



April 2025

Volume 5 Issue 8

**DEPARTMENT COMMANDER**  
**Patriot Keith Gray**

Dear Patriots and Purple Heart Recipients,

As my term as Department Commander ends and with our Department Convention approaching soon on May 17th, I reflect on the incredible journey we've made over these past three years. It has been my distinct honor to serve as your Department Commander, and I am humbled by the confidence you placed in me through three elections to lead the Department of Arizona.



During our time together, we've achieved remarkable milestones. We expanded our scholarship program to support more Purple Heart recipients and their families throughout Arizona. We strengthened our advocacy efforts at the state level, resulting in enhanced benefits for our combat-wounded veterans. Our chapters across Arizona have conducted countless community service projects, raising awareness about the sacrifices of our Purple Heart recipients while supporting veterans in need.

Together, we've established new Purple Heart cities, counties, and communities throughout Arizona, expanding the Purple Heart Trail and ensuring that the legacy of our combat-wounded veterans remains visible statewide. Our partnerships with other veteran service organizations have amplified our voice and expanded our reach to help more veterans than ever before. This role has helped me redefine who I am and has given me a purpose worth fighting for—helping veterans—even during my own personal darkest hours, and for that I am grateful. I will continue to be involved with the Department, just in a different capacity, as I have been given the opportunity of becoming the National Adjutant and having a wider impact on making a positive difference for all veterans.

I could not have prepared for this national role without all your support and guidance. I want to thank everyone who kindly offered their wisdom throughout these years. I'd like to thank Patriot Ed "Mac" McGlenn for giving me my first nudge into the Department officer realm when I attended my first Department Convention in 2017. I would have never guessed that nudge would have sent me on a path to quickly moving through the ranks and all the positions I have been in since. When you first asked me to accept the nomination to Department Judge Advocate and I was unsure, your response, which I still hear today when asked to take on a new role—"it's ok, we'll figure it out"—still gives me the courage to undertake new challenges even if I'm not sure that I am qualified. Thank you for seeing the potential in me even when I couldn't see it in myself.

Lastly, I want to give a special thank you for Larry Leighton for being an outstanding Department Adjutant, oftentimes thanklessly, but you keep moving forward ensuring success no matter the obstacles. Without your guidance and support, I am sure I would not have been successful or confident that I could fulfill the role of National Adjutant. I look forward to the work we can accomplish in the future. With a new Department Commander comes new vibrant ideas, goals, and ways to show everyone why Arizona is the best Department. I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the Department Convention on May 17th.

Honor and respect,  
Keith Gray  
Department of Arizona Commander  
Military Order of the Purple Heart of the USA Inc.

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

**MEMORIAL DAY 2025:** It is an honor and privilege for the Purple Heart recipients of the



Department of Arizona to pay tribute to our nation's fallen heroes this coming Memorial Day, May 26<sup>th</sup>. Our members will attend and participate in ceremonies in various locations in the state. We, as a

Nation, owe the deepest debt of gratitude to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty. Many if not most of those we honor were awarded Purple Heart. The members of the Military Order of the Purple Heart are honored to represent the sacrifices of those who have gone before us. All who have been decorated with the Purple Heart gave some, but those we honor on Memorial Day gave all.

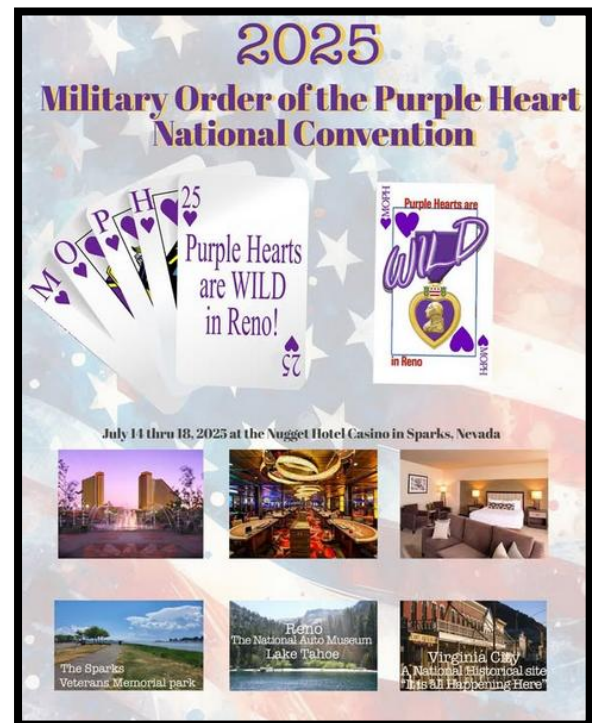
Enjoy the Memorial Day weekend. Stay safe and remember you are a testament to our fallen.



**National Convention:** The National Convention will be held in Sparks, NV July 14<sup>th</sup> through July 18<sup>th</sup>. **Nugget Hotel Casino** | 1100 Nugget Avenue, Sparks, NV 89431 is the host hotel. This is reasonably close by and a good opportunity for members to attend the National Convention.

**Registration:** The registration link for the National Convention is now live on the [National MOPH website](#)! To register, members **must** log in to their [www.purpleheart.org](#) accounts on the Purple Heart website. You ***\*\*must log in\*\**** before attempting to register.

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



**DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT**  
**Patriot Larry Leighton**

**DEPARTMENT CONVENTION: DATE:**

reminder that our 2025 Department Convention business meeting will be held at the **Holiay Inn Glendale, AZ (6151 N 99th Ave, Glendale, AZ 85305) on Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup> from 0900 until complete (probably around 1500.** A separate

email will be sent closer to the 17<sup>th</sup> with the Zoom video conference connection information. **Please join us in person or via Zoom.**

Holiday Glendale rooms are \$124.77 including tax and resort fee. Use this [link](#) to make your reservations at this MOPH discounted rate! The Department will per diem (\$0.30 per mile round trip from home to convention site plus one night's hotel bill) to any member or associate member traveling more than 50 miles one way to attend the convention.

There will be a no host dinner at the *Holiday Inn's Crooked Pint* on Friday evening, May 16<sup>th</sup>, for those interested in a little early comraderie. There is a Top Golf facility within walking distance and the Tanger Outlets, Westgate Entertainment District, Cracker Barrel and Bass Pro Shop are less than two miles away.

Convention business includes the standard fare including 1) discussions about expanding and improving our Department impact and operations, 2) Chapter Commander Reports, 3) the Patriot of the Year presentation, 4) budget approval, and of course the big one – 5) Officer Elections.

**LIFE MEMBERSHIP REBATES:** The second Life Member Rebate has been received by the Department and distributed to the Chapters. **Early "guesstimates" are there will not be a rebate in 2026** due the financial challenges facing the Nation and therefore the Order.

**BUDDY CHECKS:** Remember, you can always stay in touch with other members for no other reason than to say "hi" and "just checking to see if you are doing okay." **Call a Veteran today!**

**DEPARTMENT ELECTIONS:**

As a reminder, every **Patriot in the Department** can hold any elected or appointed office and every **Associate Member** can hold any appointed office except Department Adjutant. I encourage all of you reading this to consider volunteering for one of the Department

officer positions. **You can live ANYWHERE in Arizona and you do not have to live here full-time.** What you do need is a desire to help our Department help Veterans and Families. You can impact the way the Department moves forward.

**UNIFORMED SERVICES IN ACTION 2026**

**CALENDAR:** Don't forget to pre-order your copy of the *Uniformed Services In Action 2026 Calendar*.

**Get a discount if you do so before June 1<sup>st</sup>!**

For only \$50, you get a great looking calendar

AND 55 opportunities to win one and maybe more Scheels \$300 Gift Cards. Use [the link](#) or scan the QRC to order to get yours and extra for gifts for your friends and family.

Remember the business who would sponsor us can't if they are not asked! **Don't be afraid to ask – you never know they might say YES.**

**SAFETY:**

As we head into the "warmer" months of Jun – Aug, stay hydrated. If you think you are thirsty, you are already dehydrated. Don't become a statistic! Be SAFE! Be as HEALTHY as you can! Have FUN!

Larry Leighton  
Adjutant

**DEPARTMENT INFORMATION**



## CALENDAR:

- May 1 > Silver Star Banner Day
- May 2 > Kingman Stand-Down
- May 3 > Lake Pleasant Boat Cruise
- May 9 > AVHOF Patriotic Awards Luncheon
- May 9 > Military Spouse Appreciation Day
- May 13 > Children of Fallen Patriots Day
- May 15 > High Country Stand-Down
- May 17 > Armed Forces Day
- May 17 > Department Convention Glendale
- May 26 > Memorial Day.

## PURPLE HEART COMBAT WOUNDED

### VETERANS OF ARIZONA:



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](#)

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



**PURPLE HEART LICENSES PLATES:** Vehicle license tax exemption is available for PH veterans.



On registration of a vehicle, if the veteran submits satisfactory proof to ADOT that the person is a veteran and a bona fide Purple Heart medal recipient and was honorably discharged **the registration tax fee is waived.** Can only be used on one vehicle. Specialty plate and personalization fees still apply.

## DEPARTMENT OFFICERS 2024/2025:

**Cdr: Keith Gray**

[commandermophaz@gmail.com](mailto:commandermophaz@gmail.com)

**Sr. Vice Cdr: Jimi Sallmen**

[jimisallmen@gmail.com](mailto:jimisallmen@gmail.com)

**Jr. Vice Cdr: John Moore**

[mophchapter442@comcast.net](mailto:mophchapter442@comcast.net)

**Adjutant: Larry Leighton**

[adjutant.mophaz@gmail.com](mailto:adjutant.mophaz@gmail.com)

**Finance Officer: Jim Starkman**

[karen4357@att.net](mailto:karen4357@att.net)

**Sgt-at-Arms: Cody Phipps**

[cody.phipps@outlook.com](mailto:cody.phipps@outlook.com)

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

**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 Cap:** Like most 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. Order for \$29.95 at [Keystone Uniform Cap](#).

**FORT LOWELL CHAPTER 442 – TUCSON, AZ**

**Commander Cody Phipps**

Fellow Patriots, welcome to Chapter 442.



During April, the chapter hosted bingo for the patients at the Tucson VA Hospital. The next Bingo session will be held on May 31st. Come join us in hosting Bingo.

During the month we provided \$250 worth of food for homeless veterans housed at the Esperanza En Escalante project.

During April we presented 10 MOPH JROTC/ROTC Leadership Awards to cadets in 10 southern Arizona schools.

Three-chapter members were honored with Congressional Veteran Servant Leader Awards presented by Congressman Ciscomani.

Yours in Patriotism,  
Cody Phipps  
Commander

**Commander** Cody Phipps –

[cody.phipps@outlook.com](mailto:cody.phipps@outlook.com)

**Sr. Vice-Cdr** Dave Bertagnoli -

**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.

**CONGRESSIONAL VETERAN SERVANT LEADER AWARDS:** Congratulations to **Patriot Roger Gilbert, Patriot Jim Zimmerman, & Patriot John Grand**, who were honored as **Congressional Veteran Servant Leaders for Congressional District 6** on April 24th.

**Congressman Ciscomani** presented them with a congressional Veteran Servant Leader certificate, a challenge coin, and a Veteran Servant Leader Medal.

*(photos on next page)*

*Congressman Ciscomani & Patriot Gilbert*

### **MONTHLY PURPLE HEART LUNCHEON:**

Chapter 442 holds a monthly luncheon on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month. Our next luncheon is on May 21<sup>st</sup> at noon in Green Valley, AZ Location will be announced on FB and by email. All members are invited to attend and enjoy fellowship with other combat wounded veterans.

**CHAPTER PATRIOT OF THE YEAR:** Patriot **Cody Phipps** was honored at tonight's Ft. Lowell Chapter 442 Military Order of the Purple Heart meeting as the chapter's patriot of the year. Thank you, Cody, for the work you are doing for the veteran community. Cody was also nominated for the Department of Arizona Patriot of the Year. Adjutant John Moore on the left presents the award to Patriot Phipps on the right. Congratulations.



### **JROTC AWARD SAHUARITA HIGH**

**SCHOOL:** Patriot **Dave Bertagnoli** presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate





*Congressman Ciscomani & Patriot Grand*



### **JROTC AWARD BUENA HIGH SCHOOL:**

Patriot Dave Bertagnoli presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate along with a \$200 stipend to **Cadet Peyton Shepard** at the Buena High School, Sierra Vista, AZ awards ceremony on April 24th. Congratulations to Cadet Shepard. Also, Dave happens to be an alumnus of Buena High School.



along with a \$200 stipend to **Cadet Kalvin Benedix** at the Sahuarita High School, Sahuarita, AZ awards ceremony on April 16th. Congratulations to Cadet Benedix.



### **AIR FORCE ROTC AWARD UNIVERSITY**

**OF ARIZONA:** Patriot **Dave Bertagnoli** presented the MOPH ROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate to **Cadet William Jones** at the University of Arizona Air Force "dining out" on April 25th. **Congratulations to Cadet Jones and Bear Down!**



**BINGO AT THE VA HOSPITAL:** Fort Lowell Chapter 442 hosted bingo for the patients at the Tucson VA hospital on April 26th. **Patriot Dave Bertagnoli & Patriot Danny Lemon** conducted bingo. Dave's wife Cherie, Danny's wife Yolanda & volunteer Susan-Lea Skuhr assisted the patients. The grand prize was a beautiful quilt donated by the ladies from Canyon Del Oro Bible church. Thank you, Dave, Danny, Cherie, and Susan-Lea.

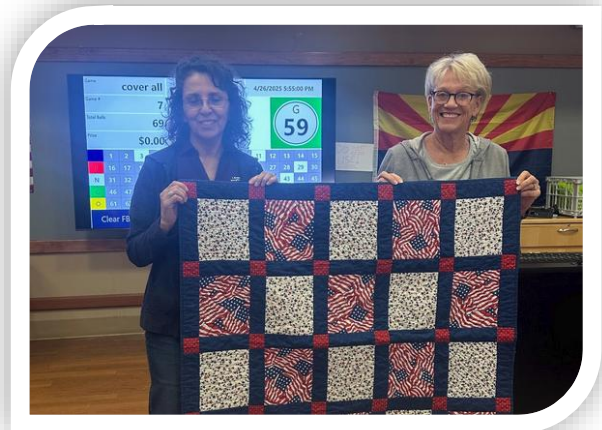
### JROTC AWARD CIENEGA HIGH SCHOOL:

Patriot **John Grand** presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate along with a \$200 stipend to **Cadet Joshua Baumann** at the Cienega High School, Vail, AZ awards ceremony on April 16th. Congratulations to Cadet Baumann.



### JROTC AWARD TOMBSTONE HIGH

**SCHOOL:** Patriot **Dave Bertagnoli** presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate along with a \$200 stipend to **Cadet Leila Julian** at the Tombstone High School, Tombstone, AZ awards ceremony on April 24th. Congratulations to Cadet Julian.



### JROTC AWARDS CEREMONY RIO RICO

**High School:** Patriot **John Grand**, Ft. Lowell Chapter 442 presented the MOPH JROTC Leadership Medal and Certificate along with a \$200 stipend to **Cadet Nicholas Mejia** at the Rio



Rico High School, Rio Rico, AZ, awards ceremony on April 25th. Congratulations to Cadet Mejia.



**THANK YOU, LETTER:** On behalf of our JROTC program, I would like to express our sincere gratitude for your generous support and for presenting awards to our cadets. Your recognition not only honors their hard work, leadership, and dedication but also inspires them to continue striving for excellence in their academic, personal, and professional development. Your continued support plays a vital role in building confidence and pride among our students. It also strengthens the bond between our community and those who are committed to fostering the next generation of leaders.

Thank you once again for your time, encouragement, and commitment to our program. We are truly grateful for your partnership.

Arturo Roque (Art)  
LTC (USA RET)  
Rio Rico HS, SR JROTC Instructor



**Learn about the chapter:** Our video presentation explains our mission, who we are and what we do. View the video at [this link](#) or click on the photo below.



### TRI-CITIES CHAPTER 472 – MESA, AZ Commander Jason Duren



Cdr: Jason Duren [jason@cidercorpsaz.com](mailto:jason@cidercorpsaz.com)  
Sr. Vice-Cdr: 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: Ignacio Rivera - 480-926-2278

**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



## MESA VET CENTER: Mesa Vet Center is



located 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.

**WEEKEND FUNDRAISER:** Weekend fundraising the weekend of April 26<sup>th</sup> with these patriots/wounded warriors from Chapter 472 is always a pleasure!

L-R Stephan Bobby; Ignacio Nacho Rivera; Ruben Del Rio; Ron Del Rio & Jim Pomush standing.



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

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

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



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

**Reminder: No Meeting in May! We decided to have a boat ride on Lake Pleasant instead. It will be followed by a non-host dinner at Dillons on Lake Pleasant.**



Our Jun meeting is on the **Army's Birthday and Flag Day** (Jun 14<sup>th</sup> for those who don't remember LOL). Our newest member, **Patriot Steven Alexander** will be our guest speaker talking about **"The Battle of Al Kasik Iraqi Military Base 7 August 2004"**. Don't miss this one! Join us in person or on zoom.

We'll be **"dark"** (no meeting) in **July and August**. We'll have some kind of social event for those interested in maintaining contact and also to recognize National Purple Heart Recognition Day (August 7<sup>th</sup>). Watch your email for more information.

Please read the **Department Adjutant's message**. He provides good information about the Department Convention on May 17<sup>th</sup>. Also check out the flier/information about the AMVETS ONE Tour Across America. The Department is hosting this event on May 12<sup>th</sup>. Our Chapter will have our recruiting booth set up again – sorry no bunnies to give away this time. Come out and support the "gang", mingle with the

Veterans from other organizations, and support Suicide Awareness and Prevention. The event is free and open to the public so bring a friend.

As we head into the “warmer” months of Jun – Aug, stay hydrated. If you think you are thirsty, you are already dehydrated. Don’t become a statistic!

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

While we did not collect membership fees or DD214’s, we did identify and talked with three very interested Veterans who have Purple Hearts. We’ll follow up and expect to sign at least two of the three. These types of events where multiple Veteran oriented organizations gather are good “hunting grounds” for potential new members.

Our second “twist” was a raffle drawing – for kids only! While the number of kids attending the car show was not as large as we had hoped, we did have fun, gave away some Easter candy, and five Easter Bunnies went to new homes!

I hope to see you at the Chapter meeting. You can always get the latest meeting information and video connection on our website at <http://691.mophaz.org/>.

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)

**VETERANS CAR SHOW:** The “gang” was at it again. This time it was at the Veterans Car Show in Glendale but this time with a couple of “twists”. Keith and John got to the location early and reserved our spot. Jim and I arrived in a short few minutes, our “recruiting station” was all set up.

While we did not collect membership fees or DD214’s, we did identify and talked with three very interested Veterans who have Purple Hearts. We’ll follow up and expect to sign at least two of the three. These types of events where multiple Veteran oriented organizations gather are good “hunting grounds” for potential new members.

**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.

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

**Facebook:** [Chapter 691 Facebook](#)

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

**VETERANS CAR SHOW (MORE PHOTOS):**

*Cdr Leighton with raffle winners.*





Keith Gray, Larry Leighton, Jim Starkman, and John Ballenger.



Our second “twist” was a raffle drawing – for kids only! While the number of kids attending the car show was not as large as we had hoped, we did have fun, gave away some Easter candy, and five Easter Bunnies went to new homes!

Department Cdr Gray



Department Cdr Gray



**ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF THE MILITARY ORDER OF THE PURPLE HEART  
SUPPORTS AMVETS ONE**

**Leaving No Veteran Behind**

May 12<sup>th</sup> from 9-12 AM

**American Furniture Warehouse**

5801 N 99<sup>th</sup> Ave, Glendale, AZ 85305

**AMVETS ONE**

**Tour Across America May 5 - May 12, 2025**

**AMVETS ONE** Leaving No Veteran Behind - Raising Awareness of Veterans' Suicide and Mental Health issues, our top gun and community issues, increase awareness of Resources, Educate and Increase through Technology, Promote and Motivate Youth Being against Depression and Advocate to Save Lives. Together we can save lives by protecting those who protect us. #NoLongNaps #Honor

AMVETS ONE is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. For more information, visit [www.AMVETSONE.com](http://www.AMVETSONE.com)

- This event is free and open to the public. Registration is not necessary to attend the event.
- Shop & Explore: Browse a wide variety of vendors offering unique goods and services.
- Delicious Food & Drinks: Savor mouthwatering treats from local food trucks.
- Live Entertainment: Groove to great tunes all day with music from our DJ.

The Arizona Department of the Military Order of the Purple Heart is hosting this event. We invite all members and the public to participate. Learn more and donate:

<http://mophaz.org/donate/>



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

Fellow Patriots,



Welcome to Chapter 793. Our chapter participates in patriotic and welfare activities throughout Northern Arizona. Chapter 793 supports Northern Arizona Stand Downs in several Northern Arizona communities. Our chapter is honored to be able to participate in patriotic events and support veterans' needs in Northern Arizona. The High-Country Stand-Down was held on April 15<sup>th</sup> in Flagstaff. Several Northern Arizona communities became Purple Heart entities during the past month. Thank you, Page Arizona, Tuba City Arizona, and Nazlini Arizona (Navajo Nation).

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

Commander  
Rodger Ely

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

**Facebook:** [Chapter 793 Facebook](#)

**Next Meeting – February 5th**

**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.

**PAGE ARIZONA BECOMES A PURPLE HEART CITY:** During April Page, Arizona was welcomed by **Department Commander Keith Gray** as a Purple Heart Community. **Mayor Steven Kidman & Vice Mayor Mike Farrow** accept plaque honoring the town's commitment as a Purple Heart Community from Cdr Gray.



**NALININ ARIZONA (NAVAJO NATION) IS A PURPLE HEART COMMUNITY:** On April 13<sup>th</sup>, Cdr Ely, Patriot Elmer Sangster, & Patriot James Jackson welcome **Nazlini, AZ as a Purple Heart Community.**



*Navajo Nation Color Guard*





**TUBA CITY ARIZONA BECOMES A PURPLE HEART TOWN:** On April 26<sup>th</sup> Supervisor **Lena Fowler** attended the special ceremony in Tuba City, where the community was officially recognized as a Purple Heart Community. Patriot **Billy Weldon** and several chapter members.



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



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.

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

**When:** Every 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month,  
1000am – 300pm  
Beginning: March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024



**PAGE VETERANS PARADE & STANDDOWN:** Chapter 793 participated in the Page, AZ Veterans Parade on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Patriot **Billy Weldon** pictured below at the parade.



### **Bob Stump Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center**

500 Highway 89 North  
Prescott, AZ 86313-5001  
[Get directions on Google Maps](#)

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

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

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

### **Flagstaff VA Clinic**

1300 West University Avenue, Suite 200  
Flagstaff, AZ 86001-7228  
[Get directions on Google Maps](#)

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

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

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

**CHAPTER 2560 – APACHE JUNCTION, AZ**  
**Commander Mike 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 > [kingjs6@live.com](mailto:kingjs6@live.com)

**Adjutant:** Sandra King [kingjs6@live.com](mailto:kingjs6@live.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

**Patriot Chuck Byers** spoke at the ceremony on April 26th in Chandler, AZ remembering the fall of Saigon, honoring Vietnam Veterans and recognizing the Vietnam Community in Chandler. Speakers and performances included immigrants who left Vietnam after the fall of Saigon.



*Patriot Byers*



**WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA:** Do you know an outstanding Wreaths Across America volunteer? Help us celebrate the incredible people who take that extra step to make this mission possible—whether they lead by example, give selflessly, or inspire others. Now is the time to recognize their impact! **Nominations for Wreaths Across America's Annual Awards are open now through May 18!** These awards honor volunteers who go above and beyond in support of the mission to Remember, Honor, and Teach. Recipients will be notified in early June.

**Learn about the different awards and submit your nomination for a deserving volunteer:**  
<https://www.wreathsassamerica.org/New.../AnnualAwards/...>

**Learn about Wreaths Across America's Mission to Remember, Honor and Teach**  
[wreathsassamerica.org](http://wreathsassamerica.org)

**Learn about Wreaths Across America's Mission to Remember, Honor and Teach**

**Chapter 2560 supports Wreaths Across America annually:** We are reaching out to any sponsors who would like to **purchase a wreath for \$17** to be placed on an interred Veteran's grave.

For every wreath sold, WAA will give \$5 back to the local veteran community!

To volunteer for December or to order wreaths, please contact Nancy Fassbender on 520-280-4715.

**POTPPOURRI**

**THE PURPLE HEART MAGAZINE:** The current issue of the Purple Heart Magazine is available [online](#) or click on the image. Enjoy!

**MYVA HOTLINE:** The MYVA is at **1-800-MyVA411 (698-2411)** and is available 24 hours a





Submit articles to [Publications@PurpleHeart.org](mailto:Publications@PurpleHeart.org)

### PURPLE HEART SCHOLARSHIPS:

Applications for the scholarship program are due every July. Information is available on the Purple Heart Scholarship Program at this [link](#).



### BILLS IN CONGRESS:

**H.R. 2081 > The "Donut Dollies Congressional Gold Medal Act."** The bill, H.R. 2081, is titled, *To award a Congressional Gold Medal to members of the Red Cross Supplemental Recreational Activities Overseas (SRAO) program, also known as the 'Donut Dollies,' who served honorably during the Vietnam conflict.*

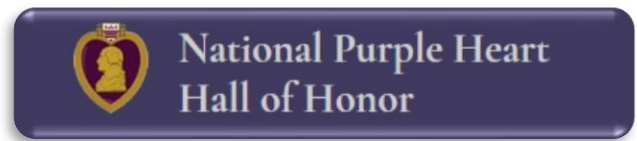
"These Red Cross volunteers were selfless, brave, and resilient. Every Vietnam veteran I know



respects and admires them for the guts they showed as they braved incoming mortars, snipers, and ground-to-air fire to visit the firebases," said McManus. "They were a lifeline. They brought a touch of home to the frontlines and offered compassion and comfort when service members needed it most." 1,120 women volunteered to serve with the Red Cross during the Vietnam War, and 627 of those women worked as Donut Dollies. They provided critical morale boosts to soldiers. Dollies traveled by jeep, truck, and helicopter to forward operating positions, logging over 2,000,000 miles visiting combat troops at remote fire bases. Their job was to bring smiles, songs, games, and a touch of home to the

day, 365 days a year to serve veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

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



### VA RESOURCE NAVIGATOR:

<https://www.prevention.va.gov/PCL/PCL-VA-Navigator.asp>

#### VA Resource Navigator

Scan QR codes, visit popular links to trusted VA websites, or call the MyVA411 hotline at (800) 698-2411 to learn more about VA resources.

VA.gov is the gateway to access and manage your VA benefits and health care.  
[www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

The VA Welcome Kit provides an overview of benefits and services.  
[www.va.gov/welcome-kit/](http://www.va.gov/welcome-kit/)

With the official VA: Health & Benefits app, you can manage your VA health care, benefits, and payments from your mobile phone or tablet.  
[www.mobile.va.gov/app/va-health-and-benefits](http://www.mobile.va.gov/app/va-health-and-benefits)

My HealtheVet is a free online tool to manage your health care. Refill and track prescriptions, access your medical records, and communicate with your health care team.  
[www.myhealth.va.gov](http://www.myhealth.va.gov)

#### How to scan a QR code with your smartphone camera

- 1 Open your smartphone's camera app or QR code scanning app.
- 2 Hold your device so that the single QR code appears on your smartphone's screen.
- 3 Once the QR code is centered on your smartphone's screen, your device will recognize the QR code and show a notification.
- 4 Tap the notification to open the link associated with the QR code.
- 5 Still having trouble? See additional tips on page five.

### UPCOMING EVENTS/ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST:

**May 17<sup>th</sup>:** **Department Convention at Holiday Inn – Glendale** ([6151 N 99th Avenue Glendale, AZ 85305](#)). [Rooms](#) are \$124.77 inclusive; No-host meal on Friday evening; Free breakfast and lunch on Saturday; Per diem if traveling more than 50 miles from home address. [Zoom Link](#); Meeting ID: 833 6205 9620; Passcode: 150527; Dial in: 253 205 0468. See attached flier.

**Jun 1<sup>st</sup>:** **Early bird discount ENDS for the Department Fundraiser.** Order your **2026 calendar** for yourself and a gift for someone (delivery first week of Nov); **\$50 gets 55 chances to win** one or more \$300 gift cards; **Only 1000 are available.** Spread the word and look for sponsors! Flier attached. [Order now](#)



or scan the QR Code.

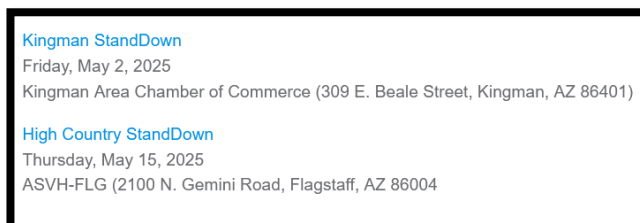
men who were in the bush and the wounded in evacuation hospitals. This all-volunteer cohort of women embraced the perilous and demanding work. As one Donut Dolly put it, “Our job was to smile and be bubbly for an entire year— no matter what the situation.”

The bill, which appeared in earlier versions in both the 117th and 118th Congresses, was re-introduced on March 11, 2025. “It is well past time for this law to be passed and these women to finally be recognized for their service.”

### HONOR FLIGHT:



### ARIZONA STANDDOWN ALLIANCE:



**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. **Get news information & photos to us by the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month.**



John R. Moore  
Jr. Vice-Commander

### 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](https://www.azregents.edu/).



### AVHOF 18<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL AWARDS

**LUNCHEON:** See flyer below for details.





**COMMISSARY PRIVILEGES PH RECIPIENTS:** See the flyer below on how to use your local base commissary.



## **SERVICE CONNECTED** Veteran's Health ID Cards are your passport to Commissary Savings!

The Department of Defense expanded commissary shopping privileges in the U.S. effective 1 January 2020 as part of the Purple Heart and Disabled Veterans Equal Access Act of 2018, included in the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019. You could be eligible!

*Follow these easy steps to verify Commissary eligibility before you shop:*

1. Examine your Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC), it must show either:

**Service connected**

**Medal of Honor**

**Purple Heart recipient status**

**Former prisoner of war (POW)**

**NOTE: Ensure that the expiration date is current**



Eligible Veterans who do not have a VHIC, as well as eligible caregivers, will still need to provide a copy of their VA-issued caregiver patronage letter, VA-issued service-connected disability letter, or VA Health Eligibility Center Form H623A to show eligibility at the commissary.

2. **Update if Necessary:** If any condition is not met, contact VA Healthcare at 877-222-8387 to request an updated card.

3. **Check Local Requirements:** Verify entry requirements with your local installation.

Eligible disabled veterans and their caregivers should go to their installation visitor center to enroll for recurring access. There, they must perform the following actions to gain installation access:

- **Present an acceptable credential (VHIC, REAL ID or VA-issued credentials as referenced above) to establish identity.**
- **Submit to an on-the-spot criminal record and terrorism check.**
- **Go through an electronic verification process to confirm on-installation benefits eligibility. If the reason for the base visit is for health care, and the DOD installation doesn't have a commissary, exchange, or authorized MWR service, then the visitor must provide proof of their appointment.**

Once visitors enroll their VHIC or REAL ID for recurring access, they will be able to go directly to the installation gate and present the same credentials to gain access for future visits. Enrollment is typically valid for one to three years, or one year after the last installation visit. If a patron's VHIC or REAL ID expires, they must reenroll with their new cards.

For more information on policies and procedures for obtaining a VA Health Identification Card (VHIC), accessing DOD installations with your VHIC, and how you could save an average of 25% every time you shop visit <https://corp.commissaries.com/extended-eligibility> or scan the QR code with your mobile device.



**Thank you for your service, and happy shopping!**

**ACCESS TO U.S. BASES/INSTALLATIONS FOR PH RECIPIENTS:** Use your VA-issued VHIC photo ID or a REAL ID-Act compliant driver's license photo ID.

Defense Department Transition Plan for Patronage Expansion Act  
Current as of September 2024



## Access to U.S. DOD Installations for Eligible Veterans and Caregivers

Certain Veterans and designated caregivers registered with the Department of Veterans Affairs are eligible to access DOD installations in the 50 states, District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico to obtain authorized benefits. All individuals seeking unescorted access to a DOD installation must establish their identity (through the presentation of an acceptable form of photo ID), their fitness (through an on-the-spot criminal records and terrorism check) and their purpose.

### What is an Acceptable Purpose for Installation Access?

At installations with the relevant types of facilities, you can be granted access to obtain authorized benefits, such as:

- Medical appointments at VA or DOD medical facilities located on DOD installations
- Shopping at commissaries and exchanges
- Use of certain MWR facilities such as golf courses, bowling centers, recreational lodging, RV campgrounds and movie theaters

### Who is Eligible for Benefits-Related Installation Access?

- Veterans enrolled in VA health care with a VA or DOD medical appointment located on the DOD installation
- Veterans with a service-connected disability
- Veterans awarded a Purple Heart
- Title 38 Prisoner of War determination
- Approved and designated primary family caregivers of an eligible veteran under VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (<https://www.caregiver.va.gov/>)

### What Documentation Do I Need for Installation Access?

- An acceptable photo ID (VA-issued Veteran Health Identification Card or a REAL ID Act-compliant driver's license or non-driver's identification card), and
  - For Medical Appointments: An email or appointment reminder showing your appointment that day.
  - For Shopping & MWR Activities: No additional documentation required with the implementation of the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System data feed to the installation visitor centers. Also, see below: "Once on Base, What Documentation Is Needed to Shop at the Commissary, Exchange and authorized MWR Activities?"

### How do I Enroll for Installation Access?

On your first visit to each DOD installation, you must stop at the installation visitor center to enroll for access.

**STEP 1:** Establish your identity by presenting your credential (VHIC or REAL ID).

*If your VHIC doesn't have a barcode or cannot be scanned, you will need to get a new card from your local VA medical center before your card can be registered.*

**STEP 2:** Establish your fitness by undergoing an on-the-spot criminal record and terrorism check.

*Those with felony convictions, arrest warrants or other derogatory information related to criminal history or terrorism will not be granted access to the installation.*

**STEP 3:** Establish your purpose.

*If you are accessing the installation for health care, provide your proof of appointment. If you are accessing for shopping, DOD will electronically verify your purpose.*



**HOW TO GET ON BASE:** Go to the installation's main gate's visitor center. Present your acceptable form of ID at the visitor center. See below for more detailed instructions.

Defense Department Transition Plan for Patronage Expansion Act  
Current as of September 2024



Once you complete these steps, the Visitor Center will enroll your credential for access for up to one year. For specifics on length of enrollment, please visit the link under "For More Information."

**Once I've Enrolled, How Do I Get on Base to Get Health Care or Use My Shopping or MWR Benefits?**

**STEP 1:** Go directly to the installation gate and present the same VHIC or REAL ID you enrolled at the visitor center.

**STEP 2:** Present your VHIC or REAL ID and eligibility letter at the medical facility or at point of sale.

**Can I escort guests onto the installation with me?**

No, but your acceptable purpose will convey to guests traveling with you. Those guests must have an acceptable form of photo ID (such as a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or non-driver's identification card) and establish their own fitness.

**If you are a guest accompanying an eligible veteran or caregiver:**

- Accompanying guests must stop at the visitor center for access and are not authorized to use any services.
- Guests must follow the same three steps as veterans and caregivers (identity, fitness and purpose) but will generally not be allowed to enroll – access will generally be granted for the current visit only.

**Once on Base, What Documentation Is Needed to Shop at the Commissary, Exchange and authorized MWR Activities?**

- A VA-issued VHIC showing eligibility status (i.e., Purple Heart, former POW or service-connected disability). Point-of-sale transactions will not be granted if the eligibility status is not shown on the card.
- For Veterans who do not have a VHIC, you will need a VA-issued service-connected disability letter or VA Health Eligibility Center Form H623A (available at [www.va.gov/my-va](https://www.va.gov/my-va)) and your REAL ID Act-compliant driver's license or non-driver's identification card.
- For approved and designated primary family caregivers, you will need a VA-issued caregiver patronage letter and your REAL ID Act-compliant driver's license or non-driver's identification card.

**How to Obtain a VHIC:**



Veterans need to be enrolled in VA health care. If you're not already enrolled, you can apply online, in person or by calling the VA at 877-222-8387. After registration, you can apply for a VHIC at a VA medical center or online at <https://www.va.gov/health-care/get-health-id-card/>. NOTE: The VHIC is different from a Veteran ID Card.

**For More Information:**

For more information and frequently asked questions on the DOD policy allowing certain veterans and caregivers access to DOD installations visit <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/benefits/mwr-programs/> and <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/benefits/commissaries-and-exchanges/>.