



February 2025

Volume 5 Issue 6

DEPARTMENT COMMANDER
Patriot Keith Gray

Arizona Patriots,

Our new year is off to a busy start. First, I want to thank each of you for your support in our mission and our activities. Without you we would not be able to accomplish all that we did this past year.



This spring we will present JROTC/ROTC awards in over 70 high schools around the state. We will support stand-downs in Northern, Central, and Southern Arizona.

March 29th is National Vietnam Veterans Day. I encourage as many of you who can to attend ceremonies taking place in communities around the state. Thank you to our members who served in the Vietnam War. Your service is honored and appreciated.

The Military Order of the Purple Heart National Convention is July 14th through July 18th in Sparks, Nevada this year. This is reasonably close by and a good opportunity for members to attend the National Convention. More information is further down in the newsletter.

Chapter and Department elections will be held in March and April. The Department elections will be held at the Department Convention on May 17th. Thank you to Chapter 691 for hosting the Department Convention. I encourage you to attend the convention in person or by zoom. Your contributions to the Order are important and are needed.

I encourage you to consider holding an elected office. You will find it a rewarding experience and you will help keep the Order viable going forward.

Last week the **National Commander, Robert Olivarez Jr.**, testified before the joint House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committee. I attended to support the testimony along with other MOPH members from around the Nation. Thank you, **Commander Olivarez Jr.**, for advocating for the needs and concerns of our Veterans.

The **Commander's Call/DEC is quarterly on the Fourth Wednesday.** A member of the chapter command group must attend. It is open to all members. Please bring your suggestions so we can make the best possible decisions for the department. The next Commander's Call/DEC meeting is in March.

Time: 06:30 PM Arizona Time, March 26th, 2024

Zoom Meeting ID: 842 2842 9701

Passcode: 879117 or Dial in: 669 900 6833.



Yours in Patriotism,
Keith Gray
Commander

DEPARTMENT ADJUTANT
Patriot Larry Leighton



SAVE THE DATE!

Our 2025 Department Convention will be held on **Saturday, May 17th**. There will be opportunities join your comrades on Friday night and activities available for spouses and significant others on Saturday. Details

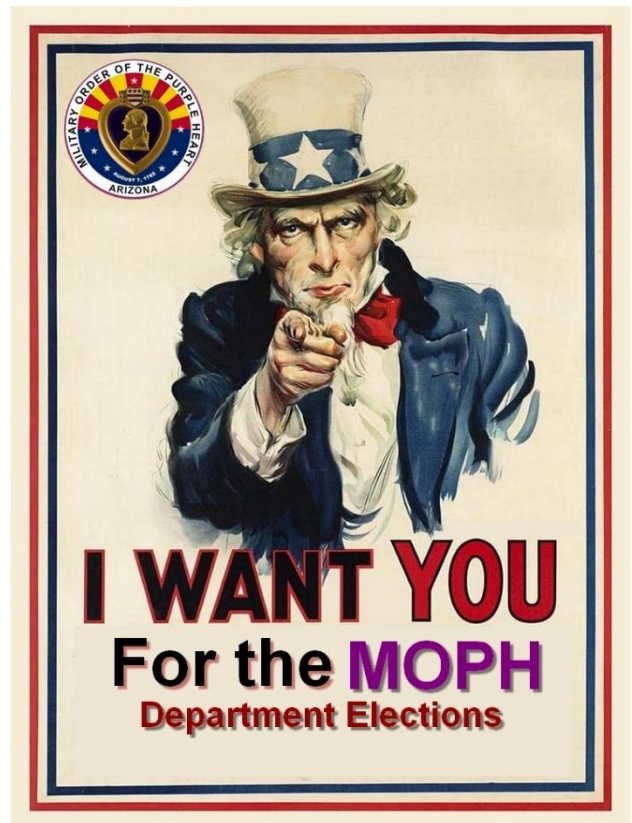
are being finalized but it looks like it will be held in the **Glendale Westgate Entertainment District**. Watch for details! We hope to see you there or on zoom.

As Commander Gray has stated in past newsletters, we need ways to expand and improve our Department impact and operations. Please share your thoughts and ideas with us (adjutant.mophaz@gmail.com; commander.mophaz@gmail.com).

The Department Fundraiser is happening! You all should have already received an invitation to buy your **Uniformed Services In Action 2026 Calendar** (early bird discount until June 1st). Unlike the 2019 calendar, 2026 has 55 opportunities to win one (or more) of the \$300 Gift Cards from Scheels (sports store carrying apparel, footwear, and equipment for activities from hunting, fishing, biking, golf, and much more). I am also asking for your help (1) to spread the invitation to your family and friends, (2) to share the Sponsor Request Letter with the businesses you frequent (and even those you don't) and (3) **don't be afraid to ask – you never know they might say YES.**

Life Member Rebate: The Life Member Rebate (LMR) from National has been received. **Jim Starkman, our Department Finance Officer**, is in the process of sending out the Chapter portions via direct deposit to the Chapter bank account. Did you know the LMR is not always guaranteed? If the National Investment Account does well, there will "generally be a LMR. Chapters and Departments must submit their election reports and their life member verification reports on time in order to receive their respective LMR. Another

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.



Calendar:

- Mar 5/6 – Tucson Stand-Down
- Mar 7 – Bullhead City Stand-Down
- Mar 13/14 – Maricopa Stand-Down
- Mar 15 – Parker Stand-Down
- Mar 20 – Verde Valley Stand-Down
- Mar 20 – Yuma Stand-Down
- Mar 29 – National Vietnam Veterans Day

Buddy Checks! Buddy Checks are important so, **let's not forget to check on our buddies, friends and family.** A simple 'How are you?' can make all the

interesting note about the LMR is that the amount each Chapter receives is based on the number of members on the respective Chapter roster. The amount the Department receives is based on the total number of members on the Department roster. If you are on a Chapter Roster, you are counted TWICE (once for your Chapter and once for the Department).

So if you are a Department Member At Large (DML) member you can help the Chapters by transferring to the one closest to you, even if it is too far to travel to regularly attend Chapter meetings. If you have any questions or want to transfer, please contact me at 623-776-5443 or adjutant.mophaz@gmail.com.

difference. Let's spread warmth and care and remind people, they are not alone!

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

I hope to see many of you at the Department Convention on May 17th whether it be in person or on zoom.

Larry Leighton
Adjutant

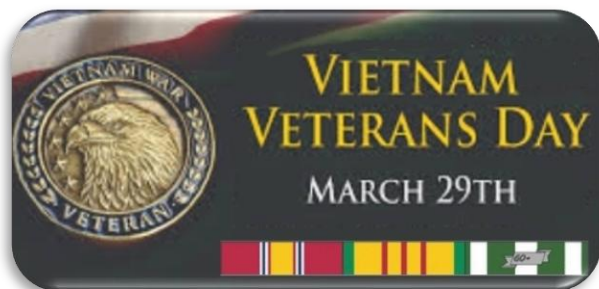


DEPARTMENT JR. VICE-COMMANDER
Patriot John Moore

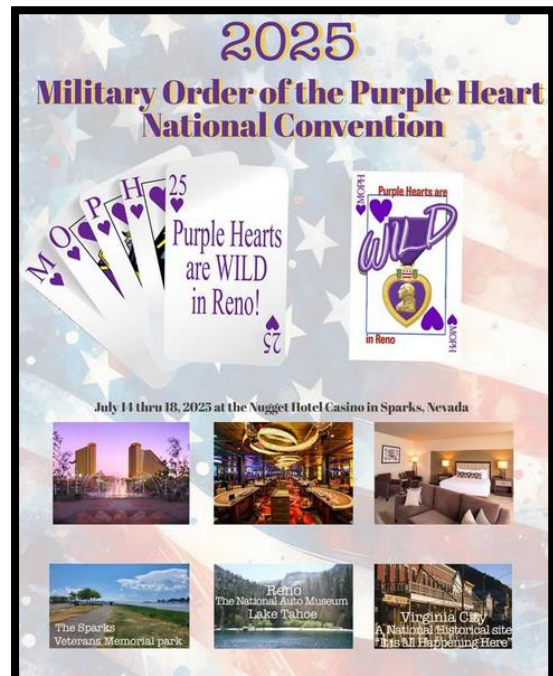
National Vietnam War Veterans Day: In March our chapters will participate in ceremonies for National Vietnam War Veterans Day in various locations around the state. In 1973 March 29th, was the day the last U.S. combat troops departed



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 664 Patriot members who received Purple Hearts** while serving in the Vietnam War.



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



John R. Moore, Jr. Vice-Commander

DEPARTMENT INFORMATION

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](#).

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 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](#)

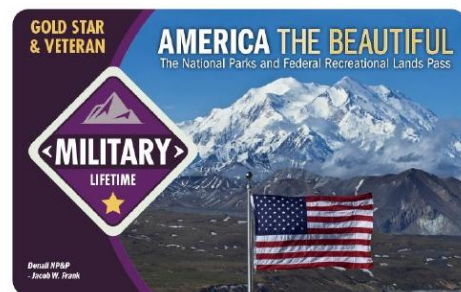
Update Your Contact Information: Keep your snail mail address, phone & email address up to date. Go to the [MOPH National website](#). You need your membership number to log-in. You can then update your contact information. You can also email us at adjutant.mophaz@gmail.com and we can update your snail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

Department Officers 2024/2025:

Cdr: Keith Gray commandermophaz@gmail.com
Sr. Vice Cdr: Jimi Sallmen
jimisallmen@gmail.com
Jr. Vice Cdr: John Moore
mophchapter442@comcast.net
Adjutant: Larry Leighton
adjutant.mophaz@gmail.com
Finance Officer: Jim Starkman karen4357@att.net
Sgt-at-Arms: Cody Phipps
cody.phipps@outlook.com
Inspector: **vacant position**
Judge Advocate: **vacant position**
Americanism Officer: **vacant position**
Chaplain: John L. Bhelm jblehmsr@gmail.com
Legislative Liaison: **vacant position**

We need your help to fill vacant officer positions. The current vacancies are **Judge Advocate, Inspector, Americanism, and three Finance Committee members**. Members can self-nominate or nominate another member. When we have nominees, the DEC will schedule a special election for the position. **Help the Order by serving. Most meetings are held on Zoom.**

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

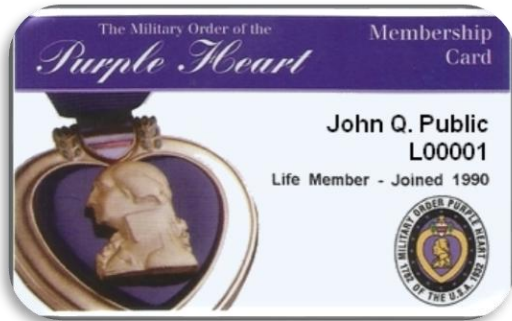


New life time pass available for Military Veterans

Upcoming Events and Activities of Interest:

08 Mar: 1000-1400: **Second Annual Veteran Recreation and Resource Fair** hosted by ASU at Phoenix College, Sophomore Square, 1202 W. Thomas Rd., Phoenix,
08 Mar: 1730: RSVP: **Imprints of Honor** (VHP) fundraiser, Chateau Luxe, 1175 E Lone Cactus Dr, Phoenix, gala.imprintsofhorizon.org, speaker is Pat Little-Upah

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>



08 Mar: 1900: **2nd Annual Mariachi & Folklórico Festival**, Herberger Theater Center! Theater | 222 E Monroe St | Phoenix,
20 Mar: **4TH ANNUAL "VERDE VALLEY STAND DOWN"** - Camp Verde AZ info: John Davis 928-286-7446
NAZVeteranStandDowns@aol.com
29 Mar: **Veterans Forum Honoring Vietnam Veterans**, hosted by Honoring America's Veterans, Paula.Pedene@HonoringAmericasveterans.org



FORT LOWELL CHAPTER 442 – TUCSON, AZ Commander Mike Dyer

Fellow Patriots, welcome to Chapter 442.



During February, the chapter hosted bingo for the patients at the Tucson VA Hospital. The next Bingo session will be held on March 29th.. 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.

The chapter participated in the annual Four Chaplains ceremony at Kino Memorial Park on February 2nd.

In April we will be presenting MOPH Leadership Awards to the 13 JROTC/ROTC programs we support in southern Arizona.

On March 29th we will participate in the dedication of Pima County's memorial to the 107 county residents that died in the Vietnam War. The ceremony will be held at Kino Veteran's Memorial Park.

The annual Tucson Sand-Down will be held on March 5th & 6th.

We are in the process of nominating officers for the chapter elections that will be held in March. I encourage all members to consider running for one of our officer positions.

Yours in Patriotism,
Mike Dyer
Commander

Commander Mike Dyer – mrdyer@comcast.net
Sr. Vice-Cdr Richard Perkins - rperkins823@gmail.com
Jr. Vice-Cdr: Cody Phipps - cody.phipps@outlook.com
Chaplain: Danny Lemon - ddlemon@outlook.com
Adjutant: John Moore – mophchapter442@comcast.net
Website: <https://442.mophaz.org/>
Facebook: [Chapter 442 Facebook Page](#)

Chapter Elections: We need your help to fill the officer positions. The Chapter will elect officers at the March meeting. The positions are **Commander, Sr. Vice Commander, Jr. Vice Commander, Finance Officer, Sgt-at-Arms, and two Trustees.** Members can self-nominate or nominate another member. Nominations will be closed at the March meeting and the election will be held. Help the chapter by considering holding a chapter office. Thank you!

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.

Fort Lowell Chapter 442 hosted bingo for the patients at the Tucson VA hospital on February 22nd. Patriot Dave Bertagnoli & Patriot Danny



Lemon conducted bingo. Their wives, Cherie & Yolanda, assisted the patients. Patriot Cody Phipps & volunteer

Susan-Lea Skuhr also helped. The grand prize was a beautiful quilt donated by the ladies from Canyon Del Oro Bible church. Thank you, Dave, Danny, Cody, Cherie, Yolanda, and Susan-Lea.



Chapter Commander Mike Dyer gave remarks at the service for **Navy veteran Mike Dietz** at the Arizona State Veterans Memorial Cemetery Marana. Rest in Peace!



Ft. Lowell Chapter 442 participated in the Four Chaplains ceremony on Sunday, February 2nd. **Patriot John Grand** read the biography of one of the Four Chaplains. He also gave remarks on the history and significance of the Purple Heart. A Purple Heart wreath was placed in honor of the Four Chaplains by **Patriot Danny Lemon, Patriot Jim Zimmerman, Patriot Frances Johnson, and Patriot Cody Phipps**. The special guest was **Patriot Walter Ram** who is 101 years old. Music was provided by the 4th Cavalry Band (reenactors).



Up, Up and Away! Southern Arizona Balloon Excursions donated a balloon ride for a combat wounded Veteran. **Patriot John Grand** was selected for the ride. John said it was a bucket list item checked off and that he enjoyed it immensely.





TUCSON VETERAN

Stand Down and Career Fair



Ramada Inn 777 W. Cushing St. ★★★★★

Veteran Stand Down March 5
from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
and Career Fair March 6
from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

** Please bring extra copies of your resume; business casual attire for the career fair*

**Open to ALL Veterans, National Guard and Reservists
in the local area in need of the following resources:**

- Clothing/hygiene items
- Haircuts
- Housing options
- Veterans Court
- Mental Health and Religious counseling
- Substance abuse counseling
- Treatment referrals
- Legal matters
- Employment assistance and job training
- Disability claims
- Benefits applications
- Pet care
- Service Organizations

Lunch will be served

For event Information contact
623-687-5552 or tucsonvetservingvets@gmail.com

NO ALCOHOL • NO DRUGS • NO WEAPONS



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. Enjoy!



Veterans Fast-Track Disability Clinic

Tucson, Arizona

March 6-8, 2025



The Department of Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Phoenix Veteran Benefits Administration (VBA) Regional Office, Arizona Air National Guard, Pima Community College, American Legion, and CBP invite you to attend a Fast-Track Disability Claims Clinic.

Pre-event phone appointment recommended using the QR Code. No appointments are necessary. If you do not have a Veteran Identification Card, you must have a valid drivers license and DD214 to show military proof of service.

March 6-8, 2025, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. at the Pima Community College Aviation Technology Campus located at 7211 South Park Ave. Tucson AZ, 85756.

To Schedule Virtual Appointment:
State/Province: Arizona
Special Notes/Requests:
US Customs and Border Protection Pass Registration for MDEO Event (6-8 Mar 25)

Southern Arizona VA Health Care System (SAVAHCS)

WOMEN VETERAN Tele-Town Hall

Theme: Mental Health



Thursday, March 6th, 2025
5:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Join us for our virtual Tele-Town Hall. We extend this invitation to all Women Veterans who receive care at the facility.

We will be providing updated information on SAVAHC'S Mental Health Services and answering your questions!

The event will be live streaming at www.facebook.com/VATucson. You can also visit access.live/womenshealth or dial in at (833)380-0738.



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



Cdr: Jason Duren jason@cidercorpsaz.com
 Sr. Vice-Cdr: Ramiero Del Rio (602) 818-0796
 Finance: James Pomush landjpomush@gmail.com
 Adjutant: Stephan Bobby 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

Tri-City Chapter 472 held a fundraiser at the Mesa Arizona Swap Meet on February 21st.



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.



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



February was a great month and we look forward to another exciting March and the spring/summer season. **The Department Convention will be held on May 17th in the Surprise area, most likely** in the Glendale Westgate Entertainment District (details to be finalized next week). Plan on attending and having a good time.

Don't forget we are having elections for Chapter Officers at our next meeting, March 8th. The meeting will be on zoom and at Sands Chevrolet. I hope to see a lot of you there either in person or on the zoom. If you cannot make the meeting but are interested in one of the positions, let me know. **You do NOT have to live in close proximity to the meeting location**, you just need a desire to help the Chapter and be willing to attend some meetings via Zoom.

If you have ideas that could improve Chapter operations, please send them to me so the leadership team can include them planning for 2025-2026.

March 14th, we'll support the Sun Dome Plaza Arts and Crafts show in Sun City West from 8-2 and need some help here as well. We have also raised over \$2,000 each time we go to this event. They hold it in March and November.

March 14th, we'll support the Sun Dome Plaza Arts and Crafts show in Sun City West from 8-2 and need some help here as well. We have also raised over \$2,000 each time we go to this event. They hold it in March and November.

Remember, if you haven't talked to another Vet from your past, or even the present, lately, pick up the phone and make his or her day! As the American Legion says, "Be the One," make the call don't just wait for someone to call you. If you just want to talk to someone, you can always call me – I'm a good listener (623-776-5443).

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

Sr. Vice-Cdr: James Starkman -
karen4357@att.net

Jr. Vice-Cdr: John Ballenger Jr. -
ejballenjer22@msm.com

Chaplain: John Blehm (623-628-6330)

Adjutant: Larry Leighton -
commander691moph@gmail.com

General Washington's Birthday: Our annual George Washington Birthday celebration was a great success despite the low turn out. The food

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.

was great and comraderie GREAT. Almost everyone danced to at least one song and several managed more, **Karen Starkman** called all Members up to the dance floor and recognized each of us for the guests. The donated raffle gifts and silent auction items enable the Chapter to not only keep the meal cost down, but also raised \$877. 25 for the Chapter.

*Keith Fowler (DJ and Emcee) and Sherry Hayes;
Mr and Mrs Roger Kleinschmidt.*



(L-R) Larry and Kay Leighton; Jim and Karen Starkman



Linda Wright is shown riding the trike she bought during the auction. Sal Salinas is in the foreground.



Gold Rush Days: As mentioned last month, on Feb 14-16 we had a booth at the Wickenburg Gold



Rush Days. Although we did not sign up any new members, the team (**Jim and Karen Starkman, Keith and Kristi Gray, Ron and Cindi Capek, John Ballenger, and myself**) raised \$2,987 for MOPH Programs. The 50/50 raffle winner won \$1,597 and donated \$397 back to the Chapter.

John Ballenger is shown "holding down the fort".

Sr. Vice-Commander Jim Starkman carried the MOPH Colors in the **2025 Massing of the Colors** held at Sun City West on Feb 11th. **Department Commander Keith Gray** also attended the ceremony.



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.

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

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 4th Wednesday.

Flagstaff Veterans VBOC: Every 1st 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 1st Tuesday of the month,
1000am – 300pm
Beginning: March 5th, 2024

80th Anniversary Iwo Jima Flag Raising:

Chapter 793 and the Department of Arizona participated in February the ceremony and parade to honor the Iwo Jima Flag Raising & Ira Hayes in Sacaton, AZ on February 22nd. The Gila River Indian Community is a proud Purple Heart Community.





View video slide show produced by the Gila River Indian Community of the ceremony at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSNZrubzjNI>

CHAPTER 2560 – APACHE JUNCTION, AZ Commander Mike Overmeyer



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

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

East Valley Red Friday Patriots Meeting: Wow!!

It just can't get any better!! Or can it? A splendid turnout of 131 patriots on January 31st with a host of first-time guests to include: Howard Smith (USA), Dylan Wood, Monika Perry (USAF), Benjamin Jeffrey (USN), Bud Whittenhall (USMC), Metalynn Mohr, Gary Mohr, Tina Hale (USA Retired), Keith Gemmill, Joe Thornell (USAF Retired), Jim Hubred (USAF), Michael Flowers (USMC), Ron Baxter (ARNG), Pam Baxter, Kay Kohlhepp, Steve Singlar (USN Retired), Steve Breuker (USAF), Patrick McDonald (USMC), Mike Hegberg (USN), Pat Upah (USA Retired), David Upah, and Walter "Chip" Wilson (USAF Retired).

Purple Heart Presentation: At the Red Friday Patriots Meeting **Ron West** was presented with the Purple Heart. As most veterans know, the administration of our beloved armed forces occasionally slips up and does not follow through on important details. Such is the case with **Ronald West**, a Vietnam combat veteran (1968 – 1969) who was wounded while serving with the **23rd Infantry Americal Division**. Ron's Form DD 214 clearly states that he was a recipient of the Purple Heart Medal. However, the medal was never presented to Ron either in a formal or informal ceremony. Thanks to the efforts of the **Military Order of the Purple Heart, Apache Junction chapter 2560** led by Chapter Commander **Mike Overmeyer**, a long-awaited **Purple Heart Medal** was presented to Ron today with a resounding ovation and appreciation for his sacrifice.



Thanks to each of you for joining us today, for sharing in our camaraderie, and supporting the mission of R.E.D. **Remember Everyone Deployed**. Please know you are always welcome on RED Friday.

We were extraordinarily pleased to have as our guest speaker **CPT Brian Udell**, a 10-year USAF



veteran who logged nearly 2,000 hours and 100 combat missions flying the F-15E Strike Eagle fighter airplane in Southwest Asia on multiple deployments.

While flying a night training mission over the Atlantic Ocean, 65 miles from the shore of Seymour-Johnson AFB, N.C., a malfunction occurred requiring Brian and the co-pilot to eject. He made the decision to bail out at 10,000 feet, got

Ron West & Cdr Overmeyer



C4 Foundation Fundraiser: Patriot Chuck Byers attended the C4 Foundation Fundraiser in Scottsdale on February 22nd. The Foundation raises funds to support Navy Seals.



Wreaths Across America Support for Chapter 2560. 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 at 520-280-4715.

Thank you for supporting our mission to **REMEMBER, HONOR, and TEACH!**

into good position and pulled the handles at 6,000 feet, left the aircraft at 3,000 feet, and the parachute opened at just under 1,000 feet. All that happened in a matter of a few seconds.

Brian holds the record for surviving the highest speed ejection from a U.S. Fighter Aircraft at nearly 800 M.P.H. Unfortunately, the co-pilot did not survive. Brian was severely injured and suffered fractures from head to feet drastically minimizing the use of his arms and legs and his chance of survival in the treacherous ocean. After four hours afloat in a partially inflated life raft, Brian was miraculously rescued by the US Coast Guard. After his eventual rehab and decision to leave the USAF in 1999, Brian secured a position as a pilot for Southwest Airlines and continues to fly with the airlines today. He has accumulated over 21,000 hours in a variety of both civil and military aircraft. His story is a compelling example of perseverance, faith, and a sheer will to survive. Thank you, Brian, for sharing your story.

If it has been a while since you last joined us for a RED Friday assembly, we encourage you to pay us a visit. You won't be disappointed, and we will be grateful for your support. **The group meets each Friday at the American Legion Post 27, 1018 S. Meridian Road, Apache Junction.** A buffet breakfast is served beginning at 7:30am (\$12pp), and the program starts promptly at 8:15am. Join us. Wear RED. Bring a friend.

Remember Everyone Deployed (R.E.D.).
 Contacts: Dick Nations (512) 809-8899, Richard Bartlow (480) 665-1038, Don Stephens (402) 210-5001, Jim Kenyon (602) 321-9671, or Nancy Fassbender (520) 280-4715.



VA Resource Navigator:

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

VA Resource Navigator VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

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
- The **VA Welcome Kit** provides an overview of benefits and services. 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
- My HealthVet** 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

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.

POTPOURRI

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



Submit articles to Publications@PurpleHeart.org

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



Purple Heart Scholarships: Applications for the scholarship program are due every July.

MyVA Hotline: The Whitehouse VA Hotline and MyVA411 have merged. [1-800-MyVA411 \(698-2411\)](tel:1-800-MyVA411) is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to serve veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors.

Arizona Stand-Down Alliance 2025 Events:

Tucson Stand-Down

Wednesday & Thursday, March 5-6, 2025

Ramada Inn (777 W Cushing Street, Tucson, AZ 85745) See Flyer at this [link](#).

Bullhead City Stand-Down

Friday, March 7, 2025

Bullhead Area Chamber of Commerce (1251 Highway 95, Bullhead City, AZ 86429)

Maricopa County Stand-Down

Thursday & Friday, March 13-14, 2025

Arizona State Fairgrounds (1826 W McDowell Road, Phoenix, AZ 85007)

Note: See below for volunteer and service provider registration information.

Parker StandDown

Friday, March 14, 2025 / 9:30am – 1:30pm

VFW Post 7061 (516 S Hopi Avenue, Parker, AZ 85344). See Flyer at this [link](#).

Verde Valley Stand-Down

Thursday, March 20, 2025 / 9:00am – 2:00pm

Location TBD. For info contact John Davis at 928-286-7446 or at NAZVeteranStandDowns@aol.com

The Million Veteran Program is on a mission to redefine the future of healthcare, and we need YOU to be a part of this monumental journey. MVP is assembling a community of over 1,000,000 Veterans to uncover how genes, lifestyles, military experiences, and exposures impact our health and wellness. Help revolutionize medicine and enhance the lives of Veterans worldwide. Join here:

<https://www.mvp.va.gov/pwa/>

Information is available on the Purple Heart Scholarship Program at this [link](#).



ADVS Grant Program is open: Small grants are available for up to \$4,999.99 and large grants from \$5,000 to \$75,000. Information on eligibility for organizations and applications are available on the [ADVS website](#).

Have Unforeseen Circumstances Caused Financial Hardships? ADVS Military and Family Relief Fund (MFRF) provides financial assistance to active-duty service members, Veterans and their families for unforeseen financial hardships caused by the service member's military service. MFRF is designed to bridge the gap for basic living expenses caused by unforeseen circumstances. Basic living expenses include, but are not limited to rental assistance, vehicle payments, utility assistance, etc. The lifetime limit for the MFRF program is set at \$20,000. Applicants can also request one-time emergency assistance for a maximum of \$3,000. MFRF is open to both pre and post 9/11 service members.



For a full list of eligibility requirements and to apply online, visit this website:

<https://dvs.az.gov/.../financ.../military-family-relief-fund>.

U.S. VETS Phoenix: Join them at the **9th annual Steps for Vets – Run, Walk, Roll 5K** on **Saturday, April 19, 2025, at Phoenix Raceway**. Register at <https://honor.usvets.org/event/steps-for-vets-phoenix/e623075>



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

An advertisement featuring a smiling couple. The woman is wearing a military camouflage uniform with 'KROZAS' and 'U.S. ARMY' visible. The man is wearing a light blue button-down shirt. The background is a soft-focus outdoor setting.

FREE TUITION

Spouses of Veterans in Arizona Can Receive Free Tuition

Photo courtesy of [unreadable]

Arizona coalition for military families

ARIZONA BOARD OF REGENTS
ASU ♦ NAU ♦ UA

All proceeds fund the programs and services provided to homeless and at-risk veterans and their families served by U.S. VETS Phoenix!

A logo for the '5K STEPS FOR VETS' event. It features the text '5K' in large yellow letters, 'U.S. VETS PHOENIX' with a star logo, and a silhouette of various people participating in the event: a person with a stroller, a person with a dog, a person in a wheelchair, and others. Below the silhouettes is the text 'STEPS FOR VETS' and 'RUN ★ WALK ★ ROLL'.

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



John R. Moore
Jr. Vice-Commander