



May 2023

Volume 3 Issue 5



Fellow Patriots,

It was nice seeing all that could attend our department convention and thank you for your continued contributions to the Department of Arizona MOPH. I am

honored to be reelected as the Department Commander. As chapters start to go dark for the summer, please set aside some time to brainstorm on the following questions. What would I like to see the Department become? What would I like to get out of being a member of the Order? What would it take for me to become more involved? What program could the Department of Arizona champion that would help boost involvement and recruitment? Lastly, what changes does Department leadership need to affect to better the order in Arizona or overall? All suggestions, remarks, comments concerns can be sent to Chapter or Department leadership and will be evaluated at the monthly Commander's calls. While I mostly hear recruitment should be a top priority, I have a different view. Just like in the movie Field of Dreams "if you build it, he will come" so let's put our heads together and come up with reasons to get and stay involved. I firmly believe that once we have a meaningful purpose, our odds of recruiting the younger era Purple Heart recipients will be more attainable. Finally, please remember that the department leadership is here to aid and support you so reach out if you need anything. Regardless, if your chapter goes dark or if you leave the area please remember to take and post photos to your chapter and the Department's social media pages, this will help get exposure for the Department. Stay safe! Get involved, stay involved!

Yours in Patriotism,
Keith Gray
Commander

Department Officers 2023/2024

Cdr: Keith Gray commandermophaz@gmail.com
Sr. Vice Cdr: Rodger Ely juggy64@aol.com
Jr. Vice Cdr: John Moore
mophchapter442@comcast.net
Adjutant: Larry Leighton
adjutant.mophaz@gmail.com
Finance Officer: Ron Capek ronluccap@gmail.com
Sgt-at-Arms: Jimi Sallmen jimisallmen@gmail.com
Inspector: **vacant position**
Judge Advocate: **vacant position**
Chaplain: John L. Bhelm jblehmsr@gmail.com
Legislative Liaison: Jim Muhr jrmuhr@yahoo.com

Update Your Contact Information

Keep your snail mail address, phone & email address up to date. You can do this yourself at the MOPH National website at <https://national-moph.uc.r.appspot.com/#>. You just need your membership number to log-in. You can also email us at adjutant.mophaz@gmail.com and we can update your snail mail, phone & email address for you.

Find Us Online

Website: <http://mophaz.org/>
Facebook: [Department Facebook Page](#)
National MOPH Website: <https://national-moph.uc.r.appspot.com/#>

Calendar

- **May 29** – Memorial Day
- **May 31** – Chapter Finance Reports due.
- **June 14** – Army Birthday.
- **June 14** – Flag Day.
- **June 22** – Department Commander's Call
- **June 29** – Twin Arrows Stand-Down

National Convention



As you all know the National Convention is fast approaching, please provide anything you would like brought up with either to National Leadership, or the Supreme Body to your Chapter leadership or at a Commander's call, the focus of the July's Commanders Call will be on ensuring Arizona's representatives at the convention are provided the information from the members to take with them. The August Commander's call will focus on what was learned at the National Convention.

This will be the 90th Annual Military Order of the Purple Heart National Convention that will be held in Baton Rouge, LA! This year's theme is **Healing the Heart**. The National Convention will be held from August 14 to August 18 at the Crowne Plaza located at 4728 Constitution Ave, Baton Rouge, LA. To get the group rate for the hotel, please go to www.crownebaton.com. Convention tickets can be purchased for \$160 by logging into your MOPH account and then selecting the [National Convention Registration](#) page. Last day for group rate is July 16.

★ 14 th JUNE FLAG DAY

Many of our members display the National Flag 24/7. Display the flag on Flag Day to show our membership's pride in the flag of our country. Many sacrificed their lives for its honor. Every battle fought by the United States was led by this flag and it is the strength of our nation.

Monthly Commander's Call

The Cdr's Call is every month on the Fourth Thursday. In the absence of the chapter commander someone from the chapter command group must attend. Open to all members. **Time: 06:30 PM Arizona Time.**

June 22, 2023 06:30 PM
Zoom Meeting ID: 842 2842 9701; Passcode: 879117 Dial in: 669 900 6833



The Military Order of the Purple Heart Department of Arizona and its chapters honor the brave men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedom. The Department and its Chapters participated in Memorial Day ceremonies across the state on May 29th. The Nation can never repay these heroes for the sacrifice they made for the rest of us. The very least we can do is honor them and give them the recognition they deserve.

John R. Moore
Jr. Vice Commander

Chapter 442 Jr. Vice-commander **John Grand** & Department Jr. Vice-commander **John Moore** placed a wreath honoring the fallen during the Memorial Day Ceremony at South Lawn Cemetery, Tucson.



Department Chapter of the Year

On May 18th the Department of Arizona Chapter of the Year recognition plaque was presented to Chapter 793 during the annual High-Country Stand-Down. Department Commander **Keith Gray** made the presentation to Chapter Commander **Rodger Ely** (past department commander) and Adjutant **Billy Weldon** (past Region VI Commander).



Department Patriot of the Year

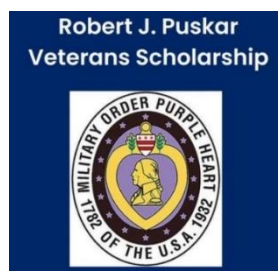
Patriot **John Grand** received his Arizona Patriot of the Year plaque on May 15th from Department Jr. Vice-commander **John R. Moore**.



The Purple Heart Magazine

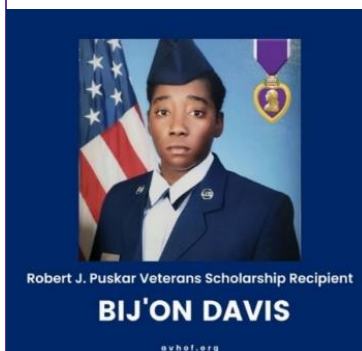
The **May/June issue of the National MOPH's Purple Heart Magazine** is available online at this [link](#).

Robert J. Puskar Veterans Scholarship



On behalf of the Military Order of the Purple Heart Department of Arizona, The Robert J. Puskar Veterans Scholarship is funded and awarded annually to a Veteran selected by the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame Society. This scholarship is named in honor of U.S. Marine Corps Captain **Robert J. Puskar** who fought gallantly during the siege of Khe Sanh and at Dong Ha, Vietnam from 1967 to 1968. Patriot Puskar served as the Department of Arizona Commander, Region VI commander & the National Commander. Our scholarship program is funded by \$2,500 donations from Bill and Karen Isaacson and Dottie Puskar.

The 1st annual Robert J. Puskar Veterans



Scholarship recipient is **Bij'on Davis**. Bij'on currently serves with the 944th Fighter Wing, an Air Force Reserve Unit located at Luke Air Force Base. She has served for more than four years as a Services Journeyman

and was deployed to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Spartan Shield and Operation Inherent Resolve. She attends Arizona State University's New College of Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences majoring in Forensic Psychology and expects to graduate in May 2025. Bij'on is described by her professor as exemplifying leadership, camaraderie, tenacity, and discipline. Her career goal is to join a police agency and eventually serve as a detective to ensure justice and well-being for victims and offenders alike. The scholarship was presented at

Department Purple Heart Brick Program



The Department Purple Heart Memorial Brick laying took place on Armed Forces Day, May 20, 2023.

Patriots **Stephan Bobby** (472) and **Jim Starkman** (691) installed newly ordered bricks at the Purple Heart Memorial at Wesley Bolin Plaza.



Order a 4" x 8" Purple Heart Brick to be placed at Wesley Bolin Plaza at the State Capitol 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 BRICK ORDER FORM](#)

the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame Patriotic Luncheon on Apr 28th. Congratulations Bij'on!



Left to right: Past Department Commander Larry Leighton (AVHOFS Class of 2019), Associate Member Kay Leighton, Associate Member Kristi Gray, Department Commander Keith Gray, Bij'on Davis, (unknown), Mrs. Robert Puskar (Dottie), Past Department Commander Ron Capek (AVHOFS Class of 2012), Associate Member Cidy Capek, Department Chaplain John Blehm (behind Cindy), Associate Member Karen Blehm, Chuck Byers (AVHOFS Class of 2018), Past Region VI Commander and Past Department Commander Billy Weldon (AVHOFS Class of 2015).

Last Out - Elegy of a Green Beret

Gold Star Families, military families, veterans and first responders can receive **free tickets** to the play, "Last Out - Elegy of a Green Beret." Play is sponsored by the **Gary Sinise Foundation**, is coming to Phoenix. Call the Herberger Theater Center at 602-254-7399, and state that you are either military family members, a veteran or a first responder and would like their tickets to be set aside. The theater will have their tickets for them at will call the day of the performance. Herberger Theater at 222 E Monroe Street, Phoenix, AZ
When:

- Friday, **June 9** at 7:00 PM
- Saturday, **June 10** at 1:00 PM
- Saturday, **June 10** at 7:00 PM

"Last Out" is a story about modern war. This powerful play informs civilians on the cost of war,

Chapter 2560 – Apache Junction, AZ



Cdr: Michael Overmeyer
moverme48@gmail.com
Sr. Vice Cdr: Chuck Byers
seagb@cox.net
Jr. Vice Cd: James King
kingjs6@live.com

Adjutant: Michael Overmeyer
moverme48@gmail.com

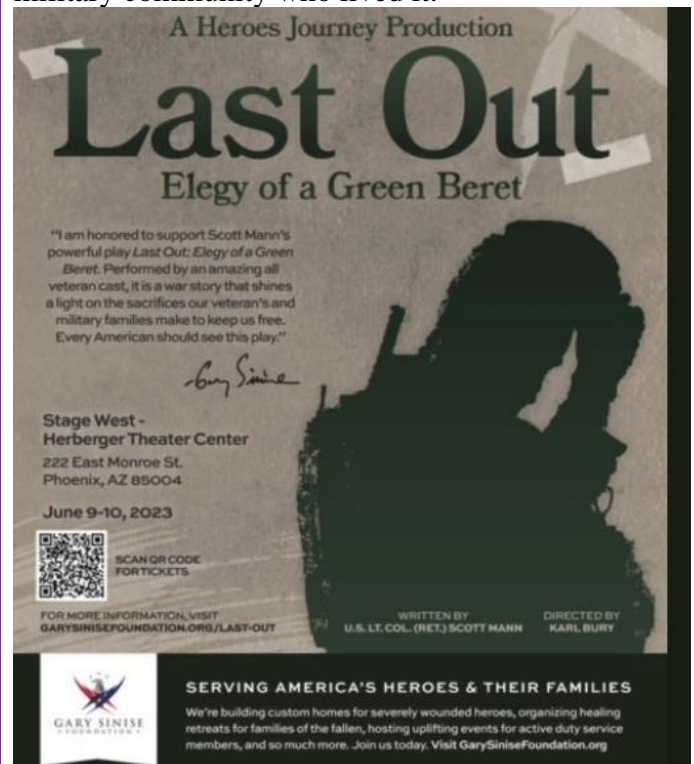
Meeting date: 2nd Saturday of the month.

Meeting time: 10:00 AM

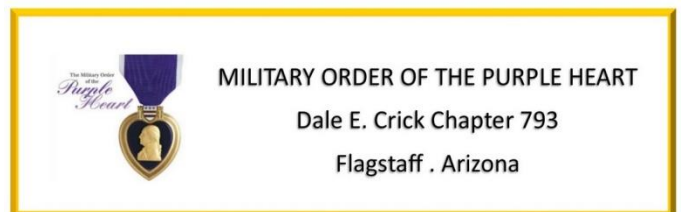
Meeting location: Mesa Buckhorn Elk Lodge
#2656 at 6718 E Avalon St, Mesa, AZ 85205

Patriot **Chuck Byers** nominated **Lee Huff** for the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame Society 2023 Copper Sword Award. This award is given to a non-veteran whose personal actions contributed significantly to the benefit and well-being of our military and veteran communities. Arizona is the Copper State, and an upright unsheathed sword is the symbol of exceptional bravery and leadership. The honoree was presented with a sword whose blade is comprised of copper in recognition of leadership and service to Arizona. This is the Society's highest award presented annually. The 2023 Copper Sword recipient is Lee Huff. Lee has a reputation across the State of Arizona for advocating for veterans through his hard work as a Veteran Constituent Services Representative for Congressman Andy Biggs & former representative Matt Salmon. For 13 years he has assisted hundreds of service members, veterans and their families obtain the healthcare, disability, and other benefits they so rightfully earned. Lee also developed the "Drop Zone," a one-stop shop for veterans' services and benefits which has gained recognition as being the best Veteran Resource Fair in Arizona. Working with the Mesa Chamber of Commerce, Lee helped in the creation of the Mesa Veteran Resource Center and helped establish a Veteran Car Giveaway program which has provided vehicles to qualified veterans for the last eight years.

while also validating the service and sacrifice of the military community who lived it.



Dale E. Crick Chapter 793 – Flagstaff, AZ



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
Facebook: [Chapter 793 Facebook](#)
Next Meeting – May 24
Meeting time: 12:30PM
Meeting location: VFW Post 1709
409 W Santa Fe Ave, Flagstaff, AZ 86001
Meeting date: Bi-monthly on 4th Wednesday.

MOPH 793 Proudly Supports Initiatives of the Northern Arizona Veterans Stand downs (NAZVSD) which include annual events in Flagstaff, Williams, the Verde Valley and a new



Fort Lowell Chapter 442 – Tucson, AZ



Fellow Patriots:

This month with the federal COVID mandate expired the chapter will again be hosting bingo for the patients at the Tucson VA Hospital. We finished the few remaining presentations of the JROTC/ROTC Leadership Award for the 13 schools we support. In addition to the MOPH Leadership Medal & Certificate the chapter provides the cadet with a \$200.00 leadership stipend.

We provided funding to our local Golden Corral's Camp Corral Raffle which will help send three in need military/veteran children to summer camp.

We will participate in Memorial Day activities at South Lawn Cemetery and the Arizona State Veterans' Memorial Cemetery Marana.

Yours in Patriotism,
Mike Dyer
Commander

Commander Mike Dyer - mrdyer@comcast.net
Sr. Vice-Cdr Richard Perkins
rperkins823@gmail.com
Jr. Vice-Cdr John Grand - jgrand5@cox.net

stand down at Twin Arrows Navajo Resort Dine' Conference Center in Twin Arrows, AZ on Thursday, June 29th, 2023. These endeavors provide veterans with essential information about services available to them within the Community... Stand Down Attributes include VA Enrollment & Services, Mental Health, Dental Hygiene, Veterans Court, Legal Services, Haircuts, Health Insurance, Medicare, Employment Opportunities & Job Fair, Surplus Distribution, Hot Food and much more...

You Are Always Welcome To Join Us !

Chapter 793 is proud to be the Arizona Military Order of the Purple Heart **Chapter of the Year**. On May 18th the Department of Arizona Chapter of the Year recognition plaque was presented to Chapter 793 during the annual High-Country Stand-Down. Department Commander **Keith Gray** made the presentation to Chapter Commander **Rodger Ely** (past department commander) and Adjutant **Billy Weldon** (past Region VI Commander).



Patriot **Billy Weldon** attended the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame Patriotic Awards Luncheon on April 28th.



Adjutant John Moore -
mophchapter442@comcast.net

Website: <https://mophchapter442.webs.com/>

Facebook: [Chapter 442 Facebook](#)

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 of I10 & Cortaro Farms Rd. Go east on Cortaro Farms Rd to N. Sandy Desert Trail.

With the Federal COVID mandate expired the chapter will again be hosting bingo for the patients at the Tucson VA Hospital. The first bingo game will be held on June 24th at 1400 hrs. in Bldg. 60, VA Hospital, 3601 S. 6th Ave, Tucson, AZ 85723. Patriot **Dave Bertagnoli** has been our OIC for this for several years. He can always use help to pass out prizes or help with patients.

Congratulations to Patriot **Danny Lemon** our new chapter chaplain.

Patriot **John Moore** & Patriot **John Grand** from Chapter 442 MOPH placed a wreath during the Memorial Day Ceremony at South Lawn cemetery this AM. Very good turnout from the community.



Chapter 442 Adjutant, **John R. Moore** presents Golden Corral manager **Tim Peeler** with a \$500 donation to support the Thornydale Golden Corral's raffle in support of sending children of veterans in need to Camp Corral.



Chapter 472 –Mesa, AZ



Cdr: James Pomush
landjpomush@gmail.com
Sr. Vice-Cdr: Ramiero Del Rio (602) 818-0796
Jr. Vice-Cdr: Matthew Beatty
matthewcbeatty@yahoo.com
Adjutant: Jason Duren
jason@cidercorpsaz.com

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

Chapter 472 Commander, **Jim Pomush**, presents the MOPH JROTC Leadership Award & Medal to Cadet **Dalton Nicodemus** at Westwood HS, Mesa AZ on May 10th.



Commander **Jim Pomush** presents JROTC Leadership Award to Cadet **Mia Guerrero** at Chandler High School Chandler, AZ.



Patriot **John Grand** presented JROTC Cadet 1SG **Dustin Diaz-Estrada** the MOPH Leadership Medal and Certificate at Rio Rico High School in Rio Rico, AZ. John also presented the cadet with a \$200 leadership stipend from the chapter.



Patriot **Roger Gilbert**, Patriot **John Moore**, Patriot **Mike Dyer**, Patriot **John Grand**, & Patriot **Roy Woolard** from Chapter 442 along with other veterans'

organizations and the community placed flags on the 4,130+ graves at the Arizona Veterans' Memorial Cemetery Marana for Memorial Day. Great turnout from the community. Thank you to all who helped place the flags.



Michael E. Mahoney Chapter 691 – Surprise, AZ



Chapter 691 Patriots,

May is Military Appreciation Month. It is a special month for both those in and out of the military. Not only do we pause on [Memorial Day](#) (5/29) to remember the sacrifice and service of those who gave all, but the month also holds several other military anniversaries and events, including [Military Spouse Appreciation Day](#) (5/8) and [Armed Forces day](#) (5/20).

Patriots and communities inside and outside Arizona need to hear our stories and they don't have to be "war stories". Let me know what you have been doing to support Veterans and families in and around where you live and work. Send me a picture of yourself and those you are helping along with a short narrative. We'll get the stories published on our social media and in the Newsletter.

Remember to keep your personal profile on the National website up to date. If you move, change your email or phone number, let us know. You can easily update the roster yourself with just a few clicks on the website. If you need any help getting it done, let me know and I will assist.



Bills in Congress

SB.1266, the Love Lives on Act, would eliminate the remarriage age for survivors in receipt of Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC). For decades, surviving spouses were no longer eligible for DIC benefits if they remarried prior to the age of 57. Then in 2021, the remarriage age was lowered to 55. Surviving spouses that are currently in receipt of DIC benefits should not have to worry about losing their benefits if they remarry before the age of 55. Please urge your Senators to co-sponsor and support S. 1266.

S.326, Elizabeth Dole Veterans Programs Improvement Act of 2023 would consolidate provisions from the 5 bills: *S. 106, the Commitment to Veteran Support and Outreach Act*; *S. 141, the Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act*; *S. 185, the Native American Direct Loan Improvement Act of 2023*; *S. 216, the RESPECT Act of 2023*; *S. 326, the VA Medicinal Cannabis Research Act of 2023*. This bill if law would have a profound impact on the lives of veterans and their families helping to: improve outreach and assistance about veterans' benefits and services; expand long-term care options for aging veterans so they can live more independently with respect and dignity; create better home loan options for Native American veterans; and study the effects of medicinal cannabis on veterans with chronic pain or PTSD. Please urge your Senators to co-sponsor and support S.326.

I am always looking for ways to improve chapter meetings and more ways to be active in our respective communities and to help Veterans and families. If you have some ideas or just want to talk, feel free to pick up the phone and give me a call or send an email/text and I'll call you.

Yours in Patriotism,
Larry Leighton
Commander

Cdr: Larry Leighton
commander691moph@gmail.com
Sr. Vice-Cdr: James Starkman
karen4357@att.net
Jr. Vice-Cdr: Kenneth Burns
ameriken81@gmail.com
Adjutant: Larry Leighton
commander691moph@gmail.com

Meeting date: 2nd Saturday

Meeting time: 9:00 AM

Meeting location: Sands Chevrolet Surprise Conference Room (16991 W Waddell Rd, Surprise, AZ 85388) Enter parking lot from N Cotton Lane.

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

Facebook: [Chapter 691 Facebook](#)

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

Patriot **Ron Capek** (691) presenting Cadet **Larissa Regalabo** of Peoria H.S. JROTC receiving her Leadership Award.



H.R. 2414 and S. 1119, the CHAMPVA Children's Care Protection Act of 2023 would increase the maximum age for children eligible for medical care under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA). When the Affordable Care Act was signed into law in 2010, it required private-sector health plans to allow children to stay on their parents' insurance until they are 26 years old, but this coverage was not extended to veteran health coverage. Currently a child of a veteran loses eligibility for CHAMPVA at age 18 if they are not a student, or at age 23 otherwise. Urge your senators and representative to provide extended health coverage for our nation's service-disabled veterans' children by supporting these bills.

S.928, the Not Just a Number Act, would require VA to produce and post an annual National Veteran Suicide Prevention report to include findings on suicide rates among veterans, information on their use of VA health care, Vet Centers and various VA benefits and services. The bill also would require information about veterans use of education programs, job training and housing utilization and an analysis of which benefits and services have the greatest impact on preventing suicide. The bill would require the VA to assess the possibility of moving the Office of Suicide Prevention to the Secretary's level. It will improve suicide data collection, reporting and analysis. Please urge your Senators to cosponsor S. 928.

H.R. 1606, the Veterans Entrepreneurship Training Act, will statutorily authorize the Boots to Business (B2B) program that helps transitioning service members to start and grow businesses. B2B is an entrepreneurial education and training program offered by the Small Business Administration as part of the Department of Defense's Transition Assistance Program (TAP). The B2B program offers transitioning service members and military spouses a foundational two-day, in-person course for an introduction to business ownership which can be followed by optional online courses. The Veteran Entrepreneurship Training Act would authorize the B2B program for five years. Please contact your Representative to request they co-sponsor H.R. 1606.

John Suardini Chapter 790 – Scottsdale, AZ

Chapter 790 was officially closed on May 5th. Members have been transferred to the chapter closest to their home address unless they requested to be assigned to a specific chapter or as a department member-at-large. Thank you, chapter members, for your support to Chapter 790 over the years.

Purple Heart License Plates

HB 2062 Vehicle license tax exemption 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 vehicle registration tax fee is waived. Can only be used on one vehicle. Specialty plate and personalization fees still apply.

Purple Heart Combat Wounded Veterans of AZ



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 a 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!

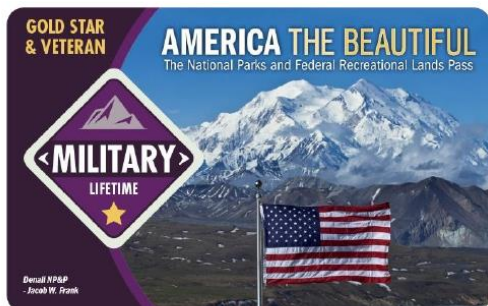
Donate Online: [Donations Appreciated](#)

The Purple Heart Hall of Honor



Free National Park Passes

More information is available at the National Parks Service [website](#).



New life time pass available for Military Veterans

Purple Heart Scholarship



Information is available on the Purple Heart Scholarship Program. Applications are due in July. Information and application are at this [link](#).



Newsletter Information

Please send information & photos that you would like included in the newsletter to mophchapter442@comcast.net. We would like to get the newsletter out on the last day of the month. Get me news information & photos by the 15th of each month.

John R. Moore
Jr. Vice-Commander

Add your story to the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor. Enroll at the url below:

<https://www.thepurpleheart.com/enrollment/>

Private School Tax Credit

Patriot **Joe Kobes** (Chapter 790) son Hudson was just recently accepted to Brophy College Preparatory High School in Phoenix. If you are so inclined to support this program and could use another tax break on your AZ taxes, you can contribute on Hudson's website for the tax donations:

<https://action.ibescholarships.org/SIXD8Q>.

If you know of any other student with a relationship to the Arizona Military Order of the Purple Heart, we will gladly distribute the same information for them.

For any private school Arizonans can allocate a tax credit to a student at a private school, and it will cost them nothing. It's a terrific program in Arizona. This is the IRS tax code covering it. <https://azdor.gov/tax-credits/credits-contributions-certified-school-tuition-organizations>.

Thoughts on Memorial Day

Let your memories be pleasant. Remembering the good times and funny times that you shared together. Be kind and tell someone else that story. How else will they understand, if we don't tell them the Sacrifices that were made for them. Not just today, but every day and every chance you get. Children ask him or her to tell you, their story. It is not a movie, because Memorial Day is every day for many veterans.

I pray you have had a blessed day, and your memories bring a smile to your face.

Patriot Sylvestre Primous
Life Member
Department of Arizona



From the Archives

Arizona Daily Sun
30 May 1947, Fri - Page 6



From the Archives

Arizona Daily Sun
30 May 2010, Sun - Page 1

Memorial Day holiday dates back to Civil War

Memorial Day is a United States federal holiday observed on the last Monday of May, which is May 31 this year.

Formerly known as Decoration **Day**, it commemorates U.S. men and women who died while in the military service.

Decoration **Day** was first enacted to honor Union soldiers of the American Civil War and was celebrated near the **day** of reunification after the Civil War.

The tombs of fallen Union soldiers were decorated in remembrance.

The first observance was in Waterloo, N.Y., on May 5, 1866.

The scope of the holiday was expanded after World War I.

The alternative name of **Memorial Day** was first used in 1882, but it did not become common until after World War II, and was not declared the official name by federal law until 1967.

The Robert J. Puskar Veterans Scholarship Check Presentation to Bij'on Davis

