officers for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. All positions are voluntary and not full-time. If you'd like to volunteer but aren't sure if you can handle it, remember those who have held the positions in the past are always ready to help. Remember the meeting starts at 0900 in the Sands Chevrolet training room. Bring a friend or potential member. Family members are always welcome and encouraged to attend.

Larry Leighton

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 the [Zoom](#) link.

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
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

GEORGE WASHINGTON DINNER DANCE:



Our George Washington Dinner-Dance was another success this

year. **Karen Starkman** provided the table decorations including the hand-made centerpieces and arranged for the cake.



Sal Salinas and Keith Gray (oldest and youngest Patriots present) cut the cake.

We had great music and dancing and good camaraderie with Chapter members, family, and guests.



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.

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](#)

SUN CITY WEST FUNDRAISER: Patriot Starkman and Patriot John Ballenger led the team again at our February fundraising event in conjunction with the **Sun City West Automobile Restoration Club (ARC)**. Our newest member – **Patriot Mike Ashmore**, a member of the ARC arranged this opportunity. Thanks to all (Frank and Marie Johnson, Cindy Capek, Elmer Short), we raised over \$600 for Veterans.



Jim Starkman (L) and John Ballenger (R) led the team

ARIZONA 250 CELEBRATION: Patriot Keith Gray attended the **Arizona Secretary of State** reading of the 1912

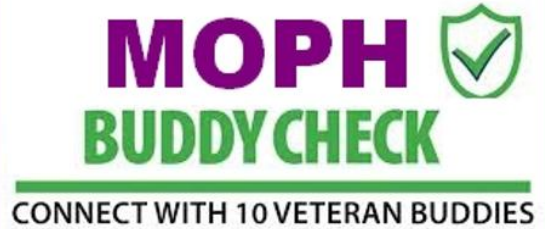


proclamation granting Arizona's State hood signed by President Taft. This was done at the

state capital on the second floor of the rotunda. The State Mine Inspector read the Governors 2026 State Hood Day proclamation. Arizona is the only state to elect a State Mine Inspector. After that there was an official send off for the **Arizona America 250** traveling museum. **Patriot Gray** is on the Military and Veterans Sub Committee for the AZ 250 Commission. As part of the subcommittee **Patriot Gray** nominated Cider Corps owned by Past 472 Chapter Commander Jason Duren to be feature in the **Cheers250** section of the celebration and I can tell you that **Cider Corps** was selected and will be featured. **Patriot John Davidson** made a presentation "Growing up Grand" to the subcommittee that is being considered to highlight the only school & district contained within the boundaries of a **National Park, The Grand Canyon School District #4**. Here is the link to the [America 250 Arizona website](#). And here is the link to the [Road to 250 Arizona Traveling Museum](#).



Secretary of State Adrian Fontes & Patriot Gray



2026 Luke Days AIRSHOW: The annual airshow at Luke AFB will be held March 21/22 in Glendale, AZ. Go to this link for more information: <https://www.lukedays.com/>



MORE ARIZONA 250 CELEBRATION PHOTOS:



Statehood 114th Birthday Cake



Road to 250 Traveling Museum

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). In February, we participated in the Four Chaplains Ceremony in Williams, AZ.

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 Osequeda – rupert@swiftaz.net

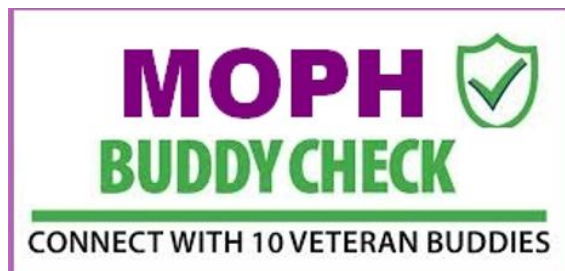
Facebook: [Chapter 793 Facebook](#)

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.



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.

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](#).

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](#)

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](#)



FOUR CHAPLAINS: Chapter 793 participated in the annual **Four Chaplains Ceremony on Feb 3rd** in Williams, AZ. **Cdr Ely** and several patriots attended the ceremony.



**Bringing VA Benefits to you
Veteran Benefits Services**

Speak with a VA representative, get answers to VA disability compensation/pension claim and benefit questions, and file your disability claim.

Contact: 1-800-827-1000

Location: Flagstaff VA CBOC
1300 West University Ave. Ste 200
Flagstaff, AZ 86001

When: Every 1st
Tuesday of the month
1000 a.m. – 1400 p.m.
Beginning: October 1, 2025

NORTHERN ARIZONA STANDDOWNS:

1. **Page StandDown**
Thursday & Friday, April 23-24, 2026
Page Elks Lodge 2498
2. **High Country StandDown**
Friday, May 15, 2026
ASVH-FLG Flagstaff, AZ
3. **Williams StandDown**
Friday, September 11, 2026
Williams Recreation Center, Williams, AZ.
4. **Twin Arrows StandDown**
Friday, October 2, 2026
Twin Arrows Navajo Resort, Flagstaff



Patriot Ely on left & Patriot Weldon on right.

PHYSICAL THERAPY AT NAVAHCS: Walk ins are available daily from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM.



SAME DAY PHYSICAL THERAPY

DON'T LET PAIN STOP YOU!

PROVIDING YOU THE RIGHT CARE WHEN YOU NEED IT MOST!

SAME DAY ACCESS TO CARE

Walk in Hours
Subject to availability
Monday – Friday
08:00 AM – 15:00PM

FACT PT BEST SERVES' PATIENTS WHO:

- Back and neck pain
- Joint pain
- Muscle strains
- Dizziness
- Mobility issues
- Falls
- Headaches
- Mobility equipment needs
- Recent D/C from SNF/Hospital

CONTACT INFORMATION

928-445-4860 ext 6087

Northern Arizona Veterans Affairs
500 HWY 89 North
Prescott, AZ 86313
Walk-In Clinic Bldg 117 Room 102

HOW TO GET PHYSICAL THERAPY AT NAVAHCS

Check in Building 117 (physical entrance) Room 102

Be seen before or after your primary care visit.

Check with your FACT team if PT is not in right place to be seen today.

CHAPTER 2560 – APACHE JUNCTION, AZ
Commander Mike Overmeyer



Michael 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

Yours in Patriotism
Mike Overmeyer
Commander Chapter 2560

NEW CHAPTER 2560 WEBSITE: We have a new website at 2560.mophaz.org. Make sure you bookmark the address in your web browser.

Jewish War Veterans Coffee Drive: Chapter 2560 took part in Jewish War Veterans Post 619's coffee drive. The goal was to collect donations of coffee to support the US Vets transitional housing at their

CHAPTER 2560 WEARS RED ON FRIDAYS:

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



We wish you could have joined us to share the camaraderie of the 95 Patriots attending our Friday assembly on Feb 20th. We look forward to your presence on Fridays

as we send a shout out to America's deployed service members. A buffet breakfast is served beginning at 7:30 AM (\$12 pp + gratuity), and the program starts promptly at 8:15 AM. See you on Fridays!! Bring a friend. American Legion Post 27, 1018 S. Meridian Rd., Apache Junction, AZ.

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

I WEAR RED
REMEMBER EVERYONE DEPLOYED
ON FRIDAYS

Phoenix location. That location serves 142 transitional veterans on a daily basis. Donations of coffee help mitigate one of their greatest expenses, as they have coffee available 24/7. Chapter 2560 donated 27 40 oz cans of coffee, enough for more than 10,000 6 oz cups. **Patriot Chuck Byers** and **Patriot Alex Gualdoni** delivered these cans on behalf of the Chapter to US Vets Executive Director Michelle Jameson and JWV Member Gabe Forsberg at Post 619's February 22, 2026, meeting. More than 380 cans of coffee were collected in total.



From L to R: Gabe Forsberg, JWV 619; Chuck Byers, MOPH 2560; Alex Gualdoni, MOPH 2560; Michelle Jameson, Exec. Dir. US Vets



That is a lot of coffee!

RELATED MOPH & VETERAN INFORMATION

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



National Purple Heart Hall of Honor

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

PURPLE HEART CHAPTER CAP: 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. 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](#).

ARIZONA HIRES VETS: We are excited to kick off our **5th year of the State of Arizona's Veterans Hiring Initiative** by announcing our Spring 2026 Hiring Event. 3,000 Veterans are employed the State of Arizona. Our event is at **the Capital Mall (the amphitheater area) on March 26, 2026**, is our flagship event and it attracts hundreds of candidates. The first half of the event is focused on the Veterans community and then opens to the general public for the second half. We have over 30 State Agencies and Veteran Supportive Services groups that have already signed up to participate. Here is the [registration link](#) for the event. The event flyer is below:

owned business. Visit the [store](#) for hats, shirts, ties, etc.

VA VETERANS' DAY POSTER CONTEST: For those of you that are artists or graphic artists the 2026 Veterans Day Poster Contest is open. **Entries are due NLT than April 21st**. Details are at this [VA Link](#).



SCAM ALERT FROM VA: Important info from the VA on SCAMS.

SCAM ALERT

We want to alert you to a new scam. Veterans have reported that they received texts claiming to be from the VA, asking them to "update their information."



These texts included a link to a very convincing website where people could unknowingly enter their sensitive personal information. **Please be aware that this is a scam!**

While the VA does send text messages to provide updates on benefits, resources, and appointment reminders, we urge you to be extremely cautious if you receive any communication requesting personal information or immediate payment.

If you receive a suspicious text message or email, please report it to the VHA at (866) 842-4357. Any scams related to VA benefits (VBA) should be reported to (833) 388-7233. For non-VA scams, contact the Federal Trade Commission at (877) 382-4357 or online at <http://reportfraud.ftc.gov/>. These resources are available 24/7.

Remember, always block, delete, and report suspicious messages. And most importantly, **never click on any links in these messages!**

5TH ANNUAL VETERANS HIRING EVENT

THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2026

A PROUD PARTNER OF:



AZ HIRES VETS!

CONTINUE TO SERVE

ARIZONA @ WORK

A proud partner of the [ameriCenter](#) network.

LOCATION: 1700 W. WASHINGTON ST. PHOENIX, AZ 85007
10 A.M. - NOON — VETERANS/MILITARY & SPOUSES ONLY
NOON - 2 P.M. — OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

hr.az.gov/vetsevent

REGISTER TODAY
SCAN OUR QR CODE

ARIZONA
JOB OPPORTUNITIES:

- On-site job interviews
- Possible contingent job offers
- State job search assistance

Benefits Available

Questions? Contact: veterans@azdoa.gov

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program • Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

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. [Bullhead City StandDown](#)
Friday, March 6, 2026
Optimum Community Center
2. [Tucson StandDown](#)
Tuesday, March 10, 2026
GEM Center
3. [Maricopa County StandDown](#)
Thursday & Friday, March 12-13, 2026
AZ State Fairgrounds
4. [Safford StandDown](#)
Friday, March 20, 2026
Graham County Fairgrounds

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](#)



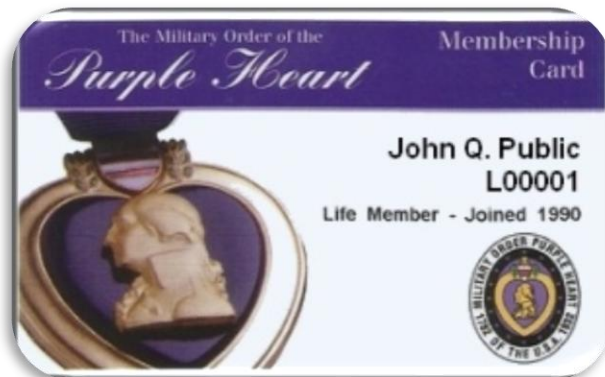
PURPLE HEART SCHOLARSHIPS:

Applications for the scholarship program are open and will close on May 1st. Program information is available at the Purple Heart Scholarship Program at this [link](#).



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

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 this [link](#).



5. [Verde Valley StandDown](#)
Wednesday, March 25, 2026
 Cliff Castle Conference Center
6. [Page StandDown](#)
 Thursday & Friday, April 23-24, 2026
 Page Elks Lodge 2498
7. [Kingman StandDown](#)
 Friday May 8, 2026
 Kathryn Heidenreich Adult Center
8. [High Country StandDown](#)
Friday, May 15, 2026
 ASVH-FLG
9. [Williams StandDown](#)
 Friday, September 11, 2026
 Williams Recreation Center
10. [Twin Arrows StandDown](#)
 Friday, October 2, 2026
 Twin Arrows Navajo Resort

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH: Thank you to all of our nation's women who have served or are serving in the military and a special thank you to the women in the Department of Arizona who have been awarded the Purple Heart.



TUCSON STANDDOWN: See flyer below.

2026 Tucson Veteran StandDown

March 10, 2026 | 9:00am - 2:00pm

GEM Center
 222 South Freeway, 3234 Tucson, AZ 85745
 (Located by Red Lion Inn and Suites Tucson Downtown)

Open to all veterans and their families in need of the following complimentary support and resources:

- Haircuts
- Clothing/Hygiene Items
- Mental Health & Religious Counseling
- Benefits Applications
- Housing Assistance
- Pima County Veterans' Court
- Substance Abuse Counseling
- Pet Care/Vaccinations
- VA Services
- Treatment Referrals
- and so much more!

VETERANS
 Bring your DD Form 214, ID cards, Social Security cards, court paperwork, and any disability claim information.

**NO ALCOHOL
 NO DRUGS
 NO WEAPONS**

Questions? Contact Jessica Grover at tucsonveterans.jessica@gmail.com.

BULLHEAD CITY STANDDOWN: See flyer for details.

Veteran Resource Fair

Bullhead City

Optimum Community Center
 2380 Optimum Way
 Bullhead City, AZ

Friday, March 6th 2026
10AM- 2PM

Vendors can sign up for one or both events by following the QR Code:

Multple agencies available:
 Contact events@javc.org

VERDE VALLEY STANDDOWN: See flyer for details.



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](#).

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. For the March issue **get news information & photos to us by the 28th of the month**. Thanks!

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

Arizona Veterans Honor Tour Fundraiser

Arizona Veterans Honor Tour (AVHT) is a veteran-owned 501(c)3 organization dedicated to honor our Veterans who not only served their country but are engaged in their Communities. One of our fundraiser is Wreaths Across America to honor interred Veterans at Mountain View Cemetery and Mariposa Gardens Memorial Park as well as other cemeteries nationwide. (wreathsacrossamerica.org/az0316p)

We are also excited to announce another fundraising initiative designed to benefit our veterans without any financial cost to participants—just a small investment of your valuable time. Your privacy is important to us. The organization will not sell your name or email address. During registration, you will be asked to provide your name and email address solely for tracking the number of surveys you complete. Optionally, you may register your cell phone, which will be used to send reminders about how many vendors you have left to survey in your allotted 75. **On March 9th at 10am**, you can log on with this link: programs.hundredx.com/givewithoutspending or you can sign up on your phone by texting to 90412 and type in DFG and send. You will register with your name and email address. Once registered, you can choose from over 5,000 vendors—including well-known companies like Best Buy—to complete surveys.

Each survey consists of five questions, such as:

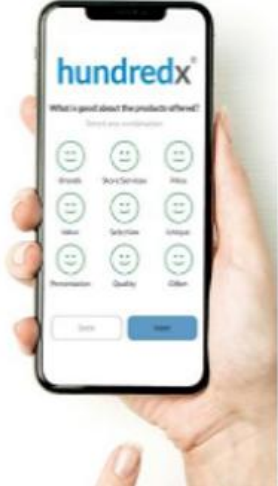

- Were you greeted at the door?
- Was the item in stock?
- Were you thanked for coming in?

You will respond to each question by selecting either a happy face or a sad face, providing an easy and intuitive way to share your feedback.

You may complete up to 25 vendor surveys per day, with a maximum of 75 surveys per registered name and email address. This is a national fundraiser, so friends and family members across the United States can participate as well.

For each vendor survey you complete, our organization earns \$1.60. Completing all 75 surveys will result in a \$120.00 contribution. The survey period runs for 30 days, starting on **March 9th and ending on April 7th**. Please do not log in before or it does not count! This fundraiser offers a fun and meaningful way to support veterans and make a difference. Grab your coffee, relax in your favorite chair, and enjoy helping your community! A Raffle will be drawn each week for those who answer 25 or more questions. And at the end of the month for those who have completed 50 or more Vendor surveys!!! I can be reached at veteranseventsaz@gmail.com or call me at 520-280-4715. Thank you so much for your support.
Nancy Fassbender, Director

Give without spending to support our missions through our Arizona Veterans Honor Tour!



How it works:

1. Text "DFG" to 90412 to sign up or use the QR code or <https://programs.hundredx.com/givewithoutspending>
2. Choose your cause & give your opinion (up to \$1.60 per quality opinion)
3. Create \$120 of impact (75 opinions max)

- Select **Arizona Veterans Honor Tour** (AVHT)
- Enter the name of person who invited you to participate. (not required)
- Complete **YOUR personal and demographic information** (please allow HundredX to share your contact information with AVHT and be confident that **your personal information will NOT be sold or shared with 3rd Parties**)
- Click **Start Giving Feedback** to begin completing surveys
- Select **Show All Categories** and **click on a category** to show all companies
- Choose a company and complete the 60-90 second survey about your customer experience using the emoji-based questions. (Easy Peasey!)
- Completing 3 to 5 companies a day adds up! You only can do 25 a day.
- We will have a couple of prizes for completing the most surveys by April 7th!
- Please share this information with friends and family members nationwide
- If you need any help, please email me at veteranseventsaz@gmail.com

Thank you so much for your continued support!
Find your favorite recliner, grab your coffee and have fun doing this Survey!

Arizona Veterans Honor Tour

Honoring Service and Community Impact

The Arizona Veterans Honor Tour, supported by a non-profit organization, is organizing a special event to honor Veterans who have served honorably and continue to make a meaningful difference in their communities. This initiative seeks to recognize not only their military service but also their ongoing commitment to supporting others.

Eligible Veterans are encouraged to apply for a five-day trip to Branson, Missouri, where they will be celebrated for their continued contributions. Branson is widely recognized for its deep appreciation of Veterans, featuring tributes at numerous venues throughout the city. The event will take place from November 15–19, 2026, coinciding with the start of Branson's Christmas shows and Veterans week, making it a particularly special time.

The primary goal of this program is to acknowledge Veterans not only for their past service but also for the ongoing support and camaraderie they provide within their communities. Many Veterans volunteer quietly, motivated by a genuine desire to help others and to remind fellow Veterans that they are not alone. These efforts contribute to building a supportive network and help reduce the suicide rate among Veterans.

Unlike traditional honors such as plaques, selected Veterans will receive a five-day trip to Branson, Missouri, where they will be honored and thanked in meaningful ways. In Branson, every theater includes a tribute segment, and the recognition extends throughout the town—from restaurants to the College of the Ozarks. Veterans will have opportunities to share their experiences and discuss the value of freedom with local students.

Honoring these Veterans involves more than symbolic gestures; it means providing opportunities for them to connect, reflect, and be celebrated by the community. Through this event, Veterans will enjoy memorable experiences and form deeper bonds with others who share their journey. The initiative aims to create lasting memories and highlight the importance of their ongoing service in civilian life.

The Arizona Veterans Honor Tour is seeking nominations for Veterans who demonstrate dedication and selflessness in their communities. If you know a Veteran who meets these qualifications, please consider encouraging them to apply. Applicants are required to submit two separate letters of recommendation outlining their community involvement and activities.

The chosen Veterans are welcome to bring a guest over the age of 21; however, the guest's expenses must be covered by the applicant. (\$1300 double occupancy). The trip package includes airfare from Mesa, Arizona, bus transportation, hotel accommodations, meals, and entertainment.

Arizona Veterans Honor Tour is raising funds for the trip through sponsorships, grants, fundraising efforts, and support from various military organizations. Each Veteran cost is approximately \$1,300 (double occupancy), which covers all major expenses. Contributions are requested by March 31st to meet deposit requirements. Only 15 Veterans will be selected for this special honor.

For Nominations, Donations or Sponsorships, please send to:

Arizona Veterans Honor Tour
4657 S Desert Dawn Dr
Gold Canyon, AZ 85118
veteranseventsaz@gmail.com

Submitted by Nancy Fassbender, Director